



Executive Committee

Tue 10 Jan
2023
6.30 pm

Council Chamber
Redditch Town Hall
Walter Stranz Square
Redditch
B98 8AH

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
Jess Bayley-Hill**

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GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

At the current time, seating at the meeting will be placed in such a way as to achieve as much space as possible for social distancing to help protect meeting participants.

Please note that this is a public meeting.

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

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Members and Officers who still have access to lateral flow tests (LFTs) are encouraged to take a test on the day of the meeting. Meeting attendees who do not have access to LFTs are encouraged not to attend a Committee if they have any of the following common symptoms of Covid-19 on the day of the meeting; a high temperature, a new and continuous cough or a loss of smell and / or taste.

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Notes:

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

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6.30 pm

Council Chamber Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs:

Matthew Dormer
(Chair)
Nyear Nazir (Vice-
Chair)
Karen Ashley
Joanne Beecham
Peter Fleming

Lucy Harrison
Anthony Lovell
Emma Marshall
Craig Warhurst

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. Leader's Announcements

4. Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)

5. Council response to the Birmingham Local Plan issues and options consultation (Pages 7 - 58)

6. Council Tax Base 2023/24 (Pages 59 - 62)

7. Final Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24 (Pages 63 - 92)

8. Financial Outturn Report 2021/22 (Pages 93 - 102)

9. Housing Revenue Account Rent Setting 2023/24 (Pages 103 - 106)

10. Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2025/25 - Update (Pages 107 - 118)

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11. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budget 2023/24 - Recommendations (Pages 119 - 160)

12. Quarterly Risk Update (Pages 161 - 168)

13. Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Pages 169 - 192)

Two sets of minutes from meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20th October and 1st December 2022 have been attached for the Executive Committee's consideration.

Members are asked to note that there is a recommendation from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny committee held on 1st December 2022 requiring the Executive Committee's consideration.

14. Minutes / Referrals - Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels etc.

To receive and consider any outstanding minutes or referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels etc. since the last meeting of the Executive Committee, other than as detailed in the items above.

15. Advisory Panels - update report

Members are invited to provide verbal updates, if any, in respect of the following bodies:

- a) Climate Change Cross-Party Working Group – Chair, Councillor Anthony Lovell;
- b) Constitutional Review Working Panel – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer;
- c) Corporate Parenting Board – Council Representative, Councillor Nyear Nazir;
- d) Member Support Steering Group – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer; and
- e) Planning Advisory Panel – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer.

16. To consider any urgent business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.



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2022

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), and Councillors Karen Ashley, Joanne Beecham, Peter Fleming, Lucy Harrison, Anthony Lovell, Emma Marshall and Craig Warhurst

Also Present:

Councillor Joanna Kane

Officers:

Michael Birkinshaw, Peter Carpenter, Sue Hanley, Guy Revans, Michael Rowan and Carl Walker

Principal Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley-Hill

92. APOLOGIES

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

93. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

94. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 8th December 2022, Members had pre-scrutinised the report on the Appropriation of Land off Ipsley Church Lane for Planning Purposes, which was due for consideration during the Executive Committee meeting. At the end of their debate, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had endorsed the recommendation in the report.

The Leader commented that he was aware that a number of members of the public had either spoken or submitted evidence in writing for consideration at that meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. On behalf of the Executive Committee, the

Chair

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Leader thanked those residents for their time and for making their contributions.

95. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 6th December 2022 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

96. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Officers confirmed that no Questions on Notice had been received for consideration at this meeting.

97. APPROPRIATION OF LAND OFF IPSLEY CHURCH LANE FOR PLANNING PURPOSES

The Bereavement Services Manager presented a report on the subject of the appropriation of land off Ipsley Church Lane for planning purposes.

Members were advised that the Council had already been granted permission by the Planning Committee for change of use of the land at Ipsley Church Lane for use as a cemetery. Part of the conditions that had been applied to this planning permission had related to the need for the Council to preserve the biodiversity of the land once it was in use as a cemetery.

The Council had the power, under Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972, to appropriate land belonging to the authority for planning purposes. The appropriation of the land was required as it was classified as primary open space. In order to appropriate the land, the Council had had to advertise locally its intention to do so for a period of two consecutive weeks and this was subject to public consultation. In this context, the Council had placed three advertisements in the Redditch Standard in September 2022 advertising the authority's intention to appropriate the land. The first advert had contained an incorrect email address and therefore the decision had been taken to place an advertisement in the local press for a third week, thereby ensuring that the process was publicised for a longer period of time than was stipulated in the legislation.

A total of 69 objections had been received from the public during this consultation process. A number of issues had been raised by the public, many of which related to planning considerations, such as issues relating to ground water and highways concerns. The

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main point that had been raised by a majority of respondents had related to concerns that there would be a loss of recreational space. Many respondents had highlighted that they used the land for a range of recreational purposes, including to walk their dogs, sledging, running and for picnics in the summer months.

When considering objections about the loss of recreational space, the Executive Committee was advised that it was important to take into account the availability of other recreational space near to the site and the impact that the appropriation of the land would have on the availability of recreational space locally. Members were advised that the site itself measured 4.6 hectares. Within a kilometre of the centre of the site, there was a further 55 hectares of open space, which could be accessed within approximately 600 metres from the site. The site represented around 8 per cent of the land in that area of the Arrow Valley Park. In the wider context of the whole of the park, comprising 364 hectares, this site represented just over 1 per cent of the open space available for recreational purposes.

During consideration of this item, reference was made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's pre-scrutiny of the report at a meeting held on 8th December 2022. Concerns had been raised at this meeting that there would be a loss of open space as a result of the appropriation of the land. However, the Executive Committee was informed that in planning terms, there would be no loss of open space as a result of the appropriation of the land. Instead, Planning Officers had previously advised that the typology of the open space would change from parks to a churchyard, cemetery or crematoria open space.

The Executive Committee was advised that there were no direct financial implications arising from the proposals detailed in the report. However, there were indirect financial implications, insofar as the Council had already committed funding to works on the cemetery, including the planning process.

There was a need for the Council to have a clear approach to management of the land following its appropriation and appropriate arrangements were in place. The appearance of the cemetery remained to be determined, which would form the focus of the next report on this subject to the Planning Committee. The Council would take into account responsibilities in respect of protecting the biodiversity of the land as part of this stage of the process.

Following the presentation of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services welcomed the report and in doing so commented that the Council had a moral responsibility to ensure that burial provision was available to residents living in the Borough.

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Members discussed the report and questioned how the number of objections received during the latest consultation process compared to the number of objections that had been received by the Council when the planning application had been submitted in 2021. Officers advised that there had been approximately 840 objections received in response to the planning application and 69 objections received in relation to the latest consultation process.

Reference was made to the new typology of open space that would apply to the land following its appropriation, which would be churchyard, cemetery and crematoria open space. Members commented that this would be close to Ipsley Church and questioned whether this would cause any conflict. Officers clarified that this was the typology classification in terms of open space in the planning process, which was separate and unrelated to the role of Ipsley Church. Members were also advised that Ipsley Church had submitted an objection in the planning process.

Consideration was given to the length of time it would take for all of the land to be used for burial plots. Officers explained that it would take between 80 and 100 years after the first burial before the cemetery would be full at the site. During that time, the site would remain available for recreational use, although it was acknowledged that some people might not feel comfortable using the land for recreational purposes once burials had started to take place.

The Committee subsequently discussed the action that was being taken to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the site and questions were raised about how this would be managed once burials started to take place. Members were informed that the Council had an opportunity to design the cemetery in a way that would enhance the biodiversity of the land. As discussed at previous meetings, there was no requirement for the cemetery to have a traditional Victorian appearance. Instead, there were a range of options available, including woodland burials. The Council would work with an ecologist to ensure that appropriate arrangements were in place.

Questions were raised about the potential for burials to be situated in rows, rather than in different locations at the site once it started to be used. Members commented that there were some residents who might otherwise be concerned about potentially causing offence or showing disrespect by inadvertently stepping on a grave. Officers explained that the interior of the site would be considered as part of the next stage of the planning process. Similarly, gravestones and the potential for more significant memorials to be installed by families would also be considered as part of this process.

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RESOLVED that

the Land off Ipsley Church Lane be appropriated under section 122 (2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 for planning purposes.

98. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6th October 2022. The Leader confirmed that there were no outstanding recommendations arising from that meeting requiring Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6th October 2022 be noted.

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

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

100. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The Chair advised that there had been no changes in respect of Executive Advisory Panel meetings since the previous meeting of the Executive Committee.

During consideration of this item, in relation to the work of the Member Support Steering Group, the Chair commented that cyber security training was due to be provided to Members at a session scheduled to take place on Wednesday 14th December 2022. All Members were urged to attend this training.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.00 pm

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive Committee
2022**10th January**Redditch Borough Council – Local Plan responses**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Matt Dormer
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford
Report Author Mike Dunphy	Job Title: Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager Contact email: m.dunphy@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881325
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding somewhere to live Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS**The Executive RECOMMEND to Council that:-**

- 1.1 The Council endorses the officer response to the Birmingham Local Plan and Duty to Cooperate (as attached at Appendix 1) and that it is confirmed with Birmingham City Council as such.**
- 1.2 That the South Staffordshire Local Plan Statement of Common Ground (Appendix 3) is signed by the Leader of the Council.**
- 1.3 That the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area Statement of Common Ground (Appendix 4) is signed by the Leader of the Council**
- 1.4 That Council notes the position with regards to the South Worcestershire Development Plan**

2. BACKGROUND

Please note that this report has been drafted at a time when the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is in the process of publishing reforms to the planning system. At the time of writing only a ministerial statement and a letter to all MPs was available for consideration. A prospectus for a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also expected.

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Depending on the content of the prospectus, the recommendations above may need to be reconsidered at short notice.

This report covers the response to three Local Plans in close proximity to Redditch Borough; the Birmingham Local Plan (BLP), South Staffordshire Local Plan (SSLP) and The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP). The BLP is at its first stage of consultation, the Issues and Options, whereas the SSLP and the SWDP are both at their final stage of engagement before the plans are submitted to the Secretary of State to undergo the examination in public stage.

Birmingham Local Plan

The officer response to the BLP can be seen at Appendix 1, this response also includes a response to the Duty to Cooperate letter the Council received from Birmingham City Council (BCC) in October 2022. That letter can be seen in Appendix 2. The response is a joint response with Bromsgrove District Council, this follows the agreed Memorandum of Understanding between the two Councils which was presented to members in June 2022.

The most significant element of the BLP Issues and Options report is the identification of the housing requirement for Birmingham. 149,286 dwellings have been identified as the need, of which only 70,871 can be accommodated within the currently available land in the City, meaning that 78,415 may need to be accommodated in other areas outside of the City boundaries. The BLP identifies 6 options for delivering this growth, of which one of them is releasing Green Belt land within Birmingham. It is the view of officers that this shouldn't be an option but a strict requirement for the plan. Especially considering that there is an expectation from BCC that Green Belt land outside of the City will need to be released and allocated. Bearing in mind BCC is also promoting some Green Belt land in its ownership in Bromsgrove District as part of the Bromsgrove District Plan review, it seems a contradictory position to take at this stage. The response at Appendix 1 makes it clear that reviewing its own Green Belt should not be an option to consider, but a firm commitment of the plan.

The second part of the response is the answering of questions in relation to the Duty to Cooperate. BCC is asking if RBC can make a contribution to meeting Birmingham housing needs. At this stage RBC is not making any commitment, the only commitment RBC will make is to continue to work under the Duty to Cooperate to investigate if a contribution can be made. This commitment is reflected in a Statement

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of Common Ground (SoCG) which covers the whole of the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA). This statement can be seen at Appendix 4.

South Staffordshire Local Plan

The SSLP is at the final engagement stage of plan making, if RBC were to respond at this stage it would have to be on the basis of making representations regarding the Soundness of the plan. Officers have reviewed the plan and consider there to be no soundness issues, therefore no formal representations need to be submitted at this stage. As part of the plan making process South Staffordshire Council has asked RBC to enter into a SoCG specifically in relation to the SSLP plan and also the wider arrangements for looking at the housing needs of the GBBCHMA. These SoCGs can be seen at Appendices 3 and 4. Both these statements commit the Council to continued engagement and working on a solution to meeting the wider housing needs, but at this stage neither statement commits RBC to accommodating any needs from another council. Should this ever be the case, a new version of this statement would be produced and presented to members for consideration.

South Worcestershire Development Plan

The SWDP is also at the final engagement stage of plan making, as with the SSLP officers have reviewed this plan and have no soundness concerns therefore it is recommended that the position is noted and no submissions are made, it is expected that a SoCG will be presented to RBC for signing in due course.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 South Staffordshire Council and the South Worcestershire Authorities have published the plans in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 4.2 Birmingham City Council has published its plan in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 4.2 It is important that Redditch Borough Council continues to engage in wider plan making activities and under the Duty to Cooperate.

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5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 The response to the plans or signing the SoCGs in itself does not have any direct implications for the strategic purposes at this stage. Ensuring that RBC is engaged and where appropriate influence plan making activities of adjoining authorities will ensure that the strategic purposes are not undermined by the plans of other local authorities.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 It is not considered that there are any specific climate change implications for Redditch Borough from plans covered in this report . Although the planning process must continue to address the wider climate change concerns, part of this is scrutinising the plans prepared by other stakeholders.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 The response has no Equality or Diversity implications.

Operational Implications

- 6.2 There are no operational implications.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The risks associated with not engaging in the plan making process and the Duty to Cooperate could be significant, both as the Councils views will not be represented, and also as the review of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan may fail under the Duty to Cooperate.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – BDC/RBC response to the Birmingham Local Plan issues and options.

Appendix 2 – BCC duty to cooperate letter

Appendix 3 – South Staffordshire Local Plan SoCG

Appendix 4 – Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area SoCG

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Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Matt Dormer	22 nd December
Lead Director / Head of Service	Ruth Bamford	22 nd December
Financial Services	Peter Carpenter	22 nd December
Legal Services	Claire Felton	22 nd December
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	N/A
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	N/A	N/A

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Ian MacLeod
Director Planning, Transport & Sustainability
Birmingham City Council

2nd December 2022

Dear Ian

This letter represents a response to both the Birmingham City Council (BCC) Issues and Options plan and the Duty to Cooperate letters sent to Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and Redditch Borough Council (RBC) on 3rd October 2022.

As BCC is aware, BDC and RBC have a Memorandum of Understanding in place which addresses certain elements of plan making across Bromsgrove and Redditch districts, one of which is:

That the Councils consider issues in relation to the GBBCHMA together and wherever possible, respond jointly to all requests to assist those authorities which have a shortfall in housing supply.

Birmingham Local Plan Issues and Options

BDC and RBC welcome the decision of BCC to adopt the standard method for the identification of housing need, giving a total need figure of 149,286 dwellings. This approach is in line with the approach identified in the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessments (HEDNA) for both Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough.

BDC and RBC note both the capacity of 70,871 dwellings and the shortfall of 78,415 dwellings over the plan period and support the approach of BCC to continue to further investigate the supply available within the City Council's boundaries.

BDC and RBC support the six options for housing growth identified (repeated below) but would stress that presenting these as options at this stage is misleading. It is clear from the evidence presented regarding the housing capacity the City currently has, that a combination of all of these options should be firm requirements for the plan going forward.

- Option 1 – Increase housing densities
- Option 2 – More active public sector land assembly
- Option 3 – Further comprehensive housing regeneration
- Option 4 – Utilise poor quality under-used open space for housing
- Option 5 – Utilise some employment land for housing
- Option 6 – Release Green Belt for housing

In relation to Option 6 "Release of Green Belt for housing", BCC is requesting through the Duty to Cooperate that BDC and RBC confirm whether they can make a contribution to addressing the shortfall arising from the Birmingham Local Plan. BCC is well aware that any large-scale development in either authority area would require releasing land from the Green Belt. To that end BDC and RBC would expect BCC to commit to reviewing and releasing land in the Green Belt within the City's boundaries at the same time as expecting other local authority areas to review and release Green Belt land. This is particularly significant as BCC is promoting land in its ownership in Bromsgrove District for release from the Green Belt under the Bromsgrove Local Plan review. With this in mind BDC and RBC would have expected a firm commitment to reviewing the Birmingham Green Belt at this early stage of plan making and are disappointed this has not happened.

BDC and RBC acknowledge the requirement for 295.6 hectares of employment land and the current shortfall of 73.64 hectares. It is noted that no options to address the employment land shortfall have

been presented in the Issues and Options document but this instead takes the form of a question. Therefore, in response to Q35 (How do you think the shortfall in the supply of employment land should be addressed?), BDC and RBC offer the following response:

As with the housing requirement, the efforts taken to provide this development within the City's boundaries is welcomed, but it is stressed that any future options including Green Belt release within the City's boundaries should be considered as a preference before release of land in neighbouring Green Belt Authority areas is considered.

BDC notes the proposed changes to the policy for the Longbridge area which would involve removing its designation as a Regional Investment Site but retaining its designation as a Core Employment/Industrial Area. Whilst there is no objection in principle at this stage, BDC welcomes the intention that Longbridge's focus on high-quality advanced manufacturing is not diluted and would wish to see the established development objectives secured through the Longbridge Area Action Plan retained as far as possible.

BDC and RBC note BCC's commitment to delivering an efficient, fair, green, sustainable and healthy transport system and welcome the intention to embed the key objectives from the Birmingham Transport Plan in the Local Plan. With Birmingham as the regional centre for employment and leisure and the Midlands transport hub, BDC and RBC would like to see a much bigger commitment in the Local Plan to improving the connectivity of areas beyond the city's administrative boundaries. Whilst this is referred to briefly in the context of Sprint rapid transit buses, cross-city bus routes and rail, further detail is needed and it would be welcomed if this commitment was extended to enhancing active travel routes between local authority areas.

Duty To Cooperate letter – 3rd October 2022

In response to the questions posed, please see BDC's and RBC's responses below:

- *Whether at this stage you are able to make a contribution to addressing the shortfall arising from the Birmingham Local Plan.*

Both Councils are in the process of agreeing to sign the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area Statement of Common Ground. That Statement commits BDC and RBC to continue to work towards an agreed approach to distributing any shortfall in housing needs. Other than identifying the housing requirement, the Birmingham Local Plan Issues and Options document does not move this issue forward in any significant way. As such it would be premature for BDC or RBC to commit to any contribution at this stage. BCC agreed with this position in response to BDC's Duty to Cooperate letter in June 2022, and at this point in time, nothing has taken place to change this position.

- *That you are committed to continuing discussions both through the HMA working group and with BCC independently, as required, to work towards accommodating the shortfall.*

Yes, the Councils are still committed to continuing discussions.

I hope you find these responses useful, which at this stage this represents the views of the officers of Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils. Should this response change as a result of the formal consideration processes in January, an updated response will be submitted to you.

Yours Sincerely

Mike Dunphy
Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager
Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils



03 October 2022

Redditch Borough Council

devplans@redditchbc.gov.uk

I am writing to notify you that the Birmingham Local Plan Issues and Options consultation will be considered by the City Council's Cabinet on Tuesday 11th October 2022, Cabinet agenda papers were published on Monday 3rd October 2022 and can be viewed on the City Council's website

[Birmingham Local Plan Issues and Options consultation Cabinet report](#)

You will be aware that the Birmingham Development Plan was adopted in January 2017 and recent review work has determined that the Plan needs to be updated. The Issues and Options will be the first stage of consultation on the new Birmingham Local Plan.

We have been preparing a number of evidence base documents including a Housing and Employment Development Needs Assessment and a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment. Together these documents help us to understand the level of growth we need to plan for as well as the capacity within the city. As you will be aware, housing need across the City has increased significantly since the adoption of the Birmingham Development Plan, and at that time Birmingham could not accommodate its own development needs.

The evidence base shows that Birmingham cannot accommodate all of its development needs within the new Birmingham Plan. Early indications are that there is a shortfall of 78,415 dwellings and 73.64 hectares of employment land. These figures are based on current land availability. The City Council has undertaken further work to identify additional sites which have development potential, and these sites will be explored in more detail as we work towards the Preferred Options, currently expected to be available for consultation in Autumn 2023. However, even if we were to be able to bring forward additional sites, there is not sufficient capacity to eliminate the shortfall. Therefore, as authorities which sit within the Housing Market Area, I am writing to request your assistance in accommodating this shortfall. As such, I ask that you respond confirming the following:

Ian MacLeod
Director, Planning, Transport & Sustainability
Birmingham City Council
Places, Prosperity & Sustainability Directorate
PO Box 28
Birmingham
B1 1TU
Email: ian.macleod@birmingham.gov.uk



- Whether at this stage you are able to make a contribution to addressing the shortfall arising from the Birmingham Local Plan.
- That you are committed to continuing discussions both through the HMA working group and with BCC independently, as required, to work towards accommodating the shortfall.

Please can you respond to planningstrategy@birmingham.gov.uk by no later than Monday 5th December 2022.

If you wish to discuss this matter in more detail please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Ian MacLeod
Director of Planning, Transport & Sustainability

Ian MacLeod
Director, Planning, Transport & Sustainability
Birmingham City Council
Places, Prosperity & Sustainability Directorate
PO Box 28
Birmingham
B1 1TU
Email: ian.macleod@birmingham.gov.uk

Statement of Common Ground
between Redditch Borough Council
and South Staffordshire District
Council

South Staffordshire Local Plan 2018-
2039

[Insert Date]

DRAFT

Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) between South Staffordshire District Council (SSDC) & Redditch Borough Council (RBC)

Introduction

1. This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by South Staffordshire District Council (SSDC) and Redditch Borough Council (RBC), hereafter referred to as “the parties” to inform the submission of the South Staffordshire Local Plan 2018-2039.
2. This SoCG has been prepared in accordance with national guidance and is intended to cover matters of strategic importance relevant to the parties. It documents those matters agreed by the parties regarding the South Staffordshire Local Plan 2018-2039 and any areas which remain subject to further discussion and therefore will be updated accordingly. This Statement of Common Ground covers the following matters:
 - Housing (including housing needs across the GBBCHMA);
 - Employment land;
 - Transport and infrastructure matters;
 - Gypsy and traveller accommodation; and
 - Natural environment.

Geography covered by Statement of Common Ground

3. This SoCG covers the Local Planning Authority areas of South Staffordshire District and Redditch Borough Council.
4. Both authorities are also within the Greater Birmingham & Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA)¹. There are wider strategic housing and employment shortfalls arising over these geographies that are subject to separate statements of common ground over these wider geographical areas dealing with these issues.

Key Strategic Matters

5. The local authorities have had on-going dialogue on cross-boundary planning issues over the course of many years, discussing housing needs and Gypsy and Traveller provision. These discussions have informed the development of adopted plans and other related documents. The key strategic matters included within this Statement of Common Ground are; housing provision; employment land; transport and wider infrastructure matters; gypsy and traveller accommodation; and matters relating to the natural and historic environment including designated sites.
6. The following issues are considered to be the key strategic matters with regards to on-going plan making, although there are other issues which may have cross boundary impacts.

¹ The GBBCHMA is made up of 14 authorities including Birmingham City Council, Bromsgrove District Council, Cannock Chase District Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Lichfield District Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Redditch Borough Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, South Staffordshire District Council, Stratford upon Avon District Council, Tamworth Borough Council, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council and Wolverhampton City Council

Both authorities are committed to further dialogue moving forward, not just limited to the periods of plan preparation.

Housing

7. SSDC and RBC have been active members of the GBBCHMA Technical Officers Group since it was established in 2017 and both authorities have contributed to discussions relating to the delivery of unmet housing need within in the HMA. Both authorities also previously participated in the GBBCHMA Strategic Growth Study (2018), which examined need and supply across the entire HMA up to 2031 and 2036, before proposing potential growth options for authorities to consider through their own plan-making process in order to seek address any resulting unmet needs. The Black Country authorities² similarly declared an unmet need from their urban area as early as their Issues and Options consultation in 2017, later indicating through the Draft Black Country Plan consultation in 2021 that this shortfall stood at around 28,000 dwellings, despite Green Belt release being explored.
8. RBC and SSDC both recognise the importance of developing a common evidence base across the HMA as far as is feasible and practical in order to ensure that contributions to unmet needs are properly evidenced. As such, both authorities are party to the emerging 2022 GBBCHMA Development Needs Group Statement of Common Ground, which seeks to provide a programme of work and governance structure to address the housing shortfalls arising from the HMA. Given the scale and complexity of the housing shortfalls arising in the HMA, the Development Needs Group Statement of Common Ground is considered to be the appropriate vehicle by which to address the issue holistically.

Employment

9. SSDC and RBC are within separate functional economic market area but continue to work together collaboratively as part of GBBCHMA Technical Officers Group to progress the necessary follow on work identified as necessary in the West Midlands Strategic Employment Sites Study 2021. No further cross-boundary issues have been identified.
10. The South Staffordshire Local Plan 2018-2039 proposes to deliver sufficient employment land on local and strategic employment sites to both meet its own local needs and provide a surplus that could contribute towards cross-boundary shortfalls.
11. South Staffordshire's EDNA 2020-2040 suggests that strategic sites (excluding WMI) within SSDC's area can contribute a surplus of 36.6ha to the unmet needs of other local authorities. In addition, SSDC will release 232ha of Green Belt to deliver a large-scale strategic rail freight interchange called West Midlands Interchange (WMI) within SSDC's area. The EDNA indicates that only 18.8ha of WMI is attributable to South Staffordshire's needs, indicating that the rest may be able to contribute to unmet needs in the wider WMI travel to work area. Supporting work commissioned to examine the apportionment of WMI suggests it can provide additional surplus B8 employment land to a wider travel to work area including the Black Country authorities, equating to 67ha of B8 land to the four Black Country planning authorities. The remaining land supply from WMI aside from the South Staffordshire and Black Country apportionment has not to date been formally stated as necessary to meet needs by other local authorities in the WMI travel to work area. This may increase the

² City of Wolverhampton Council, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

apportionment of land from WMI which could be apportioned towards the Black Country unmet needs, dependent on the stance of other authorities related to the site.

Cross boundary transport impacts

12. SSDC and RBC are committed to continue working together in partnership, alongside their respective highways authorities, with the aim of ensuring the necessary transport and highways improvements are implemented to support sustainable growth across both authorities. SSDC's are proposing four strategic housing site allocations, however none are within close proximity to the Redditch administrative area. No other cross-boundary transport issues have been identified.

Infrastructure

13. SSDC and RBC will work together where required, with the aim of ensuring the necessary infrastructure improvements are delivered to support sustainable growth across both administrative areas.
14. Necessary infrastructure (including school places) will be delivered within South Staffordshire. Therefore, no cross-boundary infrastructure issues have been identified.

Gypsy & Traveller Provision

15. SSDC has identified a 121 pitch need for Gypsy and Traveller households in South Staffordshire over the local plan period, including 72 pitches within the first 5 year period³. SSDC considers that latest evidence from Council's Gypsy and Traveller evidence base indicates that all suitable sites (including Green Belt options) which have capacity to reduce this shortfall have been maximised. It also indicates that all public land options in the District (including Green Belt options) have been explored for their potential to provide **new** public site options which could address specific families' needs and thereby reduce the shortfall. Despite these efforts, SSDC can only deliver 37 pitches within the plan period on sites which would address its unmet pitch needs. This leaves a very significant shortfall, even against the District's 5 year pitch need, which is a strategic cross-boundary issue to be discussed with adjacent authorities and other authorities within the same housing market area.
16. SSDC has written to all adjacent and housing market area authorities on multiple occasions during the plan preparation regarding the potential shortfall in Gypsy and Traveller pitch needs within the District. Following on from the publication of SSDC's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment in late 2021, SSDC wrote to all HMA and neighbouring authorities in January 2022 setting out the extent of the pitch shortfall, despite the Council's efforts to maximise all suitable and deliverable sites (including within the Green Belt) which would address the unmet need. This letter then requested authorities examine their ability to contribute to its unmet pitch needs, specifically in the form of extra supply on publicly run sites where pitches could be ensured for the families in need within SSDC. It then wrote again to these same authorities in August 2022, providing an update on extra efforts that SSDC had made to identify new public sites within the District upon Staffordshire County Council land. Despite these efforts, the letter communicated that a significant shortfall still remained and that SSDC required assistance in addressing its unmet pitch needs through

³ South Staffordshire Council Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment - Final Report August 2021

new or expanded publicly run sites.

