

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tue 5 Jun
2007
7.00 pm

Committee Room Two
Town Hall
Redditch



www.redditchbc.gov.uk

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- Access to a summary of the rights of the public to attend meetings of the Council and its Committees etc. and to inspect and copy documents.
- In addition, the public now has a right to be present when the Council determines “Key Decisions” unless the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- Unless otherwise stated, all items of business before the Executive Committee are Key Decisions.
- (Copies of Agenda Lists are published in advance of the meetings on the Council’s Website:
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**If you have any queries on this Agenda or any of the decisions taken or wish to exercise any of the above rights of access to information, please contact
Jess Bayley and Helen Saunders
Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers**

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Welcome to today's meeting.

Guidance for the Public

Agenda Papers

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

Chair

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

Running Order

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

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

Decisions

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

Members of the Public

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

Special Arrangements

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Infra-red devices for the hearing impaired are available on request at the meeting. Other facilities may require prior arrangement.

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If the alarm is sounded, please leave the building by the nearest available exit – these are clearly indicated within all the Committee Rooms.

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

Do Not stop to collect personal belongings.

Do Not use lifts.

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

The emergency Assembly Area is on the Ringway Car Park.

Declaration of Interests: Guidance for Councillors

DO I HAVE A "PERSONAL INTEREST" ?

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

OR

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

you have a personal interest.

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

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

IS IT A "PREJUDICIAL INTEREST" ?

In general only if:-

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

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

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



Overview AND SCRUTINY

Tuesday, 5 June 2007

7.00 pm

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

Committee

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs:	K Banks	C MacMillan (Chair)
	J Brunner	B Passingham
	J Cookson	D Taylor
	A Fry (Vice-Chair)	D Thomas

1. Apologies and named substitutes	<p>To receive apologies for absence and details of any Councillor (or co-optee substitute) nominated to attend this meeting in place of a member of this Committee.</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
2. Declarations of interest and of Party Whip	<p>To invite Councillors to declare any interest they may have in items on the Agenda and any Party Whip.</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 54)	<p>To note and accept the minutes of the following Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chairs' Steering Committee meetings on Tuesday, the 23rd January 2007 and Monday, the 26th March, 2007.• Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings on Wednesday, the 17th January 2007, Monday, the 19th February 2007; Tuesday, the 27th February 2007 and Monday, the 19th March 2007.• Leisure, Tourism and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings on Wednesday, the 24th January 2007 and Tuesday, the 13th March 2007.• Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings on Tuesday, the 30th January 2007 and Wednesday, the 21st March 2007. <p>(Minutes attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>

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4. The Forward Plan	<p>To consider the contents of the Forward Plan for the 1st June – 30th September 2007.</p> <p>(No separate report)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
5. Call-in	<p>To consider whether any Key Decisions of the Executive Committee's most recent meeting(s) should be subject to call-in and also to consider whether any items on the Forward Plan require pre-scrutiny.</p> <p>(No separate report).</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
6. The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Document (Pages 55 - 84)	<p>To consider the proposed new Overview and Scrutiny arrangements recorded in the attached procedures document.</p> <p>(Report to follow)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
7. Witness Guidance Notes (Pages 85 - 90)	<p>To consider the new guidance notes that will be issued to witnesses who attend Overview and Scrutiny proceedings.</p> <p>(Report to follow)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
8. Referrals	<p>To consider any referrals to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee direct, or arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Executive Committee or full Council• Other sources. <p>(No separate report).</p> <p>(No Direct Ward relevance)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
9. Work Programme	

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(Pages 91 - 94)

To consider the Committee's current Work Programme, and potential items for addition to the list arising from:

- The Forward Plan / Committee agendas
- External publications
- Other sources.

(Report attached)

(No Direct Ward relevance)

(No Specific Ward Relevance)

10. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Should it be necessary, in the opinion of the Borough Director, during the course of the meeting to consider excluding the public from the meeting on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged, it may be necessary to move the following resolution:

"That, under S.100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs (to be specified) of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act".

**CHAIRS' STEERING**

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE

23rd January 2007

MINUTES**Present:**

Councillor D Cartwright (Chair) and Councillors Beech, Field, Hill, MacMillan, Shurmer and Smithers.

Non-members:

Councillors Braley and Gandy.

Also present:

Ms A Harwood and Ms D Tulson (Oasis Christian Centre).

Officers:

T Kristunas and C Smith.

Member and Committee Services:

I Westmore.

28. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Thomas.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

30. MINUTES**RESOLVED that**

subject to the addition of Councillor Smithers to the list of those present, the minutes of the meetings of the Chairs' Steering Committee held on 14th and 30th November 2007 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

31. COMMUNITY FACILITY – PLYMOUTH ROAD

The Committee considered a proposal from the Oasis Christian Centre for the development of a Community Centre on Plymouth

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Road. The key issue for the Council to consider was the request from the Centre for a contribution to the capital funding for the scheme.

Members received a brief outline of the proposal from two representatives of the Oasis Christian Centre, Ms A Harwood and Ms D Tulson. The representatives from the Oasis Christian Centre stated their desire to create a facility that was suitable for youth related purposes but would also be available as a business conference and training centre, counselling venue and meeting place for other community groups. The Facility was to have a Christian-based ethos and would be run by a management board made up of local members of the church. The mortgage on the Centre, whilst held by the church locally, would be guaranteed by the national church. Despite the Christian ethos, the representatives were clear that the Centre would be available to all members of the local community.

The Committee considered that the aims of the Oasis Christian Centre, to provide a service to the local community were laudable and the members enthusiastic and committed but had significant concerns with a number of aspects of the proposal.

It was felt that insufficient work had been undertaken to establish a convincing business case for the Community Centre at this particular location. The estimates of income to the Community Centre did not appear to be based on closely researched evidence of local need. Members did not consider that the range of services being proposed was adequate to generate the predicted use. Use of the Community Centre appeared to be the only or main source of income to the Centre and Members felt that, given the lack of a business plan, it would be imprudent to commit Council money to the scheme. It would be necessary for the Council to undertake borrowing to allocate funds to this proposal. This was not considered the most sensible course of action for the authority given the questions raised over the financial viability of the scheme.

There were also concerns at the prospect of the Community Centre competing for business with established facilities and at the range of services being proposed. This was particularly felt to be the case in terms of youth facilities. The vicinity the proposed centre, within a central location, was already served by established facilities whereas other parts of the town were lacking any dedicated youth provision.

Given the concerns that had been expressed, Members did not feel able to recommend the proposal to the Executive Committee.

RECOMMENDED that

the Executive Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

for the reasons stated above, the proposal be rejected

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32. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2006/07 AND 2007/08

Members received a report setting out the Revised Housing Revenue Account Estimates for 2006/07 and the Initial Estimates for 2007/08.

Officers highlighted a number of amendments made following circulation of the report as set out below:

Paragraph 4.5

Following a recalculation of the rent figures included in the report the figures included in the final sentence of this paragraph should read as follows:

£57.45 should read **£57.22**, and
£54.59 should now read **£54.50**.

Paragraph 5.2

The figures in bold should read **£2.72 on a 52 week basis**.

Paragraph 7.2

£2.96 should read **£2.72** per week on a 52 week basis, and
£3.21 should now read **£2.95** on a 48 week basis.

Officers reported that the Housing Revenue Account was in a relatively healthy position at the present time. Members noted that there had not been the expected fall in expenditure on responsive repairs following an increase in planned maintenance and Officers explained that this appeared to be linked to consistently rising expectation amongst tenants.

There was considerable discussion around contributions from the Housing Revenue Account to fund the capital programme. The Council was currently taking advantage of rules that provided for free borrowing for housing capital expenditure. The level of revenue balances on the Housing Revenue account was around £5M and was set to increase, although it was recognised that the Government could change these subsidy rules at any time which would cause the Council to end this provision. The arrangements ensured that the Housing Revenue Account was in a sustainable position, a view that was supported by the Council's auditors. Members recognised that the present course of action provided the Council with the scope to properly manage a stock transfer if it was considered necessary.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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33. O&S TRAINING SESSION WITH DAVID MCGRATH – OUTCOMES

Members considered the outcomes of the training session given by David McGrath on the 11th January. A summary of the responses to the session was provided for Members. It was noted that six members of the Committee had been able to attend the session.

At the conclusion of the training session Members had been invited to put forward suggestions as to how scrutiny could be transformed during 2007 and this list was one of the focuses of the discussion.

Given that the training session was considered by the majority of those present to be extremely useful, it was suggested that the facilitator come in to assist the Council on a “consultancy” basis, specifically to assist in the scoping of major reviews that were being planned.

The idea of channelling interested Members towards specific reviews garnered support as it was considered the present system still did not do this sufficiently. This was starting to happen through the use of increasing use of Task and Finish Groups. Greater focus within reviews was also seen as essential in delivering SMART outcomes through the Overview and Scrutiny process.

Further training for Members in Overview and Scrutiny was identified as desirable as there was still the perception in some quarters that the conduct of the Committees had not moved on far enough from the previous old-style Committee system. It was noted that the call-in system did not appear to be operating to any real extent, although it was unclear whether that was to the detriment of the working of the Council. In addition, the use of Executive Advisory Panels was identified as a weakness of the present system and it was suggested that the avoidance of these Panels would be to the benefit of Overview and Scrutiny;

The Chairing of Overview and Scrutiny Committees by minority groups was raised as a possibility in order that the policies of the majority or controlling group on the Council were subjected to an adequate level of holding to account. In a similar vein, it was suggested that the introduction of a single party Executive or Cabinet could advance this development.

RESOLVED that

Officers undertake further research of Overview and Scrutiny structures and methods of operation and provide a further report back to Members in due course.

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34. WORK PROGRAMME

The necessity of receiving the budget and performance monitoring reports was again discussed. Officers commented that a clear audit trail for monitoring by Members of performance and budgetary compliance was regarded as essential at a corporate level.

RESOLVED that

the programme of future work be noted.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 p.m.
and closed at 8.45 p.m.

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CHAIR



CHAIRS' STEERING

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE

26th March 2007

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor D Cartwright (Chair) and Councillors Beech, Field, MacMillan and Shurmer.

Officers:

S Hanley and J Smith.

Member and Committee Services:

I Westmore.

35. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Hill and Thomas.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

37. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT – APRIL – DECEMBER 2006

At the outset it was noted that a budget monitoring report was not being submitted to the present meeting as consideration of third quarter figures so close to year end was thought untimely.

Housing and Asset Management

The average length of stay in hostel accommodation was noted. Officers were able to report that the figure was decreasing and was expected to fall further with the work undertaken to prevent homelessness apparently proving fruitful.

The failure of responsive maintenance to fall off as a result of increased spending on planned maintenance was again highlighted. Investment over recent years of £38 Million could not alter the fact that the Council still maintained an ageing housing stock, but the Council was still on course to achieve the Redditch Standard for its stock. A related issue was that of the percentage of repair appointments kept. It was noted that the Council was exceeding its target but Members

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were interested to establish whether tenants were similarly good at keeping appointments. Officers confirmed that there was no sanction at present and that the level of any charge could not be justified in terms of overall financial benefit to the Council. Officers were primarily engaged in building up tenants' confidence in the service.