17. RBC's most recent response was to the January 2022 correspondence where they considered that there is insufficient evidence to conclude that there was a strong connection between movement patterns of travellers between the authority areas. Therefore, additional provision within the Redditch area would not provide a sustainable solution to meeting the specific needs of the Gypsy and Traveller population within the South Staffordshire area. In SSDC's view, the established Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market (GBBCHMA) is clear evidence of a functional link between both authorities and therefore requires that both authorities work together to address cross boundary housing matters (including Gypsy and Traveller provision). SSDC acknowledges that it has less of a functional relationship with RBC than it does with some other authorities within the GBBCHMA, but believes it cannot be assumed that traveller families would be unwilling to relocate to a public site in RBC's administrative area if this secured them a permanent pitch. In SSDC's view it is therefore currently unclear as to what extent RBC may or may not be able to assist in meeting unmet pitch need arising from SSDC. RBC maintain that the evidence does not provide clear evidence of a functional link with regard to Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs, which can be closely related to extended family and their existing locations. The GBBCHMA strategic study does not consider the needs of Gypsy and Travellers and It is not clear whether any work has been previously done to evidence this functional link in relation to these specific gypsy and traveller needs. Therefore, RBC feel that the emphasis remains as stated here - that it is very much unclear as to what extent RBC may/may not be able to assist in meeting SSDC's pitch needs.

Natural Environment

18. SSDC and RBC are committed to continue working together in respect of matters relating to the natural environment where these are applicable to the authorities.
19. No cross-boundary issues have been identified.

Signatures

We confirm that the information in this Statement of Common Ground reflects the joint working to address identified strategic matters that has been undertaken between South Staffordshire District Council and Redditch Borough Council. The authorities will continue to work together to address cross-boundary issues on an ongoing basis.

South Staffordshire District Council

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Date:

Redditch Borough Council

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Date:

DRAFT

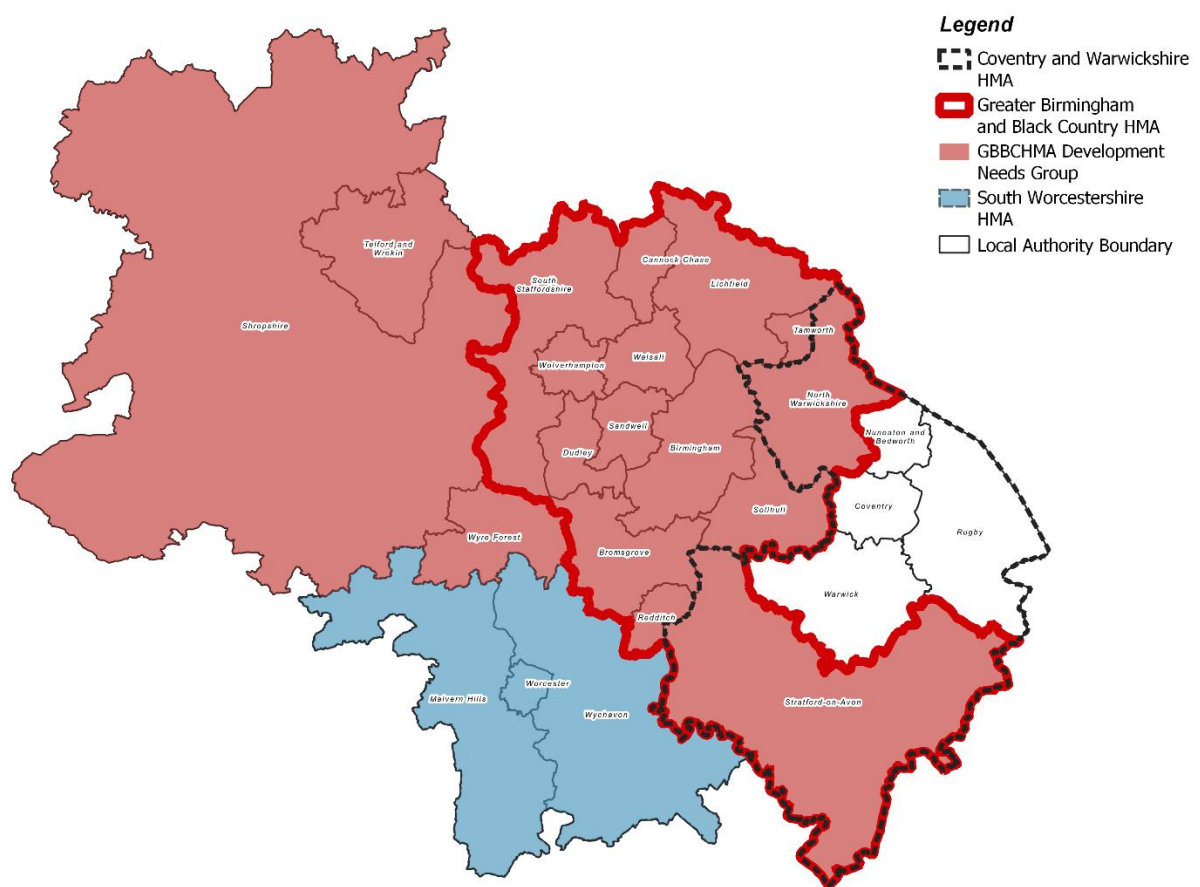
GBBCHMA Development Needs Group

Draft Statement of Common Ground

August 2022

1. Purpose and list of Parties involved in this Statement of Common Ground

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared to facilitate and record cross-boundary engagement between local authorities in addressing existing and emerging housing shortfalls within the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA). It records cooperation and progress to date in addressing this strategic issue, demonstrating that the participating authorities have engaged constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis under the Duty to Cooperate.
- 1.2 The Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA) Development Needs Group comprises the local planning authorities set out below. The Black Country consists of the Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton local planning authorities.



Local planning authorities within the GBBCHMA

- Birmingham City Council
- Bromsgrove District Council
- Cannock Chase District Council
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Lichfield District Council
- North Warwickshire Borough Council
- Redditch Borough Council

- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
- South Staffordshire District Council
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council
- Tamworth Borough Council
- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
- City of Wolverhampton Council

Other related local planning authorities outside of the GBBCHMA

- Shropshire Council
- Telford and Wrekin Council
- Wyre Forest District Council

2. Signatories to this Statement of Common Ground:

- Birmingham City Council
- Bromsgrove District Council
- Cannock Chase District Council
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Lichfield District Council
- North Warwickshire Borough Council
- Redditch Borough Council
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
- South Staffordshire District Council
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council
- Tamworth Borough Council
- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
- City of Wolverhampton Council
- Shropshire Council
- Telford and Wrekin Council
- Wyre Forest District Council

3. Strategic Geography

- 3.1 The Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA) comprises 14 local authorities: Birmingham City Council, Bromsgrove District Council, Cannock Chase District Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Lichfield District Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Redditch Borough Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, South Staffordshire District Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Tamworth Borough Council, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council and City of Wolverhampton Council.
- 3.2 This geography was defined through two published studies commissioned from Peter Brett Associates (now Stantec) in accordance with guidance at the time based on

analysis of migration flows and commuting patterns and was subsequently endorsed by all authorities.

- 3.3 As part of the review of the Birmingham Development Plan (BDP), the City Council has tested whether this geography is still valid. A draft Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) report, which has been subject to engagement with neighbouring authorities through the GBBCHMA group, confirms that this is still a reliable geography using more recent data where available. The draft HEDNA has yet to be tested through examination in public. It also confirms that other authorities beyond the GBBCHMA have close functional relationships with it, based on commuting and migration flows, as listed below:
- Shropshire
 - Telford & Wrekin
 - Wyre Forest
 - Worcester City
 - Coventry City
- 3.4 Based on the findings of this report, Shropshire Council, Telford & Wrekin and Wyre Forest were invited to be signatories to this Statement of Common Ground, recognising the close functional relationships these areas have with the GBBCHMA (or parts of it) and authorities generating shortfalls within it. Worcester City Council and Coventry City Council were not invited to be signatories, because these are constrained urban areas that have historically relied on other neighbouring authorities to meet their housing needs over separate functional geographies and are therefore unlikely to be able to contribute towards the housing needs of the GBBCHMA.
- 3.5 At this time, expansion of the GBBCHMA is not advocated but it is acknowledged that there are potentially cross boundary matters, particularly in relation to migration patterns, which need to be addressed in order to ensure compliance with the Duty to Cooperate.
- 3.6 The strategic geography and scope of this Statement of Common Ground reflects current emerging evidence regarding the functional relationships between the GBBCHMA and surrounding areas. This scope will be updated to reflect the finalised Birmingham HEDNA report and any other evidence showing functional relationships beyond the GBBCHMA as and when such evidence becomes available.
- 3.7 It should be noted that both North Warwickshire and Stratford-on-Avon fall within the Coventry and Warwickshire HMA as well as the Greater Birmingham and Black Country HMA. In respect of Stratford-on-Avon District, the Fosse Way is an accepted boundary between the two HMAs reflecting the geographic proximity to the HMAs of this large rural district.

4. Strategic Matter - Meeting Housing Need

2011 – 2031 period

- 4.1 All post NPPF adopted development plans for the GBBCHMA authorities which cover the period 2011-2031 sought to meet their own Objectively Assessed Need (OAN). Those unable to meet their own needs are as follows:

Plan	Adopted	Details of shortfall
Birmingham Development Plan, 2011-2031	January 2017	The Birmingham Development Plan identified an Objectively Assessed Need of 89,000 homes with a shortfall of 37,900 homes which could not be met in the plan area. Policy TP48 of the adopted BDP sets out a mechanism for how this will be dealt with.
Cannock Chase Local Plan, 2012-2028	June 2014	The Cannock Chase Local Plan identified a shortfall of 500 homes, which was met in the Lichfield Local Plan (adopted 2015). The Cannock Chase Local Plan review identifies no shortfall over the period 2018-38 therefore this shortfall does not now need to be addressed.
Redditch Local Plan, 2011 – 2030	January 2017	The Redditch Plan identified a shortfall of 3,400 homes. The plan was prepared and examined in parallel with the Bromsgrove Local Plan (adopted 2017), which identified capacity to accommodate all of this shortfall.
Tamworth Local Plan, 2006 – 2031	February 2016	The Tamworth Plan identified a shortfall of 1,825 homes. The North Warwickshire Local Plan (adopted 2021) meets 913 homes of this shortfall. The Lichfield Local Plan (adopted 2015) meets 500 homes of this shortfall and a statement of common ground signed in 2018 agreed to increase this contribution to 912 homes. The Lichfield Local Plan review does not make a specific contribution to Tamworth.

Birmingham Policy context

- 4.2 Policy TP48 of the Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) states that:

“The Council will also play an active role in promoting, and monitor progress in, the provision and delivery of the 37,900 homes required elsewhere in the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area to meet the shortfall in the city. This will focus on:

- *The progress of neighbouring Councils in undertaking Local Plan reviews to deliver housing growth to meet Birmingham’s needs.*
- *The progress of neighbouring Councils in delivering the housing targets set out in their plans.*

- *The extent to which a 5-year housing land supply is maintained in neighbouring areas.”*

4.3 Policy TP48 goes on to state that if other local authorities do not submit plans that provide an appropriate contribution to the shortfall, then the Council needs to consider the reasons for this and determine whether it is necessary to reassess Birmingham’s capacity by means of a full or partial BDP review after three years. In acknowledgement of the BDP shortfall, those authorities that preceded it included review mechanisms to address the shortfall. Commitments to review in adopted plans are set out in Appendix 1.

4.4 January 2020 signalled three years since adoption of the BDP. In December 2019 Birmingham City Council published an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS)¹ which concluded that an early review was not required. This stated that:

“...the Local Planning Authority will start scoping out the work needed to undertake this in 2020 and set out a timetable for any BDP update, if necessary, in the next version of the LDS by January 2022’

4.5 The Birmingham LDS was updated in June 2021, providing a timetable for the BDP review. That review has now commenced, and technical work is being undertaken. An Issues and Options document is due to be published in Autumn 2022.

Joint studies commissioned to address strategic housing shortfalls

4.6 Work commissioned to date by the GBBCHMA to find solutions to address these strategic housing shortfalls consists of the following two studies:

- Peter Brett Associates - Strategic Housing Needs Study
- GL Hearn / Wood – Strategic Growth Study 2018 (SGS)

4.7 As well as updating the position regarding the shortfall both up to 2031 and 2036, the Strategic Growth Study identified potential broad areas which each authority could explore and test through their plan-making processes to potentially accommodate the shortfall. Three broad development typologies were identified:

New settlements – 10,000 – 15,000 dwellings
 Employment led – 1,500 – 7,500 dwellings
 Urban Extensions – 1,500 – 7,500 dwellings

4.8 Potential locations were placed in two categories, a short list warranting further consideration and a long list. A full schedule of locations by development typology and potential capacity is shown in Appendix 2.

¹ <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/lfs>

- 4.9 These strategic options were accompanied by five smaller areas where potential for a proportionate distribution pattern of development (500 – 2,500 dwellings) should be examined further.

Monitoring the GBBCHMA Shortfall

- 4.10 A monitoring framework was established based on the Strategic Growth Study and progress towards meeting this shortfall has been reflected in a series of position statements for the period 2011 – 2031. The most recent of these position statements was published in 2021 with a base date of 1 April 2020. This suggests that the shortfall to 2031 is some 10,000 homes fewer than when the Strategic Growth Study was published. This is mainly as a result of the Birmingham Development Plan identifying additional capacity over that anticipated when the plan was examined.
- 4.11 The summary of GBBCHMA housing supply and need below in Table 1 includes capacity identified through the Solihull and North Warwickshire local plan reviews. In the case of Solihull, a contribution of 2,104 homes has been identified as coming forward before 2031 and in North Warwickshire a contribution of 3,790 by 2033. Further contributions may come forward pre 2031 as identified in Table 2, which may close the gap further.
- 4.12 As North Warwickshire and Stratford-on-Avon straddle the GBBCHMA and the Coventry and Warwickshire Housing Market Area, their contribution is shared and this is set out in an agreed Memorandum of Understanding², consequently an adjustment is made in Tables 1 & 2.

Table 1: GBBCHMA Housing Supply and Need as at 2019/20

	SGS Baseline (2011 – 31)	2017 update published (2011 - 31)	2017 Update revised (2011 - 31)	2019 (2011 - 31)	2020 (2011 -31)
GBBCHMA Housing Need (Strategic Growth Study baseline)	205,099	205,099	205,099	205,099	205,099
Contribution to CWHMA	-2880	-2880	-2880	-2880	-2880
Minimum housing requirement	207,979	207,979	207,979	207,979	207,979
Supply baseline	191,654	197,283	199,238	205,382	201,677
Total shortfall	16,325	10,696	8,741	2,597	6,302

Source: GBBCHMA Position Statement update

- 4.13 The Position Statement and Table 1, however, do not include capacity coming forward in South Staffordshire, Lichfield, Shropshire and Cannock Chase through sources of supply not formally identified in April 2020, which have important implications for the overall position and may provide capacity pre-2031.

² Available here:

<http://democracy.stratford.gov.uk/documents/s35727/Appendix%201%20MoU%20CW%20HMA.pdf&TxtOnly=1>

- 4.14 They also do not fully reflect the latest Black Country Plan position as set out in the Regulation 18 Plan, published for consultation in August 2021, which will further adjust supply based on more up to date urban capacity evidence, capacity from potential Green Belt releases and through seeking to address housing needs beyond the 2031 monitoring date. The implications of the total changes in supply arising are set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Local Plan Reviews – Shortfalls and Contributions

Local Plan	Status	Total contribution to GBBCHMA unmet needs (up to and beyond 2031)	Comments
South Staffordshire	Reg 18 October 2021	+4,000	2018-2038 plan period
Cannock	Reg 18 March 2021	+500	2018-2039 plan period
Shropshire	Examination July 2022	+1,500 Contribution specifically for Black Country unmet needs	2016 -2038 plan period
Black Country	Reg 18 Draft Plan August 2021	-28,000	2020 – 2039 plan period
Lichfield	Reg 19 July 2021	+2,655 2,000 contribution specifically for Black Country unmet needs	2018-2040 plan period Agreement in 2018 to contribute 912 towards the Tamworth shortfall.

Housing Need and capacity post-2031

- 4.15 The Black Country is the only plan area in the GBBCHMA that does not have a post NPPF local plan which has been adopted or reached examination. However, the Black Country Plan has reached Regulation 18 stage, and this is significant because it identifies a shortfall of 28,234 homes over the period 2020-39 (16,346 by 2031 and 11,888 over the period 2031-2039). These shortfall figures are based on up-to-date local housing need (including the 35% uplift for Wolverhampton). These figures, however, are subject to further consultation and examination. The Birmingham Development Plan review is at its formative stages and the extent of any post 2031 shortfall has yet to be established.
- 4.16 The 2018 Strategic Growth Study did consider unmet housing needs across the whole GBBCHMA up to 2036, concluding that there was an approximate 60,000 dwelling shortfall. In general, however, at the time of publication, plans looking beyond 2031 were not far enough advanced so capacity beyond this date would be limited by implication.

5. Timetable for review and ongoing cooperation

- 5.1 Table 3 sets out progress on local plan reviews across the Statement of Common Ground geography. Where plans have not yet reached Preferred Options Regulation 18 stage, the adopted plan is included. There is clear evidence to show that the shortfall has reduced significantly up to 2031. There is, however, evidence of an as yet untested gap emerging post 2031.

Table 3: Local plan review progress

Area	Plan Period	LHN as of 2022 (homes per annum)	Plan Requirement (homes per annum)	Shortfall / Surplus over Plan Period (total homes)	Plan Status
Birmingham	2011-2031	6,750	2,555	-37,900	Adopted (2017)
Black Country	2020 -2039	4004	2278	-28,239	Regulation 18 (2021)
Bromsgrove	2011-2030	383	368	+ 3,400 ³	Adopted (2017)
Cannock Chase	2018-2038	276	301	+ 500	Regulation 18 (2021)
Lichfield	2018 - 2040	303	422	+2655 ⁴	Examination (2022)
North Warwickshire	2014-2033	169	454	+ 3790 ⁵	Adopted (2021)
Redditch	2011-2030	165	337	-3,400 ⁶	Adopted (2017)
Solihull	2016-2036	807	939	+2,105	Examination (2022)
South Staffordshire	2018-2038	243	444	+4,000	Regulation 18 (2021)
Stratford-on-Avon	2011-2031	567	730		Adopted (2016)
Tamworth	2006-2031	145	177	-1825 ⁷	Adopted (2016)
Non-HMA					
Shropshire	2016-38	1,147	1,430	+1,500 ⁸	Examination (2022)
Telford and Wrekin	2011-31	491	864		Adopted (2018)
Wyre Forest	2016-36	276	276		Adopted (2022)

- 5.2 Whilst the full extent of the post 2031 shortfall is not yet established and not all plans within the GBBCHMA have agreed to make a contribution towards a GBBCHMA shortfall, there appears to be evidence that it will be difficult to meet the entire GBBCHMA shortfall within its collective boundaries. Shropshire has acknowledged this

³ 3,400 contribution specifically towards the 2011-30 Redditch shortfall

⁴ 2,000 contribution specifically towards the 2020-38 Black Country shortfall

⁵ 913 contribution specifically towards the 2006-31 Tamworth shortfall

⁶ 3,400 met by Bromsgrove Local Plan (2017)

⁷ 500 met by Lichfield Local Plan (adopted 2015) and 913 homes met by North Warwickshire Local Plan (adopted 2021)

⁸ Shropshire contribution towards Black Country shortfall specifically post 2031

and proposed a contribution of 1,500 dwellings towards the Black Country shortfall accordingly.

Approach taken in local plans to date

- 5.3 The purpose of this section is to set out how local plan reviews intend addressing the GBBCHMA shortfall and how they have used the shared evidence base, namely the GL Hearn / Wood Strategic Growth Study 2018. The wording provided for each authority represents the views of the authority concerned.

Birmingham

- 5.4 Birmingham City Council has commenced an update of the Birmingham Development Plan. It is likely that there will be a shortfall arising from this Plan update, however this has not yet been quantified. The Issues and Options consultation programmed for Autumn 2022 will provide an initial indication of the scale of the shortfall, however the City's capacity will evolve as the Plan update progresses. Housing need has increased since last plan so it is likely that the shortfall will be at least as severe as last time round.

Black Country

- 5.5 The Strategic Growth Study made several recommendations of relevance to the Black Country, including examining potential additional urban supply, and identifying and allocating additional land elsewhere for developments of 1500+ homes. The Black Country Urban Capacity Review Update 2021 examines the potential to increase densities in the urban area, and Policy HOU2 of the Draft Black Country Plan proposes increased housing densities compared with those required by current policy.
- 5.6 The Strategic Growth Study also identified areas of search for sites beyond and within the Green Belt. These included land for an urban extension North of Walsall around Brownhills (Walsall, Lichfield, Cannock) and South of Dudley (within Dudley). The Draft Black Country Plan proposes allocations in both of these locations, although the detailed assessment carried out for the Plan has shown that the total capacity of individual sites at each location is less than 1500 homes.

Bromsgrove

- 5.7 The Bromsgrove District Plan review is considering over 400 possible sites for inclusion in the plan. In some instances, these sites correspond with those areas suggested for consideration by the Strategic Growth Study. The assessment process the Council is undertaking is significantly more detailed than the Strategic Growth Study. Therefore, all realistic options including those in the Strategic Growth Study have been considered. A July 2022 Memorandum of Understanding between Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils confirms that the surplus of housing currently allocated for the needs for Redditch Borough (currently approximately 2241 dwellings) is handed back to BDC for BDC to consider in its plan making.

Cannock Chase

- 5.8 The Strategic Growth Study is being used to inform local plan review process. The Preferred Options report set out a strategy to meet own needs and provide a contribution to GBBCHMA shortfall of 500 dwellings, recognising the proportionate dispersal option in the Strategic Growth Study. This will require Green Belt release and there are infrastructure constraints. The Strategic Growth Study is the only independent document providing GBBCHMA shortfall evidence, so the local plan is seeking to test its recommendations. Cannock Chase is not aware of alternative evidence and is keen to make use of existing evidence and work with partners on that.

North Warwickshire

- 5.9 The Strategic Growth Study was used as a piece of evidence to inform recently adopted plan. CWHMA used commuting patterns as a consistent methodology for distributing needs and used a version of this as a basis for taking 10% of Birmingham's shortfalls. Tamworth and CWHMA unmet needs were also provided for. The Strategic Growth Study was relied upon for market capacity evidence to support the stance in local plan.

Lichfield

- 5.10 The Strategic Growth Study is used as a piece of evidence to inform the Local Plan review process. All potential options identified within Lichfield District within the Strategic Growth Study have been considered through the plan-making process. The Strategic Growth Study directly informed the identification of one of the key areas for growth within the draft Local Plan. Other options identified within the SGS have been discounted through the plan-making process, having had consideration of wider evidence base. The draft Local Plan proposes to provide 2,000 homes to the Black Country and 665 homes to the wider GBBCHMA. The existing adopted Local Plan provides 500 towards the previous Cannock Chase Local Plan shortfall (which does not now exist) and 500 homes towards the Tamworth Local Plan shortfall. Lichfield District Council signed a Statement of Common Ground with Tamworth Borough Council in 2018 agreeing to meet 912 homes of the Tamworth Local Plan shortfall.

Redditch

- 5.11 Redditch Borough Council is at the start of the plan review process. The Strategic Growth Study will be one of many pieces of evidence that will be considered proportionately as plan making progresses. A July 2022 Memorandum of Understanding between Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils confirms that the surplus of housing currently allocated for the needs for Redditch Borough (currently approximately 2241 dwellings) is handed back to BDC for BDC to consider in its plan making

Solihull

- 5.12 The local plan was submitted for examination in May 2021. Hearings took place from September 2021 to February 2022. Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's (SMBC) approach was to make a contribution to the GBBCHMA based on the shortfall created by the 2017 Birmingham Development Plan as this represented a tested and established position, which is not yet the position for the Black Country Plan. Other LPAs made the case that SMBC should be doing more now. The Inspector's [interim] report is not yet published, but they have confirmed their conclusion *"that the Council has complied with the duty to co-operate in the preparation of the Local Plan."*
- 5.13 As a piece of evidence, the Strategic Growth Study options were considered during the preparation of the plan and helped inform further evidence (e.g. testing a new settlement proposal through the Sustainability Appraisal for the plan). Whilst the SA did not support a new settlement in the Balsall Common area, the Local Plan has been able to treat the settlement as an appropriate location for what is effectively an urban extension. The plan includes growth at other options identified in the Strategic Growth Study e.g. land south of the airport/NEC and land south of Birmingham around Hollywood, Whitlock's End and Cheswick Green. This represents a balanced approach and reflects the tensions in the Strategic Growth Study which identified the Green Belt in these locations as making a 'principal contribution'.

South Staffordshire

- 5.14 South Staffordshire first established its 4,000 dwelling contribution towards GBHMA unmet needs in its Local Plan Review 2018 Issues and Options consultation. This contribution was in addition to the district's own housing needs and represented the sum of the minimum indicative capacities of the following four strategic growth locations recommended in the GBHMA Strategic Growth Study 2018:
- Urban extension (1,500 dwellings minimum) north of Penkridge
 - Employment-led strategic development (1,500 dwellings minimum) in vicinity of i54/J2 of M54
 - Proportionate dispersal (500 dwellings minimum) north of Codsall/Bilbrook
 - Proportionate dispersal (500 dwellings minimum) on the western edge of the conurbation
- 5.15 The Council's position was that if all authorities in the GBBCHMA delivered the locations proposed by the Strategic Growth Study, the shortfall (including up to 2036) would be met, in line with paragraph 1.102 of the Study.
- 5.16 There was also a need to consider other locations in the district alongside the locations listed above, due to the district's own increasing housing needs. The Council then proposed a Spatial Strategy in 2019 which delivered both the 4,000 dwelling contribution and growth in the broad locations identified in the Strategic Growth Study. These were then translated into proposed site allocations in the 2021 Local

Plan Review Preferred Options consultation, whilst being refined to take account of local constraints.

- 5.17 South Staffordshire took this approach to ensure that its contribution towards the GBBCHMAs unmet housing needs was based upon the recommendations of the Strategic Growth Study, which it considers to be the only consistent assessment of Green Belt purposes, market capacity, deliverability and sustainability prepared by the GBBCHMA authorities to date. To date it has not received direct objections to the 4,000 dwelling contribution figure from GBBCHMA authorities, although some planning authorities have indicated they would not consider it appropriate to follow a similar methodology to determine their contribution to unmet needs.

Stratford-on-Avon

- 5.18 Stratford-on-Avon is continuing to progress its Site Allocations Plan which will identify reserve sites to contribute to the GBBCHMA shortfall to 2031. In addition, SDC is working with Warwick District on the South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP) running to 2050. The SWLP is being prepared with work on the strategic Part 1 already underway. Issues and Options consultation is due late summer 2022 with adoption of Part 1 expected by the end of 2025. The SWLP will have to address both Birmingham and Coventry City shortfalls. The Strategic Growth Study will form part of the evidence base to inform plan preparation, but no decisions have yet been made. Stratford-on-Avon are keen to agree a GBBCHMA-wide approach, such as commuting flows, to act as a benchmark for contributions.

Tamworth

- 5.19 The adopted Local Plan makes up 1,825 of GBBCHMA unmet need. 913 of this shortfall is met through the recently adopted North Warwickshire Local Plan. The adopted Lichfield Local Plan meets 500 of the shortfall and Lichfield District Council signed a Statement of Common Ground in 2018 agreeing to meet 912 homes of the shortfall. The Lichfield Local Plan review does not propose to make a specific contribution towards Tamworth. The Tamworth Local Plan review statement issued in 2020 stated that: *“given the existing development constraints within Tamworth’s border, it is unlikely that a significant contribution to the HMA shortfall could be made.”* The Tamworth Local Plan review is programmed to commence in 2022.

Shropshire

- 5.20 Shropshire submitted a local plan in September 2021 which makes a contribution of 1,500 homes towards meeting the needs specifically of the Black Country authorities as established through the Black Country Plan review. The examination is underway and questions have been asked regarding the rationale for Shropshire’s contribution to unmet needs. Shropshire’s approach is largely based on migratory trends. Shropshire is located outside the GBBCHMA and Shropshire is acknowledged as a separate housing market area. Shropshire has engaged with the Association of Black

Country Authorities constructively and have agreed a separate Statement of Common Ground to support its approach towards unmet needs.

Telford & Wrekin

- 5.21 The Council has considered the representations made to the local plan received from local authorities. It is acknowledged by all parties that Telford & Wrekin functions as a separate housing market area, based on an analysis of the relevant indicators presented in supporting evidence to the Local Plan. This is consistent with the decision of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GB&S LEP) to exclude Telford & Wrekin from their assessment of housing needs within the GB&S LEP area. Given this relationship, and based on current evidence available at this time, the potential contribution of in-migration arising from the Local Plan's housing requirement towards meeting the needs of the GBBCHMA has not been quantified. The Council will continue to consider this matter in the light of emerging evidence. It does not at present rule out the potential apportionment of some of the Local Plan's housing requirement towards meeting the needs of the GBBCHMA. Discussions will therefore continue to progress on this basis.

Wyre Forest

- 5.22 The Wyre Forest District Local Plan 2016-2036 was adopted in April 2022. Policy SP1 Spatial Development Strategy 2016-2036 clearly states that due consideration will be given, through a future early review of the Wyre Forest District Council Local Plan where necessary and in accordance with the NPPF, to the housing needs of neighbouring local authorities in circumstances when it has been clearly established through the local plan process that these needs must be met through provision in the Wyre Forest District area.

6. Summary of Current Position

Summary of key issues

- There remains a shortfall of 6,302 homes between 2011 and 2031 based on April 2020 information. Contributions towards addressing the shortfall have thus far been by local authorities within the GBBCHMA. The shortfall may reduce further as a result of plans progressing through the review process.
- There is evidence of a shortfall post-2031 based on published evidence, specifically the Black Country Regulation 18 Plan, although authorities have different positions on whether this currently warrants contributions from other authorities. The shortfall identified is also subject to further testing and consultation.
- This post-2031 shortfall is likely to increase in the future, principally from Birmingham in the light of progress with the Birmingham Plan.
- It is the role of emerging plans to seek to best meet any defined unmet needs in a sustainable manner.

- The Strategic Growth Study recommended testing several strategic opportunities through Local Plan reviews, which it indicated could meet the shortfall if delivered. Some of these opportunities have been reviewed through Local Plan work to date; but these opportunities, plus those which are yet to be tested are unlikely to be sufficient to address the post-2031 shortfall, although work to formally examine this in light of new housing needs has not been commenced.
- Duty to Cooperate engagement and evidence commissioned since the Strategic Growth Study has identified other closely related Local Planning Authorities, that can accommodate unmet need in a sustainable manner where a functional relationship between areas is defined and agreed through Duty to Cooperate engagement.
- Engagement to date has primarily taken place through direct Duty to Cooperate discussions between individual local authorities and the GBBCHMA officer group. Proposed governance arrangements are intended to supplement and support the Duty to Cooperate process across the GBBCHMA and beyond

Summary of key areas of agreement

- Cross boundary unmet housing needs are acknowledged as a strategic matter.
- The GBBCHMA geography is agreed as an appropriate geographical area within which to consider how to address housing needs.
- The proposed Officer Working Group and Member Board offers a complementary process to other Duty to Cooperate engagement and is agreed as the preferred means to cooperating across the strategic geography as a whole in order to ensure housing delivery, and terms of reference will be established to support this.
- Joint working will be employed where circumstances warrant (e.g., BC LP etc).
- Agreement in principle to the plan making value of the existing evidence base, including the 2018 Strategic Growth Study, whilst acknowledging that this is not a policy document it is part of an evidence base to take matters forward through the local plan review process⁹.
- Parties to this Statement of Common Ground will commission funding of shared evidence bases, where practicable to do so, to inform cooperation on housing delivery, including any necessary updates to the 2018 Strategic Growth Study.

Summary of key areas where agreement is still being sought

- There is, as yet, no agreed approach to accommodating the shortfall across the GBBCHMA or other closely related Local Planning Authorities with an agreed functional relationship, that can accommodate unmet need in a sustainable manner.
- Despite the findings of the Strategic Growth Study, there is no current agreed position on the scale of the shortfall to be planned for post-2031, with individual

⁹ https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/9405/february_2018_glhwood_position_statement

local authorities taking different positions on the Black Country's emerging post - 2031 housing shortfall for example.

- The relative weight given to the Strategic Growth Study varies, all local authorities utilising the Strategic Growth Study have tested and supplemented it with more local evidence, but the manner in which this has been done varies.

7. Future objectives and work streams to address key issues and areas where an agreement is still being sought

Objectives of the Development Needs Group

7.1 There is considerable variety in the progress and status of local plans across the GBBCHMA. Notwithstanding this complexity, the signatories to this statement will seek to deliver the following objectives:

- coordinate housing delivery to meet identified needs.
- maximise agreement on the approach towards strategic housing distribution.
- identify a transparent minimum level of housing need across the GBBCHMA that is consistent with national policy; and
- develop shared evidence bases where feasible and proportionate to inform the approach to meeting housing needs.

Review the position to date and the deliverability of the 2018 Strategic Growth Study

7.2 The existing evidence base is in urgent need of review in light of the lack of a clear and up-to-date picture on unmet housing needs beyond 2031 and the differing positions of authorities on the recommendations made in the original 2018 Strategic Growth Study. Further work is required to develop and agree the scope and sequencing of this review, but key next steps should include:

- Confirming how current contributions to meet GBBCHMA wide needs will be apportioned between the current and emerging unmet needs of the Black Country and Birmingham. This work is essential in order to show how the anticipated, but not yet tested, Black Country housing shortfall in particular is being addressed to support the next stages of the Plan.
- To confirm the scale of the housing shortfall across the whole of the GBBCHMA over a period of at least 15 years, using the standard method as the starting point for addressing housing needs, to inform the approach taken by current emerging Local Plan reviews¹⁰. This should attempt to take a consistent approach to identifying capacity within the study area, particularly in areas generating housing shortfalls.
- A review of whether the growth locations identified in the 2018 Strategic Growth Study remain appropriate and whether further work is needed to identify new growth areas for testing through Local Plan preparation.

¹⁰ Where plans have reached an advanced stage then this will be addressed via the review cycle.

- A market analysis which can advise at a strategic level on market absorption rates (including reference to previous build out rates), in particular for areas that may be identified as potential locations for strategic growth.
- Consider the extent to which the shortfall will be addressed within the GBBCHMA before seeking options beyond it.
- Consider the extent to which major job creating and infrastructure projects e.g. West Midland Interchange and UK Central / HS2 can be supported by labour supply from within the GBBCHMA
- A review of existing SHELAA evidence, including Green Belt assessments and viability/deliverability expectations across the GBBCHMA

7.3 This is not necessarily an exhaustive list and may need to be updated to consider findings from local plan examinations within and adjoining the GBBCHMA.

Prepare an updated set of strategic growth recommendations to address any residual housing shortfalls

7.4 Subject to the outcome of the work set out above there may be a need for additional work to identify additional strategic growth locations to meet any residual unmet needs. The exact scope of this work will depend on the findings of the review and the extent of any remaining shortfall, but could examine matters including:

- Potential options for strategic growth locations beyond and within the Green Belt.
- The comparative suitability and deliverability of strategic growth locations using a consistent methodology.
- Opportunities to align future growth locations with existing planned and potential future transport infrastructure improvements.
- Clear conclusions on the level of strategic growth locations required to meet residual housing shortfalls, leading into a range of different growth distributions (e.g., combinations of different strategic growth locations) across the study area which could address these needs.
- Potential transport carbon emission implications and sustainability impacts of different growth distributions to meet the area's unmet needs.
- The degree to which different growth distributions align with functional relationships between shortfall authorities and the surrounding area.

7.5 The detailed scope of this work will be prepared by the GBBCHMA officer group. It is intended that this work, once completed, would provide a range of potential future growth distributions to be considered by the GBBCHMA and any other functionally linked authorities under the proposed governance structures set out in this Statement of Common Ground.

Delivering ongoing engagement going forward

7.6 The GBBCHMA authorities will establish an advisory Member Board of local elected members to address housing solutions across the GBBCHMA and beyond. The

structure of the Board will be agreed through future iterations of this Statement of Common Ground.

- 7.7 Future Duty to Cooperate engagement through the Member Board on the scale and apportionment of housing shortfalls will be informed by the programme of work set out in 7.2-7.4 to review and (if necessary) update the Strategic Growth Study, although the final decision on how such matters will be addressed is a matter for individual local authorities' local plans. The principles which will inform the identification and distribution of housing shortfalls within the GBBCHMA will be further developed in future iterations of this Statement of Common Ground.
- 7.8 The final scope of the revised Strategic Growth Study work and future iterations of this Statement of Common Ground will be informed by best practice from similar statements of common ground covering other large housing market areas, whilst having regard to the differing political structures, combined authority roles and functional geographies across such areas.

8. Future governance arrangements for the GBBCHMA Development Needs Group

- 8.1 At present cross boundary matters are dealt with through an officer group, the details and Terms of Reference are set out below:

GBBCHMA Development Needs Group – Officer Working Group

Terms of Reference

- 8.2 The GBBCHMA Development Needs Group provides a framework for coordination between local authorities to ensure that unmet needs within the GBBCHMA can be satisfactorily addressed (where possible). These Terms of Reference set out how the Development Needs Group - Officer Working Group will work together and report to the Member Board of the GBBCHMA.
- 8.3 The objective of the GBBCHMA Development Needs Group – Officer Working Group (OWG) is to prepare evidence and monitoring information to inform recommendations made by the GBBCHMA Development Needs Group – Member Board.

Status

- 8.4 Each local planning authority is individually responsible for meeting its legal duties under the Duty to Cooperate, working together constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to address strategic matters, such as cross-boundary housing shortfalls and strategic employment sites. Given the existing and emerging housing pressures facing the GBBCHMA, the local planning authorities listed in this Statement of Common Ground have formed an advisory partnership, overseen by the Member Board with the OWG co-ordinating evidence preparation to support this role. The Member Board and OWG have no additional powers but serve to provide a

mechanism for all local authorities involved in the GBBCHMA Development Needs Group, to work constructively together in a co-ordinated manner to address housing shortfalls and strategic employment sites, resolving (as far as possible) differences in position on this matter and make advisory recommendations.

Composition

8.5 The membership of the OWG will comprise representatives of all the local planning authorities involved in the GBBCHMA Development Needs Group, as defined through signatories to this statement of common ground (set out in Section 2 of this document).

- The OWG will comprise suitable officers of the GBBCHMA Development Needs Group local authorities.
- Officers or technical / professional representatives of stakeholder organisations, by invitation.

Structure and Procedures

8.6 The following structures and procedures will be observed:

- The OWG will meet, as a minimum, on a quarterly basis.
- Meetings of the OWG will be chaired by each member local authority in turn.
- Officer support and secretariat services will be provided by a nominated participant in the OWG.
- Agendas, reports, and minutes of meetings will be circulated to relevant facilitators in advance of any meetings.
- Officer support will be provided for each local authority as necessary.
- With the agreement of members of the OWG members, advisory members (such as the West Midlands Combined Authority or relevant County Councils) may be co-opted to represent a specific area of interest or issue of consideration, especially where this will assist with the delivery of sites and support the group in evidence gathering to address housing shortfalls.

Remit

8.7 The OWG will be responsible, with external support, where agreed with the Member Board, for undertaking the following:

- Advise the Member Board as necessary on issues relating to unmet housing needs and strategic employment sites from the GBBCHMA.
- Provide technical support to the Member Board, prepare reports for the Member Board's consideration, and carry out such actions as may be instructed by the Member Board.
- Co-ordinate quarterly updates on local plan progress and evidence base gathering relevant to the GBBCHMA housing shortfall and strategic employment sites for the Member Board.

- The OWG may agree to establish small project or working groups, resourced as necessary, to progress specific work areas where appropriate.

GBBCHMA Development Needs Group - Member Board

8.8 To steer and respond to the activities of the Development Needs Group (DNG) an appropriate Member Board is required. A suitable structure will be drawn up based on the following principles:

- The Member Board will be supported by the OWG and convene at regular intervals to consider relevant matters.
- The chair of the group will rotate annually with support and secretarial services provided from within the OWG.
- All local authorities that are signatories to the Statement of Common Ground will be represented.
- The Member Board will be advisory in nature and will not override local authority decision making or local plan preparation.

8.9 In terms of its remit the Member Board will:

- Work positively and constructively to address cross boundary strategic matters especially those relating to housing and employment to meet the legal Duty to Cooperate and National Planning Policy Framework requirements.
- Will oversee the development, implementation, and monitoring of joint work to quantify and address existing and emerging housing shortfalls arising from the GBBCHMA.
- Oversee and steer the commission of key studies to inform the evidence base for policy development.
- Will advise/steer the DNG on changing priorities based on changes to the legal and policy framework and commit to new actions where required.
- Will rely on input from the OWG to help inform their advisory decisions and will direct the DNG where additional/different actions are required.
- Receive and review quarterly reports from the OWG, summarising evidence base gathering and local plan progress relevant to the GBBCHMA housing shortfalls and strategic employment sites.
- Receive and consider regular reports from the DNG including the Statement of Common Ground and its regular updates.

Appendix 1: Local Plan Commitments to review

This appendix sets out commitments in post NPPF local plans (or Site Allocations Documents) to review policies to consider the wider HMA shortfalls.

Bromsgrove Local Plan 2011 – 2030, Adopted January 2017

Policy BDP4: Green Belt

BDP4.1 The Green Belt as indicated on the Policies Map will only be maintained as per BDP 4.2. BDP4.2 A Local Plan Review including a full Review of the Green Belt will be undertaken in accordance with BDP 3 in advance of 2023 to identify:

- a) Sufficient land in sustainable locations to deliver approximately 2,300 homes in the period up to 2030 to deliver the objectively assessed housing requirement for Bromsgrove District.
- b) Safeguarded land for the period 2030-40 to meet the development needs of Bromsgrove District and adjacent authorities based on the latest evidence; and
- c) Land to help deliver the objectively assessed housing requirements of the West Midlands conurbation within the current plan period i.e. up to 2030.

The timing of the Green Belt Review will be determined by updated evidence such as the GBSLEP Strategic Housing Needs Study and the monitoring of housing delivery against the Council's projected housing trajectory. The outcomes of the Green Belt Review will then be incorporated into the Local Plan Review. BDP4.3 The Green Belt boundary review will follow sustainable development principles and take into account up to date evidence and any proposals in Neighbourhood Plans. Where appropriate, settlement boundaries and village envelopes on the Policies Map will be revised to accommodate development

Lichfield Local Plan Strategy 2008 - 29, Adopted February 2015 and Local Plan Allocations 2008-2029, Adopted July 2019

Local Plan Strategy

4.6 Following discussions falling under the Duty to Cooperate Lichfield District Council recognises that evidence is emerging to indicate that Birmingham will not be able to accommodate the whole of its new housing requirements for 2011-31 within its administrative boundary and that some provision will need to be made in adjoining areas to help meet Birmingham's needs. A similar situation applies, albeit on a lesser scale, in relation to Tamworth. Lichfield District Council will work collaboratively with Birmingham, Tamworth and other authorities and with the GBSLEP to establish, objectively, the level of long term growth through a joint commissioning of a further housing assessment and work to establish the scale and distribution of any emerging housing shortfall. In the event that the work identifies that further provision is needed in Lichfield District, an early review or partial review of the Lichfield District Local Plan will be brought forward to address this

matter. Should the matter result in a small scale and more localised issue directly in relation to Tamworth then this will be dealt with through the Local Plan Allocations document.

Local Plan Allocations

2.1 The Council is aware and is committed to reviewing its Plan in full to assist in addressing strategic issues which cross local authority boundaries. The Council continues to work proactively with partners to identify the appropriate amount of growth to be accommodated within the boundaries of Lichfield District. In addition, as part of this review the Council will continue work with other Neighbouring Authorities through the Duty to Cooperate (DTC), as well as undertaking a comprehensive review of its evidence base.

2.2 The Local Plan Review has already commenced with the publication of and consultation on a Scope, Issues and Options document in April 2018. Through a Local Plan Review, changes to the spatial strategy, policies and proposals within the current local plan may be required in response to emerging evidence or to reflect strategic issues being dealt with through the DTC. It is through this review process that consideration of such strategic matters, including the spatial strategy, are most appropriately considered.

2.3 Policy LPR Local Plan Review sets a review mechanism for the Lichfield District Local Plan.

Policy LPR: Local Plan Review

Lichfield District Council shall carry out an early review of the Local Plan for Lichfield that will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination in accordance with the latest Local Development Scheme or no later than the end of December 2021. This review shall replace the adopted Local Plan Strategy (LPS) 2008-2029 in all aspects and therefore be a comprehensive review. This Plan will extend the existing plan period to at least 5 years beyond the end of the current LPS and it shall review as a minimum the following matters:

- The housing requirement for Lichfield and the potential for housing land supply to meet this need.
- Any unmet housing need arising from the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA), inclusive of any unmet housing need arising from Tamworth Borough and the appropriate level of contribution within the District of Lichfield in line with ongoing technical work and the requirements of policy TP48 of the adopted Birmingham Development Plan (BDP).
- Employment land requirements for Lichfield as identified through a comprehensive evidence basis.
- Lichfield's potential role in meeting any wider unmet employment needs through the Duty to Co-operate (DtC).
- The appropriateness of the existing settlement hierarchy and the strategic distribution of growth in light of new housing, employment and other service/infrastructure needs.
- Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople (GTTS) provision.

- A comprehensive Green Belt Review either in partnership with relevant neighbouring authorities or in close consultation with these authorities through the DTC, to inform any further Green Belt release to accommodate new development within the District.
- An evidence-based assessment of highways infrastructure needs, in partnership with the highways authorities.

Explanation

2.4 The Local Plan Strategy identified that following on from discussions falling under the DTC it had been identified through evidence emerging at that time that indicated Birmingham would not be able to accommodate its housing requirement within its administrative boundary and that a similar situation applied to Tamworth, although on a much reduced scale. The Local Plan Strategy recognised that, in the event of further housing provision would be needed within Lichfield District, such issues could be addressed through a review of the Lichfield District Local Plan.

2.5 It has been established through the examination and adoption of the Birmingham Development Plan that there is a significant unmet housing need arising from Birmingham and the wider Housing Market Area (HMA) within which it sits. Policy PG1 of the Birmingham Development Plan identifies an unmet need of approximately 37,900 dwellings in the period to 2021. It should be noted that further consideration of this need has been undertaken and it is considered to be a lower need than established within the Birmingham Development Plan. Lichfield District is part of the Greater Birmingham and Black Country HMA along with Birmingham, the Black Country authorities, South Staffordshire, Cannock Chase, Tamworth, North Warwickshire, Stratford-upon-Avon, Solihull, Bromsgrove and Redditch.

2.6 Additionally, Tamworth Borough Council's adopted Local Plan notes that it cannot meet its housing requirement within its own administrative area and requires a further 1,825 dwellings to be accommodated outside of the Borough. Tamworth is located within the Greater Birmingham and Black Country HMA and this additional shortfall of 1,825 dwellings is part of the overall shortfall within the HMA. It is considered most appropriate to consider how to address such shortfall as part of the wider HMA shortfall through the review of the Local Plan. Furthermore, since the above shortfall was identified, the early stages of the review of the Black Country Core Strategy indicate a further shortfall of approximately 22,000 dwellings.

2.7 To assist with discussion between the authorities within the HMA a significant evidence base has been produced by the authorities. This includes the Strategic Housing Needs Study (stage 2 and stage 3) and the Strategic Growth Study (2018). These studies provide a number of strategic recommendations and examine a number of strategic locations for housing growth which could assist in meeting unmet needs. Ultimately the study sets out a range of options which it concludes could be considered through the review of authorities' respective local plans. At this time no decisions upon the apportionment of such unmet need have been made. A recommendation of the Strategic Housing Needs Studies was that there needed to be a consistent evidence base across the HMA authorities in relation to the Green Belt. The Strategic Growth Study includes a high level strategic green belt review all

of which assists in providing a consistent evidence base for the authorities to consider and upon which future memorandums of understanding (MOU) and/or statements of common ground (SCG) apportioning unmet growth can be based.

2.8 Alongside the strategic Green Belt Review within the Strategic Growth Study, Lichfield District will prepare a comprehensive Green Belt Review to assess, in further detail, the capacity of the Green Belt across the authority as part of the evidence base supporting the review of the Local Plan.

2.9 Although unmet housing need remains the largest cross-boundary issue, there are other associated issues which may need consideration, including provision for Gypsy and Travellers and employment land provision.

2.10 The Council will continue work with other Neighbouring Authorities through the DTC, as well as undertaking a comprehensive review of its evidence base. The District Council is committed to working positively with its partners to address these strategic issues and where appropriate prepare MOU or SCG with respect of the issues above.

Redditch Local Plan, 2011 – 30, Adopted January 2017

1.11 In addition, Redditch has worked with other Local Authorities, which although are not directly adjacent to Redditch may have strategic matters that have implications for the preparation of BORLP4. In particular, Redditch Borough Council and Birmingham City Council have jointly acknowledged there is a strategic planning matter with regard to Birmingham being unable to accommodate all of its own housing needs. As required by the Duty to Cooperate, due consideration will be given, including through a review of the BORLP4, to the housing needs of another local planning authority in circumstances when it has been clearly established through collaborative working that those needs must be met through provision in Redditch. With regard to Birmingham City Council, the mechanism for resolving this potential strategic matter of Birmingham's unmet housing needs will be through the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Redditch's subsequent review of the BORLP4.

Tamworth Local Plan 2006 -31, adopted February 2016

Agreements have been reached with Lichfield and North Warwickshire for the delivery of housing. In addition to this Tamworth Borough Council is actively involved with the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Economic Partnership. The GBSLEP Spatial Framework looks to present options for delivering strategic planning across the LEP, one of which is the delivery of housing. Tamworth recognises that there is a current under provision of housing to meet objectively assessed needs across the LEP and that part of this arises from within Tamworth, but to a much greater extent from Birmingham. It has been established that Tamworth cannot fully meet its own housing or employment needs, any future development which goes beyond the levels of development set out in this Local Plan will be to meet needs arising from Tamworth. Through the preparation of Birmingham City Council's Local Plan and Tamworth's it has been agreed between the two authorities that Tamworth is unable to assist in meeting Birmingham's unmet needs.

South Staffordshire Site Allocations Document, adopted September 2018**Local Plan Review**

6.7 The Localism Act 2011, and specifically Section 110, introduced a legal requirement known as Duty to Co-operate (DtC). The DtC is important when issues arise that cross the boundaries of local authority areas. Dialogue between neighbouring local authorities should be constructive, active and on-going to ensure that it can be demonstrated that plans have been positively prepared, having regard to cross boundary issues of strategic importance. Further information on the Duty to Cooperate can be found in paragraphs 4.4-4.8.

6.8 Through a Local Plan review, changes to the spatial strategy in the adopted Core Strategy may be necessary in response to emerging evidence, or to reflect cross boundary issues of strategic importance under the DtC. Whilst the SAD is not considered to be the appropriate place at which to revise the strategic approach established in the adopted Core Strategy, it is considered necessary now, to provide a narrative on significant cross boundary issues that have arisen since the Core Strategy was adopted in December 2012. Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area (GBHMA).

6.9 There is a primary Housing Market Area (HMA) comprising Birmingham, the Black Country and nine neighbouring local authorities defined in a Strategic Housing Needs Study (SHNS); commissioned by the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) and the Black Country Authorities. South Staffordshire is one of the nine local authorities within the HMA, together with Cannock Chase, Lichfield, Tamworth, North Warwickshire, Stratford--on-Avon, Solihull, Bromsgrove and Redditch.

6.10 The adopted Birmingham Development Plan (Policy PG1) identifies an unmet housing need of 37,900 dwellings up to 2031, for which provision is to be made elsewhere within the GBHMA. Furthermore, since this shortfall was identified, a further additional 22,000 dwelling unmet need has been identified through early stages of the review of the Black Country Core Strategy. For this reason, the distribution of the unmet housing need across the HMA is yet to be agreed. South Staffordshire Council is working positively towards a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) with all local planning authorities within the GBHMA.

6.11 To assist discussions between the HMA authorities with regard to the apportionment of housing needs, a Strategic Growth Study is being prepared across all fourteen GBHMA authorities. This examines strategic locations for housing growth which could assist in meeting the identified HMA unmet needs across the GBHMA, having regard to high-level Green Belt Review, assessment of infrastructure capacity, sustainability criteria and deliverability assessments. The study re-examines the potential urban capacity of GBHMA authorities and options for strategic development past the Green Belt, and ultimately sets out options for strategic growth locations to be tested through the Local Plan Review. This provides a Site Allocations Document (SAD) September 2018 20 consistent evidence base upon which a future MoU/SoCG apportioning housing growth can be based.

6.12 In addition to this, South Staffordshire Council and the Black Country authorities have agreed to prepare a joint Green Belt Review to assess, in further detail, the capacity of the Green Belt across the five authorities. This may provide a basis for identifying future housing and employment sites, where exceptional circumstances demonstrate these are required. Given the changing nature of cross-boundary housing growth pressures, additional evidence may be required to review the District's housing capacity. For example, an update of the evidence base in respect of the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC), including mitigation measures and assessment of existing rural settlements' infrastructure capacity, and services and facilities. This evidence will inform the framework for a new spatial strategy which seeks to meet the District's own objectively assessed housing needs and, subject to discussion with other local authorities, could potentially meet a proportionate contribution towards unmet housing needs from the wider housing market area.

Stratford-on-Avon Core Strategy, adopted July 2016

Explanation

Policy CS.17 Accommodating Housing Need Arising from outside Stratford-on-Avon District The existence of unmet housing need arising outside Stratford-on-Avon District will not render this Plan out of date. However, the Plan will be reviewed if evidence demonstrates that significant housing needs arising outside the District should be met within the District and cannot be adequately addressed without a review. To establish this, the Council will work with other local authorities in the Coventry and Warwickshire Housing Market Area to:

1. prepare and maintain a joint evidence base including housing need and housing land availability;
2. take part in a process to agree the strategic approach to address any shortfall of land availability to deliver in full the Housing Market Area's Objectively Assessed Housing Need or other evidenced housing need arising outside the District; and
3. where the evidence and the duty to co-operate process clearly indicates that there is a housing need that cannot be met within the administrative boundaries of the authority in which the need arises and part or all of the need could most appropriately be met within Stratford-on-Avon District, the Council will seek to identify the most appropriate sites to meet this need and will review the Local Plan to do this, should it be required.

Explanation

5.3.1 The six local planning authorities within the Coventry and Warwickshire Housing Market Area (HMA) have agreed to cooperate together to ensure the HMA's housing need of at least 4,277 dwellings per annum is met in full. It is recognised that this is important in supporting the growth ambitions of Coventry and Warwickshire as well as ensuring local plans and core strategies within the sub-region comply with national policy and guidance.