Environment and Planning

The numbers of concessionary journeys and Dial-a-Ride passenger trips were seen to be on target to exceed targets. Officers informed the Committee that the significant increase in use had not been expected and that it was expected to have an ongoing impact on budgets. The audit process to determine the validity of the figures produced for these services was outlined; the processes for independently auditing the figures was unclear and Officers undertook to determine from the County Council the measures in place. It was anticipated that a roll-out of smart-cards would assist in ensuring accurate recording of passenger usage.

Leisure, Customer and Business Support

Members were keen to determine the validity of satisfaction ratings for the Council's sports and leisure facilities. It was noted that periodic changes to the methodology for assessing satisfaction was an effective means of ensuring the continued soundness of monitoring.

The effectiveness of the Reddicard concessionary scheme was questioned. The figures contained within the report appeared to suggest that the level of concessionary use was considerably lower than might be expected and Members were concerned that take-up of the concession was apparently not taking place.

Well Managed Organisation

The levels of sickness absence were seen to be running above the target figure. Officers explained that sickness absence was generally becoming less of a problem although a differentiation needed to be made between long-term and short-term absences. There were also differences apparent between front-line and other services as might be expected and services which had previously had cultural issues around sickness absence, such as leisure, were being addressed.

RESOLVED that

Subject to Members' comments, the update on key performance indicators for the period April – December 2006 be noted.

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38. COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered a report that set out a proposed method of producing the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Members were content with the course of action proposed and for Officers to draft a report on their behalf.

RESOLVED that

the overall structure and the form of its proposed contribution to an annual report to Council from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees be approved.

39. TAKING SCRUTINY FORWARD

The Committee considered a report following up on the discussion held at the previous meeting on the issues that had arisen from the Overview and Scrutiny training session provided in January 2007.

Members provided their own perspective on the present Scrutiny structures and how they might be adapted. It was suggested that the existing structures were too close in nature to the previous service committees and that alignment to particular services discouraged adequate scrutiny. A clear gap between the executive and scrutiny was considered desirable, even to the extent of having minority party chairing of scrutiny, and it was proposed that this could be achieved within a position of no over-all control.

The forthcoming proposal to move to a single commissioning Overview and Scrutiny body was generally welcomed. The adoption of an alternative system in order to overcome present deficiencies was considered a worthwhile exercise. Added value from scrutiny was considered relatively low although the reasons for this were thought to stem as much from the executive arm as from scrutiny processes. The executive was generally regarded as emasculated and it was hoped that perceived shackles on the executive could be released, portfolio holder roles enhanced and modernised structures embraced more fully.

Scrutiny was at times seen to be an obfuscating process and it was suggested that groups needed the opportunity to critique possible policy options and legitimately engage in a 'political' debate over issues. The converse view, demonstrating that scrutiny could and did work consensually, was also provided by some Members.

RESOLVED that

Subject to Members' comments, the report be noted.

CHAIRS' STEERING

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
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40. WORK PROGRAMME

The programme of future work was considered. It was noted that there were two items that had been proposed by Officers for consideration, these being the establishment of a group to consider corporately fees and charges and a means of engaging in a review of corporate communications.

Officers circulated a report from the Redditch Community Safety Partnership on its performance in addressing violent crime.

RESOLVED that

the programme of future work be noted.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 p.m.
and closed at 8.10 p.m.

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CHAIR



ENVIRONMENTAL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17th January 2007

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor I Beech (Chair) and Councillors Chalk, Dudley, Hunt, Pulsford and Taylor.

Non-members:

Councillors Anderson, Braley, Chance, Cookson, Field and Gandy.

Officers:

R Bamford, R Egan, A Grimmett and J Staniland.

Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer:

I Westmore.

42. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Enderby and Hicks.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or of the Party Whip.

44. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meetings of the Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 15th of November and 4th December 2006 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

45. REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY – PHASE TWO REVIEW

Councillor Jack Cookson, the Council's representative on the West Midlands Regional Assembly and West Midlands Local Government Association introduced this item, noting the original Regional Spatial Strategy had been agreed in 2004 but was undergoing revision due to central Government pressure to increase the housing stock nationally.

Councillor Cookson commented that the discussion taking place in other areas would have significance for Redditch as the greater the

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CHAIR

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amount of new housing absorbed elsewhere in the region, the less would be potentially required in the remainder. However, it was noted that even the minimum requirement, based upon natural growth, would exceed the land presently designated for housing in the Borough.

Officers provided further detail on the current, partial review of the Regional Spatial Strategy, stating that the overall objectives of the strategy had not changed but that certain issues were being reviewed. The Committee then received a summary of the options set out in the consultation document for the period 2001-2026. These were set out under four headings, housing, employment, waste and transport.

Housing

There were three options set out within the consultation document for the proposed increase in the numbers of households for each of the major urban areas, counties and constituent districts.

Option One for Redditch comprised 4300 households which represented a continuation of the level of growth experienced in recent years. This was expected to accommodate a slight growth in the Borough's population and a continued decrease in the average household size. If the Borough were to build all houses already committed, on those reserve sites in Local Plan No. 3, on Potential Urban Capacity sites and within the Areas of Development Constraint (ADR), the Council could very nearly meet this first option.

Officers raised a number of points that were apparent from the overall Strategy. The Council was interested to note that other North Worcestershire districts did not appear to be bearing such a heavy burden of house building as Redditch despite their greater area. There was also the hope expressed that urban renaissance might slow the out-pouring of emigrants from major urban areas.

Option Two represented an increase of 8,200 in the numbers of households and Option Three represented an increase of 13,200 households. Officers provided illustrative examples of what these increases would entail by relating the proposals to the Brockhill Estate, Batchley. The Committee was informed that in addition to the potential house building sites already identified, Option Two would entail development of a scale of three new Brockhill Estates and Option Three of seven new Brockhill Estates. Given the extent of the proposed development, it was made clear that construction of part of the Redditch housing allocation outside of the Borough boundary was an option that would have to be considered. An earlier example under Local Plan No. 2 was highlighted for Members, this being the Ravensbank Business Park which was a Redditch Borough development constructed within Bromsgrove District.

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Councillor Cookson added that of the ½ million new households proposed for the West Midlands, much would of necessity be directed to areas where the infrastructure was already in place. In a sense, local government boundaries were an artificial construct and it was probable that expansion of existing settlements, irrespective of boundaries, would occur.

Employment

One of the more significant features of the consultation options was in the removal of the link between the development of housing land and employment land, as the two had formerly increased according to a ratio under the former Worcestershire Structure Plan. This was said to be the result of an inability to establish a ratio that could be applied region-wide.

The proposed allocation of employment land for the Borough was similar under all three options and represented a much smaller area than allowed for under previous assessments of need. There was a concern expressed that sites currently within employment use could be used for housing should manufacturing decline and the need for housing land increase. Set against this was a recognition that growth sectors within the local and national economy were generally less space-hungry and other factors, such as working from home, would become increasingly significant over time.

Waste

It was made clear that the Council had only a partial responsibility within this heading as the County Council was the principal authority for waste disposal within Worcestershire. There was to be a county-wide meeting at the end of February at which the questions on the waste aspects of the consultation were to be dealt with and it was suggested that the Council could formally endorse these findings in due course.

Officers reported that colleagues from all of the relevant departments would be involved in coordinating the response from Redditch and that a whole range of Council policies would inform the position that was finally developed.

Transport

Officers informed the Committee that, at this stage, answers to the questions on transport had not been developed; the Council was using the expertise of Officers from the County Council Highways section to investigate the implications of the proposals contained within the consultation document.

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It was noted that there was little apparent thought being given to a strategic approach to transport provision across the region, with a lack of consideration of the role of public transport within the consultation. The situation of Redditch and the existing road system was felt to set it apart in some regards in that there were a number of primary routes into the town and the town itself was in close proximity to the motorway network.

Over-arching Issues

Officers returned to what they considered to be the major issues to be addressed. There were several areas where the Council required a greater degree of clarity before a definitive response could be developed.

The Council wished to query a number of the assumptions that had been made in constructing the models were out for consultation from the Regional Assembly. The inclusion of neighbouring Districts within the housing strategy was an area that would require a large amount of additional study and there was little information available to the Council on possible development options. Officers proposed that a feasibility study be undertaken to establish how the higher housing targets might realistically be achieved. There was a general acknowledgement that any solution would have an impact on the green belt, either through rolling it back or by encroaching upon it. Studies would also need to encompass how natural growth should be met, the provision of employment and community facilities and the overall direction of growth.

It was suggested that the Council's Neighbourhood Groups be used as a platform through which public awareness might be increased; in addition, it was intended to contact all of the individuals and organisations on the planning database, providing a brief outline of what the Regional Assembly was proposing. Officers wished to be upfront on the issues and let local residents know what the likely implications were of the Strategy Review. Members supported the raising of awareness among the public although it was concluded that the most appropriate means of so doing was through a basic presentation of the facts as they were known, albeit highlighting the ownership by the Regional Assembly of the consultation document.

Officers were intending to prepare a public notice and press release on the matter and it was suggested that a public meeting might be held at the Town Hall. It was hoped that this would give local residents the opportunity to engage with representatives of the Regional Assembly, should they be available to attend, and would allow Officers to provide an outline of the proposals and the Council's view of these.

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RESOLVED that

subject to the comments of Members, the actions outlined by Officers in connection with the preparation of the response to the consultation on the Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Review be noted.

46. PROGRESS ON EMERGING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS (SPD'S)

Officers provided a brief update on a number of Supplementary Planning Documents that were ongoing at the moment. All were currently at the stage of being prepared for public consultation. It was proposed that the consultation on these be undertaken in part through the Council's Neighbourhood Groups. Certain Groups would be receiving a more detailed consultation opportunity should their wards encompass specific local SPD sites.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

47. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The programme of future work was noted by Members and it was determined that the provisional meeting date on 24th January would not be required.

It was reported that Officers wished to engage specialist retail consultants to progress the work on the proposed redevelopment of Church Hill District Centre and Members were asked to approve the use of the Committee's remaining budget for this activity. Officers stated that the overall cost of the consultant's fees might exceed the amount left in the Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee budget and Members agreed to make a recommendation to the Chairs' Steering Committee regarding the possible shortfall.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the remaining funds within the Environmental Overview and Scrutiny budget be utilised in the engagement of specialist retail consultants in connection with the ongoing work on the proposed redevelopment of the Church Hill District Centre; and**
- 2) the Chairs' Steering Committee be requested to make available sufficient funds from other Overview and Scrutiny budgets should there be a shortfall in the amount available in the budget of the Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

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17th January 2007

The meeting commenced at 7.00 p.m.
and closed at 9.40 p.m.

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CHAIR



ENVIRONMENTAL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19th February 2007

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor I Beech (Chair) and Councillors Chalk, Dudley, Hicks, Hunt and Pulsford.

Non-members:

Councillors Anderson, Braley, Field and MacMillan.

Officers:

R Bamford, A Grimmett and J Staniland.

48. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Enderby and Taylor.

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or of the Party Whip.

50. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

The minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 17th of January 2007 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

51. REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY – PHASE TWO REVIEW

The Committee received a report setting out the draft response of the Council to the Housing questions relating to the Regional Spatial Strategy – Phase Two Review.