5.3.2 However, it is recognised that there may be physical or policy constraints which make it difficult for one or more of the local planning authorities within the sub-region to meet their local objectively assessed housing need in full. In these circumstances it will be

necessary for the six authorities to work closely together to address this potential shortfall and to ensure the HMA's overall housing need is met in full.

5.3.3 The process for doing this has been set out and agreed by the Coventry and Warwickshire Shadow Joint Committee. The starting point of this process is a shared evidence base relating to strategic issues. It is recognised that the following assessments/studies are likely to be the key elements of this shared evidence base:

- a Joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment: it is important to ensure that the objectively assessed housing need of the HMA and each of the Councils within the HMA is understood and that the evidence to support this is kept up to date.
- a Joint Approach to Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments: it is important that housing land availability is assessed consistently across the HMA so that the overall and local supply of potential housing sites is understood. Stratford-on-Avon District Council - July 2016 100 Stratford-on-Avon Core Strategy 2011-31 Section 5 Development Strategy – 5.3 Accommodating Housing Need from outside the District
- Joint Employment Land Assessment: it is important to ensure that employment land requirements and supply are understood, and planned for, alongside housing. A shared evidence base will help to understand the sub-regional and local employment land requirements as well as the availability of sub-regional and local sites to meet these requirements.
- a Green Belt Study: the West Midlands Green Belt covers significant parts of the Coventry and Warwickshire HMA. The Green Belt study needs to be up to date to inform a sub-regional approach.

5.3.4 In the event that there is a shortfall arising from one or more District within the HMA, and in the context of a shared evidence base, the six local planning authorities have agreed to work together to develop and maintain a strategy to meet the HMA's housing requirement. This process will seek to identify the most suitable available sites to meet any shortfall. Stratford-on-Avon District Council will participate actively in the process on an on-going basis.

5.3.5 Should this strategy identify that sites within Stratford-on-Avon District are required to meet some or all of a housing need arising from outside the District, the Council will undertake work to establish the most appropriate sites to do this and if this indicates that significant modifications are required to the Local Plan, the Council is committed to undertaking an early review of the Plan to address this.

5.3.6 A further issue that may need to be addressed through this process is the potential for a shortfall in housing land arising from outside the Coventry and Warwickshire HMA, in particular from the Greater Birmingham area. In the event that such a shortfall may need to be partially addressed within the Coventry and Warwickshire HMA, the six local planning authorities have agreed to work together using the process described above.

North Warwickshire Reviewed Plan 2011 -33, adopted September 2021 (rolled forward from 2029)

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a requirement for the Borough Council to co-operate with other local authorities as well as organisations and agencies to ensure the effective discussion of issues of common concern to develop sound plans. This Duty is an ongoing process and does not stop with the production of a plan. The Borough Council has a proven track record in cooperating with neighbouring authorities in strategic planning matters and has been working with neighbouring authorities to consider their future development needs and if they can accommodate them. The Borough Council has reached an agreement on the amount of development that can be accommodated can be delivered with local authorities from the Coventry and Warwickshire area as well as the Greater Birmingham and Black Country area (including Tamworth). It is considered there is sufficient information to progress this Plan taking into account these needs and providing for them where possible within this Plan. In addition, the Borough Council continues to commit to working collaboratively with relevant authorities and bodies to refine the scale and distribution of housing and employment needs within the housing market areas and functional economic market areas in which the Borough falls, the levels that it is appropriate for the Borough to seek to accommodate, and to working collaboratively with infrastructure providers to ensure that any impacts of growth are suitably mitigated. In the event that evidence, monitoring indicators (set out below) or events identify that a significant change in provision is needed compared to that set out in the Local Plan (or the evidence upon which it is based) an early partial/ full review, depending on the issue, will be brought forward to address this. In any event the Council is required by statute to complete a review of the plan every five years, starting from the date of adoption

Solihull Local Plan – Adopted December 2013

8.4.5 Following discussions falling under the Duty to Cooperate Solihull Council recognise that evidence is emerging to indicate that Birmingham will not be able to accommodate the whole of its new housing requirement for 2011-31 within its administrative boundary and that some provision will need to be made in adjoining areas to help meet Birmingham's needs. Solihull Council will work collaboratively with Birmingham and other relevant neighbouring local authorities and with the GBS LEP to establish objectively the level of long term growth through jointly commissioning a Strategic Housing Needs Study and work to establish the scale and distribution of any emerging housing shortfall. This may require a review of the Green Belt in relevant locations.

8.4.6 It is anticipated that a Strategic Housing Needs Study will be commissioned and prepared during 2013 as evidence to inform the development of a GBS LEP strategy (Strategic Spatial Framework). This would provide a high-level context for reviewing the Solihull Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) during 2014. In the event that the work identifies that further provision is needed in Solihull, a review of the Solihull Local Plan will be brought forward to address this.

Telford and Wrekin Local Plan, adopted January 2018

1.3.2.2 Telford & Wrekin Council has arrived at this version of the Local Plan following extensive discussion on cross-boundary planning issues including with other councils across the West Midlands. A full account of the Council's approach to the Duty to Co-operate is set out in a 'Duty to Co-operate' Statement. Matters were raised at Regulation 18 stage by a number of local authorities in an adjacent, but separate, housing market area (Greater Birmingham and the Black Country authorities, and South Staffordshire). This specifically relates to issues of housing delivery within the West Midlands conurbation, as well as matters relating to waste management.

1.3.2.3 The Council has considered the representations made to the local plan received from these local authorities. It is acknowledged by all parties that Telford & Wrekin functions as a separate housing market area, based on an analysis of the relevant indicators presented in supporting evidence to the Local Plan. This is consistent with the decision of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GB&S LEP) to exclude Telford & Wrekin from their assessment of housing needs within the GB&S LEP area. Given this relationship, and based on current evidence available at this time, the potential contribution of in-migration arising from the Local Plan's housing requirement towards meeting the needs of the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBC HMA) has not been quantified. The Council will continue to consider this matter in the light of emerging evidence. It does not at present rule out the potential apportionment of some of the Local Plan's housing requirement towards meeting the needs of the GBBC HMA. Discussions will therefore continue to progress on this basis.

Appendix 2: Strategic Growth Study 2018 Areas of SearchRecommended strategic development areas

Development type / General Location /	Local Authority	Potential capacity
New Settlements		
South of Birmingham	Stratford-on-Avon	10,000 – 15,000
between Birmingham and Bromsgrove / Redditch	Bromsgrove	10,000 – 15,000
Around Shenstone	Lichfield	10,000 – 15,000
Around Balsall Common	Solihull	10,000 – 15,000
Urban Extensions		
South of Dudley	Dudley	1,500 – 7,500
North of Tamworth	Lichfield	1,500 – 7,500
East of Lichfield	Lichfield	1,500 – 7,500
North of Penkridge	South Staffordshire	1,500 – 7,500
Employment Led		
North of Wolverhampton (I54)	South Staffordshire	1,500 – 7,500
East of Birmingham	North Warwickshire	1,500 – 7,500
South of Birmingham Airport/ NEC	Solihull	1,500 – 7,500

Long list of alternative strategic development areas

Development type / General Location /	Local Authority	Potential capacity
New Settlements		
Between Wolverhampton and Penkridge	South Staffordshire	10,000 – 15,000
Around Dunston	South Staffordshire	10,000 – 15,000
Around New Arley	North Warwickshire	10,000 – 15,000
Around Fradley and Alrewas	Lichfield	10,000 – 15,000
South West of Stratford-on-Avon District	Stratford-on-Avon	10,000 – 15,000
Around Wellsbourne	Stratford-on-Avon	10,000 – 15,000
Urban Extensions		
South of Penkridge	South Staffordshire	1,500 – 7,500
North west of Tamworth	Lichfield	1,500 – 7,500
East of Polesworth	North Warwickshire	1,500 – 7,500
South of Stratford-on-Avon town	Stratford-on-Avon	1,500 – 7,500
South East of Redditch	Stratford-on-Avon	1,500 – 7,500
North of Walsall around Brownhills	Walsall, Lichfield, Cannock	1,500 – 7,500

Recommended areas of proportionate dispersal

Proportionate Distribution area	Local Authority	Potential capacity
Western edge of the conurbation between Stourbridge and Wolverhampton	Dudley/ South Staffordshire / Wolverhampton	500 – 2,500
To the north of Codsall/Bilbrook	South Staffordshire	500 – 2,500
The vicinity of Cannock, Great Wyrley, Burntwood, Brownhills and Aldridge	Walsall / Cannock / South Staffordshire	500 – 2,500
To the west / southwest of Tamworth	Lichfield/Tamworth	500 – 2,500
To the south of Birmingham around Hollywood, Whitlock's End and Cheswick Green	Solihull / Bromsgrove	500 – 2,500
To the south and southeast of Redditch	Redditch?	500 – 2,500

Signatories (Senior Officer and Councillor)

Birmingham City Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

Bromsgrove District Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

Cannock Chase District Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

Lichfield District Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

North Warwickshire Borough Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

Redditch Borough Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

South Staffordshire District Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

Tamworth Borough Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

City of Wolverhampton Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

Shropshire Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

Telford and Wrekin Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

Wyre Forest District Council

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE****10th January 2023****COUNCIL TAX BASE 2022/23**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Karen Ashley
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Michelle Howell, Head of Finance and Customer Services
Report Author Peter Carpenter	Job Title: Interim S151 Officer Contact email: peter.carpenter@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel:
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	Aspiration, work and financial independence
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

To enable Members to set the Council Tax Base for 2023/24

2. RECOMMENDATIONS**2.1 The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that**

- 1) the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for the whole and parts of the area for 2023/24, be approved; and
- 2) in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the figures calculated by the Redditch Borough Council as its tax base for the whole area for the year 2023/24 be 26,304.94 and for the parts of the area listed below be:

Parish of Feckenham	375.79
Rest of Redditch	25,929.15
Total for Borough	26,304.94

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3. KEY ISSUES**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The tax base has been calculated and adjusted by the estimated amount of Council Tax Support discounts awardable.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992 require a billing authority to notify its major precepting bodies (and its Parishes, if required) of the Tax Base, for the whole or part of the area for the following financial year. The precepting bodies - Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner and Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Authority - need this information in order to calculate and notify the Borough Council of their precept requirements for 2023/24. This will enable tax setting resolutions to be finalised and bills to be produced early in March 2023.
- 3.3 The legislation also requires a billing authority to calculate the tax base for any "special areas" within its boundary. There are no such areas in the Redditch Borough.
- 3.4 It is necessary to outline the method by which these calculations have been carried out so that the Council can formally adopt them for the purposes of the 1992 Regulations.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.5 In October 2022, form CTB1 was submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government. This analyses the draft Valuation List of properties into the various bands and then provides further details of those properties which are subject to the full charge, those entitled to discounts and those which are exempt.
- 3.6 This report is a summary of that return updated to include any known changes since November. It also makes provision for anticipated changes which could arise for a variety of reasons such as appeals, new properties or properties falling off the list. An allowance of 2.00% has been made for non-collection of the tax.
- 3.7 The Council is required to set a Council Tax Base each year, this forms part of the process of setting the following year budget. Failure to do so will result in the Council not being a Well Managed Organisation.

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- 3.8 The Tax Base for 2023/24 has been calculated to be 26,304.94. Once this has been agreed, the County Council, Police & Crime Commissioner and Fire Authority will be notified and the figures will be used in the setting of the Council Tax to be presented to the Executive Committee and approved by the Council in February 2023.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There is no identified risk associated with the proposal contained in this report.

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

- 5.1 The Council Tax Support all Council initiatives.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 Not applicable.

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

- 6.1 Not applicable.

6. APPENDICES

None

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Previous Years Council Tax Base Reports

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive
2023****10th January****Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Karen Ashley
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Head of Service		Michelle Howell, Head of Finance and Customer Services
Report Author Peter Carpenter	Job Title: Interim S151 Officer Contact email: peter.carpenter@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel:	
Wards Affected		All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)		Aspiration, work and financial independence
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Council is asked to approve the introduction of a revised and more supportive Council Tax Reduction scheme for working age applicants with effect from 1st April 2023.
- 1.2 The scheme is designed to assist the lowest income households and to allow the Council to operate the scheme more flexibly by:
- (a) Increasing the maximum level of support for working age applicants in certain income bands and to increase the income levels within the 'income - grid' scheme. Both of these changes are designed to provide more support to low income households;
 - (b) Disregarding certain child care charges where an applicant (and their partner if they have one) is working more than 16 hours per week;
 - (c) Disregarding certain payments paid to taxpayers under special schemes (Local Welfare Provision); and
 - (d) Where the Government makes emergency increases to national welfare benefits to assist in a crisis, the scheme will give the Council the discretion to disregard those increases if they would have a negative effect of Council Tax Reduction.
- 1.3 All other parts of the existing scheme will remain unchanged.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend the implementation of a revised scheme following feedback from the consultation with the public

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and the major precepting authorities in respect of proposed changes to the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme which would take effect from 1st April 2023.

- 2.2 Each year, the Council is required to review its Council Tax Reduction Scheme in accordance with the requirements of schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and to either maintain the scheme or replace it.
- 2.3 Council Tax Reduction (CTR) was introduced from 1st April 2013, when it replaced the Central Government funded Council Tax Benefit. From the inception of CTR, the funding available to the Council from Government has reduced year on year.
- 2.4 The Council made significant changes to the CTR scheme, which took effect from 1st April 2021. The changes increased the maximum level of support and replaced the existing Council Tax Benefit based scheme with a banded income scheme intended to reduce the administrative burden placed on the Council by universal credit. As with the majority of authorities within England, the Borough Council needs to review the scheme for working age claimants to ensure it remains relevant and provides appropriate levels of support to the lowest income households.
- 2.5 It should be noted that the Council can only make changes to the working age Council Tax Reduction scheme as the scheme for pension age applicants is determined by Central Government by the Prescribed Requirement Regulations.
- 2.6 If the recommendations are accepted by Cabinet, then the new scheme will be submitted to Full Council for resolution (as required by the legislation) by no later than 11th March 2023.

The current scheme

- 2.7 The current scheme for working age applicants (Table 1) provides the following discounts and is based on the weekly net income of the applicant plus any partner (if they have one).
- 2.8 The existing scheme determines eligibility by placing claimants into income bands and a percentage reduction is then applied to their Council Tax based on the relevant income band. There is no proposal to adjust the method for calculating CTR, however, there is a need to review and increase the income bands to adjust for the effects of inflation.

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- 2.9 The Council has taken advice from ACS Consultancy who gives specialist advice in this area across a number of Councils and the current experience is that
- Councils are not looking to reduce the level of support to applicants and in fact authorities are either looking to maintain the maximum level of support or increase it. For 2023/24 a large number of authorities will be providing additional support;
 - In all cases where changes are being made, authorities are looking to target support to low income households and to allow additional flexibilities especially where Government creates grant schemes to assist households with the cost of living crisis and avoid inadvertent effects on Council Tax Reduction;
- 2.10 In addition the vast majority of authorities are looking to simplify their working age scheme in a similar way to that being adopted by the Council.
- 2.11 The objective of the Council's CTR scheme will continue to be to maintain additional support to those households on the very lowest incomes, especially given the present cost of living crisis. There is no intention to reduce the level of support available to other households

Table 1

Discount Band	Discount	Single Person	Single person with one child	Single person with two or more children	Couple	Couple with one child	Couple with two or more children
Income Ranges							
Band 1*	100%	£0 - £98.00	£0 - £155.00	£0 - £217.00	£0-£144.00	£0 -£201.00	£0 - £263.00
Band 2	75%	£98.01 - £119.00	£155.01 - £186.00	£217.01 - £247.00	£144.01 - £165.00	£201.01 - £232.00	£263.01 - £294.00
Band 3	50%	£119.01 - £139.00	£186.01 - £217.00	£247.01 - £278.00	£165.01 - £186.00	£232.01 - £263.00	£294.01 - £325.00
Band 4	25%	£135.01 - £160.00	£217.01 - £247.00	£278.01 - £309.00	£186.01 - £206.00	£263.01 - £294.00	£325.01 - £356.00
	0%	Over £160.00	Over £247.00	Over £309.00	Over £206.00	Over £294.00	Over £356.00

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2.12 If the applicant or partner is in receipt of Income Support; Income-Based Jobseeker's Allowance or Income Related Employment & Support Allowance they will receive the maximum level of support.

2.13 Whilst the current scheme works well, it is considered that it does not:

- (a) Provide sufficient support for the households;
- (b) Allow for child care charges to be taken into account; nor
- (c) Have sufficient flexibilities to allow the scheme to disregard any grants or awards made by Central Government to assist household with the cost of living crisis

2.14 The present number of recipients of Council Tax Reduction are as follows:

Pension Age - 2389

Working Age - 3589

The proposed scheme

2.15 The proposed scheme is shown below in Table 2

Table 2

Discount Band	Discount	Single Person	Single person with one child	Single person with two or more children	Couple	Couple with one child	Couple with two or more children
Income Ranges							
Band 1*	100%	£0 - £115.00	£0 - £180.00	£0 - £245.00	£0- £165.00	£0 -£230.00	£0 - £295.00
Band 2	80%	£115.01 - £140.00	£180.01 - £215.00	£245.01 - £280.00	£165.01 - £190.00	£230.01 - £265.00	£295.01 - £330.00
Band 3	55%	£140.01 - £165.00	£215.01 - £250.00	£280.01– £315.00	£190.01 - £215.00	£265.01 – £300.00	330.01 - £365.00
Band 4	30%	£165.01 - £190.00	£250.01 - £285.00	£315.01 – £350.00	£215.01 £240.00	£300.01 - £335.00	£365.01 - £400.00
	0%	Over £190.00	Over £285.00	Over £350.00	Over £240.00	Over £335.00	Over £400.00

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-
- 2.16 As with the current scheme, ,If the applicant or partner is in receipt of Income Support; Income-Based Jobseeker's Allowance or Income Related Employment & Support Allowance they will receive the maximum level of support
- 2.17 The proposed scheme however increases the width of each income band and allows for certain child care charges to be disregarded where an applicant (and their partner if they have one) is working more than 16 hours per week. This incentivises returning to work.
- 2.18 The proposal is also to increasing support to households in income bands 2 to 4 to 80%, 55% and 30%. This ensures that more support is provided throughout the income ranges.
- 2.19 All other aspects of the scheme remain the same as at present.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The current CTR scheme was first implemented in the 2021/22 financial year and currently costs £6.119m. This cost is borne by the Council's Collection Fund. Costs are shared between the Council and the Major Precepting Authorities in the following proportions:
- Borough Council 13%
 - Worcestershire County Council 70%
 - West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner 12%
 - Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service 5%
- 3.2 By implementing the proposed scheme, the overall costs of the scheme would increase by £141,000. This amount would be allocated to precepting authorities as per the percentages in paragraph 3.1 with the Redditch's allocation 13%.
- 3.3 Whilst the expected costs of the scheme for 2023/24 are slightly higher, the overall level of Council Tax Reduction as a proportion to Council Tax Base has reduced year on year since 2013 as shown below until the 2020/21 tax year when support increased due to the discretionary one off support provided due to the C-19 pandemic.
- 3.4 The overall proposed costs level for 2023/24 is considerably lower in terms of the percentage of the tax-base than when Council Tax Reduction was introduced in 2013. The costs of the scheme, based on 2022/23 council tax charges, will increase to an estimated £4.954m from £4.659m with the proposed recommendation.

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Tax Year	Maximum % reduction	Gross Council Tax £000s	Total CTR awarded £000s	CTR as % of gross CT
2013/14	100	42,374	6,166	14.55
2014/15	80	43,571	5,272	12.10
2015/16	80	44,735	5,138	11.49
2016/17	80	46,487	5,088	10.94
2017/18	80	47,777	4,969	10.40
2018/19	80	50,312	4,913	9.77
2019/20	80	53,088	4,974	9.37
2020/21	80	55,399	6,024	10.87
2021/22	100	57,292	6,118	10.67
2022/23	100	59,653	6,228	10.44

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 A full consultation process was undertaken in line with the legislative requirements with the following:
- Worcestershire County Council
 - West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner
 - Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service; and
 - The public
- 4.2 Both the major preceptors and the public (including other stakeholders) were asked to provide their views on the changes.
- 4.3 The responses from the major preceptor, the County Council is shown in Appendix A and an analysis of responses from both public and other stakeholders is shown within Appendix B.
- 4.4 The County Council's view is that *"Whilst we would support in principle the ambition for many of the changes to your Council Tax Reduction Schemes, the net council tax income would reduce and that would mean the impact, however small, would ultimately be felt on the overall resources available across other district areas outside of Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council. We would not encourage any cross subsidy and would ask that its impact is minimised or avoided if possible"*.

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- 4.5 The Council accepts this point but would highlight that non-payment will go up due to the present “cost of living” crisis. This will result in higher levels of default which in turn impacts the precepting authorities with lower levels of income and the requirement to make right in the following financial year through the collection fund. Although we do not have definitive figures, this change is substituting a degree of this risk but giving discounts to enable more of these low income families to be able to pay reduced amounts. This should be a benefit to the precepting authorities.
- 4.6 The public consultation ended on 16th December 2022 and the Council received 94 responses to the proposed changes. In summary the responses were overwhelmingly in favour of the changes as follows:

Question	Yes %	No %	Don't know %
Do you agree with revising the income-based banded discount scheme?	70.37	16.67	12.96
Disregarding certain child care charges where the applicant (and partner if they have one) worked for at least 16 hours per week	81.63	12.24	6.13
The scheme will disregard certain crisis payments paid to taxpayers (Local Welfare Provision)	87.50	8.33	4.17
Disregarding emergency increases in national welfare benefits	87.50	8.33	4.17

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Schedule 1A (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, states:
Before making a scheme, the authority must:
- consult any major precepting authority which has power to issue a precept to it;
 - publish a draft scheme in such manner as it thinks fit; and
 - consult such other persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.
- 5.2 In addition, in order to set a new scheme, the Council is obliged to make a resolution by 11th March of the year prior to the scheme coming into place

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6. SERVICE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Council Tax Reduction was introduced by Central Government in April 2013 as a replacement for the Council Tax Benefit scheme administered on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). As part of the introduction, the Government:

- Placed the duty to create a local scheme for working age applicants with billing authorities;
- Reduced initial funding by the equivalent of ten per cent from the levels paid through benefit subsidy to authorities under the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme; and
- Prescribed that persons of Pension age would be dealt with under regulations set by central Government and not the authorities' local scheme.

6.2 Since that time, funding for the CTR scheme has been amalgamated into other central Government grants paid to Local Authorities and also within the Business Rates Retention regime. It is now generally accepted that it is not possible to identify the amount of funding actually provided from central Government sources.

6.3 The current CTR scheme administered by the Council is divided into two schemes, with pension age applicants receiving support under the rules prescribed by central Government, and the scheme for working age applicants being determined solely by the local authority.

6.4 Pensioners, subject to their income, can receive up to 100 per cent support towards their Council Tax. The Council has no power to change the level of support provided to pensioners and therefore any changes to the level of CTR can only be made to the working age scheme.

6.5 When CTR was introduced in 2013, for working age applicants, the Council broadly adopted the previous means tested Council Tax Benefit scheme as the basis of awarding support. Due to the reduction in funding from central Government, the Council also required all working age applicants, even those on the lowest income, to pay a minimum payment of 20%.

6.6 Since that time, other slight changes have been made to bring the scheme into line with Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.

7 OTHER OPTIONS

7.1 The alternative to introducing a revised scheme for CTR is to maintain the existing scheme; this would result in the income bands ceasing to be

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relevant and the withdrawal of support from the lowest income households and lead to increasing costs of administration; and in the longer term, significantly affect the collection of Council Tax and the effectiveness of the scheme to support households within the Borough Council's area.

8. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 8.1 The Council Tax Reduction Scheme provides targeted support to the Councils most vulnerable residents.

Climate Change Implications

- 8.2 The delivery of additional support to our most vulnerable residents via a reduction in their Council Tax will have a neutral effect on the climate.

9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 9.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of this process and is attached at Appendix C

Operational Implications

- 9.2 The changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme can be accommodated within existing teams and computer software.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 A full risk assessment has been undertaken and the changes are assessed as low given that they are minor changes to the existing scheme.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Responses from Major Preceptors
Appendix B – Public consultation analysis
Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment

12. REPORT SIGN OFF

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Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder		
Lead Director / Head of Service		
Financial Services		
Legal Services		
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)		
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)		

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APPENDIX A – MAJOR PRECEPTOR RESPONSES

County Council Response




With regard to your consultations on possible changes to your Council Tax Reduction Schemes in Bromsgrove and Redditch in 2023/24, I welcome the opportunity to comment on behalf of Worcestershire County Council. As the major preceptor in your area the majority of costs fall on the County Council and a main priority would be to ensure that these costs do not increase any further.

Whilst we would support in principle the ambition for many of the changes to your Council Tax Reduction Schemes, the net council tax income would reduce and that would mean the impact, however small, would ultimately be felt on the overall resources available across other district areas outside of Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council. We would not encourage any cross subsidy and would ask that its impact is minimised or avoided if possible.

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2023**10th January**APPENDIX B – ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION****Redditch Borough Council - Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2023/24****Consultation****1. Background to the Consultation**

1. I have read the background information about the Council Tax Reduction Scheme: This question must be answered before you can continue.				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		100.00%	94
2	No		0.00%	0
			answered	94
			skipped	0

2. Part 1 – Increasing the level of support within the Income Grid scheme for applicants of working age

2. Do you agree with revising the income-based banded discount scheme?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		70.37%	38
2	No		16.67%	9
3	Don't Know		12.96%	7
			answered	54
			skipped	40




3. If you disagree with revising the income-banded scheme please explain why and what alternative would you propose?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	9
1	I have previously received council tax support and the system doesn't work. One week I would receive a letter stating I was would receive a discount. Then I would receive a letter saying I wasn't. Then another letter. In the end I gave up			
2	You have failed to explain in the table whether the amounts are per week or per month, so it is impossible to form a view.			

**Executive
2023**10th January**3. If you disagree with revising the income-banded scheme please explain why and what alternative would you propose?**

3	The current scheme is sufficient. There are people in working households who have to pay full CT & have less available income than some on benefits		
4	I agree with changing it but I think the rates are still unfair for a single mother of 2 children, working, keeping a family home instead of going down the council root and struggling to get any help. £350 is not enough.		
5	I think everyone should receive a discount Not just low income payers it's unfair		
6	No im not happy. people on low income should start look into saving money. you want to tax working people more to give it away to people who live in council houses. I would look into who live in those houses because i know people where 2 adults work full time kids are almost 18 years old. and they have still council house and any problems within a house we will pay for it. As a person who saved 7 years to buy a house (no holidays, no takeaways, no going out to pubs, restaurants). There is a coupe who live next door two small kids 2 cars none of them are working but at the same time thae have money to drive to shop every 5mins smoke weed etc. you should start looking into saving money on public spending like i said who is eligible for council home and benefits. you should start giving money away for free unless someone is disable and needs help. when you gonna understand that wealth is created from hard work.		
7	Single persons who work are hit the hardest. I'm 61, live alone, work full time and struggle to pay my mortgage, council tax and bills. 25% discount should be 40 to 50%.		
8	Continue with the current scheme. Benefits are rising in line with inflation where salaries are largely not therefore those claiming benefits are already protected better than the rest of the population. Services require better funding therefore the money would be better spent elsewhere.		
9	To keep as is, encouraging alternative revenue streams for clament.		
		answered	9
		skipped	85

3. Part 2 - Disregarding certain child care charges where the applicant (and partner if they have one) worked for at least 16 hours per week




4. Do you agree with this change to the scheme?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		81.63%	40
2	No		12.24%	6
3	Don't Know		6.12%	3
			answered	49
			skipped	45

**Executive
2023**10th January**5. If you disagree please explain why and what alternative would you propose?**

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	3
1	Childcare costs are already disregarded under other schemes. I am also in favour of parents raising their own children, not having their upbringing subsidised by the state.		
2	Same as previous answer		
3	Benefits only for people who are disable and single mums with more than 1 kid. stop giving benefits to poeple who can work!		
		answered	3
		skipped	91

4. Part 3 - The scheme will disregard certain crisis payments paid to taxpayers (Local Welfare Provision)**6. Do you agree with this change to the scheme?**




Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes 	87.50%	42
2	No 	8.33%	4
3	Don't Know 	4.17%	2
		answered	48
		skipped	46

7. If you disagree please explain why and what alternative would you propose?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	2
1	This would be yet another advantage for people on benefits over those who are working and paying for them. Working people don't get 'double bubble' if they are lucky enough to even get these payments in the first place.		
2	Please ask people to start work if not they can not claim any benefits		
		answered	2
		skipped	92

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5. Part 4 - Disregarding emergency increases in national welfare benefits

8. Do you agree with this change to the scheme?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		87.50%	42
2	No		8.33%	4
3	Don't Know		4.17%	2
			answered	48
			skipped	46

9. If you disagree please explain why and what alternative would you propose?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	1
1	As before, this is a 'double bubble' effect for those on benefits over and above those who are working.			
			answered	1
			skipped	93

6. Alternatives to changing the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

10. Please use this space to make any other comments on the proposed scheme.				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	9
1	The proposed scheme has good intentions. However it perpetuates the state as a provider of a lifestyle on benefits and low income and does not provide incentive to people to increase their hours or seek higher pay or better jobs.			
2	Homeowners in band e properties just because they was built close to 1991 and now valued less than band c and d properties did not revive any help this year. Even tho I am a single dad and people in band c and d properties with 2 incomes and houses valued higher got government/council help			
3	Foster carers should be exempt from paying council tax as we provide loving homes for children. We have larger houses to allow foster children to have their own bedrooms . Unfortunately then			

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10. Please use this space to make any other comments on the proposed scheme.

	we have larger council tax bills being then in band E. We should not have to pay council tax . I foster for Worcestershire children First		
4	Being unemployed should not be more advantageous than working, giving people more benefits does not give people the incentive to get jobs.		
5	Scheme should be for all benefits		
6	AFTER 2021 CENSUS YOU HAVE ALL INFO TO FIND OUT WHO IS WORKING AND WHOS NOT. Take benefits from people who are to lazy to work. I'm not fan of social money, mainly because lots of people using this to do not work.		
7	Able to move 2 payments a year if necessary, as year is paid in 10 months, this would benefit some house holds when they struggle with income.		
8	i think child maintenance should be included as part of income, i know lots of single parents on benefits, rent paid, getting serious amounts of child maintenance from their children's absent paying parent(s)- never understood why it's not included as income when claiming benefits.		
9	Altering the scheme to remove unnecessary administrative issues is clearly a good thing. Further handouts to those already in receipt of inflation matching benefits to the detriment of service provision and ignoring the struggling working population is not.		
		answered	9
		skipped	85

11. Please use the space below if you would like the Council to consider any other options (please state).

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	5
1	The council should consider a 1-3 month scheme that allows 'breathing space' for all those in difficulty regardless of income levels or benefit status. The 1-3 month payments that are skipped would then be collected by higher payments afterwards - essentially a loan to cover the 1-3 months, recouped in the period afterwards. This would be a fairer way to help more people in a time of crisis or misfortune.		
2	Help people on disability benefit - PIP		
3	Foster carers should be exempt from paying council tax as we provide loving homes for children. We have larger houses to allow foster children to have their own bedrooms . Unfortunately then we have larger council tax bills being then in band E. We should not have to pay council tax . I foster for Worcestershire children First		
4	Schemes for hard working families that have their own homes but are struggling to pay bills		
5	Make the administrative changes but leave the % reductions as they currently are.		
		answered	5
		skipped	89

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12. If you have any further comments or questions to make regarding the Council Tax Reduction Scheme that you haven't had opportunity to raise elsewhere, please use the space below.

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	3
1	Please promote the scheme. People may be unaware of this form of assistance. Thank you for the proposals to give more help to those who need it most.		
2	Foster carers should be exempt from paying council tax as we provide loving homes for children. We have larger houses to allow foster children to have their own bedrooms . Unfortunately then we have larger council tax bills being then in band E. We should not have to pay council tax . I foster for Worcestershire children First		
3	How easy it will be to see if you are eligible and how intuitive will be the application?		
		answered	3
		skipped	91

7. About You

13. Are you completing this form on behalf of an organisation or group?


Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	0.00%	0
2	No	100.00%	44
		answered	44
		skipped	50

If yes, please tell us the name of the organisation/group and add any other comments you wish to make.



Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	0.00%	0
No answers found.			
		answered	0
		skipped	94

8. Questions for Individuals



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2023**10th January**14. Do you live in the Redditch Borough Council area?**

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		100.00% 43
2	No		0.00% 0
		answered	43
		skipped	51



15. Are you currently receiving Council Tax Reduction?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		27.91% 12
2	No		72.09% 31
		answered	43
		skipped	51


16. Are you or your partner in work or self-employed?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		55.81% 24
2	No		44.19% 19
		answered	43
		skipped	51




17. Are you liable to pay Council Tax?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		93.02% 40
2	No		6.98% 3
		answered	43
		skipped	51







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2023**10th January**18. Are you currently serving in the Armed Forces?**

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		0.00%	0
2	No		100.00%	43
			answered	43
			skipped	51

19. What is your gender?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Male		25.58%	11
2	Female		69.77%	30
3	Non-Binary		0.00%	0
4	Prefer not to say		4.65%	2
			answered	43
			skipped	51





20. What is your age?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	18-24		0.00%	0
2	25-34		11.63%	5
3	35-44		44.19%	19
4	45-54		23.26%	10
5	55-64		4.65%	2
6	65-74		11.63%	5
7	75-84		0.00%	0
8	85+		0.00%	0
9	Prefer not to say		4.65%	2
			answered	43





**Executive
2023**10th January**20. What is your age?**

skipped	51
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21. Disability: Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		23.26%	10
2	No		62.79%	27
3	Don't know		2.33%	1
4	Prefer not to say		11.63%	5
			answered	43
			skipped	51

22. Ethnic Origin: What is your ethnic group?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Prefer not to say		4.65%	2
2	White British		79.07%	34
3	White Irish		2.33%	1
4	White Gypsy or Irish Traveller		0.00%	0
5	Any other White background		13.95%	6
6	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White & Black African		0.00%	0
7	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White & Black Caribbean		0.00%	0
8	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White & Asian		0.00%	0
9	Any other multi mixed background		0.00%	0
10	Asian or Asian British Pakistani		0.00%	0

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22. Ethnic Origin: What is your ethnic group?				
11	Asian or Asian British Indian		0.00%	0
12	Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi		0.00%	0
13	Asian or Asian British Chinese		0.00%	0
14	Any other Asian background		0.00%	0
15	Black African		0.00%	0
16	British Caribbean		0.00%	0
17	Black British		0.00%	0
18	Any other Black background		0.00%	0
			answered	43
			skipped	51

23. Other ethnic group?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		0.00%	0
No answers found.				
			answered	0
			skipped	94

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APPENDIX C – EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Equality Assessment Record

Title of Service, Policy, Procedure, Spending Review being Proposed	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2023/24
Name of Service Area	Revenues and Benefits
Name of Officer completing this assessment	Lisa Devey & David Riley
Date Assessment Started	
Name of Decision Maker (in relation to the change)	
Date Decision Made	

Overview

Provide a clear overview of the aims of the service/policy/procedure and the proposed changes being made. Will the current service users' needs continue to be met? Why is the change being proposed? What needs or duties is it designed to meet?

The policy revises the Council's working age Council Tax Reduction Scheme by:

1. Increasing the maximum level of support for working age applicants in certain income bands and to increase the income levels within the 'income - grid' scheme. Both of these changes are designed to provide more support to low income households;
2. Disregarding certain child care charges where an applicant (and their partner if they have one) is working more than 16 hours per week;
3. To disregard certain payments paid to taxpayers under special schemes (Local Welfare Provision); and

4. Where the Government makes emergency increases to national welfare benefits to assist in a crisis, the scheme will give the Council the discretion to disregard those increases if they would have a negative effect of Council Tax Reduction

Who is the proposal likely to affect?	Yes	No
All residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific group(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All Council employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific group(s) of employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other – Provide more details below	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Details

Outline who could be affected and how they could be affected by the proposal/service change. Include current service users and those who could benefit from but do not currently access the service.

Working age applicants who are currently in receipt of Council Tax Reduction or those who apply on or after 1st April 2023. Pension age applicants will not be affected as their scheme remains unchanged.

Evidence and data used to inform your equality impact assessment

What data, research, or trend analysis have you used? Describe how you have got your information and what it tells you.

Modelling of the revised scheme has been undertaken throughout and will continue to be undertaken until such time as the 2023/24 scheme is approved.

The **current modelling data** is shown below:

	Existing Scheme			New Scheme			
	Numbers	Expenditure	Average Weekly Amount	Numbers	Expenditure	Average Weekly Amount	Average Weekly Gain / (Loss)
Single Person							
Couple no children							
Single person with one child							
Single person two or more children							
Couple with one child							
Couple with two or more children							
Applicant Gender – Male							

Applicant Gender - Female							

- The scheme is designed to protect the households with the lowest incomes and will redistribute the levels of support available in a fairer manner. The overall costs of the scheme are marginally higher, and this will allow up to 100% support to those applicants on the lowest incomes and improve the support to those households in the lower discount bands
- The scheme will protect applicants who are disabled or where any member of their household is disabled;
- The scheme will be more generous to carers and those who have non dependants;
- The scheme will also allow for child care charges where the applicant works for 16 hours per week or more; and
- The scheme will not have unintentional consequences when the applicant is in receipt of Government crisis awards; and
No applicant will be detrimentally affected by the changes.

Engagement and Consultation

Consultation has taken place with the Major Preceptors (Fire and Rescue, Police and the County Council). Details of their responses are shown within Appendix A of the report.

A full public consultation has been undertaken until 16th December 2022 and the results of which are shown within Appendix B of the report

It can be seen that the consultation has received an overall positive response.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Equality Duty Aims	Evidence
<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation</p> <p>How does the proposal/service ensure that there is no barrier or disproportionate impact for anyone with a particular protected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The revised scheme has been designed to support all low-income taxpayers and has been created strictly in accordance with the legislative requirements. • The revised scheme provides more support to those on the lowest incomes • Existing 'protected' categories or persons who are currently determined as vulnerable within the existing scheme, will continue to be protected in the new scheme.

characteristic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The authority's Exceptional Hardship Scheme will continue to assist any applicant who feels that they require additional support.
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups How does the proposal/service ensure that its intended outcomes promote equality of opportunity for users? Identify inequalities faced by those with specific protected characteristic(s).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All working age are covered by the scheme and any taxpayer who meets the criteria will be able to apply for support. The scheme allows easier access to support; maximisation of assistance whilst at the same time maintaining the protections from the current scheme; No applicant will receive less support.
Foster good relations between different groups Does the service contribute to good relations or to broader community cohesion objectives? How does it achieve this aim?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, the scheme is designed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be easily accessible by all applicants; Avoid multiple changes to entitlement (and Council Tax) throughout the year; Be less complicated and more easily understood.

Is there evidence of actual or potential unfairness for the following equality groups?

- Does the proposal target or exclude a specific equality group or community?
 - No, all working age applicants are treated in the same way;**
- Does it affect some equality groups or communities differently and can this be justified?
 - No**
- Is the proposal likely to be equally accessed by all equality groups and communities? If not, can this be justified?
 (It may be useful to consider other groups, not included in the Equality Act, especially if the proposal is specifically for them e.g. lone parents, refugees, unemployed people, carers)
 - Yes**

Impact of proposal

Describe the likely impact of the proposal on people because of their protected characteristic and how they may be affected. How likely is it that people with this protected characteristic will be negatively affected? What are the barriers that might make access

difficult or stop different groups or communities accessing the proposal? How great will that impact be on their well-being? Could the proposal promote equality and good relations between different groups? How?

- **Details of the impact of the change have been provided above**

If you have identified any area of actual or potential unfairness that cannot be justified, can you eliminate or minimise this?

What mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove this impact? (Include these in the action plan at the end of the assessment) Equal treatment does not always produce equal outcomes; sometimes you will have to take specific steps for particular groups to address an existing disadvantage or to meet differing needs.

Protected Group	Impact of proposal	Justification for any actual or potential unfairness identified	If you have identified any area of actual or potential unfairness that cannot be justified, can you eliminate or minimise this?
Age	Affects working age applicants only (pension age applicants are dealt with under Central Government Prescribed Scheme)		
Disability	Protected		
Transgender	N/A		
Marriage and Civil Partnership	N/A		
Pregnancy and Maternity	N/A		
Race	N/A		
Religion or Belief	N/A		
Sex (Male/ Female)		The scheme provides a higher level of support to both male and female applicants. As with the existing scheme, more female applicants will be in receipt of Council Tax Reduction	
Sexual Orientation	N/A		

How will you monitor any changes identified?

The scheme will be constantly monitored by the service throughout 2023 /24 to ensure that its objectives are met.

The actions required to address these findings are set out below.

Action Required	By Whom	By When	Completion Date
Recommended – It is recommended that the revised Council Tax Reduction scheme be implemented from 1 st April 2023			

Sign off on completion	Name	Signature	Date
Lead Officer completing assessment			
Equalities Officer			

When you have completed this assessment, retain a copy and send an electronic copy to the Policy Team (Equalities) attaching any supporting evidence used to carry out the assessment.

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EXECUTIVE

10th January 2022

Revenue Outturn 2020/21 – Updated Position following Draft Accounts Submission

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr. Karen Ashley, Finance and Enabling Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Michelle Howell
Report Author Peter Carpenter	Job Title: Interim Section 151 Officer email:peter.carpenter@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel:
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. Purpose and summary

The purpose of this report is to update members on the Councils 2020/21 Outturn position which was presented to Members in draft form on the 11th January 2022 following the issuing of the draft 2020/21 Accounts to Audit, Governance & Standards Committee on the 15th December 2022. This report updates that draft position.

2. Recommendations

The Executive is asked to RESOLVE

- 2.1 That the revenue outturn position, which was reported as an underspent of £373,954.05 is corrected to a position of an underspend of £290,309.
- 2.2 That the final C-19 Grant position is £580k at 31st March.
- 2.3 That the final level of General Fund and Earmarked Reserves are £1,889k and £11,473k respectively.
- 2.4 That the final capital position for the year is a £0.266m underspend against approved budget.

3. Revenue Position

- 3.1 The January 2022 Outturn Report set out the following outturn position by Service area compared to budget:

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Service	2020/21 Original Budget	2020/21 Working Budget	2020/21 Revised Actuals	2020/21 Variance
	£	£	£	£
Business Transformation & Organisational Development Total	1,667,517.00	1,576,921.95	1,569,282.09	-7,639.86
Chief Executive Total	-2,628,903.00	-2,427,459.00	-2,072,008.91	355,450.09
Community & Housing GF Services Total	2,000,756.00	1,738,238.53	1,531,780.83	-206,457.70
Corporate Financing Total	-9,702,415.00	-9,057,990.12	-9,240,653.08	-182,662.96
Environmental Services Total	2,676,940.00	2,660,624.72	2,437,678.26	-222,946.46
Financial & Customer Services Total	1,832,247.00	1,414,809.67	1,671,234.68	256,425.01
Legal, Democratic & Property Services Total	2,046,633.00	1,972,087.55	1,735,193.66	-236,893.89
Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services Total	1,138,274.00	1,153,815.70	1,006,645.15	-147,170.55
RBC Regulatory Client Total	352,702.00	352,702.00	346,748.15	-5,953.85
RBC Rubicon Client Total	648,249.00	648,249.00	671,315.55	23,066.55
Starting Well - GF Total	-32,000.00	-32,000.00	-31,170.43	829.57
Total	0.00	-0.00	-373,954.05	-373,954.05

- 3.2 The revised outturn position, following the submission of the 2020/21 Accounts to Audit Governance & Standards Committee on the 15th December is set out in the following table:
- 3.3 The revised position reduces the underspend position by £80k to a position of £290k. Most of the Service Areas have remained the same, with the major changes coming in the Chief Executives area and Financing. The commentary by Service area is:

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	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Draft Outturn	Variance
Business Transformation and Organisational Development	1,667,517.00	1,576,921.95	1,569,224.40	(7,697.55)
Community and Housing GF Services	2,000,756.00	1,738,238.53	1,531,780.83	(206,457.70)
Corporate Financing	(9,121,975.89)	(8,163,102.01)	(8,653,390.92)	(490,288.91)
Corporate Services	(3,209,342.11)	(3,007,898.11)	(2,468,895.15)	539,002.96
Environmental Services	2,676,940.00	2,660,624.72	2,437,678.26	(222,946.46)
Financial and Customer Services	1,832,247.00	1,321,360.67	1,578,820.16	257,459.49
Legal, Democratic and Property Services	2,036,633.00	1,741,087.55	1,514,188.19	(226,899.36)
Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	1,148,274.00	1,163,815.70	1,078,391.15	(85,424.55)
Regulatory Client	352,702.00	352,702.00	346,748.15	(5,953.85)
Rubicon Client	648,249.00	648,249.00	806,315.55	158,066.55
Starting Well	(32,000.00)	(32,000.00)	(31,170.43)	829.57
Grand Total	-	-	(290,309.81)	(290,309.81)

Business Transformation & Organisational Development (An underspend position of £7k against an original position of an underspend of £7k)

- 3.4 £37k underspend due to salary vacancies in HR, £36k shortfall in income from street naming and numbering, £21k underspend on corporate training budget due to Covid 19 and the reduced ability to deliver training.

Chief Executive (An overspend position of £539k against an original position of an overspend of £355k)

- 3.5 Overspend on corporate services primarily due to higher than originally budgeted for pension costs (this being previously reported at Q3). This has now been factored into ongoing budgets. In addition to this there was also an increase in the bad debt provision duuring the year.

Community & Housing GF Services (An underspend position of £206k against an original position of an underspend of £206k)

- 3.6 £138k underspend on underspend is due to staff restructure in anti-social behaviour team - however this is recharged to HRA (so is not a general fund saving).

Corporate Financing (An underspend position of £490k against an original position of an underspend of £182k)

- 3.7 The above table shows that in summary this service area was under £490k. The main variations being as follows
£183k underspend driven largely by interest payable being lower due to a lower than forecast borrowing requirement (due to Covid-19 monies being paid in advance into our accounts) and lower interest rates (cut to historically low levels due to Covid-19), as well as a lower than budgeted MRP charge for the year due to previous year underspend on capital programme (partially Covid impacted).

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Lower in-year minimum revenue provision charge

Environmental Services (An underspend position of £222k against an original position of an underspend of £222k)

- 3.8 £112k additional income from bereavement services (due to Covid pandemic), £63k savings on hedge cutting team due to the success of the trial of using less agency workers and vehicles.

Financial & Customer Services (An overspend position of £257k against an original position of an overspend of £256k)

- 3.9 £256k under recovery in benefits as there have not been any court recoveries taking place due to the pandemic (the rules not allowing for this action). This has been projected through the year.

Legal, Democratic & Property Services (An underspend position of £226k against an original position of an underspend of £237k)

- 3.10 £332k underspend in assets and facilities management due to savings on utility budgets and other premise based operational budgets within some of our public buildings including the Town Hall. These savings were due to the pandemic's impact re reduced opening hours during the year and reflect the usual operational costs of heating and operating our assets. £54k overspend in business development predominantly due to the loss of income from Learning online & civic suite hire due to current circumstances.

Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services (An underspend position of £85k against an original position of an underspend of £147k)

- 3.11 Parks and events were underspent by £127k as events have not taken place also due to COVID-19 along with some temporary salary savings. £90k overspend on economic and tourism development due to some additional costs following the closure of the Rubicon Business centre. There is also a shortfall in income at the other business centres projected

RBC Regulatory Client (An underspend position of £6k against an original position of an underspent £6k)

- 3.12 There were no material variances

RBC Rubicon Client (An overspend position of £158k against an original position of an overspend £23k)

- 3.13 The additional amounts paid to Rubicon Leisure were paid from general covid grant, and are not shown in this service line

Starting Well (Total overspend £829)

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3.14 There were no material variances

Covid grant

3.12 The council received significant un-ringfenced covid grant during the year to support service delivery and mitigate the impact of covid. The January 2022 report set out that it had been applied in the following way:

General Covid Funding	£
Amount Received (four initial tranches)	1,455,981
Amount spent 19/20	12,657.32
Amount spent 20/21	862,884.57
Remaining balance at 31/3/21	580,439.11
Fifth tranche of grant	496,389
Total remaining covid grant	1,076,828.11

3.16 It is important to note that of the £863k applied in 20/21 year, £543k was paid over to Rubicon Leisure to support them due to the reduction in leisure income as covid forced the closure of leisure facilities. A further £120k was applied as part of the closure process.

Revenue Reserves

3.17 The Underspend position has resulted in the Councils General Fund position increasing from an opening position of £1.599m by the underspend position of £290k to a closing position of £1.889m. Earmarked Reserves are set out in Appendix A

Earmarked Reserves have increased from an opening position of £4.980m to a closing position of £11.473m. Main changes are

- £0.836m increase in Business Rates Retention Scheme
- £0.580m in general C-19 Grants
- £4,433 of Collection Fund C-19 Grant – to offset 2020/21 non collection in future years

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Grants

The Council received £17.662m of Grant Income during the year for council activities, up from £16.951m the previous year. In addition to this the council also received significant grant, acting as an agent on behalf of Central Government to support businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The largest grant for services continues to be the Housing Benefit Subsidy Grant at £14.551m. Grants are set out in Appendix B

Capital Outturn

- 3.18 The management accounts reported the following capital outturn:- The outturn report sets out that expenditure was £6.338m against Capital budgets of £6.604m approved for the year. This is £0.266m underspend. The MTFP already requested £5.407 be slipped to future years. This total was increased in February 2022 to £5.864m
- 3.19 There have been significant underspends in capital during the course of the year. This has been due to delayed starts in projects and slower spend than anticipated. A review of the capital programme has taken place moving forwards to ensure a more accurate position and reduce potential future variances to budget.

Housing Revenue Account

- 3.20 The Housing Revenue Account for 2020/21 is showing an underspend of £1.9m and This represents an actual contribution to HRA balance of £1.72m in comparison to the budget which was set at £208k contribution from HRA balances.

The overall performance of the HRA service was severely constrained by the restrictions and lockdowns in response to the covid outbreak, Essentially, a lot of activity relating to repairs, maintenance, and the overall management of the HRA could not be done and had to be rescheduled to future years.

Repairs and maintenance is showing an underspend of £1.3m and £637k of this is due to reduced activity in relation to (demand led) responsive repairs. Similarly, activities relating to the supervision and management of the HRA was reduced and this resulted in an underspend of £650k. However, dwellings rental income is £150k lower than budget due to the incidence of voids and the turnaround period of void properties.

The HRA capital program for 2020/21 is showing an underspend of £7m. As noted above this was due to rescheduling of the planned program of works to future years because of covid restrictions.

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4. Treasury and Cash Management

Borrowing

As at 31st March 2020 the council had no short term borrowing, and £104m long term borrowing.

Investments

At 31st March 2020 we had placed £4.5m in investment accounts to generate an income for the Council.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

No legal implications have been identified.

7. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 7.1 This relates most closely to the strategic purpose: 'Provide Good things for me to see, do and visit'.

Climate Change Implications

- 7.2 No climate change implications were identified.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 8.1 No equalities and diversity implications were identified.

Operational Implications

- 8.2 Managers meet with finance officers on a monthly basis to consider the current financial position and to ensure actions are in place to mitigate any overspends.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

AUTHOR OF REPORT

EXECUTIVE

10th January 2022

Name:

Appendix A – Earmarked Reserves

	Balance as at 1 April 2019 £000	Transfers In 2019/20 £000	Transfers Out 2019/20 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2020 £000	Transfers In 2020/21 £000	Transfers Out 2020/21 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2021 £000
General Fund:							
Business Rate grants	7	0	(7)	0	0	0	0
Business Rates Retention Scheme	3,246	2,002	(3,252)	1,996	836	0	2,832
Support for Commercialism	28	0	(28)	0	0	0	0
Community Development	4	65	(2)	67	7	0	74
Community Safety	225	302	(225)	302	202	(272)	232
Corporate Services	150	150	(150)	150	0	(1)	149
Customer Services	12	0	(12)	0	93	0	93
Economic Growth	0	330	0	330	0	0	330
Electoral Services	40	23	(19)	44	5	0	49
Environmental Vehicles	0	0	0	0	29	0	29
Equalities	11	0	(11)	0	0	0	0
Equipment replacement	73	0	(26)	47	0	(22)	25
Financial Services	55	32	0	87	0	0	87
General Risk reserve	17	35	(7)	45	0	0	45
Housing Benefit Implementation	200	70	0	270	0	0	270
Housing Support	724	118	(97)	745	283	(50)	978
Land Charges	9	0	0	9	0	0	9
Land Drainage	141	0	(12)	129	0	0	129
Leisure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mercury Emissions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parks & Open spaces	23	8	(23)	8	0	0	8
Planning Services	30	678	(39)	669	0	(153)	516
Public Donations - Shop mobility	6	0	(6)	0	0	0	0
Sports Development	63	68	(63)	68	0	(59)	9
Town Centre	45	0	(43)	2	5	0	7
Warmer Homes	12	0	0	12	4	0	16
Transformational Growth				0	100	0	100
Pensions				0	200	0	200
Regeneration Income				0	273	0	273
Covid-19 (General)				0	580	0	580
Covid-19 (Collection Fund)				0	4,433	0	4,433
Total General Fund	5,121	3,881	(4,022)	4,980	7,050	(557)	11,473
HRA							
Housing Capital	18,235	0	(2,977)	15,258	0	0	15,258
Total HRA	18,235	0	(2,977)	15,258	0	0	15,258
Total Earmarked Reserves	23,356	3,881	(6,999)	20,238	7,050	(557)	26,731

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Appendix B – Grants

Credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	2020/21	2019/20
	£000	£000
Revenue Support Grant	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(926)	(754)
S31	(1,272)	0
Other Government Grants	(7)	(122)
Capital Grants	0	(1,123)
Total	[2,205]	[1,999]
Credited to Services	2020/21	2019/20
	£000	£000
Cabinet Office - Individual Electoral Registration		(20)
MHCLG - Council Tax Support Admin Subsidy	(95)	(97)
MHCLG - Local Plans		
MHCLG - Cost of Collection	(107)	(107)
MHCLG - Homelessness Grant	(291)	(223)
MHCLG - Town Deal		(173)
MHCLG - COVID-19		(13)
MHCLG - New Burdens		(11)
MHCLG - Other Grant Income		(30)
DWP - Benefit Schemes	(77)	(75)
DWP - Discretionary Housing	(51)	(77)
DWP - Housing Benefit Subsidy	(14,551)	(15,538)
DWP - Housing Benefit Subsidy Admin Grant	(224)	(221)
Bus Grant	0	(7)
Worcestershire County Council - Redditch Centre Development		(250)
Worcestershire County Council - Positive Activity Fund		(64)
Sports Partnership	(19)	(27)
Apprenticeship Levy		(4)
Other Grants	(381)	0
MHCLG Covid-19 Emergency Grant	(1,417)	0
MHCLG Covid-19 Sales, Fees and Charges Grant	(361)	0
WCC Food and Essential Supplies	(88)	0
Total	[17,662]	[16,937]
The following grants have been removed from income and expenditure on the CIES; the Council acts as an agent for the purpose of distributing these grants. Given the Covid-19 pandemic the Council was required by Central Government to distribute the grants below in line with their criteria and funding levels.		
	2020/21	2019/20
	£000	£000
Covid-19 Business Support Grants (Tranche 1)	(121)	0
Covid-19 Business Support Grants (Tranche 2)	(14,329)	0
Covid-19 Test and Trace Support Payments - Self Isolation Payments	(4,265)	0
	(18,715)	0
Grants Received in Advance (Revenue)	2020/21	2019/20
	£000	£000
Covid-19 S31 grant	(8,325)	0
Total	(8,325)	0

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE****10 January 2023****HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT RENT SETTING 2023/24**

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Craig Warhurst, Portfolio Holder for Housing
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Head of Service		Michelle Howell, Head of Finance and Customer Services
Report Author Peter Carpenter	Job Title: Interim S151 Officer Contact email: peter.carpenter@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel:	
Wards Affected		All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)		Aspiration, work and financial independence
Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

To present Members with the proposed dwelling rent increase for 2023/24.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND to Council that

- the actual average rent increase for 2023/24 be set as 7%.