Members discussed the suggested officer response to the Housing questions (H1 to H18) of the consultation document.

H1 to H18 formed part of the suggested officer response to this consultation period which was recommended for approval at Executive Committee and full Council on 21st & 26th February 2007 respectively. The responses discussed by O&S dealt with the overall

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CHAIR

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housing allocation and distribution across the Region and more specifically, the options for Redditch Borough and related issues.

The point was also raised concerning the public profile of Redditch Borough Council and whether or not it would be possible for the Leader of the Council to present the Council's formal response to this consultation period to the Regional Planning Body on Monday 5th March.

RESOLVED that

the responses to questions H1 to H18 be endorsed subject to one amendment, as set out below:

H1: What overall level of new housing development do you think is appropriate to plan for across the Region?

Options	Level of Demand 2001-2026 (gross)	Yes	No
One	381,000	✓	
Two	491,200		*
Three	575,000		✓

*Redditch Borough Council considers it inappropriate to comment in detail on the overall levels of new housing development across the Region due to limited knowledge regarding any district other than its own. However....

Changed to:

H1: What overall level of new housing development do you think is appropriate to plan for across the Region?

Options	Level of Demand 2001-2026 (gross)	Yes	No
One	381,000		
Two	491,200		
Three	575,000		

Redditch Borough Council considers it inappropriate to comment in detail on the overall levels of new housing development across the

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Region due to limited knowledge regarding any district other than its own.

However...

The meeting commenced at 7.00 p.m.
and closed at 9.00 p.m.

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CHAIR



ENVIRONMENTAL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE

27th February 2007

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor I Beech (Chair) and Councillors Chalk, Hunt and Pulsford.

Officers:

R Bamford and J Prendergrast.

Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer:

S Skinner.

52. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Dudley.

Portfolio Holder Community Safety, Cllr Hartnett also tendered his apologies.

53. QUORUM

There being no quorum at 7.00 p.m. the start of the meeting was delayed until 7.25 p.m.

54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or of the Party Whip.

**55. DISTRICT CENTRES -
DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

Ruth gave preamble to the report

Officers introduced the report and went through salient points of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) They further advised that current plans were at this stage only initial sketches.

Officers responded to Members' queries, providing a range of clarifications and explanations.

It was confirmed that the Council had employed GVA Grimley for their expertise in retail issue GVA Grimley had confirmed that there was a need for retail and that the market was currently buoyant. They had suggested that 4-6 new retail units be constructed and that they also

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now advised that an additional 1,000 to 1,500 sq ft be set aside for a pharmacy.

Parking was discussed. It was confirmed that the Council as landlord could set the level but needed to consider the economic viability of the land use. Currently there was too much, it was in the wrong place and so was underused other than at school pick up times. Some dedicated space would be allocated for the supermarket, but possibly only 10-12 spaces.

There were crime risk concerns regarding canopies and a lack of visibility meaning camera sightlines were blocked. Officers confirmed that nothing was yet fixed in design terms at this point. Members expressed serious concerns re the existing ingrained crime culture in the area.

With regard to passing traffic, the need to secure some passing traffic near shops was recognised as were traffic management solutions so as to secure safety for pedestrians. It was confirmed that the nature of quality and design could bring about reductions of speed.

It was suggested that sections of the bus route be opened up. Various options were considered, such as roundabouts and traffic light controlled junctions. Gordon Anstis House, for example could be better accessed, via some opening up of the bus route and the same could be said of the school entrance. Members favoured a traffic island, if this could be achieved as this would also be more environmentally friendly than traffic lights. Officers agreed to pursue this further.

Concerns were expressed regarding the proposed "apartments" over shops. The Committee was advised that these would be appropriately designed and laid out. Anti-social behaviour limitation would be part of the design brief. Officers advised of potential usefulness of a visit to Castle Vale to see similar works already undertaken there.

Finally, some textual amendments were noted for correction.

It was confirmed that a Period of public consultation would take place from 23rd March to 4th May. Members noted the forthcoming Election Period and its impact on this process and queried what the possibility might be of running the consultation period after 4th May, to avoid the problems of the election period. Officer explained the importance of the timescales to possible receipt of Planning Grant which was still an unknown factor at this stage.

It was agreed that the Chair would present the Committee's views to the Executive Committee.

RESOLVED that

subject to Members' comments as recorded in the preamble above, it be RECOMMENDED that the draft District Centre Development Brief Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix A), its accompanying statement of conformity with the Statement of Community Involvement (Appendix B) and the Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix C) be approved for publication for the purposes of public consultation.

56. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS - SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISALS

Officers introduced the Sustainability Appraisals to each of the SPD's. Each SPD should achieve all of the 22 objectives listed within the Appraisal. Officers drew the Committee's attention to their intentions in producing these Sustainability implications for all the Planning documents going to the Executive Committee on 7th March and Council on 12th March 2007.

RESOLVED that

Members noted the Officer's report.

57. CHURCH HILL CENTRE - DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT - LAND ASSEMBLY ISSUES

Officers provided an illustrated presentation and Members noted some draft recommendations proposed, in consultation with the Chair.

Officers were reported to be pleased with the report to date from GVA Grimley and had confidence in the material they were producing.

GVA Grimleys had suggested:

1. The need for clear development vision
2. The need for clear through route – "High Street", so long as it did not become a "rat run".
3. The need to create a sustainable development
4. The need to be well balanced for local community
5. Economic, social and environmental attributes needed to have equal weight.
6. The integrated sports development with Church Hill Community Centre was a very good idea. Such schemes work if there were high level of community involvement.
7. The need to change present access routes and encourage access to the centre via a new route, including the need to relocate pedestrian crossings to encourage more sensible pedestrian flow.

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8. There needed to be pride in the development and ownership by the local community.
9. It was highly important that there were clear Member champions to promote this with the whole community. The community needed to be 100% behind it and to be heard to say so.

The Best Practice advice for a successful project as advised by the council's consultants, GVA Grimley based on their past experience and research were :-

1. *Clear attention to what is possible within the framework of the local retail market place and available catchment.*
2. *Distinct leadership in the regeneration initiative from the Council.*
3. *Involving local residents and respecting their needs and aspirations.*
4. *Strong, positive vision for local quality of life, with the retail strategy embedded in the local regeneration or neighbourhood strategy*
5. *Organisational innovation, possibly delegated from the local authority to a regeneration company or development consultancy with dedicated Council Officer.*
6. *Use of public money to reinforce the potential achievement in the market place, in this case the RBC land possibly offered at very low value or nil will show the RBC commitment, and will ensure that the extra community facilities can be provided.*
7. *Promotion of the locality as a high quality destination through environmental enhancements.*
8. *It's not just about good housing design but a variety of local recourses which make a vibrant locality.*
9. *A thriving community life needs appropriate recourses, facilities and meeting places.*
10. *Innovative measures to consult with and involve young people in regeneration activities, and a broadening of the social regeneration agenda to reflect the concerns of the young.*
11. *Providing a range of different places for meeting and socialising, opportunities for fostering the "weak links" so essential to local life, e.g. pubs/restaurants, cafes, sitting out areas (incl. seats in public spaces), play areas, meeting places*

for teenagers and sports and social facilities which can both cater for individual groups and mixing between groups.

13. *Improved landscaping throughout the site to rationalise pedestrian and vehicular movement and create a sense of space. The design of the through road with careful surface treatments will contribute to slowing traffic with possibly width restrictions, etc...*
14. *To achieve a high value, quality and sustainable development of new homes for the residents of Church Hill that will provide lifetime use, with some affordable housing (kept to a low number) such as flats (flats to buy or on shared ownership schemes) but these must be mixed in with the remaining private housing. What Church Hill needs in this area is to restore a balance of private/social housing , by providing an influx of new private housing as the area to the west and east is very predominately social housing and short term rental units of accommodation. Private housing is also the key to the viability of the scheme with the other development costs."*

Members had some concerns about how to change the culture and attitudes in the area necessary to make this a success. Issues of social mix were considered and members noted that an increase of home ownership in the area would assist in this. Church Hill Centre is very much focussed on the rented property market, hence the need for greater balance in the market. This could include shared ownership housing, and other forms of property purchase.

There was a need to involve people, especially young people which might require the use innovative consultation methods. The Council needed to establish how it could connect and foster the weak ties with the community which were causing some of the problems. Provision of the necessary facilities would get problem groups away from the shops and into facilities they could identify for themselves. Landscaping amendments would also assist with the improvements to the area.

Members also considered viability issues as a number of new factors had come into the equation including:

- Replacement of YMCA building / Sports Hall (there was considerable interest in this as the Hall was currently not of a regulation size for certain sporting activities). There was land for this purpose adjacent to the Community Centre (illustrated at the meeting).
- New outdoor play and congregating areas could also be located in the vicinity. Detailed sketch plans were considered to indicate the benefits of better designed and controlled areas

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around the Community Centre, with fenced areas and new pedestrian access routes.

- Cost of provision of new “High Street” route meant that there was a lot for developers to take on board before they could turn a profit and this has to be considered in relation to any social housing aspirations.

Members supported the proposal , particularly with regard to the “passive surveillance” of young people within appropriately controlled areas.

Members noted the need to “re-assemble” the Council’s land holdings in the area, some of which had been disposed of as part of the Council’s earlier Focus on the Future reviews. Some owners had already declared an interest in joining the Partnership for the redevelopment. A capital bid for £41,000 was to be submitted to the Council at the end of March.

Officers recommended maintaining a long leasehold arrangement for disposal of the site, so that the Council retain a significant interest and degree of control of the land over a long period. In essence, this was about creating a completely new identity for Church Hill.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **all the Council-owned land within the Church Hill Centre, edged by the thick black line shown on the attached plan, be declared surplus to current District Centre uses;**

RESOLVED that

- 2) **Officers be authorised to negotiate and explore the land assembly options for the Church Hill study area to include other owners, to achieve the most viable redevelopment scheme for the Council;**
- 3) **Officers be authorised, subject to the necessary budgetary approval, to appoint consultants to prepare development briefs and legal documentation and, via the consultants, to investigate fully the possibilities for the scheme which may include competition between prospective development partners;**
- 4) **Officers be authorised to gather views from the dentist, doctors, chemist, public house (Brewery), YMCA, Worcestershire NHS Community & Mental Health Trust, Redditch & Bromsgrove Primary Care Trust and Worcestershire County Council and other current occupiers;**

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- 5) **Officers be authorised to consider the options for replacing the YMCA sports hall building on land adjacent to the Church Hill Community Centre, including the options of enhancing that site with new outdoor play equipment and possibly youth shelter type of equipment; and**
- 6) **Officers prepare a first draft report on the financial viability, given the aspirations drawn from the consultation envisaged above, to include new housing, replacement retail and community facilities.**

58. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The programme of future work was noted by Members, without amendment.

59. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that, under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.

Minute 60 – Church Hill Centre - Draft Supplementary Planning Document – Confidential Land Assembly Issues

SUMMARY OF CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

60. CHURCH HILL CENTRE - DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – CONFIDENTIAL LAND ASSEMBLY ISSUES

Members considered a number of detailed land assembly issues related to the Church Hill Centre Draft Supplementary Planning Document.