3. KEY ISSUES**Financial Implications****3.1 The rent increase above is in line with the Government guideline on rent increase as described below.**

- On the 31st of August 2022, DLUHC published a consultation on a draft Direction to the Regulator of Social Housing about social housing rents in England. DLUHC was seeking views on whether a rent cap should be introduced, where it should be set and whether it should potentially cover one or two years.
- In the Autumn statement issued by the Chancellor on the 17th of November 2022, The government stated that it is capping the

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amount that social rents can increase by next year at 7% compared to circa.11.1% under current rules (CPI plus 1%)

- The committee is asked to recommend that the council increase the rent by the government cap of 7% to enable the HRA to balance the budget for 2023/24.
- 3.3 The additional income from the 7% rent increases will be fed into specific initiatives to improve the quality of our social housing including works around Mould which have recently been in the national news.
- 3.4 As members are aware the system of housing revenue account subsidy ceased on the 31st of March 2012 and was replaced with a devolved system of council housing finance called self-financing. The proposal in the form of a financial settlement meant a redistribution of the 'national' housing debt. This resulted in the Council borrowing £98.9 million from the Public Works Loan Board.
- 3.4 Self-financing placed a limit (Debt Cap) on borrowing for housing purposes at the closing position for 2011/12 at £122.2 million, however, the debt cap has now been removed and officers are currently reviewing implications of this change on councils future social housing growth strategy.
- 3.5 The Direction on the Rent Standard 2019 issued by the Government in February 2019 confirmed that from 1 April 2020 weekly dwelling rents could be increased in line with CPI inflation (Consumer Price Index), plus 1% for the 5 year period through to 2024/25. This is the fourth year following the new rent standard guidance. The government has indicated that a revised rent structure will be put in place for the "cost of living crisis" following the consultation set out in 3.1 above.

2023/24

- 3.6 **For 2023/24, the actual average rent increase will be 7%. The average rent on a 52 week basis will be £89.90 or £97.39 on a 48 week basis. This compares to the average for 2022/23 on a 52 week basis of £84.02 and £91.02 on a 48 week basis.**

Legal Implications

- 3.7 Section 21 of the Welfare and Reform Act 2016 required that 'In relation to each relevant year, registered providers of social housing must secure that the amount of rent payable in respect of that relevant year by a tenant of their social housing in England is at least 1% less than the amount of rent that was payable by the tenant in respect of the preceding 12 months.' This has now come to an end, and on 4 October 2017, DCLG announced that "increases to social housing rents will be limited to CPI plus 1% for 5 years from 2020

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE****10 January 2023**

- 3.8 Consultation on the introduction of a rent cap for 2023/24 and 2024/25 took place between September and October 2022. In the 2022 autumn statement, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the rent cap for social housing will be set at 7%.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.9 The Council needs to approve the rents in a timely manner to allow officer time to notify the tenants of the annual rent. Tenants must have 28 calendar days' notice of any change to their rent charge.

Customer/Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.10 The rent increase will be applied by the same percentage regardless of property size. The equality and diversity implications of the changes will be evaluated and considered as part of the decision-making process. For those on benefits, these rises are within the 10.1% increase in benefits announced by the Chancellor in October.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 There is a risk to that rents are not approved in sufficient time to allow for notification of tenants of the increase. This will be monitored throughout the process.

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

- 5.1 This rent setting report links to the following strategic purposes:
- Help me to find somewhere to live in my locality.
 - Help me to live my life independently,
 - Help me to be financially independent.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 Rent levels directly impact the HRA's maintenance, which include complying with national and local climate targets.

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

- 6.1 Not applicable - complying with Government limits

7. APPENDICES

None

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE****10 January 2023**

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Previous years HRA Rent Setting reports.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/4 TO 2025/6 Update**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr. Karen Ashley, Finance and Enabling Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Michelle Howell
Report Author Peter Carpenter	Job Title: Interim Section 151 Officer email:peter.carpenter@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel:
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Council will set its budget in two Tranches this year. The initial Tranche was published on the 17th October this contained £1.5m of savings against a carried forward deficit of £0.9m. As per the MTFP update reported to Executive on the 6th December more data was required on the Chancellors Statement and following the Provisional Local Government Settlement on the 2nd December this detail is included in this report. Also included are the additional pressures which leaves the “real gap” to be closed.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive are asked to Resolve that:

- 1 That Officers continue to work on additional options now the “real gap” for the 2023/24 budget is known, as outlined in the Strategy section of the Tranche 1 Report for presentation to Executive in February as Tranche 2 of the Budget.

3. Background**Introduction**

- 3.1 The Council sets a 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan every year, with the final Council Tax Resolution being approved by Council in February. This year’s process, as set out in the Tranche 1 documentation (attached as

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022

Background Papers) has been more difficult due to the following factors and as such has been split into two Tranches to ensure maximisation of delivery in the 2023/24 financial year:

- Starting the process with an initial deficit amount from the 2022/23 MTFP.
- This being the first year that the Government starts to pay for the C-19.
- The present cost of living crisis.
- A change of Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- Limited Reserves and balances.

Tranche 1 Proposals

- 3.2 The Tranche 1 Report was discussed on the 25th October and approved for implementation by the Executive on the 6th December. In that report, the Interim Director of Finance noted in his draft robustness statement set out that the MTFP highlights that the current financial position is untenable without some form of intervention. We now know, following the Provisional Local Government Settlement that following the work undertaken in Tranche 1 that a £0.515m gap still remains in 2023/24 to be mitigated.
- 3.3 It is important, for planning purposes that those initial savings proposals are approved by Council as soon as possible in order to achieve the maximum benefit in the 2023/24 financial year. As per the Q2 Monitoring Report, which is also being presented to Executive today, prior years “unallocated savings” have now been fully allocated to service budgets.
- 3.4 The table below sets out the position at the end of Tranche 1. As per previous discussions the largest issues are the inflationary increases that are impacting all Local Authorities.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022

Redditch Position Statement				
		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
		£000	£000	£000
Base Budget Position 22/23 MTFP				
	Expenditure	10,290	10,428	10,661
	Funding	-9,341	-9,595	-9,621
	Net	949	833	1,040
Revised Gap		949	833	1,040
Pressures				
	50% Funding for Climate Change Officer	30	30	30
Savings Options				
	Environmental Services Partnership	0	-25	-50
	Service Reviews	-140	-330	-405
	Move to All Out Elections	0	0	-170
	Town Hall	0	0	-400
	Finance Vacancies	-100	-100	-100
	MRP	-100	-100	-100
	Pension Fund	-580	-580	-580
	Engage Capacity Grid (One Off) £14m De	-300	-300	0
	10% Increase in Fees and Charges	-339	-340	-342
	Council Tax Increase	0	-104	-104
	Total Savings	-1,529	-1,849	-2,221
Revised Position		-580	-1,016	-1,181
Pressures				
	Pay Pressure Year 1	928	928	928
	Pay Pressure Future Years (1%)	0	0	117
	Transport Pressure	21	21	21
	Contracts Pressures	230	235	240
	Core Pressures	1,179	1,184	1,306
Updated Position		599	168	125
	Utilities Inflation	1,140	1,140	1,140
Final Draft Position		1,739	1,308	1,265

- 3.5 The Council's Capital Programme must prioritise the spending of Towns Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Grant Funding – both of which have to be delivered by April 2026 and April 2025 respectively. Therefore, the new rationale is for any scheme not yet started (unless grant or S106 funded) is that they must rebid for funds as part of the 2023/24 budget process.

Provisional Local Government Settlement

- 3.7 The Provisional Local Statement was announced on the 19 December. This announcement confirmed the following funding sources for the Council:
- The Provisional Local Government Settlement has the following effect
 - New Homes Bonus - £19k
 - Services Grant - £86k
 - Funding Guarantee - £493k
 - Reduction in Council Tax Base 130k pressure
 - Additional 1% on Council Tax – £69K

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022

- Additional savings on Pensions (now have final figures) – the projected contributions over the next 3 years is £7,781m – which is £2,593k a year. In tranche 1 we reduced the base budget to £2,814k – this is an additional £221k savings.
 - Service Options
 - Place and Strategic Routes – 10% £197k 6.5 staff – across both
 - Waste 10% - £179k, 6 staff – across both
 - Allocation of Grants like DFG
- 3.8 This has the impact of reducing the funding gap identified in Tranche 1 from £1,739m to a £0.211m. However, this is before additional pressures as set out in section 3.16 below.
- 3.9 The Provisional Local Government Settlement is only for 1 year. For planning purposes, the Council must take a medium-term view over three years. The net Government funding of £468k is in line with previous years equivalent grants. **Therefore, for planning purposes an assumption has been made that Grant levels will remain at the net level of £450k for the 2nd and 3rd years of the 3 year plan.** This will be adjusted once there is clarity on future years Settlement details.
- 3.10 The Provisional Local Government settlement has now taken place on the 19th December. Therefore, the overall timetable changes slightly:
- Provisional Local Government Settlement – 19th December
 - Tranche 1 approved by Council in January
 - Final Local Government Settlement – 12th January
 - Tranche 2 options ready for Executive – 17th January
 - Tranche 2 options presented to Executive - 7th February
 - Full Budget approved by Council – 27th February
- Timescales are estimated – however the issue is that there is little time for delivery of either Tranche1 or Tranche 2.
- The Council's Base Assumptions including Inflation and Grants (Revisited)**
- 3.11 Following the Provisional Local Government Statement, it is important that the Councils base assumptions are revised.
- 3.12 Tax Base underlying assumptions are as follows
- Council Tax – Figures assume the full 1.99% increase, but the ability to increase by £104k from 2024/25. As per the Chancellors Statement, this can now increase, subject to approval, by another 1%.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022

- We have reduced the Council Tax Base by £130k.
 - Business Rates Increases – business rates assume no growth in the base. This is being reviewed in light of the post C-19 environment. More work is being undertaken to validate the final business rates position, taking into account various S31 Grants and the effect of the Worcestershire and Herefordshire Pool.
- 3.13 Grant support assumptions are as follows (Revenue and Capital). It should be noted that these are budgeted figures and final grant figures will not be confirmed until the time of the final Local Government Settlement.
- The main Revenue Grants are
 - S31 Grant - £0.748m
 - Housing Benefit Administration Grant - £0.235m
 - Housing Benefit Grant - £18.5m
 - Discretionary Housing Payment - £0.136m
 - Revenue Cost of Collection Grant - £0.106m
 - Homelessness Grant - £0.153m
 - The Council has £15.2m of Towns Fund Grant to be spent by April 2026 which is match funded by £2.0m of Council funding.
 - The Council has £2.4m of UK Shared Prosperity Fund to spend by April 2025. This is both revenue and capital in nature.
- 3.14 Inflationary increases are significant due to factors already identified in previous sections. The following are the current base assumptions although given the present “cost of living” crisis and the change of Government in September it is likely these will need to be updated in Tranche 2.
- The Employers agreed a 2022/23 pay award of £1,925 per pay point plus on costs. We have a pressure of £928 in Tranche1. The actual pay award was implemented to employees in the December payroll and the actual value is £200k lower. This adjustment has been made in base assumptions.
 - An assumption of General inflation increases of 10% was made in Tranche1 in relation to transport and contract budgets. Its impact on 2023/24 was transport budgets £21k and base contracts £230k. (it is assumed that 2024/25 will move back to normal levels of 2%). This still remains the base assumptions.
 - Tranche 1 set out utility increase of 200% amounting to £1.140k. Our existing Utility contracts requiring renewal by the end of this financial year, and we have seen increases in some areas of up to 400%. We still think this is a valid assumption. We will keep a 100% increase in the base budget but will move the other 100% to be funded from a new Earmarked Reserve.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022**Tranche 2 Pressures**

3.15 There are also other pressures that have now been quantified. We do know that there are changes in Government legislation which have yet to be received. Key items include:

- The future waste operating model.
- Possible commercial opportunities to maximise income.
- Climate Change.
- Review of the Councils Leisure contract.

3.16 Other service-based pressures identified for inclusion in the Tranche 2. Include

- Refurbishment of the fleet, which extends live for 5 years and lets the Council buy new vehicles in 2028 when supply of such vehicles will be more stable. Refurbishment costs circa £70k, a new diesel vehicle is £200k, and electric Vehicle is £400k
- Leisure Contract is a £600k management fee with £300k from SLAs for purchase of Services. If this contract can be bought back to break even in 2 years this is cost avoidance
- Pressures for Local plan outside the levels of the reserves
- Enforcement pressure due to the WRS initiative being so successful
- Real cost of rolling out Abacus and further automation (we have the first few areas)
- Housing – Cost mitigation – especially TA
- Cross gates redevelopment (and associated with all depots – need the £40k business case)
- Resources required to deliver HAD Damp/Mildew inspections – both HRA and Private Rented Sector
- A fund for apprentices across the Council assume 20K a position-n so we can take advantage of apprenticeship levies - overall amount – circa £100k across both Councils
- We will need to fund a data analyst – if we move forward with all the work on automation, robotics, etc, to take the Council forward. The costs if £50K spread across both Councils.
- The increased costs of Worcestershire Regulatory Services due to the pay award and other inflationary increases.
- Redundancy payments – if we restructure the workforce – also cost of voluntary redundancies.
- Cost of Inflation and Pay award over and above our ongoing assumptions of 2%.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022

- 3.17 The Local Government Provisional Settlement Updates along with the pressures set out in this section result in a resultant gap for the Council of £0.562m which is set out in the following table

Redditch Position Statement			
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£000	£000	£000
Base Budget Position 22/23 MTFP			
Expenditure	10,290	10,428	10,661
Funding	-9,341	-9,595	-9,621
Net	949	833	1,040
Revised Gap	949	833	1,040
Pressures			
50% Funding for Climate Change Officer	30	30	30
Savings Options			
Environmental Services Partnership	0	-25	-50
Service Reviews	-140	-330	-405
Move to All Out Elections	0	0	-170
Town Hall	0	0	-400
Finance Vacancies	-100	-100	-100
MRP	-100	-100	-100
Pension Fund	-580	-580	-580
Engage Capacity Grid (One Off) £14m Deb	-300	-300	0
10% Increase in Fees and Charges	-339	-340	-342
Council Tax Increase	0	-104	-104
Total Savings	-1,529	-1,849	-2,221
Revised Position	-580	-1,016	-1,181
Pressures			
Pay Pressure Year 1	928	928	928
Pay Pressure Future Years (1%)	0	0	117
Transport Pressure	21	21	21
Contracts Pressures	230	235	240
Core Pressures	1,179	1,184	1,306
Updated Position	599	168	125
Utilities Inflation	1,140	1,140	1,140
Tranche 1 Final Draft Position	1,739	1,308	1,265
Draft Local Government Financial Settlement			
New Homes Bonus	-19		
Services Grant	-86		
Funding Guarantee	-493		
C Tax Base Reduction	130		
Business Rates - TBC			
Future Years Settlements - assumption		-450	-450
Settlement Draft Amounts	-468	-450	-450
1% more on Councils Tax	-69	-69	-69
Conversion of 50% of Utilities to a Reserve	-570	-570	-570
Correction of Salary £1,925 amount	-200	-200	-200
Additional Pensions Savings	-221	-221	-221
Revised Deficit	211	-202	-245
New Pressures (Known/Ongoing)			
Fleet Refurbishment	129	258	258
Apprenticeship Scheme	50	50	50
Data Analyst	25	25	25
WRS Increase	47	61	74
Increased pay award - so 2%	100	100	0
Total	351	494	407
Revised Draft Position	562	292	162

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022**Strategic Approach**

- 3.18 The Council has come into the 2023/24 budget process with a number of conflicting issues. These include:
- An ongoing budget deficit position from the 2022/23 MTFS of £1.0m which has now been resolved.
 - Significant inflationary increase due to the “cost of living” crisis.
 - Limited reserves to call on to reduce any deficit, which is still the case due to inflationary pressures. Earmarked reserves stand at just under £11.5m and General Fund Reserves at £1.9m
 - Increases in Council Tax are limited at 3% or £5, which is significantly lower than the present rates of inflation.
- 3.19 The Council must move to financial sustainability as soon as is practically possible due to the present inherent risks but must be minded of Government support that will be announced in the settlement.
- 3.20 As set out in the Tranche 1 report, the strategy must be to move the Council to financial sustainability by the 2024/25 financial year. To get to this position there will be the need for investment and possibly the requirement to fund redundancy (both from reserves). Both these requirements will be outputs from the Council having to implement changes to the way it operates to continue to become a viable entity going forward and this will take 18 months to implement fully.
- 3.21 As set out later in the Robustness Statement, in compiling Tranche1 of the budget, assumptions have been made based on the best information held now. Issues the Council is facing are not unique, they are being faced by almost all Councils. Tranche 2 of the budget will adjust for any funding that the Government will provide and also look at other options to close any deficit should the Government settlement not bridge any resultant gap. Initiatives that will be assessed in Tranche 2 (as more time is required to analyse these individual options) include:
- Clarity of the Local Government Settlement on the 19th December set out grant of £468k to the Council.
 - Ensuring Grants are maximised.
 - Ensuring Agency work reflects the income provided for its delivery.
 - Minimisation of Bed and Breakfast Temporary Accommodation costs
 - Reviewing the effectiveness of the Council’s largest Contracts.
 - Maximising the effectiveness of our refuse fleet
 - Reviewing the location and effectiveness of our Depot
 - Assessing the Council’s leisure and cultural strategy in terms of affordability
 - Reviewing recharging mechanisms between the Councils for appropriateness

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022

- Rationalisation of Back Office services as we embrace technology.
- 3.22 Many of these initiatives will require investment, for which the only present source of funding is reserves (General Fund and Earmarked Reserves). Key areas of investment will be:
- Documentation of Processes
 - Investment in automation and robotic processes
 - Possible redundancy – through restructures
- 3.23 However, in any situation, the Council must move to sustainability by the 2024/25 financial year.

Impact on Reserves

- 3.24 As per the Tranche 1 Report these will be fully updated in the final Tranche 2 position but are set out in 3.18 above.

Capital Programme

- 3.24 The final position, based on scheme slippage to date in 2022/23 and the availability of resources, will be reassessed as part final Tranche 2 position. The Council will need to concentrate on the delivery of Towns Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund capital initiatives over this period as funding must be spent by the 1st April 2026 and the 1st April 2025 respectively.

Robustness Statement

- 3.25 The opinion of the Interim Director of Finance is that the 2023/24 budget estimates contain considerable risk due to the level of uncertainty in the Council's operating environment, making it problematic to develop meaningful assumptions.
- 3.26 The revenue budget and capital programme have been formulated having regard to several factors including:
- Funding Available.
 - Inflation.
 - Risks and Uncertainties.
 - Priorities.
 - Service Pressures.
 - Commercial Opportunities.
 - Operating in a Post C-19 environment.
- 3.27 The MTFP highlights that if the 1-year Local Government Financial Settlement was to continue at the present levels then the Council starts to move to

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022

financial viability in years 2 and 3 of the plan. However, the overall position will need to improve the level of General Fund Reserves which are below the level of 5% of gross spending, which is the best practice benchmark. The Council has a significant portion of its tax base in the bottom three Council Tax bands and therefore Council Tax revenues are lower than the “average” Council. However, because of this there is a higher requirement for Council services as there are a higher proportion of lower income households. The Council would like to understand if there are options for address this imbalance between funding and service requirements as it has become far more acute with the present cost of living crisis. The Council is currently forecasting a £0.562m overspend in 2023/24 due to the additional demands placed on it due to the present rates of inflation, which in turn is utilising the remaining available reserves balances to fund these pressures.

- 3.28 Given all the uncertainty which encapsulates this MTFP, the assumptions have been based on the best available information to the Council at this time. Work will continue in validating all assumptions, robustly challenging estimates, ensuring the delivery of existing saving plans. Updates will be included in the final Tranche 2 Report to ensure a balanced, sustainable budget is set.

4. **IMPLICATIONS**

Financial Implications

- 4.1 Financial implications are set out in section 3.

Legal Implications

- 4.2 A number of statutes governing the provision of services covered by this report contain express powers or duties to charge for services. Where an express power to charge does not exist the Council has the power under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to charge where the activity is incidental or conducive to or calculated to facilitate the Council's statutory function.

Service / Operational Implications

- 4.3 Monitoring will be undertaken to ensure that income targets are achieved in 2023/24.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 4.4 The implementation of the revised fees and charges as set out in Tranche 1, will be notified in advance to the customer to ensure that all users are aware of the new charges and any concessions available to them.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 There is a risk that if fees and charges are not increased that income levels will not be achieved, and the cost of services will increase. This is mitigated by managers reviewing their fees and charges annually. The final report to Executive in February will have an updated section on Risk (updated from the Tranche 1 MTFP that was presented to Executive on the 25th October 2022).

6. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers

Tranche 1 MTFP – Executive 25th October 2022
MTFP 2022/23 – Approved February 2022

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

7. KEY

None

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022**WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BUDGET INCREASES**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr. Karen Ashley, Finance and Enabling Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Michelle Howell
Report Author Peter Carpenter	Job Title: Interim Section 151 Officer email:peter.carpenter@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel:
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Following its meeting on the 17th November, the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Board approved budget increases for all constituent Members for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial year. This report sets out those increases for their inclusion in the Councils 2022/23 Monitoring reports and 2023/24 budget.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive are asked to Recommend to Councils that:

- 1 WRS contributions are increased by £22,668 in 2022/23 due to the national pay award of £1,925 per pay point and increases in hosting costs due to the “cost of living” crisis.
- 2 WRS Budget contributions are increased to £648,000 in 2023/24 to take account of pay awards and the impact of the “cost of living crisis.”

3. Background**Introduction****2022/23**

- 3.1 The WRS Budgets for 2022/23 were set as part of the 2022/23 MTFP process. At the WRS Board meeting on the 17th November it was reported that at the end of September the overall position was a projected outturn

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022

2022/23 resulting in a £1k refund to partners against the agreed budget. This overspend was set against the assumptions in the MTFP of a 2% pay award, Pest Control overspends being allocated based on actual work undertaken for partners, and Bereavement costs being charged on an “as and when” basis.

- 3.2 WRS budgeted for a 2% pay award in 2022-23. The current proposed pay award of £1,925 per annum on all pay points (pro rata for part time work) has now been accepted by employers and unions, the additional pressure on WRS salaries will be £115,757. WRS are unable to cover this increase, therefore an increase to partner funding will be required of:-

Council	2022/23
	£
Bromsgrove District Council	16,843
Malvern Hills District Council	15,083
Redditch Borough Council	20,292
Worcester City Council	19,146
Wychavon District Council	26,902
Wyre Forest District Council	17,491
Total	115,757

- 3.3 When hosting charges was set in November 2021 it was impossible to anticipate the level of cost increases faced by local authorities in terms of pay award, utility costs and the wider impact of high inflation. In order to avoid placing a significant burden on hosting authorities in year, members are asked to agree to the following increases in hosting charges below:

Council	2022/23 Increase in Rent £	2022/23 Increase in ICT Hosting £	2022/23 Increase in Support Hosting £
Bromsgrove District Council	811	434	728
Malvern Hills District Council	725	388	651
Redditch Borough Council	977	522	877
Worcester City Council	921	493	827
Wychavon District Council	1,294	692	1,162
Wyre Forest District Council	842	450	756
Total	5,570	2,980	5,000

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022**2023/24**

- 3.4 The WRS Board also considered the 2023/24 budget at the meeting on the 17th November. In the budget presentation the following assumptions were agreed as being valid for constructing the budget:
- The base budget has been adjusted to include the increase of £116k created by the higher-than-expected pay award in 2022-23 and also the increase in hosting and support charges of £13.5k
 - 2% pay award across all staff for 2023/24 – 2025/26. This will be subject to the National Pay Negotiations that are ongoing and therefore the final position will reflect any formally agreed increases, the budget also includes any employee entitled to an incremental increase.
 - Increase in Rent of £7.7k
 - Increase in ICT Hosting of £7.5k
 - Increase in Support Hosting of £8.6k in 2023-24 and a further 2% in 2024-25 and 2025-26
 - No inflationary increases in supplies and services or transport.
 - Pension back-funding will be paid by all partners.
- 3.5 The unavoidable salary pressures are not able to be met by WRS making additional income, therefore, an increase to partner funding will be required of:

Council	2023/24	2024/25 - Cumulative	2025/26 - Cumulative
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Bromsgrove District Council	12	23	34
Malvern Hills District Council	11	21	31
Redditch Borough Council	14	28	41
Worcester City Council	14	27	40
Wychavon District Council	19	37	54
Wyre Forest District Council	12	24	35
Total	82	160	235

- 3.7 In the Autumn of 2021, when the Officer members of the Board reached agreement on the increase in hosting charges for Wyre Forest and Bromsgrove for 2022/23, no one could have anticipated the extent of the inflationary pressures currently being experienced by all councils. Inflation being in double figures was not yet talked about. The scale of the sharp increases in energy costs had not yet become apparent and a national pay settlement for 2022/3 that adds around 7% on average was well beyond what was anticipated. Whilst the pay award clearly impacts directly on staff employed for WRS purposes, it also impacts those staff based in the host

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022

authorities that provide supporting roles. These impacts, along with the anticipated impacts that will hit us in 2023/4, need to be reflected realistically in setting the budget for hosting next year.

- 3.8 IT suppliers are also experiencing increased financial pressures that many are passing these on to users. Software license charges are increasing significantly, which means a significant impact on our modern, digitally enabled services. All officers in local authorities are reliant on IT kit and software for their flexible work patterns and the cost of these provisions are increasing and will increase further looking forward. Utilities costs continue to rise and must be factored into the accommodation charges that the hosting provider faces. These pressures are not able to be met by WRS, therefore, an increase to partner funding will be required of:

Council	2023/24 Increase in Rent	2023/24 Increase in ICT Hosting	2023/24 Increase in Support Hosting
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Bromsgrove District Council	1	1	1
Malvern Hills District Council	1	1	1
Redditch Borough Council	2	1	2
Worcester City Council	1	1	1
Wychavon District Council	2	1	2
Wyre Forest District Council	1	1	1
Total	8	7	8

- 3.10 In addition to the base budget there are three additional technical officers working on income generation, animal activity and gull control. We are unable to include these officers into the base budget as the income generation officer is an additional post on the establishment to bring in additional income agreed by partner councils and the animal activity and gull control officer recharge percentage basis is different to the agreed partner recharge allocations.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022

Council	Tech Officer Income Generation £000	Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Tech Officer Gull Control £000
Bromsgrove District Council	5	7	
Malvern Hills District Council	5	13	
Redditch Borough Council	6	2	
Worcester City Council	6	3	65
Wychavon District Council	8	11	
Wyre Forest District Council	6	5	
Total	36	41	65

3.11 The Pension back-funding figures to be paid by partners are as follows:

Council	Pension Back Funding 2023-24 £000	Pension Back Funding 2024-25 £000	Pension Back Funding 2025-26 £000
Bromsgrove District Council	5	5	5
Malvern Hills District Council	5	5	5
Redditch Borough Council	6	6	6
Worcester City Council	6	6	6
Wychavon District Council	8	8	8
Wyre Forest District Council	6	6	6
Total	36	36	36

3.12 The Approved revenue budget and partner percentage allocations for 23/24 onwards agreed at the Board on the 17th November are

Council	£'000	Revised %
Bromsgrove District Council	510	14.52
Malvern Hills District Council	457	13.00
Redditch Borough Council	615	17.49
Worcester City Council	580	16.72
Wychavon District	815	23.19
Wyre Forest District Council	530	15.08
Total	3,507	

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**10th January 2022**4. IMPLICATIONS****Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Financial implications are set out in section 3.