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60. CHURCH HILL CENTRE - DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – CONFIDENTIAL LAND ASSEMBLY ISSUES

Further to the previous item on this matter, Officers advised of landholdings in the ownership of the Worcestershire NHS Trust. The PCT believe that the present surgery needed to expand, or new facilities needed to be identified in the area.

The PCT had approached the NHS Trust and terms for the purchase of the land had been agreed. This has led to liaison with the Lead Doctor, who was very sympathetic to the whole idea of Church Hill Redevelopment. However their timescales were different to the Council's.

Sites A and B on the plan displayed at the meeting were looked at as potential sites for a new surgery. The doctor had also spoken to the dentist on 1st floor at YMCA and apparently they were keen to look at a new combined premises comprising a seven consulting room surgery. Site B was marginally bigger, and more suitable.

There was obviously an issue for the Council should it need to commit to any scheme at such an early stage and the possible implications were detailed. They were seeking the Council's early decision, but were keen not to have public disclosure at this stage.

Members believed the Council should continue with its own plans at this stage but seek to accommodate the doctors and dentist's interests as far as possible.

Officers finally advised of the next stages of the potential redevelopment involving competition and consideration of best designs.

The meeting commenced at 7.25 p.m.
and closed at 10.00 p.m.

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CHAIR



ENVIRONMENTAL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19th March 2007

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor I Beech (Chair) and Councillors Chalk, Hunt, Pulsford and Taylor.

Non-members:

Councillors Anderson and Braley.

Also Present:

Mr A Bobowski (Borough Tenants' Panel representative)

Officers:

R Kindon, G Lavery and P Liddington.

Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer:

I Westmore.

61. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Enderby and Hicks.

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or of the Party Whip.

63. BUSINESS CENTRES OVERVIEW

The Committee received a report following a reference from the Leisure, Customer and Business Support Zero-Based Budget Group. The Group had expressed some concern at the way the Business Centres were being used by the Council, with an apparent divergence from the original ideal of having the facilities available specifically for business start-up.

Members were interested to establish how long particular businesses had been tenants of the Centres and the impact of long-term tenancy on potential new businesses. It was reported that some tenants had been present at the Centres in excess of 15 years. By way of explanation, Officers added that there was still a constant turn-over of tenants and the Centres had reached a state of equilibrium with few

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vacancies and short waiting lists. The existence of a number of longer term tenants provided a degree of stability to the operation.

The Committee was informed that the Centres catered for small businesses generally and not just business start-ups. There was a limit put on the numbers of units operations were allowed to expand into before it was deemed that they were too large to remain at the Centre. Another advantage offered by the Centres was the flexibility to allow businesses to expand and contract dependant on economic conditions which often enabled businesses to remain trading.

The Committee was interested to hear what was being done to encourage businesses to either relocate to or remain in Redditch. Officers confirmed that the Council actively monitored the reasons businesses provided for not taking up units at the Business Centres. It was also stated that prospective tenants were proactively targeted with offers of new or alternative business accommodation. The different nature of the businesses catered for at the three Centres was taken into account when allocating businesses to Centres.

In terms of the costs to businesses of locating at the Centres and the service provided, it was noted that the charges levied by the Council were very close to those on the open market. However, the tenancy agreement did provide greater flexibility in that it allowed for two-month termination on either side.

Generally Members were content with the mixture of stability and new starters at the Centres and the flexibility provided by the Centres to tenants, given the constant turn-over and low level of vacancies.

RESOLVED that**the report be noted.****64. CIVIL (DECRIMINALISED) PARKING ENFORCEMENT TASK AND FINISH GROUP - REPORT**

Councillor Pulsford, Chair of the Task and Finish Group introduced the draft report that had been produced. It was noted that the Committee had given the Group the task of investigating the advantage of introducing CPE at no additional cost to the Council and this objective had been achieved.

The Group considered the present situation unsatisfactory. Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) were routinely ignored, residents' parking schemes were largely worthless and there was no prospect of any further measures such as additional double yellow lines whilst enforcement was not being carried out. However, it did appear from the comments of local residents through forums such as the Neighbourhood Groups that inconsiderate and illegal parking was a

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significant issue for people. The Group was also concerned that CPE be introduced before the Council was forced to do so through compulsion from central Government.

Further detail was provided of the background research that had been undertaken in producing the report, including the meetings between the Group and representatives of the County Council and Wychavon District Council. Contact with these authorities had resulted in them agreeing in principle to meet the Council's initial start-up costs and first year's operating deficit. The financial risk in the proposal for the Council lay in Wychavon District Council not being able to recoup its contribution to the start-up costs over a five year period after which the Council would be liable to make up the shortfall, but it was considered unlikely that such an eventuality would occur.

Members discussed the proposal and raised a number of concerns at the recommended course of action.

The lack of off-street car-parking provision within the Borough was highlighted as a weakness when ensuring that the scheme was self-financing, as this was generally a significant revenue source for authorities which had assumed these powers. There was concern that improved parking behaviour by local residents could not therefore result in an increase in off-street income. In a similar vein, it was feared that the need for Wychavon to recoup their contribution would lead to an aggressive enforcement regime across the Borough.

There was some debate over the public reaction to the introduction of CPE with a divergence of opinion as to whether local residents might either welcome or be against these new powers. It was generally accepted that the Council was unaware of the opinions of its residents on this matter and it was therefore suggested that public consultation be undertaken before any further decision was made as to the introduction of CPE.

The Committee was unable to come to a consensus over the form of any recommendation to the Executive Committee. It was agreed that further public consultation should be recommended, with this consultation taking place through local newspapers. The outcome of the consultation was to be fed back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) the findings of the Task and Finish Group be carefully considered; and, subject to the outcome of this consideration;**
- (2) public consultation be undertaken on the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement.**

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65. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The programme of future work was noted by Members. It was suggested that the remaining three District Centres other than Church Hill be discussed further at the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that

the Work Programme be noted.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 p.m.
and closed at 9.10 p.m.

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CHAIR



LEISURE, TOURISM & ECONOMY

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE

24th January 2007

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor J Cookson (Chair) and Councillors Hunt, MacMillan, Smith and Smithers.

Non-Member:

Councillor Anderson

Officers:

R Cooke, R Egan and D Wheeler.

Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer:

I Westmore.

34. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Thomas.

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

36. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Leisure, Tourism and Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 28th of November 2006 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

37. REDDICARD REVIEW

Officers had been requested to respond to proposals made by Members at the previous meeting of the Committee, and these responses were set out in detail within the report.

The proposals concentrated on three major themes, these being hard to reach groups, marketing Reddicard and partnership working.

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The first proposal was to simplify the pricing structure for Pitcheroak Golf Course based upon people's ability to pay. Officers had provided less headings under which users would be charged in order to rationalise the pricing system. Prices were rising relatively moderately but the Council was still looking to achieve acceptable income levels. The user group at the course and the golf club were aware of the proposed prices and were pleased with the plan to simplify the structure.

Plans had been developed to increase participation for hard to reach groups. It was proposed to work in partnership with the relevant groups to meet the needs of these users but also utilise the quieter times at the leisure centres during off-peak times. One implication of the proposal was the requirement for additional resources in terms of Officer time to implement this development.

It was suggested that income derived from Reddicard could be directed towards the marketing of the scheme. Officers did not consider it sustainable to put an additional price on Reddicard and this alternative proposal would require a diversion from normal Council policy of returning revenue from the scheme to the general fund.

The objectives of Reddicard had been revisited by Officers as it was recognised that the aims and objectives of the scheme had been lost sight of to an extent. SMART criteria had been applied to the original aims and objectives and those that were no longer fit for purpose and amendments had been suggested where it was considered necessary.

Members considered that a strategic review of the concessionary element of the Reddicard scheme should be undertaken every two years as was suggested within the report; this did not preclude a more regular review of the Reddicard scheme as a delivery mechanism.

The additional resources that had been identified within the report for marketing were an acknowledgement that current levels of promotion in the leisure team were lower than were found in the majority of similar authorities. Members had seen that the Borough of Telford and Wrekin had invested to gain and it was proposed that a similar investment might be made in Redditch. Sure Start had been approached to part fund the additional post but it was hoped that a marketing post could be made self-financing after year one in any event. Members suggested that small price increases for service users could be maintained as an alternative should a revenue bid be unsuccessful.

A number of other suggestions were made as to how the proposals could be refined. These included the rounding up of certain fees and charges in order to increase charges by 10 pence rather than 5 pence increments. Members wished to forward the Reddicard proposals to the forthcoming meeting of the Executive Committee.

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RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the proposed revisions to the fees and charges for 2007/08, as listed in (i), be approved;**
- 2) **an additional post of Marketing Officer (approximately Scale 6) and appropriate operational budget be approved;**
- 3) **should an additional post of Marketing Officer not be approved through the Revenue budget, approval be given for the ring-fencing of particular additional income-streams to fund the proposed marketing scheme as noted in (vii)(i);**
- 4) **the necessary amendments be made to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers to allow for the implementation of short term and one-off promotions by the managers of sports and leisure facilities and senior Officers as noted in (iv);**
- 5) **the strategies for marketing and promoting the Reddicard as set out in (vi) be endorsed; and**
- 6) **the application of SMART criteria to the original aims and objectives of the Reddicard and the amendment and deletion of those that do not meet the standard be endorsed.**

38. WEST MIDLANDS ECONOMIC STRATEGY – CONSULTATION ON POLICY OPTIONS

Officers explained that, in order for the proposed response to carry more weight at a regional level, it was intended to incorporate the Redditch response within a county response to be co-ordinated by the Worcestershire Partnership.

A brief overview was given of the content of the proposed response. A key consideration was ensuring that the response was in line with that being prepared for the consultation on the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Members had a number of concerns over economic development within the Borough and these in part reflected the findings of the Committee's earlier report into Jobs, Employment and the Economy. The diminution in the size of the Economic Development Unit of the Council was regarded as a retrograde step and business support to local businesses had, as a consequence, not been as comprehensive as was considered desirable. There was perceived to be a weakness in the opportunities available for existing businesses to promote themselves and share expertise and good practice. The position of the Borough on the fringes of the West Midlands Technology Belt was a further area of concern. Members were strongly of the opinion that for

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existing industries within Redditch to flourish and for aspirations for diversification to be met, the town needed to be placed within the belt. It was, however, recognised that the Borough was limited in the amount of land that could be designated for high-technology use and that further high-technology employment would not necessarily assist in employing local people.

The Committee had some concerns also over the incorporation of the Redditch response to the consultation within a wider response from Worcestershire. Particularly given that the Borough was very different in nature from the remainder of the County, it was proposed that Redditch prepare its own appendix to be submitted alongside the Worcestershire Partnership response as was allowed under the consultation guidelines. Officers agreed that this would, at the least, be a useful exercise in determining exactly what the Borough required or wanted. It was agreed that the Executive Committee should be recommended to allow a group of Overview and Scrutiny Members to prepare such a Redditch appendix.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **the Council respond to the consultation process, in conjunction with the Worcestershire Partnership;**
- 2) **the key issues as detailed in Section 5 of the report be included in the Council's response to consultation;**
- 3) **the Council make an individual submission, to be submitted as an appendix to the response from the Worcestershire Partnership; and**
- 4) **a Task and Finish Group comprising Councillors Cookson, Hunt and MacMillan produce, in conjunction with Officers, the draft individual submission from the Council, to be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval at its meeting on 21st February 2007.**

39. TOWN CENTRE VITALITY

The Committee discussed the decision that had been made at an earlier meeting that town centre vitality be adopted as a topic for review by the Committee. Members considered this again in the terms set out in the overview and scrutiny training session earlier in January. It was suggested that a number of bold objectives could be set out in order to raise the bar and provide an aspirational target. For example, the Committee could look at ways to increase footfall in the town centre by 15%, increase time spent in the town centre by visitors by 25% and increase the number of tourists by 30%, and so on.

In the immediate term, it was recognised that this piece of work was unlikely to be progressed.

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24th January 2007

40. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED that

The programme of future work be noted.

The meeting commenced at 7.05 p.m.
and closed at 9.07 p.m.

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CHAIR



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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE

13th March 2007

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor D Thomas (Chair) and Councillors Cookson, Hunt, MacMillan and Smith.

Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer:

I Westmore.

41. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

43. MINUTES

It was reported that the minutes of the meeting held on the 24th of January 2007 were not available for submission to the present meeting.

44. COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Members discussed the most appropriate means by which the annual report of the Committee to Council should be prepared.

It was agreed that the report be prepared by Officers with input from Members. The Committee was keen to ensure that there should be mention made of the recommendations made to the Executive and the subsequent response of the Executive. It was noted that, although reports from Overview and Scrutiny were generally well-received the subsequent outcomes were disappointing. Members expressed their view that the inter-relationship between Overview and Scrutiny and the Executive was deficient and that this was leading to a lack of added value from both functions.

Members considered that the Committee had carried out several worthwhile pieces of work during 2006/07. However, it was noted that the major topics covered had been derived from Officers and it was suggested that this was contrary to the notion of the process being Member-led.

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CHAIR

LEISURE, TOURISM & ECONOMYO V E R V I E W & S C R U T I N Y
C O M M I T T E E13th March 2007

RESOLVED that

the form of its proposed contribution to an annual report to Council from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees be approved.

45. ABBEY STADIUM REDEVELOPMENT – PROPOSAL TO SHADOW THE WORK OF THE ADVISORY PANEL

It was noted at the outset that the Committee had struggled to maintain the continuing work on development of proposals for the Abbey Stadium within the scrutiny sphere. This would have followed on from the work that commenced in late 2006. Given that this case had not been supported at Council and an Advisory Panel had been established, it had subsequently been suggested by the Chair that the work of the Panel be shadowed by Overview and Scrutiny. This idea was put forward for discussion.

Members commented that matters had progressed in due course and specific mention was made of the debate that had taken place at a meeting of Council the previous evening at which the Chair of the Advisory Panel had explicitly stated that other Members were welcome to attend the forthcoming meetings of the Panel. The Committee accepted this as a compromise and asked that the Chair of the Panel be informed of their intention to attend the next meeting.

The Committee briefly discussed the merits of the present proposals. It was suggested by some Members that the recent scheme that had been turned down at a planning inquiry had been overly ambitious and that they were striving to achieve a development that was achievable and did not have a significant negative impact on the local population.

RESOLVED that

the Chair of the Abbey Stadium Advisory Panel be advised of the intention of Members of the Committee to attend the forthcoming meeting of the Panel in accordance with the invitation made at Council on 12th March 2007.

39. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the programme of future work. Officers informed the Committee of the desirability of establishing a small group of Members to review the charges for fishing at Arrow Valley Lake in response to a recommendation from the Executive Committee.

RESOLVED that

LEISURE, TOURISM & ECONOMY

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COMMITTEE

13th March 2007

- 1) **a group comprising Councillors Cookson, Hunt and Smith be established to consider the charges for fishing at Arrow Valley Lake; and**
- 2) **the programme of future work be noted.**

The meeting commenced at 7.05 p.m.
and closed at 7.55 p.m.

.....
CHAIR



SOCIAL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

30th January 2007

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor M Shurmer (Chair) and Councillors Boyd-Carpenter, Brunner, Cartwright, Field, Hill and Passingham.

Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer:

I Westmore.

17. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Thomas.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

19. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Social Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 13th of September 2006 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

20. FEEDBACK FROM TASK AND FINISH GROUPS REPORTING TO THIS COMMITTEE - APPEALS

It was noted that there had been no further meetings of the Appeals Task and Finish Group since early December, in part due to a lack of dedicated Overview and Scrutiny Support.

Members were informed that a final meeting of the Group at which the outcomes of the review were to be considered was scheduled to take place on Monday, 5th February, with a final report being submitted to the Executive Committee at the end of March.

21. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – HELP AVAILABLE IN REDDITCH

The Chair introduced a short information report and set out the reasons for the provision for victims of domestic violence being included on the present agenda. It was stated that there were concerns following the loss of the refuge house within the town centre

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and the prevailing wisdom that women victims be supported within their own homes. Members wished to establish the exact processes now in place, present levels of provision and whether existing practises were the most appropriate.

The present system, whereby the perpetrator was removed from the home and the victim encouraged to stay with appropriate support, found some support. The advantage of this system was that it allowed the victim to maintain their normal routine to a great extent in relative safety and with a degree of discretion. It was noted that multi-agency protection panels were now routinely used in this context.

There was some disquiet that the two approaches to meeting the needs of victims of domestic violence could not both be accommodated and particularly that much of the current agenda was being driven by cost considerations. It was recognised that refuges were a short-term solution but some Members felt that they still had an important part to play.

Members did not consider that they were adequately informed as to the arrangements currently available to victims of domestic violence and requested that a report be prepared for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that

a group comprising Councillors Boyd-Carpenter, Brunner, Field and Passingham be established to consider historical and current provision of services to victims of domestic violence, to report back to the next meeting of the Committee.

22. USE OF DETACHED YOUTH WORKERS IN REDDITCH

The Committee received a short information report detailing the present system of detached youth work within the Borough as provided by the County Council.

There was some discussion as to what the major issues were with youth provision and how the Committee and Council could realistically expect to influence the debate. It was suggested that the present means of youth provision was going in the right direction in becoming less attached to fixed premises but there was still the impression that youth workers were trying to organise children to a greater extent than was desired by service users.

A wider issue was considered to be the overall lack of provision within the Borough, with the detached youth work teams being under-resourced to make a significant difference to levels of anti-social behaviour.

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The Committee agreed that Members should investigate the role of detached youth workers, present provision within the Borough and pull together an evidence-based case for what was required within Redditch. It was proposed that this be done initially through a meeting with Officers of the County Council.

RESOLVED that

a Group, open to all Members of the Committee, be established to consider current detached youth provision and assess present requirements within the Borough, to report back to the next meeting of the Committee.

23. PASSENGER TRANSPORT WITHIN THE BOROUGH

The discussion of passenger transport provision had been prompted by the recent decision to curtail evening bus services within the town and, in particular, by the bus companies running the 57 and 58 services in particular. This decision was felt to be particularly regrettable given that the new cinema was shortly to open within the Town Centre and Members were concerned that young people would be especially disadvantaged.

The reports of violence against bus drivers on this route were taken seriously by Members but there was the underlying feeling that such reports were on occasions being used as a pretext for withdrawing services that were not making money. It was, however, noted that this particular evening route attracted subsidies from the County Council.

As with the two previous items, there was the recognition that the County Council was a key partner and had the greatest influence over service provision, prompting some Members to question the influence that the Committee could have on this subject. However, Members agreed that a Group could investigate the matter prior to the next meeting.

RESOLVED that

a Group, comprising Councillors Boyd-Carpenter, Brunner, Cartwright, Field, Passingham and Shurmer, be established to consider evening passenger transport provision within the Borough, to report back to the next meeting of the Committee.

24. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the programme of future work. It was suggested that the Committee could usefully consider how young people access the Arts within Redditch, particularly given that this was a service over which the Council had considerable control and influence. It was proposed that the present systems should be reviewed, along with access to funding, the barriers in place that

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prevented young people from gaining access and assistance available through the Council and its partners.

RESOLVED that

subject to the addition detailed above, the Committee's Work Programme be approved

The meeting commenced at 7.00 p.m.
and closed at 8.30 p.m.

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CHAIR



SOCIAL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21st March 2007

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor M Shurmer (Chair) and Councillors Boyd-Carpenter, Field, Hill and Passingham.

Officer:

M Bough.

Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer:

I Westmore.

25. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Brunner and Thomas.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

27. FEEDBACK FROM TASK AND FINISH GROUPS REPORTING TO THIS COMMITTEE - APPEALS

The Committee received the draft final report from the Appeals Task and Finish Group which was introduced by Councillor Field, a Member of the Group.

Councillor Field explained the reasoning behind the recommendation contained within the draft report which was, in effect, to maintain the status quo and review the situation at the end of the calendar year. The basis of the recommendation was the contention that it was appropriate to retain Member involvement in the process but that the involvement of Members should not become too burdensome and the handling of appeals and possible appeals should not be delayed unduly.

The potential numbers of homelessness appeals to be considered by Members should the Council move to a single stage appeals process was highlighted to the Committee as an example of why the present recommendation had been made. Officers noted that the other viable

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alternative would be to move to a single stage but without Member involvement.

The second recommendation, that all Members of the Council receive training in the attendance of quasi-judicial meetings, was broadly welcomed although there was no accurate conception of the extent to which such training had been provided to the present Membership.

There was some discussion as to the precise contents of the final report to be submitted to the Executive Committee. It was agreed that the more comprehensive alternative should be adopted. Officers added that there were some final amendments to be made to the report prior to submission to the Executive Committee

RESOLVED that

The draft report of the Appeals Task and Finish Group be submitted to the Executive Committee for consideration, subject to final additions and amendments being made by Officers.

28. COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered a report that set out a proposed method of producing the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Members were content with the course of action proposed and for Officers to draft a report on their behalf.

RESOLVED that

the overall structure and the form of its proposed contribution to an annual report to Council from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees be approved.

29. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the programme of future work. Officers apologised for their inability to arrange the meetings to discuss Domestic Violence, Detached Youth Provision and evening provision of Passenger Transport following the last meeting of the Committee. In explanation, Members were informed that the present lack of dedicated Overview and Scrutiny staff was being addressed.

Members engaged in a short discussion of the proposals that were to be considered by the Council regarding the move to a single commissioning Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the implications of that.

The Committee discussed other possible topics for consideration, including the provision of sheltered accommodation for the BME community and services for looked after children. The latter was particularly singled out as deserving of review as Redditch had the

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highest number of looked after children in the County and the Committee therefore agreed that this item be added to the programme of future work.

RESOLVED that

subject to the addition detailed above, the Committee's Work Programme be approved

The meeting commenced at 7.00 p.m.
and closed at 8.12 p.m.

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CHAIR

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures Document

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Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

Aims and objectives of Overview and Scrutiny

The Local Government Act 2000 required every Council to set up new structures to replace the old Committee system. Redditch Borough Council established a “Cabinet with Leader” system to manage the Council’s business.