Legal Implications

- 4.2 A number of statutes governing the provision of services covered by this report contain express powers or duties to charge for services. Where an express power to charge does not exist the Council has the power under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to charge where the activity is incidental or conducive to or calculated to facilitate the Council's statutory function.

Service / Operational Implications

- 4.3 Monitoring will be undertaken to ensure that income targets are achieved in 2023/24. This is via the quarterly WRS Board Meetings.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 4.4 The implementation of the revised fees and charges will be notified in advance to the customer to ensure that all users are aware of the new charges and any concessions available to them.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 There is a risk that if fees and charges are not increased that income levels will not be achieved, and the cost of services will increase. This is mitigated by managers reviewing their fees and charges annually.

6. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

WRS Updated Fees and Charges 2023/24 – Executive 6th December 2022

WRS Board Papers 17th November 2022

Tranche 1 MTFP – Executive 25th October 2022

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

10th January 2022

7. KEY

None

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL					
Regulatory Services					
Roundings are to the nearest 510p.					
Service Category	charge 1st April 2022 £	% Change	Increase/decrease £	Proposed charge from £	COMMENTS
LICENSING ACT 2003 - FEES SET BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT - SAME FOR ALL DISTRICT COUNCILS					
Temporary Event Notices					
Fee to serve a Temporary Event Notice (TEN)	£21.00	0.00%	0	£21.00	
Copy of a TEN (free or stated)	£10.00	0.00%	0	£10.00	
Personal Licences					
Application for the grant of a personal licence	£37.00	0.00%	0	£37.00	
Fee for a replacement personal licence (if lost or stolen)	£10.00	0.00%	0	£10.00	
Fee to notify a change of name or address on a personal licence	£10.00	0.00%	0	£10.00	
Applications for new premises licences or club premises certificates					
Applications for the grant of a premises licence or club premises certificate					
Band A (INLRV 0 - 4000)	£100.00	0.00%	0	£100.00	
Band B (INLRV 4001 - 10000)	£190.00	0.00%	0	£190.00	
Band C (INLRV 10001 - 87000)	£315.00	0.00%	0	£315.00	
Band D (INLRV 87001 - 125000)	£460.00	0.00%	0	£460.00	
Band E (INLRV 125001 +)	£835.00	0.00%	0	£835.00	
Applications for the grant of a premises licence or club premises certificate (where the premises is used exclusively or primarily for the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises)					
Band A (INLRV 0 - 4000)	£100.00	0.00%	0	£100.00	
Band B (INLRV 4001 - 10000)	£190.00	0.00%	0	£190.00	
Band C (INLRV 10001 - 87000)	£315.00	0.00%	0	£315.00	
Band D (INLRV 87001 - 125000)	£900.00	0.00%	0	£900.00	
Band E (INLRV 125001 +)	£1,900.00	0.00%	0	£1,900.00	
Additional fees for grant of a premises licence (for large venues with capacities over 5000)					
5000 - 9999	£1,000.00	0.00%	0	£1,000.00	
10000 - 14999	£2,000.00	0.00%	0	£2,000.00	
15000 - 19999	£4,000.00	0.00%	0	£4,000.00	
20000 - 29999	£8,000.00	0.00%	0	£8,000.00	
30000 - 39999	£16,000.00	0.00%	0	£16,000.00	
40000 - 49999	£24,000.00	0.00%	0	£24,000.00	
50000 - 59999	£32,000.00	0.00%	0	£32,000.00	
60000 - 69999	£40,000.00	0.00%	0	£40,000.00	
70000 - 79999	£48,000.00	0.00%	0	£48,000.00	
80000 - 89999	£56,000.00	0.00%	0	£56,000.00	
Applications to vary premises licences and club premises certificates					
Applications to vary a premises licence or club premises certificate					
Band A (INLRV 0 - 4000)	£100.00	0.00%	0	£100.00	
Band B (INLRV 4001 - 10000)	£190.00	0.00%	0	£190.00	
Band C (INLRV 10001 - 87000)	£315.00	0.00%	0	£315.00	
Band D (INLRV 87001 - 125000)	£460.00	0.00%	0	£460.00	
Band E (INLRV 125001 +)	£835.00	0.00%	0	£835.00	
Applications to vary a premises licence (where the premises is used exclusively or primarily for the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises)					
Band A (INLRV 0 - 4000)	£100.00	0.00%	0	£100.00	
Band B (INLRV 4001 - 10000)	£190.00	0.00%	0	£190.00	
Band C (INLRV 10001 - 87000)	£315.00	0.00%	0	£315.00	
Band D (INLRV 87001 - 125000)	£900.00	0.00%	0	£900.00	
Band E (INLRV 125001 +)	£1,900.00	0.00%	0	£1,900.00	
Application for a minor variation of a premises licence or club premises certificate	£80.00	0.00%	0	£80.00	
Annual maintenance fees					
Annual premises licence or club premises certificate fee					
Band A (INLRV 0 - 4000)	£70.00	0.00%	0	£70.00	
Band B (INLRV 4001 - 10000)	£160.00	0.00%	0	£160.00	
Band C (INLRV 10001 - 87000)	£290.00	0.00%	0	£290.00	
Band D (INLRV 87001 - 125000)	£320.00	0.00%	0	£320.00	
Band E (INLRV 125001 +)	£360.00	0.00%	0	£360.00	
Annual premises licence (where the premises is used exclusively or primarily for the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises)					
Band A (INLRV 0 - 4000)	£70.00	0.00%	0	£70.00	
Band B (INLRV 4001 - 10000)	£160.00	0.00%	0	£160.00	
Band C (INLRV 10001 - 87000)	£290.00	0.00%	0	£290.00	
Band D (INLRV 87001 - 125000)	£460.00	0.00%	0	£460.00	
Band E (INLRV 125001 +)	£1,050.00	0.00%	0	£1,050.00	
Additional annual fees premises licences (for large venues with capacities over 5000)					
5000 - 9999	£500.00	0.00%	0	£500.00	
10000 - 14999	£1,000.00	0.00%	0	£1,000.00	
15000 - 19999	£2,000.00	0.00%	0	£2,000.00	
20000 - 29999	£4,000.00	0.00%	0	£4,000.00	
30000 - 39999	£8,000.00	0.00%	0	£8,000.00	
40000 - 49999	£12,000.00	0.00%	0	£12,000.00	
50000 - 59999	£16,000.00	0.00%	0	£16,000.00	
60000 - 69999	£20,000.00	0.00%	0	£20,000.00	
70000 - 79999	£24,000.00	0.00%	0	£24,000.00	
80000 - 89999	£28,000.00	0.00%	0	£28,000.00	
Other applications and notifications					
Application to transfer a premises licence	£23.00	0.00%	0	£23.00	
Application to vary a premises licence to nominate a premises supervisor	£23.00	0.00%	0	£23.00	
Fee to change name or address of the holder of a premises licence	£10.00	0.00%	0	£10.00	
Fee to change the name or address of a designated premises supervisor on a premises licence	£10.00	0.00%	0	£10.00	
Fee for a replacement premises licence or club premises certificate (if lost or stolen)	£10.00	0.00%	0	£10.00	
Fee for a replacement licensing authority of a proper interest in a premises	£21.00	0.00%	0	£21.00	
Notification of closure or club name or alteration to club rules	£10.00	0.00%	0	£10.00	
Notification of change of registered address of club	£10.00	0.00%	0	£10.00	
Interim authority notice following death, incapacity or invalidity of licence holder	£23.00	0.00%	0	£23.00	
Application for grant of a provisional statement	£315.00	0.00%	0	£315.00	
Other Fees and Charges					
TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE					
Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence	£264.00	5.00%	£13.20	£277.20	
Private Hire Vehicle Licence	£264.00	5.00%	£13.20	£277.20	
Private Hire Operator Licence (5 year/1-3 vehicles)	£637.00	0.00%	£0.00	£637.00	
Private Hire Operator Licence (all operators) per additional vehicle	£17.00	0.00%	£0.00	£17.00	
Private Hire driver licence (3 years)	£160.00	5.00%	£7.50	£167.50	
Dual Hackney Carriage / Private Hire driver licence (3 years)	£208.00	5.00%	£10.40	£218.40	
Knowledge Test	£23.00	5.00%	£1.15	£24.15	
Administration Charge - new applications	£37.00	5.00%	£1.85	£38.85	
Replacement vehicle licence plate	£23.00	5.00%	£1.15	£24.15	
Renewment driver's licence	£13.00	5.00%	£0.65	£13.65	
Amendment to paper licence e.g. change of address	£13.00	5.00%	£0.65	£13.65	
Temp vehicle licence fees (87.5%)					
Replacement driver ages - £13.50 per age					
Transfer of ownership of a licensed vehicle	£51.00	5.00%	£2.55	£53.55	
Criminal Record (DBS) Check	£56.00	5.00%	£2.80	£58.80	
ANIMAL ACTIVITY LICENCES					
Setting out fences, handling of dogs, providing or arranging the provision of boarding for cats or dogs and selling animals in pairs					
Application fee	£329.00	0.00%	£0.00	£329.00	
Licence fee (1 year)	£164.00	0.00%	£0.00	£164.00	

License fee (2 years)	£364.00	0.00%	£0.00	£364.00	
License fee (2 years)	£546.00	0.00%	£0.00	£546.00	
Application to vary a licence	£240.00	0.00%	£0.00	£240.00	
Veterinary fees (if applicable)	Recovered at cost			Recovered at cost	
Local authority inspection (on request of licence holder)	£164.00	0.00%	£0.00	£164.00	
Reptile or Invertebrate animals for exhibition (cont)					
Application fee	£219.00	0.00%	£0.00	£219.00	
License fee (2 years)	£300.00	0.00%	£0.00	£300.00	
Application to vary a licence	£158.00	0.00%	£0.00	£158.00	
Veterinary fees (if applicable)	Recovered at cost			Recovered at cost	
Local authority inspection (on request of licence holder)	£163.00		£1.00	£164.00	
ACUPUNCTURE, COSMETIC PIERCING, SEMI-PERMANENT SKIN COLOURING, TATTOOING, ELECTROLYSIS					
Fee to register a premises	£138.00	5.00%	£6.90	£142.80	
Fee to register a practitioner	£99.00	5.00%	£4.95	£99.90	
GAMBLING ACT 2005 (inc. SMALL LOTTERIES)					
Small society licences					
Fee to register a small society lottery	£40.00	0.00%	£0.00	£40.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Small society lottery annual maintenance fee	£20.00	0.00%	£0.00	£20.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for the grant of a premises licence					
Betting (including tracks)	£1,853.00	5.00%	£92.70	£1,945.70	
Betting Tracks	£1,853.00	5.00%	£92.70	£1,945.70	
Rings	£2,171.00	5.00%	£108.60	£2,279.60	
Adult Gaming Centres	£1,240.00	5.00%	£62.00	£1,302.00	
Family Entertainment Centres	£1,240.00	5.00%	£62.00	£1,302.00	
Premises licence annual fees					
Betting (including tracks)	£371.00	5.00%	£18.60	£389.60	
Betting Tracks	£371.00	5.00%	£18.60	£389.60	
Rings	£639.00	5.00%	£32.00	£671.00	
Adult Gaming Centres	£639.00	5.00%	£32.00	£671.00	
Family Entertainment Centres	£639.00	5.00%	£32.00	£671.00	
Application to vary a premises licence					
Betting (including tracks)	£926.00	5.00%	£46.30	£972.30	
Betting Tracks	£926.00	5.00%	£46.30	£972.30	
Rings	£1,086.00	5.00%	£54.30	£1,139.30	
Adult Gaming Centres	£639.00	5.00%	£32.00	£671.00	
Family Entertainment Centres	£639.00	5.00%	£32.00	£671.00	
Application to transfer a premises licence					
Betting (including tracks)	£742.00	5.00%	£37.10	£779.10	
Betting Tracks	£742.00	5.00%	£37.10	£779.10	
Rings	£746.00	5.00%	£37.30	£782.30	
Adult Gaming Centres	£1,240.00	5.00%	£62.00	£1,302.00	
Family Entertainment Centres	£620.00	5.00%	£31.00	£651.00	
Application for a provisional statement					
Betting (including tracks)	£1,853.00	5.00%	£92.70	£1,945.70	
Betting Tracks	£1,853.00	5.00%	£92.70	£1,945.70	
Rings	£2,171.00	5.00%	£108.60	£2,279.60	
Adult Gaming Centres	£1,240.00	5.00%	£62.00	£1,302.00	
Family Entertainment Centres	£1,240.00	5.00%	£62.00	£1,302.00	
Application for the grant of a premises licence (provisional statement holders)					
Betting (including tracks)	£742.00	5.00%	£37.10	£779.10	
Betting Tracks	£742.00	5.00%	£37.10	£779.10	
Rings	£746.00	5.00%	£37.30	£782.30	
Adult Gaming Centres	£746.00	5.00%	£37.30	£782.30	
Family Entertainment Centres	£620.00	5.00%	£31.00	£651.00	
Application for reinstatement of a premises licence					
Betting (including tracks)	£746.00	5.00%	£37.30	£782.30	
Betting Tracks	£746.00	5.00%	£37.30	£782.30	
Rings	£746.00	5.00%	£37.30	£782.30	
Adult Gaming Centres	£746.00	5.00%	£37.30	£782.30	
Family Entertainment Centres	£666.00	5.00%	£33.40	£699.40	
Premises licence fees (initial/annual)					
Copy of a premises licence (all types)	£25.00	0.00%	£0.00	£25.00	AT STATUTORY MAXIMUM ALREADY - CANNOT INCREASE
Notification of a change in a renewal of a premises licence (all types)	£50.00	0.00%	£0.00	£50.00	AT STATUTORY MAXIMUM ALREADY - CANNOT INCREASE
Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permits					
Application for grant of a permit	£150.00	0.00%	£0.00	£150.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for variation of a permit	£100.00	0.00%	£0.00	£100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for transfer of a permit	£25.00	0.00%	£0.00	£25.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Annual permit fee	£50.00	0.00%	£0.00	£50.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Change of name shown on a permit	£25.00	0.00%	£0.00	£25.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	0.00%	£0.00	£15.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Licensed Premises Gaming Machines (Automatic Enforcement)					
Fee to serve notification	£50.00	0.00%	£0.00	£50.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Club Gaming Permits					
Application for grant of a permit	£200.00	0.00%	£0.00	£200.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for grant of a permit (Club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	0.00%	£0.00	£100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for variation of a permit	£100.00	0.00%	£0.00	£100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit	£200.00	0.00%	£0.00	£200.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit (club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	0.00%	£0.00	£100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Annual permit fee	£50.00	0.00%	£0.00	£50.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	0.00%	£0.00	£15.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Club Machine Permits					
Application for grant of a permit	£200.00	0.00%	£0.00	£200.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for grant of a permit (Club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	0.00%	£0.00	£100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for variation of a permit	£100.00	0.00%	£0.00	£100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit	£200.00	0.00%	£0.00	£200.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit (club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	0.00%	£0.00	£100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Annual permit fee	£50.00	0.00%	£0.00	£50.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	0.00%	£0.00	£15.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Family Entertainment Centre Gaming Machine Permit					
Application for grant of a permit	£300.00	0.00%	£0.00	£300.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit	£300.00	0.00%	£0.00	£300.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Change of name shown on a permit	£25.00	0.00%	£0.00	£25.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	0.00%	£0.00	£15.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Pixie Gaming Permits					
Application for grant of a permit	£300.00	0.00%	£0.00	£300.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit	£300.00	0.00%	£0.00	£300.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Change of name shown on a permit	£25.00	0.00%	£0.00	£25.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	0.00%	£0.00	£15.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Temporary Use Notices					
Fee to serve a Temporary Use Notice	£310.00	5.00%	£15.50	£325.50	
Fee for a copy of a Temporary Use Notice	£16.00	5.00%	£0.80	£16.80	
STREET TRADING					
Annual street trading consent - food - initial	£1,447.00	5.00%	£72.40	£1,519.40	
Annual street trading consent - food - renewal	£1,327.00	5.00%	£66.40	£1,393.40	
Annual street trading consent - non-food - initial	£1,207.00	5.00%	£60.40	£1,267.40	
Annual street trading consent - non-food - renewal	£1,086.00	5.00%	£54.30	£1,139.30	
SCRAP METAL DEALERS LICENCES					
Application for a new site licence	£296.00	0.00%	£0.00	£296.00	
Fee per additional site	£153.00	0.00%	£0.00	£153.00	
Application for renewal of a site licence	£245.00	0.00%	£0.00	£245.00	
Fee per additional site	£153.00	0.00%	£0.00	£153.00	
Application for a new collectors licence	£146.00	0.00%	£0.00	£146.00	
Application for renewal of a collectors licence	£97.00	0.00%	£0.00	£97.00	
Validation of a licence	£87.00	0.00%	£0.00	£87.00	
Request for a copy of a licence (if lost or stolen)	£26.00	0.00%	£0.00	£26.00	
ZOO LICENCES					
Application for grant or renewal of a licence	£131.00		£119.00	£250.00	
Secretary of state inspector and veterinary fees	Recovered at cost			Recovered at cost	

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WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY, 17TH NOVEMBER 2022, AT 4.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors: T. Rowley (Chairman), S. Cronin (Vice-Chairman, during Minute No's 24/22 to 27/22), H. J. Jones, P.L. Thomas, S. Khan, L. Harrison (substituting for Councillor N. Nazir), J. Raine, B. Nielsen, C. Mitchell, D. Morris and N. Martin

Officers: Mr. S. Wilkes, Mr. P. Carpenter, Mr. R. Keyte, Mr. D. Mellors, Ms. K. Lahel, Mr. M. Cox and Mrs. P. Ross

Partner Officers: Mr. L. Griffiths, Worcester City Council, Mr. I. Miller, Wyre Forest District Council, Mr. I. Edwards, Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils (all via Microsoft Teams)

19/22 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N. Nazir, Redditch Borough Council, with Councillor L. Harrison in attendance as the substitute Member; and Councillor L. Whitehouse, Wyre Forest District Council.

20/22 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

21/22 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 23rd June and 6th October 2022, were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board meetings held on 23rd June and 6th October 2022, be approved as correct records.

22/22 **WRS BOARD AGENDA PAPERS FROM 6TH OCTOBER 2022**

The Head of Regulatory Services reminded the Board that the meeting of the Board on Thursday 6th October 2022 was not quorate due to unforeseen circumstances impacting on one Board Member, which had resulted in one partner authority not being represented at the meeting.

Having discussed all options with the Council's Legal Advisor and Head of Regulatory Services, the Chairman determined that the meeting would go ahead in order to avoid wasted journeys; having noted that no papers on the agenda required a formal vote for decision, they were all simply for noting. Members who were in attendance were then able to ask questions of the officer's present on the reports presented and a broad ranging discussion of the issues raised took place.

However, in order to address what was effectively outstanding business, this report introduced those previously scheduled papers as background papers; in order for them to be formally noted by the Board and to agree the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd June 2022.

The reports that were presented to Board Members on 6th October 2022, were included as background papers, with the agenda distributed for 17th November 2022.

Thus, enabling those Board Members who were not in attendance to address their contents and to ask any questions during today's meeting.

RESOLVED that the Board papers report for 6th October 2022 be noted, and that the relevant recommendations in each of the reports as detailed in the background papers as provided, be noted.

23/22

WRS REVENUE MONITORING APRIL - SEPT 2022

The Interim S151 officer, Finance, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and Redditch Borough Council (RBC), introduced the report and in doing so drew Members' attention to the Recommendations as detailed on pages 27 to 29 of the main agenda report.

The Interim S151 officer, confirmed that the report covered the period April to September 2022.

Members were informed that the detailed revenue report, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report; showed a projected outturn 2022/23 of £1k refund to partners. It was appreciated that this was an estimation to the year-end based on the following assumptions: -

- A 2% pay award had been added to the April to September Actual and projected outturn figures.
- Agency staff costs were being incurred due to backfilling of staff working on grant funded work and other contractual work e.g., food recovery programme, contaminated land.
- If April to September 2022 spend on pest control continued on the same trend for the rest of year, there would be an overspend on this service of £14k. WRS officers would continue to monitor and

analyse this spend and advise of any changes in the projected outturn figure at quarter 3. The projected outturn figure to be funded by partners was, as follows: -

Redditch Borough Council	£6k
Wychavon District Council	£7k
Worcester City Council	£1k

- The following was the actual bereavements costs April to September 2022 to be funded by partners. These costs were charged on an as and when basis. Due to the nature of the charge, it was not possible to project a final outturn figure: -

Bromsgrove District Council	£8k
Malvern Hills District Council	£4k
Redditch Borough Council	£2k
Worcester City Council	£6k

- Appendix 2 to the report, detailed the income achieved by WRS for April to September 2022.
- Any grant funded expenditure was shown separate to the core service costs as this was not funded by the participating Councils.

WRS had budgeted for a 2% pay award in 2022-23. The current proposed pay award was £1,925 per annum on all pay points (pro rata for part time work,) had now been accepted by employers and unions; the additional pressure on WRS would be £115,757. WRS were unable to cover this increase, therefore an increase to partner funding would be required as follows: -

Council	2022/23
	£
Bromsgrove District Council	16,843
Malvern Hills District Council	15,083
Redditch Borough Council	20,292
Worcester City Council	19,146
Wychavon District Council	26,902
Wyre Forest District Council	17,491
Total	115,757

RESOLVED that the Board notes the final financial position for the period April – Sept 2022, and that

- 1.1 partner councils be informed of their liabilities for 2022-23 in relation to Pest Control, as follows:-

Council	Projected Outturn for Pest Control £000
Redditch Borough Council	6
Wychavon District Council	7
Worcester City Council	1
Total	14

- 1.2 partner councils be informed of their liabilities for 2022-23 in relation to Bereavements, as follows:-

Council	Apr–Sept 22 Actual for Bereavements £000
Bromsgrove District Council	8
Malvern Hills District Council	4
Redditch Borough Council	2
Worcester City Council	6
Total	20

- 1.3 partner councils be informed of their liabilities for 2022-23 in relation to three additional Technical Officers; as follows:-

Council	Estimated Projected Outturn 2022/23 Tech Officer Income Generation £000	Estimated Projected Outturn 2022/23 Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Estimated Projected Outturn 2022/23 Gull Control £000
Redditch Borough Council	6	2	
Malvern Hills District	4	7	

Council			
Worcester City Council	5	2	70
Bromsgrove District Council	5	8	
Wychavon District Council	8	13	
Wyre Forest District Council	5	8	
Total	33	40	70

- 1.4 Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2022/23 in relation to the additional increase in pay award and recommend the increase to individual partner councils, as follows:-

Council	£000
Bromsgrove District Council	17
Malvern Hills District Council	15
Redditch Borough Council	20
Worcester City Council	19
Wychavon District Council	27
Wyre Forest District Council	18
Total	116

- 1.5 Approve additional partner liabilities for 2022/23 in relation to the additional increase in hosting cost in Wyre Forest and Bromsgrove District Councils relating to ICT, accommodation and support staffing costs and recommend the increase to individual partner councils; as follows: -

Council	2022/23 Increase in Rent £000	2022/23 Increase in ICT Hosting £000	2022/23 Increase in Support Hosting £000
Bromsgrove District Council	0.8	0.4	0.7
Malvern Hills	0.7	0.4	0.6

District Council			
Redditch Borough Council	1.0	0.5	0.9
Worcester City Council	0.9	0.5	0.8
Wychavon District Council	1.3	0.7	1.2
Wyre Forest District Council	.8	0.5	0.8
Total	5.5	3.0	5.0

24/22

WRS BUDGETS 2023/24 - 2025/26

The Interim S151 officer, Finance, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and Redditch Borough Council (RBC), introduced the report and in doing highlighted that no one could have anticipated the extent of the inflationary pressures and economic conditions currently being experienced by all councils; with the sharp increases in energy costs and utilities.

IT suppliers were also experiencing increased financial pressures with many passing these on to users. WRS had therefore incurred increased costs with licensing and Uniform costs. However, some costs were offset against a decrease in transport costs now that the essential car user allowance could no longer be claimed.

The Head of Regulatory Services responded to questions regarding the non-Partner Council revenue side; and in doing so briefly explained that the Service were doing an excellent job working with Worcestershire County Council on areas like Safety at Sportsgrounds and petroleum licensing, with the Technical Services Manager's Team were doing an excellent job on delivering this alongside the vapour recovery work of Environmental Health, both of which had generated an additional income. Officers would continue to look more broadly at other public authorities to work with as the legislative framework made this more straight forward than dealing with the private sector; although no one would know the medium term financial situation for some time. If WRS were struggling with the budget, then partner officers would look at how services could be delivered differently if necessary.

WRS was relatively unique, there were no other district council partnership models delivering services on the scale of WRS. The shared services model on which WRS is based was a tried and tested model and officers had been successful in bringing in additional income and had built a strong team to achieve this. The work of WRS was nationally

recognised by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA); and WRS was very well known to the Local Government Association (LGA). The Licensing and Support Services Manager, WRS, chaired the Primary Authority group and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) was visiting WRS in the near future to look at the service's use of intelligence, with a view to using this in part of the amendments to its Code of Practice.

Officers would continue to scope other areas of expertise and also build on more Primary Authority work.

With regard to promoting WRS, the Head of Regulatory Services commented that most of the business was generated by peer to peer contact, by word of mouth. Officers had looked at trying to market services. However, he would also ask Senior Officers and Members to champion WRS when / whenever possible at relevant forums.

The Chairman thanked officers and stated that we all had a role to play in promoting WRS.

RECOMMENDED that partner authorities approve the following for 2023/24 – 2025/26: -:

- 1.1 Approve the 2023/24 gross expenditure budget of £4,288k as shown at Appendix 1 to the report,
- 1.2 Approve the 2023/24 income budget of £781k as shown at Appendix 1, to the report;
- 1.3 Approve the revenue budget and partner percentage allocations for 2023/24 as follows: -

Council	£'000	Revised %
Bromsgrove District Council	510	14.52
Malvern Hills District Council	457	13.00
Redditch Borough Council	615	17.49
Worcester City Council	580	16.72
Wychavon District	815	23.19
Wyre Forest District Council	530	15.08
Total	3,507	

1.4 Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2023/24 in relation to unavoidable salary pressure, as follows: -.