The Cabinet, which at Redditch Borough Council is called the Executive Committee, is directly accountable for the day to day management of services provided by the Council (within the overall policy and budgetary framework agreed by full Council). In addition, the Council has appointed one Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny function is designed to:

- consider, and where necessary, question decisions made by the Executive Committee to promote open and transparent decision making and democratic accountability;
- monitor the effectiveness of policy and budget making processes;
- monitor the way the Council’s services are provided and their impact on communities;
- make recommendations on whether new policies or changes to existing policies are needed to improve performance. These can be referred to the Executive committee or to full council;
- consider issues of public concern;
- scrutinise the way that the Council and other organisations do their work;
- ensure decisions and policies are right for Redditch Borough; and
- research and provide innovative thinking on particular issues.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

The value of Overview and Scrutiny At the heart of Overview and Scrutiny is the principle that it should be Member-led. Effective Overview and Scrutiny supports community leadership where it:

- complements strategy and policy development;
- helps tackle cross-cutting issues;
- enables investigation below the surface of policies and strategies;
- encourages public involvement in the policy process;
- stimulates a more reflective, evaluative and evidence-based culture within the Council;
- provides useful oversight and “challenges” Best Value and Service Planning processes;
- remains aware of national developments in Best Value and scrutiny;
- supports performance management and continuous improvement;
- maintains awareness of existing council policies and community priorities; and
- develops well informed and highly skilled Members and Officers;

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

The remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Steering Committee

Redditch Borough Council has one Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Eight non-executive members can vote on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, mirroring the number of councillors on the Executive Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is designed to act as a commissioning body to:

- manage the overview and scrutiny work programme;
- commission scrutiny work from task and finish groups, setting the terms of reference for each review, time managing completion of each project, and finalising report recommendations;
- consider requests from ward councillors to scrutinise issues subject to community calls for action;
- receive annual reports from Executive Committee members about the service they champion;
- liaise with members of the Executive Committee, submitting final overview and scrutiny reports and co-ordinating overview and scrutiny's response to the Executive Committee's Forward Plan;
- manage overview and scrutiny finances and resources;
- receive quarterly budget and performance reports; and
- initiate call-in proceedings in response to key decisions made by the Executive Committee*.

*The call-in procedure is detailed in Appendix 1.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

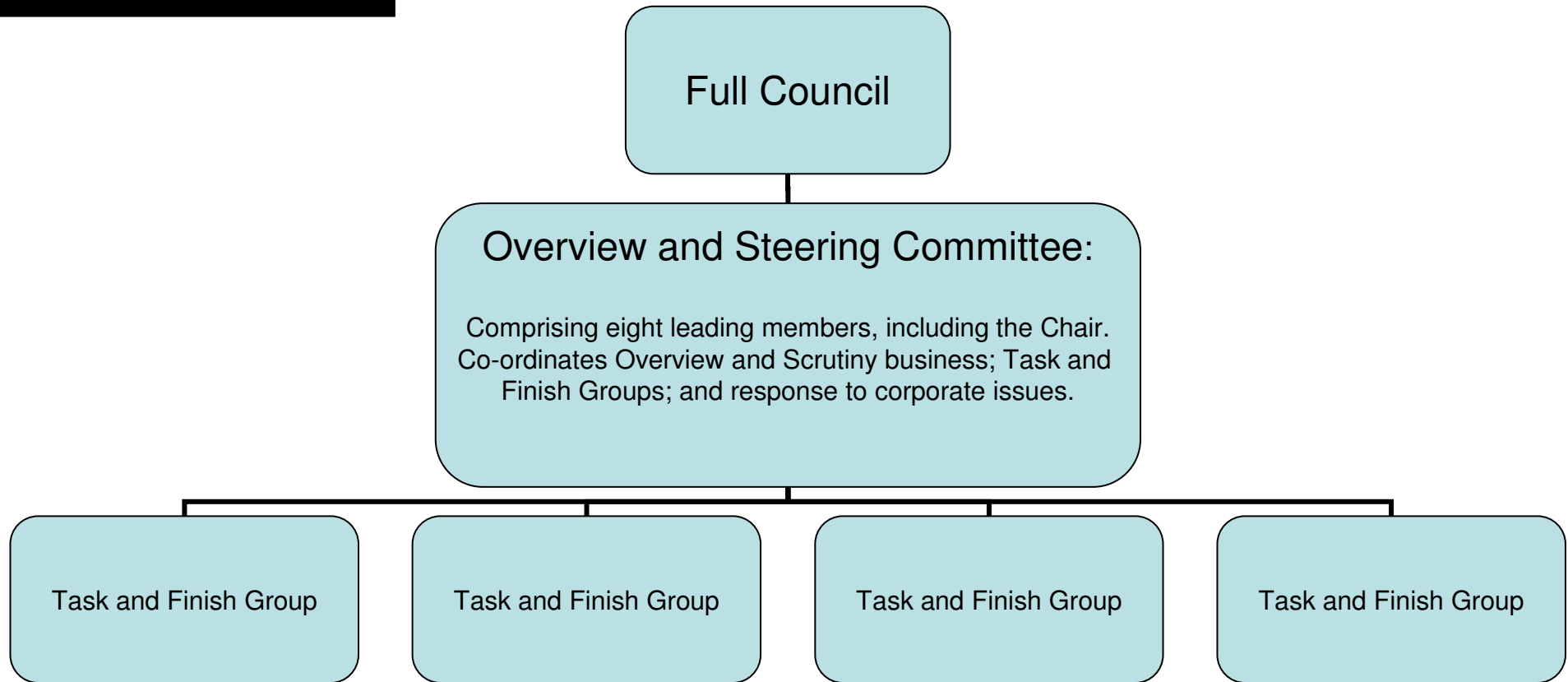
The Principles of Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups

At Redditch Borough Council Task and Finish groups are commissioned by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to undertake short, focused reviews.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will undertake the initial scoping exercise to guide the work of Task and Finish Group reviews. The selection of subjects for Task and Finish Group work should take the following considerations into account:

- the contents of the overview and scrutiny work programme and other existing overview and scrutiny commitments;
- requests for review that have been referred to overview and scrutiny by the Executive Committee and/or full Council.
- the subjects of existing task and finish groups;
- the likelihood that valuable outcomes will be produced by the review;
- who is likely to be affected by a review;
- how long the review is expected to take;
- what resources are available;
- the availability of expert witnesses and independent sources; and
- whether it would be more appropriate for another body to consider the issue.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures



Overview and Scrutiny Structure at Redditch Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

Who can be a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee?

Eight non-executive councillors can sit as voting members on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. All councillors, except members of the Executive Committee, are eligible to become voting members on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These eight members, including the Chair, are selected by full Council at the annual meeting.

Who can be a member of a Task and Finish group?

All non-executive members can sit as members of Task and Finish Groups. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will appoint members to sit on Task and Finish Groups. All expressions of interest made by any non-executive members to participate on particular Task and Finish group reviews will be appropriately considered by the Steering Committee. In addition, all task and finish groups will be chaired by a member of the Steering Committee. Task and Finish groups are entitled to appoint a number of people as non-voting co-optees.

No Member may be involved in scrutinising a decision in which he/she has been directly involved.

Frequency of Overview and Scrutiny meetings

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will meet approximately every three weeks. Meetings will be scheduled to take place a week after Executive Committee meetings to enable Overview and Scrutiny Committee members to consider the Executive Committee's activities and, where necessary, the need to call-in key decisions. Additional meetings will be called as and when appropriate.

Task and Finish Groups meet on a more ad hoc basis. Task and Finish Group members will determine these arrangements, although sufficient meetings will need to be arranged to ensure that the group's review is completed according to schedule.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

Work programmes

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee manages the Overview and Scrutiny work programme. Additional items may be added by the full Council, Executive or any other Committee if:

- a particular activity, policy or plan requires investigation;
- priorities change;
- an urgent matter needs to be included at short notice; or if
- A recent decision taken by the Executive Committee is to be investigated or has been called-in.

How to add an item to a Committee work programme

Any member of the council is entitled to request that the Proper Officer (Borough Director) includes an item on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's agenda. If the item is not suggested for inclusion by at least seven working days in advance of the meeting it will be addressed at the following Committee meeting.

The Forward Plan

All members of the Council receive a copy of the Forward Plan. The Forward Plan lists all the Key Decisions which it is anticipated the Executive Committee will take in the forthcoming four months. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may request to be given the opportunity to consider and provide input on a subject before it is considered by the Executive Committee.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

Items which the Council and Executive Committee request to be investigated

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall also respond, as soon as its work programme permits, to requests from the Council and the Executive Committee to investigate particular issues. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall report its findings and any recommendations back to the Executive Committee and/or Council.

Policy review and development

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's role in the development of the Council's budget and policy framework is set out in detail in the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules within the Council's Constitution. A copy of the Council's Constitution may be obtained from the Council's Monitoring Officer. It is also available on the Council's website, www.redditchbc.gov.uk

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, within its terms of reference, may make proposals to the Executive Committee on other matters not forming part of the Council's policy and budget framework. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may also hold enquiries and commission Task and Finish Groups to investigate the available options for future direction in policy development.

The scoping process

While each review or scrutiny exercise may be approached in a different way, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will undertake what is known as the "scoping process" on behalf of any Task and Finish Group. A number of questions should be considered during the scoping process*. The scoping process identifies what it is the Task and Finish Group will look at, how it will look at that issue, who can assist it in its investigation and how it should come to a conclusion on what recommendations, if any, it may wish to make. The scoping process will be used to guide the scrutiny exercise as it progresses.

*Details of these questions and the criteria for rejecting an item can be found in Appendix 2.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

Collecting evidence As the complexities of a scrutiny review may not be envisaged at the outset, it is recommended that an initial period of research informs a review.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may decide to delegate a review to a Task and Finish Group, which is empowered to look at a subject in detail before reporting back to the main Committee. Task and Finish Group members will address a number of considerations before beginning their task to ensure that the scrutiny work is appropriately focused on the selected issue. However, if the subject matter under scrutiny affects an area beyond the boundaries of the Borough, then the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may decide to set up a joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an adjoining Council or they may wish to invite a representative of that authority to be co-opted on to the Committee whilst the scrutiny exercise is being carried out.

Evidence may be gathered from a wide variety of people. Such requests for evidence should allow reasonable time for a full and informed response to be made. However, before any decision is made to use such written evidence, consideration should be given as to whether other ways of collecting evidence may be preferable or may enhance the evidence already received.

A Task and Finish Group may investigate whether any other Councils around the Country have carried out a similar scrutiny exercise. This can be a useful exercise as members can consider the conclusions of any work undertaken by other authorities and whether any external councils' recommendations would be transferable to the Redditch Borough area.

* These considerations are listed in Appendix 3.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

Oral evidence is often a useful way to gather evidence as it enables questions to be asked and clarification to be sought. Overview and Scrutiny Committees have the power to require Executive Committee members, Officers, and representatives of organisations who provide local public services to appear before them. In addition, the Committees can invite any other people to appear who may be able to help them with their enquiries, such as trained professionals or neighbourhood representatives. However, external witnesses who are not involved in providing local services, cannot be compelled to attend .

It is helpful to combine such oral evidence with a written brief that Task and Finish Group members can study in advance of a meeting. This assists Members in identifying the questions they wish to ask and makes for a more productive meeting.

If Task and Finish Group members wish to obtain information about specific aspects of the issue they are reviewing it can be beneficial to talk to the people who are doing a relevant job or are recipients of a service. Committee members may, therefore, wish to undertake site visits in order to develop first hand knowledge of the subject. The Committee may also wish to carry out a public consultation exercise involving public meetings. Public consultations are useful for overview and scrutiny because they create a forum for receiving the views of a large number of people in a relatively short space of time.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Co-optees

A number of co-optees may attend Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Task and Finish Group meetings when relevant items are under review. The co-optees at Redditch include three Trade Union representatives, two from UNISON and one from UCATT and two tenant's panel representatives.

Members and Officers giving evidence

As well as reviewing documentation, in fulfilling the scrutiny role, the Task and Finish Group may require any Officer with due regard to their position/seniority in the Authority to attend before it, either in a supporting role or to give evidence as necessary for the Group's review. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may also require any member of the Executive Committee to attend a Task and Finish Group meeting. It is the duty of those persons to attend if so required.

Where any Member or Officer is required to attend a Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Task and Finish Group meeting, the Member or Officer will be informed in writing giving at least 5 working days notice of the meeting at which he/she is required to attend. The letter will state the nature of the item on which s/he is required to give account and whether any papers will need to be produced for the Committee or Task and Finish Group.

Where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Task and Finish Group requires an Officer or Member to produce a report that Member or Officer will be given sufficient notice to allow for preparation of the documentation.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

Evidence provided by others All non-executive members have the right to attend Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings and to speak at the invitation of the Chair. Only members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can vote at Committee meetings.

Executive members who wish to contribute at a Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting will need to consult with the Chair, or Vice-Chair, for permission to arrange formal attendance. The appropriate officer will need to be informed of the Executive member's attendance at the committee meeting at least two days before the meeting for administrative purposes. These arrangements do not apply to the Leader of the Cabinet who is able to attend and to contribute to Overview and Scrutiny meetings without requesting the Chair or Vice-Chair's consent.

Any Executive member who is permitted to formally attend an Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting is able to speak during the proceedings but is not able to vote. All other Executive members may attend Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings but are not able to contribute to proceedings and must sit in the public gallery.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Task and Finish Groups may invite other people to make presentations, to discuss issues of local concern and/or to answer questions. They may, for example, wish to hear from residents, stakeholders and Councillors or Officers from other parts of the public sector and can invite such people to attend.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

Procedure at Overview and Scrutiny meetings

When non-executive members know what topic is going to be the subject of a scrutiny exercise, they may wish to conduct their own research into the matter. This might include preparing questions to ask witnesses who have been invited to attend Overview and Scrutiny meetings. It is also possible that a non-executive member may wish to conduct independent research to enable him/her to persuade the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that a particular topic should be included on the work programme.

Where either the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a Task and Finish Group conducts investigations and invites witnesses to attend to give evidence the investigations will be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

- the investigation will be conducted fairly, with all members of the Committee/Group given an opportunity to ask questions of the attendees, and to contribute to the discussion;
- any witnesses, officers or members assisting an Overview and Scrutiny meeting by giving evidence is to be treated with respect and courtesy; and
- the conduct of any investigation should aim to be as efficient as possible.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

Procedure for Expert Witness attendance at Overview and Scrutiny meetings

The procedure at any meeting where Expert Witnesses are asked to address an Overview and Scrutiny meeting will progress as follows:

- the Chair will introduce each witness to any persons present at the meeting;
- the Expert Witness will be asked to make a short presentation and/or be asked a series of set questions that the witness has received in advance;
- Councillors may ask Expert Witnesses to expand on any answers they have made or ask them further questions based on their answers and a general discussion may ensue;
- if more than one Expert Witness is present, witnesses may be asked to comment on each other's answers;
- the Chair will summarise the main findings of the meeting;
- at the end of the meeting there shall be a full debrief; and
- after the meeting, Expert Witnesses shall be given a copy of the minutes to approve, a copy of the report; and will be kept updated of the outcomes of the review.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

After the investigation: Task and Finish Groups

Once all the evidence has been collected, a Task and Finish Group should agree a set of recommendations to be included in a draft report and should identify who will draft the final report on its behalf. If a Task and Finish Group cannot agree on a single final report then not more than one draft minority report may be prepared for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee alongside the draft majority report.

The Task and Finish Group should then forward its draft report(s) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider any recommendations and may choose to favour either the majority report or the minority report or to confirm both versions. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will agree a final report based on this assessment.

Consideration of Overview and Scrutiny reports by the Executive Committee

Once finalised the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will determine whether to forward a copy of the report to the Executive Committee, full Council or the relevant external organisation for consideration.

The Executive Committee will then have the opportunity to consider the Overview and Scrutiny Committee report at its subsequent two meetings. After these two meetings have occurred the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may request the attendance of a representative of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee's representative could be asked to explain the Committee's response to the report and whether any of the recommendations will be implemented. If the recommendations are not to be implemented the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may request an explanation from the Executive Committee's representative. If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is not satisfied with the Executive Committee's response they may refer the issue to full Council for consideration.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

Monitoring the implementation of Overview and Scrutiny recommendations

Monitoring is an important part of the Overview and Scrutiny process. Monitoring the implementation of Overview and Scrutiny recommendations can highlight the constructive contributions generated by the process. Alternatively, monitoring can reveal consequences of implementation that have had a detrimental impact on service quality or may reveal a need to further address a subject through additional scrutiny work.

When submitting a final report to the Executive Committee the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may attach a timetable, with specific targets, for monitoring the implementation of recommendations. The dates of this timetable will be left to the discretion of Overview and Scrutiny members and support officers as some activities might take longer to have a measurable impact on services than others.

During monitoring proceedings the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can request that a member of the Executive Committee attend the session to discuss any progress in implementing recommendations and the perceived impact on the quality of relevant services. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may also invite stakeholder representatives and any relevant Expert witnesses who participated in the original scrutiny work to attend the monitoring proceedings. These external representatives could be asked to comment on their experience of the impact of the scrutiny exercise upon relevant services.

Every year an annual report of Overview and Scrutiny work is issued to all members. The annual report will address the outcomes of the monitoring process.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

Reviewing the Overview and Scrutiny process – continuing improvement: The Overview and Scrutiny Discussion Forum

The Overview and Scrutiny Discussion Forum is intended to be an informal arrangement providing non-executive members with an opportunity to discuss how to improve Overview and Scrutiny arrangements at Redditch Borough Council. The Forum will meet biannually, although additional meetings could be initiated by the Chair if considered necessary.

The Chair, and/or Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and at least one of the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers will be expected to attend meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Discussion Forum. In addition, members representing Task and Finish Groups that have recently or are currently addressing local concerns may wish to attend to contribute to the discussions.

The Discussion Forum will contribute to the continuous review and improvement of Overview and Scrutiny at Redditch Borough Council. Members and Officers attending the Forum are expected to discuss recent experiences of best (and worst!) practice in Overview and Scrutiny work. Members and Officers could also use the Forum as an opportunity to highlight exemplary practices encountered in other authorities. At the end of the forum all suggested improvements will be recorded by the appropriate officer.

The Chair, or Vice-Chair, may decide to take further action by addressing any concerns raised in the discussion forum at a formal Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. Alternatively, the Chair, or Vice-Chair, may recommend that any significant issues raised are addressed in a Task and Finish Group review.

Following any review work the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may choose to make recommendations either via the Executive Committee or, directly, to full council (where improvements cannot be adopted without reference to the council).

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

Community Calls for Action (CCAs/CCfAs)

Community Calls for Action (CCAs) were originally introduced in the Police and Justice Act 2006. The CCA is intended to provide members of the public with an opportunity to trigger action on a community crime and disorder issue that they feel has not yet been adequately addressed. As part of this legislation Councillors were provided with the authority to question representatives of partner organisations on the local Crime Disorder and Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and to consult with other interested parties over resolving the issue.

The remit of this activity was extended further in October 2006 in 'Strong and Prosperous Communities – The Local Government White Paper'. This white paper produced a vision of CCAs that focused on providing ward Councillors with the power to address issues of local concern that might not be a crime and disorder matter.

As a consequence there are two forms of Community Call for Action. The CCA addresses crime and disorder issues and is initiated by constituents. The CCfA addresses other community issues and only becomes a Community Call for Action when a Councillor chooses to respond to it as such. The CCA/CCfA will not become an obligatory part of local government until spring 2008. However, CCAs/CCfAs could be addressed by Councillors and Overview and Scrutiny under existing arrangements.

CCAs and CCfAs were introduced primarily as a ward councillor responsibility. Councillors are expected to respond to constituents' CCfAs, although they may use their discretion to determine whether to pursue a complaint as a CCfA.* It is intended that most CCAs/CCfAs should be resolved by the Councillor alone or, where relevant, in consultation with the CDRP and other partner organisations. If these negotiations failed to resolve the issue a CCfA must be referred to the Executive Committee. As such, Overview and Scrutiny will only be involved in a CCA/CCfA as a last resort.

* See Appendix 3 for considerations determining whether a complaint should be treated as a CCA/CCfA.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

The role of Overview and Scrutiny in CCAs/CCfAs

If the Executive Committee chooses to refer a CCfA to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the procedure will progress as follows:

- the Steering Committee will consider whether to address the CCfA in more detail. To assist the committee in making a decision about the CCfA the ward councillor will be expected to make a presentation explaining their constituent's concerns;
- if a decision is taken to address the CCfA, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may choose to set up a Task and Finish Group to scrutinise the issue. Alternatively, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will schedule a meeting date to look at the issue in more detail;
- Overview and Scrutiny may then request representatives of partner bodies who have already been involved in the process as Expert witnesses. These witnesses are obliged to attend;
- Overview and Scrutiny can also request copies of any briefing papers already prepared by partner organisations on the issue;
- the Overview and Scrutiny members will then produce a report with a list of recommendations on the issue. This report can be forwarded to the Executive or to full council for consideration; and
- a copy of the report will be made available to the relevant ward councillor. S/he will be expected to relay the report's recommendations back to his/her constituents.

Appendix 1

The Call-in Process

Overview and Scrutiny members have the power to call-in a decision that has been made by the Executive Committee and refer it back for further consideration.

When the Executive Committee makes a decision, it is published in a Decision Notice as soon as possible after the meeting, each decision then comes into effect after seven working days of the publication date unless it is called-in.

Within the seven day period, the Committee or any three Members of the Council may call-in the decision if they have reason to suspect that any of the principles of decision making as laid out in Article 13 of the Constitution has been contravened; that is, proportionality; due consultation; respect for human rights; openness; clarity of aims and outcomes; giving reasons for the decision and explaining what other options were considered.

Within five days of the call-in, a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall be held to review the decision. If it is decided that the decision should be referred back to the decision maker, it must be addressed at the next appropriate meeting on the Executive Committee.

Call-in may also challenge the exercise of authority of the Executive Committee, in terms of its acting within the Council's Policy and Budget Framework.

Although not technically a "call-in", which relates to decisions taken by the Executive Committee (i.e. RESOLVED items), Overview and Scrutiny may require to scrutinise any proposals for policy change being submitted to the Council.

Appendix 2

Scrutiny Scoping checklist

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

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

Criteria to reject items for review

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

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

Appendix 3

Task and Finish Group checklist

Task and Finish Group members should address the following to ensure that their review is conducted efficiently:

- the general subject area to be scrutinised;
- what baseline background information is required by the Committee;
- the specific subjects to be scrutinised (terms of reference);
- who should be invited to give evidence, for example, the relevant Portfolio Holder(s), Council Officers and/or external witnesses;
- if the Committee wishes to receive evidence from sources other than witnesses;
- if a period of public consultation should form part of the scrutiny exercise and on what the public should be consulted;
- if other authorities have carried out similar scrutiny exercises, their conclusions and detail any lessons that could be learnt;
- if the scrutiny exercise crosses the Borough boundary and identify if any other authorities should be invited to participate;
- if it is appropriate to co-opt anyone onto the Committee whilst the scrutiny exercise is being carried out;
- the timetable for the scrutiny exercise and when witnesses will be interviewed;
- how many meetings of the Committee the interviews will take;
- when it is anticipated the final draft report will be considered by the Committee;
- if the Committee is to make recommendations to the Executive Committee, who will present the report on behalf of the Committee; and
- when the Committee will review the effectiveness of any decision taken by the Executive Committee.

Appendix 4

CCfA checklist for Councillors

When determining whether a constituent's concern should be treated as a CCfA Councillors should determine answers to the following questions:

- is the constituent concerned about a neighbourhood or community issue? If so their concerns may be relevant to address as a CCfA;
- is the constituent's concern relevant to the quality of local public service provision? CCfAS can address the quality of services provided not only by the council but also by other local public service organisations;
- is the constituent's concern an individual complaint? If so it may be relevant to refer the constituent to the relevant service department in the council to consider their complaint;
- does the constituent's concern relate to an individual quasi-judicial decision? (E.g. planning or licensing). If so the constituent should be referred to the appropriate committee; and
- is the constituent's concern an individual hobby horse? Members have the authority to reject any complaints which they consider to be persistent, vexatious or trivial.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedures

For additional copies of this report, or to find out more about Overview and Scrutiny at Redditch Borough Council please contact:

Jess Bayley, Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer
jess.bayley@redditchbc.gov.uk 01527 64252 (3268)

or

Helen Saunders, Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer
Helen.saunders@redditchbc.gov.uk 01527 64252 (3267)

Overview and Scrutiny
Member and Committee Services
Redditch Borough Council
Town Hall
Walter Stranz Square
Redditch
B98 8AH



Guidance for Witnesses Giving Evidence at Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meetings

**Redditch Borough Council
2007**

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

The elected Councillors at Redditch Borough Council work to represent the interests of their constituents. The councillors that are members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review policies and make recommendations about how to improve existing services. The committee often delegates review work to Task and Finish Groups. These groups investigate an issue in detail and are dissolved once a project has been completed.

The Overview & Scrutiny process draws on evidence from Councillors, Council Officers and from sources outside the Council. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee cannot work successfully in isolation. The council, therefore, calls on the expertise of local people, service partners and community groups to ensure the Council delivers effective services.

Why have I been invited to act as a witness?

You have been invited to act as a witness because your views are important to the elected councillors. Your expert opinion can help councillors to gain an understanding of the issue that they are reviewing. As a guest of the Committee you will not be interrogated or asked questions that seek to catch you out. The councillors will attempt to put you at your ease as they realise that you have given up your time to help them. Notes will be taken of the proceedings. This is merely for the purpose of producing minutes of the meeting.

Is it compulsory to attend?

It depends on who you are. Elected councillors and Council Officers must attend meetings if requested by Overview and Scrutiny Committee members. In addition, organisations which provide local public services must attend meetings when requested. These organisations may select a representative to attend the meeting on their behalf. This representative must understand the subject of the review and be capable of responding to questions. Attendance is not compulsory for any other witnesses who are asked to attend a meeting.

Can someone be nominated to attend on my behalf?

If you cannot attend, you can nominate another person to come on your behalf. That person must be fully briefed on the issue. Committees sometimes invite an organisation to give evidence. In this case, it is up to you to decide who should attend.

It may be possible for the Committee to consider a written submission from you. The Committee may then come back to you at a later date if there are matters that have not been dealt with. This is something you can discuss with an Overview & Scrutiny Support Officer.

What if I cannot attend on the date of the Committee meeting?

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee groups witnesses together to help ease the flow of information. This also encourages detailed discussions of the topic because information from various sources can be reviewed at the same time. Committees work to tight timescales and so it is often impossible to rearrange meetings. As a consequence, it is important that you attend on the day requested.

Do witnesses get paid for attending Overview and Scrutiny meetings?

You will not be paid for giving evidence at an Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. However, travelling expenses as well as childcare costs can be reimbursed. Please retain your receipts and hand these to an Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer. The Officer will ensure that you are reimbursed for these costs.

Where are Overview and Scrutiny meetings held?

Most of Redditch Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny meetings are held at Redditch Town Hall. The Town Hall is located in Walter Stranz Square in the Town Centre. The Town Hall's Committee Rooms are fully air-conditioned and have full access for people with disabilities. Parking facilities are available at the Town Hall during evenings and weekends. During office hours Car Park 2 is available adjacent to the Town Hall. The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer will inform you of the exact arrangements for your meeting.

When you arrive at the Town Hall report to reception and ask for the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer. The Officer will provide you with an ID card, will discuss the proceedings with you and will show you to your seat in the council chamber.

Who will be present at the meeting?

A number of Councillors and Council Officers, including the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer, will be present at the meeting. Co-opted members may also attend the meeting if it addresses a topic which is of interest to them. These co-optees may include trade union representatives, from UNISON and/or UCATT, and people representing the Borough's tenants' panel. Other witnesses may also have been invited to give evidence at the meeting.

Many Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings are open to the public. You may, therefore, find that members of the public or press attend the proceedings. If you feel that the presence of the public or press would make you feel uncomfortable please contact the Overview & Scrutiny Support Officer to discuss the matter further. (The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers contact details are listed on the back page of these guidance notes).

Will I have to give a presentation?

Sometimes the Committee asks witnesses to give a short presentation. Presentations at Overview and Scrutiny meetings usually take ten minutes. The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer will inform you in advance if you are required to give a presentation. On other occasions the Councillors will ask you to answer a number of questions. If you are expected to answer questions at the meeting you will be sent a copy of the questions in advance. You may find it convenient to prepare your answers before the meeting takes place. The Councillors may ask you some additional questions based on the answers that you provide. They may also ask for your opinion about evidence provided by other witnesses at the meeting.

Alternatively, you may be asked to submit written evidence to the meeting. Any written evidence should include the main points of your opinion about the subject being discussed. If you submit the written evidence in advance please assume that the members have read the document before the meeting takes place.

How are witnesses treated at Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings?

Redditch Borough Council is committed to treating witnesses in a respectful and courteous manner. Please be aware that information about individuals who give evidence, such as addresses, is only available to senior Officers. The council will not give your personal details to other organisations or individuals.

What will happen after the meeting?

About a week after the meeting we will send you a copy of the meeting's minutes summarising the main arguments that were made. The minutes may quote some of the things that you said. You will have the opportunity to suggest amendments to the minutes. You will be informed of a cut-off date by which any changes to the minutes will need to be made. The Councillors may also ask for you to provide additional information to the committee.

Once the councillors have finished collecting evidence, they will produce a report summarising their findings. The report will make recommendations for future action. This report will acknowledge any sources of written and oral evidence provided to the Councillors.

As a valued contributor to the Committee the council will keep you informed on future progress. We will send you a copy of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's final report with its recommendations. You will also be informed of the outcomes of this report, including whether the recommendations will be implemented.

The Councillors will monitor any implementation of the report's recommendations. You will be kept informed of related developments. You may also be invited to attend future meetings that monitor the outcomes of the proceedings.

Further Information:

If you require any further information about Overview and Scrutiny arrangements at Redditch Borough Council you can obtain it from our website at <http://redditch.whub.org.uk/home/rbc-your-council-overview-and-scrutiny> You will find information on this site about the role of Overview and Scrutiny in local democracy, Redditch Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny procedures and the aims of Overview and Scrutiny. You can also access an Overview and Scrutiny library, containing archive material produced for past Overview and Scrutiny reviews.

Once the review has finished you will be invited to give feedback on participating in the Overview and Scrutiny process. Your feedback will be valued and will contribute to continuous improvement of the Overview and Scrutiny function at Redditch Borough Council.

If you have any further concerns or wish to have an informal chat about contributing to the Overview and Scrutiny process at Redditch Borough Council please contact one of the dedicated Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers.

Sources:

OPSI, (The Office of Public Sector Information), (accessed May 2007), The Local Government Act 2000, <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2000/20000022.htm>
DCLG (Department for Communities and Local Government), (October 2006), 'Strong and Prosperous Communities: The Local Government White Paper' http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/98/StrongandProsperousCommunitiestheLocalGovernmentWhitePaperVol1_id1504098.pdf

Contacts

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

No Direct Ward Relevance

5th June 2007

9. WORK PROGRAMME

(Report of the Borough Director)

Date of Meeting	Subject Matter	Officer(s) Responsible for report
ALL MEETINGS	REGULAR ITEMS	(LEAD DIRECTOR - CHRIS SMITH)
	Minutes of previous meeting	Borough Director
	Consideration of the Forward Plan	Borough Director
	Consideration of Executive Committee key decisions	Borough Director
	Call-ins (if any)	Borough Director
	Referrals from Council or Executive Committee, etc. (if any)	Borough Director
	Task & Finish Groups – feedback	Relevant Lead Director
	Committee Work Programme	Borough Director
4th July 2007	REGULAR ITEMS	
	Quarterly Performance Report	Relevant Lead Directors
	Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report	Relevant Lead Directors
26th September 2007	REGULAR ITEMS	
	Quarterly Performance Report	Relevant Lead Directors
	Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report	Relevant Lead Directors

**OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

5th June 2007

28th November	REGULAR ITEMS Quarterly Performance Report Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report	Relevant Lead Directors Relevant Lead Directors
6th February 2008	REGULAR ITEMS Quarterly Performance Report Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report	Relevant Lead Directors Relevant Lead Directors
27th February 2008	REGULAR ITEMS Annual Report from Executive Committee portfolio Holders	Borough Director
19th March 2008	REGULAR ITEMS Annual Report from Executive Committee portfolio holders	Borough Director
9th April 2008	REGULAR ITEMS Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2007/08	Borough Director
OTHER ITEMS – DATE NOT FIXED	Review of Service Plans 2007/10: Borough Directorate Leisure, Customer and Business Support Directorate Environment and Planning Directorate Housing and Asset Management Directorate	Borough Director Director of Leisure, Customer and Business Support Director of Environment and Planning Services Director of Housing and Asset Management

**OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

5th June 2007

	District Centres Task and Finish Group - Recommendations	Director of Housing and Asset Management
	Council Communications Task and Finish Group - Recommendations	
	Voluntary Sector Support Task and Finish Group – Recommendations	