Council	£'000
Bromsgrove District Council	12
Malvern Hills District Council	11
Redditch Borough Council	14
Worcester City Council	14
Wychavon District Council	19
Wyre Forest District Council	12
Total	82

1.5 Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2023/24 in relation to increase in hosting costs, as follows: -

Council	Increase in Rent £000	Increase in ICT Hosting £000	Increase in Support Hosting £000
Bromsgrove District Council	1	1	1
Malvern Hills District Council	1	1	1
Redditch Borough Council	2	1	2
Worcester City Council	1	1	1
Wychavon District Council	2	1	2
Wyre Forest District Council	1	1	1
Total	8	7	8

1.6 Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2023/24 in relation to three Technical Officers, as follows: -

Council	Tech Officer Income Generation £000	Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Tech Officer Gull Control £000
Bromsgrove District Council	5	7	
Malvern Hills	5	13	

District Council			
Redditch Borough Council	6	2	
Worcester City Council	6	3	65
Wychavon District Council	8	11	
Wyre Forest District Council	6	5	
Total	36	41	65

25/22

ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE DATA QUARTER 2 - 2022/2023

The Community Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services presented the Activity and Performance Data for Quarter 2, 2022/2023 and in doing so highlighted the following key points: -

ACTIVITY DATA

The number of food safety cases recorded by WRS during the year to date was a reduction of 28% compared to 2021-22, but an increase of 18% compared to 2020-21. In general terms, a higher proportion of food safety cases were enquiries such as requests for business advice or export health certificates.

Of the interventions conducted at businesses included in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS), 39 were rated as non-compliant (0, 1 or 2) with most of these ratings issued to takeaways, restaurants and small retailers.

Approximately 71% of recorded cases related to noise nuisances, with noise from domestic properties (such as from dog barking or noise from audio-visual equipment) being the most prominent sources. A further 11% of recorded cases related to smoke nuisances and issues such as the burning of domestic or commercial waste.

PERFORMANCE

At the end of last year, officers saw an increase in the number of defective vehicles reported, driven mainly by higher numbers in one of the six fleets. There was a similar picture at the end of quarter 2 this year, with 37 vehicles being suspended in the period but with 25 being in that same fleet area. Even with this number, only 2.37% of the fleet county-wide were recorded as potentially problematic. Members' attention was drawn to the table detailed at Appendix B to the report. Officers hoped that they could work with the operators to reduce this figure, but members of the trade needed to be aware that they must

always keep their vehicles up to standard and that the regular tests undertaken, were not there to be used to assess what maintenance may be required on their vehicles.

The rate of noise complaints against population was 0.91. This was slightly lower than the figure at quarter 2 last year (1.08,) but like the figures in the previous 2 years (0.94 and 0.85 respectively.) Members may be aware that this measure had been significantly higher at this point in previous years with 1.7 in 2018/19 and 2.1 in 2017/18. Hopefully, the current figure again was indicative of a return to normal levels.

Income brought in during the first half of 2022/23 was £232,520, which was significantly up on last year at this point (£163, 583,) and the previous year (£131,901). Using the historic budget figure for 2016/17 (£3,017,000) to maintain the comparison with previous years, this comes out at 7.7%. Hopefully, this showed that WRS were starting to see more normality returned in the areas that generated our income streams. Officers had not included additional income for work on issues like supporting Ukrainian refugees as this was work done on behalf of the six partners and officers tried to use this measure to look at the work that WRS carried out for others.

Officers responded to questions from the Chairman and Members of the Board, with regard to the information as detailed at Appendix 2, on page 59 of the main agenda report; with regard to defective vehicles and why Redditch Borough Council appeared to be out of kilter compared to other partner authorities.

It was suggested as mentioned above that some drivers may be using the taxi checks at the depot, as a way of seeing what work was required on their vehicles in order to keep them operating within policy and safe. Members were reassured that the Licensing and Support Services Manager, WRS was looking into this. Licensing officers needed to ensure that drivers were carrying out safety checks and that regular maintenance on their vehicles was taking place.

Officers further responded to questions regarding the use of domestic log burners. Members were briefly informed that new powers under the Environment Act 2021 could allow local authorities to issue Penalty Notices for illegal smoke emissions, however, officers needed a better understanding on how log burners were being used incorrectly before they could do this as there were a number of reasons that could result in an illegal emission, particularly if the wrong fuel was used, and most log burners on the market were tested to standards that made them suitable for use in smokeless zones. The Head of Regulatory Services reminded

members that the service's enforcement policy would require that officers take a proportionate approach, making members of the public aware of what to / what not to buy, what can / can't be used as fuel with log burners; and that officers had to have the tools to deal with any concerns / issues raised in this area before any kind of formal action would be instituted.

The Chairman expressed his sincere thanks to officers for an informative report.

RESOLVED that the Activity and Performance Data Quarter 2, for 2022/2023, be noted and that Members use the contents of the activity data in their own reporting back to fellow Members of their partner authorities.

26/22

UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF THE AUTOMATION PROJECT

The Licensing and Support Services Manager introduced a further update report on the Automation progress, as agreed.

Members were informed that progress on making a final decision on a system had progressed. WRS had found two suppliers who seemed most positive about working with WRS and being able to deliver within our proposed timescales. The specification was being finalised and discussions were taking place with procurement colleagues this would enable WRS to make a direct award to the one that best fits the needs of WRS.

In the coming few weeks WRS will be working with the Procurement solicitor at Bromsgrove District Council to ensure that the necessary procurement processes were followed, whilst utilising one of the two Government portals available for direct award.

In parallel to the wider automation project officers had also been discussing the implementation of electronic ID Cards in the taxi trades for both safeguarding and enforcement measures. Since there was only one supplier on the market for this technology the procurement process was not as burdensome so officers would continue to work with the supplier to ensure that all of the needs would be met on implementation.

RESOLVED that the update on progress of the automation project be noted.

27/22

INFORMATION REPORT - FLEXIBLE WRS WORKFORCE

The Technical Services Manager, WRS, introduced the report and in doing so informed the Board that as detailed in the report that, during the last three years, WRS had provided reports or updates to Members on the various COVID-19 related workstreams. At the peak of demand, we

had teams working to support businesses and the public in a variety of ways throughout the pandemic. This led to a massive recruitment drive to fill the 80 plus temporary posts created.

The pandemic had created a unique situation which WRS was able to use to its benefit, in giving lots of talented, conscientious, and highly skilled individuals a chance to work alongside Environmental Health and Licensing staff to get a taste of our world. Whilst much of that work has come to an end during 2022 many of the staff previously employed in COVID-19 workstreams had been able and willing to be redeployed in regulatory and public health related matters utilising the skills developed and supporting the WRS budget.

The Head of Regulatory reiterated this and commented that the Technical Services Manager had provided a good summary for Members. They had employed some very talented people during Covid-19.

Planning Enforcement

WRS had been utilising the knowledge and skills we have in this area to support our partner authorities. During the spring we trained former contact tracing staff where required (as some had considerable experience in enforcement previously) to deliver planning enforcement work on behalf of four of the Worcestershire District Councils. Whilst the work for Wychavon and Malvern Hills Districts ceased in June, WRS continued to work alongside Planning colleagues in Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils.

Members' attention was drawn to the table, as detailed on page 96 of the main agenda report.

Homes for Ukrainians

Much of the work of the COVID Advisors during the pandemic was to support businesses and members of the public with a variety of issues, concerns, and worries. The Advisors were selected for their communication skills and drive to help people. This has served well in supporting housing colleagues at Bromsgrove District, Malvern Hills District, Redditch Borough, and Wychavon District Council's in delivering the work of supporting Ukrainians who had arrived in the county.

In July two more COVID Advisors started to assist but this time in Wychavon District and Malvern Hills District Council areas to carry out property checks to ensure that the properties were suitable for the Ukrainian guests.

COVID Advisors were always happy to take on any new challenges and were flexible in their approach to the regular changing guidelines during

COVID and now the regular change in workplace. They adapted well in these important roles using their previous experiences dealing with a range of different people (the general public, business owners, colleagues and management across the county in the six districts, county public health and councillors) and transferable skills such as their caring, empathic approach from visiting the clinically extremely vulnerable during lockdown, helping on vaccine centres to now carrying out Safeguarding checks for the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

In the last few months there had been some complex and sensitive cases, as one would envisage in a scheme where hosts offered to open their homes to strangers who had had to leave their homes and, in many cases, suffered terribly from the conflict.

Benefit to Partners

As well as supporting our colleagues in the District Councils, we have retained staff with valuable skills and knowledge. In terms of WRS' income generation from these work strands, we have only covered costs, but it had enabled us to utilise the associated opportunities in developing and enhancing our baseline workforce with managerial experience, a variety of work and an opportunity to provide value to our society; whilst being flexible and adaptable to our partners and residents in managing and delivering services for the benefit of all.

Further detailed discussion followed on the role of the flexible workforce in dealing with planning enforcement. Officers reassured Members that the flexible workforce had the crucial skills in adhering to enforcement policies and in enabling successful prosecutions. All enforcement goes through the planning department who direct WRS. Key communication with planning officers takes place and officers ensure that each of the partner authorities' policies are followed. It's about a flexible workforce having the abilities to undertake investigation without falling foul of legislation, the law and regulations; and assisting with quite onerous cases that could take between 1 and 2 years.

Further discussion took place on other enforcement work that WRS might take on. The Head of Regulatory Services directed Members to those areas mentioned in the WRS 3-year business plan as options that partners could consider, although he added that the view expressed by some members about wanting to retain services locally was understandable and reasonable.

RESOLVED that the Information Report – Flexible Worcestershire Regulatory Services workforce, be noted.

The meeting closed at 5.30 p.m.

Chairman

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**25th October 2022**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/4 TO 2025/6 – Tranche 1**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr. Karen Ashley, Finance and Enabling Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Michelle Howell
Report Author	Job Title: Head of Finance & Customer Services email:michelle.howell@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel:
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Council will set its budget in two Tranches this year. The initial Tranche will be published the Autumn with approval of options at Council in January, with a second Tranche in January once final settlement figures are known with approval in February. HRA budgets will be dealt with in a separate report although they will form part of a single report to Council in February at Council Tax setting time.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS**Executive are asked to Resolve that:**

- 1 They endorse the inputs into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan as at the start of October, and the associated risks and opportunities.
- 2 These inputs have been used, along with the 2022/23-24/25 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) agreed by Council in February 2022, to project an initial "gap" to be closed.
- 3 An initial Tranche of savings proposals, as set out in Section 3.25 - 3.28 and the associated Savings Proposal Document in Appendix A, will be published on the 16th October and any feedback will be considered by Executive in November 2022 and at Council in January 2023.
- 4 Tranche 2 of this process will add further information such as the Local Government Settlement to give a final financial position for the Council.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**25th October 2022**3. Background****Introduction**

3.1 The Council sets a 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan every year, with the final Council Tax Resolution being approved by Council in February. This year's process will be more difficult due to the following factors:

- Starting the process with an initial deficit amount from the 2022/23 MTFP.
- This being the first year that the Government starts to pay for the C-19 Pandemic.
- The present cost of living crisis.
- A change of Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- Limited Reserves and Balances.

As such, it is prudent to split the budget process into two tranches,

- Having an initial Tranche which seeks to close as much of the deficit as possible using information known as at the end of September and seeking approval for those savings to be implemented at Council in January,
- Having a second Tranche after the Christmas break, which will be approved in February, that takes account of the Local Government Settlement whose final detail will not be known until early January.

3.2 This report will set out:

- The starting position for the 2023/24 MTFP.
- The emerging national picture including expected settlement dates.
- The Council's Base Assumptions including Inflation and Grants
- Fees and Charges update.
- Strategic Approach
- Tranche 1 set of pressures and savings proposals.
- Impact on Reserves and Balances.
- Capital Programme.
- Robustness Statement
- Consultation Details.

The Starting Position for the 2023/24 MTFP

3.3 The Council set a three year MTFP 2022/23 to 2024/25 in February 2022. That plan had inherent budget deficits built into the plan with balances set to fall from £2.292m to £0.282m over the period. This overall position is summarised in Table 1.

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	2022-23 £000	2023-24 £000	2024-25 £000
Departmental base budget	10,064	10,051	10,132
Incremental Progression	144	275	361
Unavoidable Pressures	427	140	134
Revenue Bids/Revenue impact of capital bids	191	150	128
Savings and Additional income	-305	-327	-327
Changes in Specific Grant/Funding Movements	0	0	0
Net Revenue Budget Requirement	10,520	10,289	10,428
FINANCING			
Reserve release	-100	0	0
Lower Tier Services Grant	-100	0	0
Business Rates Net Position	-2,985	-2,985	-2,985
Council Tax	-6,747	-6,941	-7,031
Collection Fund Deficit (Council Tax)	-180	0	
New Homes Bonus	-330	0	
Investment Income	-673	-673	-673
MRP (Principal)	959	1,098	1,046
Interest payable	218	220	218
Discount on advanced pension payment	-301	-60	-170
Funding Total	-10,238	-9,341	-9,595
General Balances	2022-23 £000	2023-24 £000	2024-25 £000
Estimated opening balances 22/23 (projected)	2,292	2,010	1,061
Contribution (from) / to General Balances	-282	-949	-833
Closing Balances	2,010	1,061	228

Table 1 – Opening MTFS Position

- 3.4 In addition, there are unallocated savings in the existing MTFP amounting to £347k. These amounts are being addressed as part of the ongoing 2022/23 budget process.
- 3.5 The table below sets out the revised “gap” that needs to be bridged for the Council’s budget to come back into a balanced sustainable position. The revised gap is because the MTFP has been rolled on a year to include 2025/26.

Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Budget Deficit	£949,000	£833,000	£1,040,000
Total Gap	£949,000	£833,000	£1,040,000

Table 2 – Budget Gap

The emerging national picture including expected Settlement Dates

- 3.6 Local Government is in uncharted territory. 2023/24 will be the first full year out of C-19 restrictions or associated support. C-19 has changed significantly the way Councils and the people they serve work, or expect to be served, and

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this needs to be reflected in Service Plans and associated budgets. It is expected that this will also be the first year that the Government starts to repay the significant sums that it borrowed during C-19 and this will affect any Local Government Settlement.

- 3.7 In addition, since the start of the War in Ukraine, we have seen shortages of key raw materials, including fuel. This has led to Inflationary increases that have now reached over 10% and the cost of petrol/diesel being 70% higher than a year ago. This has now been labelled a “cost of living” crisis and affects our residents, our businesses and also the Councils themselves. We have included in the assumptions section what we are predicting at the 30th September and these assumptions are reflected in the position Statement. This will be refined in Tranche 2 of the budget as we update for conditions in January and also the effect of any Government support. The Chancellors Mini-Budget on the 23rd September concentrated on Growth initiatives and not the allocation of funds. There is a significant risk to Councils if the forecast growth is not achieved.
- 3.8 Councils also declared “Climate Emergencies” and have challenging carbon reduction targets to deliver by 2030, 2040 and 2050. The Council’s Climate Change Strategy and associated Carbon Reduction Implementation Plan also goes to Executive on the 25th October. At the moment plans are within existing budgets, but as we move through the next three-year period there will be the requirement for the prioritisation of resources and approval of additional funding on a scheme by scheme basis. These will need to be taken account of in future budgets, although a significant part of this budget spend will be Capital in nature.
- 3.9 We have also had a change of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The Johnson regime ended on the 5th September and Liz Truss became Prime Minister. Given the issues highlighted in the previous paragraphs and these significant changes it is unclear at the moment on the new strategic direction of the Government and the level of support and influence the Local Government sector will have.
- 3.10 The new Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng, outlined a mini-Budget on Friday 23rd September. In this mini-Budget, as set out in para 3.7 above, the emphasis was on growth, with no detail over allocation of resources. It is hoped that the “usual” Chancellors Statement in November will contain more detail.
- 3.11 It is not known when the Local Government Settlement will take place. We will assume that the Chancellors Statement will be in the third week of November, with the Local Government Provisional Settlement on the final Thursday before Christmas. The final Local Government Settlement will be required halfway through January to enable all precepting authorities to deliver their budgets – using this gives the following timetable:

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- Initial Tranche 1 Options published - 16th October
- Executive discuss initial options – 25th October
- Chancellors Statement – 23rd November
- End of feedback period – 23rd November
- Tranche 1 approved by Executive in December and Council in January
- Provisional Local Government Settlement – 15th December
- Final Local Government Settlement – 12th January
- Tranche 2 options ready for Executive – 17th January
- Tranche 2 options presented to Executive - 7th February
- Full Budget approved by Council – 27th February

Timescales are estimated – however the issue is that there is little time for delivery of either Tranche1 or Tranch 2.

The Council's Base Assumptions including Inflation and Grants

- 3.12 It is important to set out the base assumptions under which the budget is constructed. These assumptions can then be stress tested for various scenarios to test the robustness of the overall budget.
- 3.13 Tax Base underlying assumptions are as follows
- Council Tax – Figures assume the full 1.99% increase, but the ability to increase by £104k from 2024/25
 - Business Rates Increases – business rates assume no growth in the base. This is being reviewed in light of the post C-19 environment.
 - New Homes Bonus – It is assumed to be none in 23/24 onwards
 - Lower Tier Services Grant - It is assumed to be none in 23/24 onwards
 - Pension Fund assumptions – takes account of the latest triennial valuation which was received in September
- 3.14 Grant support assumptions are as follows (Revenue and Capital). It should be noted that these are budgeted figures and final grant figures will not be confirmed until the time of the final Local Government Settlement.
- The main Revenue Grants are
 - S31 Grant - £0.748m
 - Housing Benefit Administration Grant - £0.235m
 - Housing Benefit Grant - £18.5m
 - Discretionary Housing Payment - £0.136m
 - Revenue Cost of Collection Grant - £0.106m
 - Homelessness Grant - £0.153m
 - The Council has £15.2m of Towns Fund Grant to be spent by April 2026 which is match funded by £2.0m of Council funding.

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- The Council has £2.4m of UK Shared Prosperity Fund to spend by April 2025. This is both revenue and capital in nature.

3.15 Inflationary increases are significant due to factors already identified in previous sections. The following are the current base assumptions although given the present “cost of living” crisis and the change of Government in September it is likely these will need to be updated in Tranche 2.

- Presently, the Employers have offered a 2022/23 pay award of £1,925 per pay point plus on costs. This equates to an additional £953,453 cost to the Council from its initial budget. We budgeted for a 2% increase in our base budget in the 2022/23 MTFS which was £180k. In addition, we are assuming the 2023/24 will see an additional cost of 1.5% over our 1% base at a cost £154,667 before reverting back to 1% from 2024/25.
 - Therefore, at our present employee budgets, this accounts for an ongoing pressure of £1,108,120. Taking off the £180K budgeted this leaves £928,120.
- General inflation is running at 10% as of the 18th August. The assumption is this will affect transport and contract budgets in particular. Its impact on 2023/24 will be as follows (it is assumed that 2024/25 will move back to normal levels of 2%):
 - Redditch base transport budget - £209k – Increase £21k
 - Redditch base “contracts” budget - £2.3m – Increase £230k
- Utilities increases will be significant, with all our existing Utility contracts requiring renewal by the end of this financial year. We have seen increases in some areas of up to 400%. For planning purposes, we will assume an increase of 200% in 2023/24 which should then be relatively constant for the next three years.
 - Redditch base utilities budget - £570k – Increase £1,140k

It will not be possible to increase income budgets by the same percentages and potential fees and charges increase are set out in the next section.

These are significant increases and at the moment reflects what the Council projects to be the most likely scenario. This could change quickly and so the impact of different inflationary scenarios are shown below:

For general contracts:

- Inflation at the Bank of England target of 2% is only £50k
- A 5% increase would only increase costs by £125k
- A 20% increase would be £502k

For Fuel:

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- A 50% uplift would see an increase of £285k
- A 100% uplift would see an increase of £570k
- A 400% uplift would see an increase of £2,280k

3.16 There are also other possible pressures that will be monitored during the Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 processes as many relate to changes in Government legislation which is yet to be received. Key items include:

- The future waste operating model
- Possible commercial opportunities to maximise income
- Climate Change – see 3.8 above plus also the Growth bid of the Climate Change Manager which will be shared with Bromsgrove.

Fees and Charges update

3.17 There is a separate report on the proposed Fees and Charges increases for the 2023/24 Financial year on this Executive Agenda. These increases are shown in detail by service in the Fees and Charges Report which is also on today's agenda. The table below highlights the possible increase of income if 10% was applied across the board. The 10% has been applied to Contributions and Fees and Charges budgets and not on SLA Income, lifeline, where charges are set statutorily, and charges across more than one area. Dial a Ride and Shopmobility have 35% increases.

Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Base Budget	3,395,000	3,404,000	3,416,000
10% Increase	339,000	340,000	342,0000

Table 3 Fees and Charges Increases at 10%

3.18 The overall impact on the Council's position is set out in the following section. In setting the base budget levels to apply the increases an assessment has been made on deliverability.

Strategic Approach

3.19 The Council has come into the 2023/24 budget process with a number of conflicting issues. These include:

- An ongoing budget deficit position from the 2022/23 MTFS of £1.0m
- Significant inflationary increase due to the "cost of living" crisis.
- Limited reserves to call on to reduce any deficit (the present MTFS sees General Fund Balances fall to £0.228m by 2025/26). Earmarked reserves stand at just under £7m.
- Increases in Council Tax are limited at 2% or £5, which is significantly lower than the present rates of inflation.

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- 3.20 The Council must move to financial sustainability over the time scale of the next MTFS. Given the magnitude of the savings to be made it is not prudent to expect the movement to sustainability to happen by 2023/24. However, the level of reserves and balances presently held suggest that moving to sustainability by 2025/26 is too late and will leave inadequate resources for any emergency situation.
- 3.21 As such, the strategy must be to move the Council to financial sustainability by the 2024/25 financial year. To get to this position there will be the need for investment and possibly the requirement to fund redundancy (both from reserves and balances). Both these requirements will be outputs from the Council having to implement changes to the way it operates to continue to become a viable entity going forward and this will take 18 months to implement fully.
- 3.22 As set out later in the Robustness Statement, in compiling Tranche1 of the budget, assumptions have been made based on the best information held now. Issues the Council is facing are not unique, they are being faced by almost all Councils. Tranche 2 of the budget will adjust for any funding that the Government will provide and also look at other options to close any deficit should the Government settlement not bridge any resultant gap. Initiatives that will be assessed in Tranche 2 (as more time is required to analyse these individual options) include:
- Clarity of the Local Government Settlement including the Lower Tier Service Grant and the New Homes Bonus which if confirmed as intimated at Prime Ministers Question Time on the 12th October is worth £0.4m
 - Ensuring Grants are maximised.
 - Ensuring Agency work reflects the income provided for its delivery.
 - Minimisation of Bed and Breakfast Temporary Accommodation costs
 - Reviewing the effectiveness of the Council's largest Contracts.
 - Maximising the effectiveness of our refuse fleet
 - Reviewing the location and effectiveness of our Depot
 - Assessing the Council's leisure and cultural strategy in terms of affordability
 - Reviewing recharging mechanisms between the Councils for appropriateness
 - Rationalisation of Back Office services as we embrace technology.
- 3.23 Many of these initiatives will require investment, for which the only present source of funding is reserves (General Fund and Earmarked Reserves). Key areas of investment will be:
- Documentation of Processes
 - Investment in automation and robotic processes
 - Possible redundancy – through restructures

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- 3.24 However, in any situation, the Council must move to sustainability by the 2024/25 financial year.

Tranche 1 set of pressures and savings proposals

- 3.25 The initial base budget for 2023/24 to 2025/26 are set out in the following table. Given the uncertainty over inflation in particular, the table has been constructed to show progress against the initial target reductions set out in Table 4 below before adding on pressures to give an overall position.
- 3.26 Overall, the Council has identified £1.5m of savings items . This more than offsets the £1.0m budget deficit. Appendix A, our Savings Proposal Document, sets out the growth and savings proposals in more detail.
- 3.27 However, when we add in inflationary pressures (non-utilities) we move to a deficit position of £599k which reduces to a deficit of £125k over the three-year period.
- 3.28 We have kept utilities separate at the moment as there is talk of significant Government support. If this were not to materialise then the overall deficit position increases to £1.7m, reducing to £1.3m on present working assumptions.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**25th October 2022

Redditch Position Statement		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
		£000	£000	£000
Base Budget Position 22/23 MTFP				
	Expenditure	10,290	10,428	10,661
	Funding	-9,341	-9,595	-9,621
	Net	949	833	1,040
Revised Gap		949	833	1,040
Pressures				
	50% Funding for Climate Change Officer	30	30	30
Savings Options				
	Environmental Services Partnership	0	-25	-50
	Service Reviews	-140	-330	-405
	Move to All Out Elections	0	0	-170
	Town Hall	0	0	-400
	Finance Vacancies	-100	-100	-100
	MRP	-100	-100	-100
	Pension Fund	-580	-580	-580
	Engage Capacity Grid (One Off) £14m De	-300	-300	0
	10% Increase in Fees and Charges	-339	-340	-342
	Council Tax Increase	0	-104	-104
	Total Savings	-1,529	-1,849	-2,221
Revised Position		-580	-1,016	-1,181
Pressures				
	Pay Pressure Year 1	928	928	928
	Pay Pressure Future Years (1%)	0	0	117
	Transport Pressure	21	21	21
	Contracts Pressures	230	235	240
	Core Pressures	1,179	1,184	1,306
Updated Position		599	168	125
	Utilities Inflation	1,140	1,140	1,140
Final Draft Position		1,739	1,308	1,265

Table 4 – Present Position

Impact on Reserves

- 3.29 The existing MTFP saw general fund balances reduce from £2.292m to £228k over the three year planning horizon finishing in 2024/25. However, clearly this is not a sustainable level of general fund reserves where a level of 5% of gross budget is usually advised which is £2.5m. This is not a sustainable

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**25th October 2022

strategy and the Financial Strategy sets out that this needs to move to sustainability within 2 years. A range of scenarios will be modelled as there is significant uncertainty over the ongoing inflation amounts to budget for.

- 3.30 The Council also has Earmarked Reserves which are held for specific purposes. These earmarked reserves presently sit at £6.666m. All reserves will be reviewed for their ongoing applicability.

Capital Programme

- 3.31 The Council over the past number of years has not spent its capital programme allocations in year. A review has been carried out of
- All schemes that have not started (both from 22/23 and from previous years)
 - Schemes that have started
- To assess deliverability and links to revised strategic priorities.
- 3.32 Present rationale is for any scheme not yet started (unless grant or S106 funded) to rebid for funds as part of the 2023/24 budget process. There will be the need to add items to the capital programme (will be finalised over next couple of weeks) to include sums for:
- ICT hardware (such as laptops, etc)
 - Property Maintenance budgets (as minimal and significant work is required to ensure energy efficiency compliance).
- 3.33 The priority in capital terms is for the Council to spend its grant funding. It has the following:
- Towns Funding of £17.2m
 - UK Shared Prosperity Funding of £2.4m
 - A Bid in for Levelling Up Funding of £20m for town centres
- This funding is time limited and must all be spent by 2026 (with UKSPF being 2025). Therefore, there is a question over what resources would be available to manage any significant capital spend above these schemes.
- 3.34 Appendix B sets out the revised capital programme, taking into account the actions set out in paragraphs 3.31 and 3.32, and schemes that will need to be rebid. These total £1.6m and are highlighted in yellow in the appendix. However, all schemes are being reviewed.
- 3.35 Additional budget will be required for:
- ICT Hardware
 - Corporate Property – to ensure all are brought up to the required standard

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**25th October 2022**An Initial Risk Assessment**

- 3.36 As set out the Strategic Approach and Robustness Statement sections we are budgeting in a time of extreme uncertainty. In September we have had a change of Prime Minister and Cabinet and await confirmation of overall political direction for the sector.
- 3.37 As per the Risk Reports that are reported to both Cabinet and Audit, Standards and Governance Committees in July this year. These are
- Resolution of the approved budget position
 - Financial process rectification
 - Decisions made to address financial pressures and implementing new projects that are not informed by robust data and evidence
 - Adequate workforce planning
- 3.38 The core risks of implementation
- Any savings proposal must pass the S151 Officers tests for robustness and delivery. If items are not deliverable or amounts not obtainable, they cannot be included.
 - Implementation of savings to time and budget – there must be full implementation processes documented to ensure implementation within timescales.
 - Non delivery is a high risk - Savings tracking and ensuring implementation happens based on the plans and the assumptions will become part of the Council's core processes
 - Loss of key personnel will be crucial in a number of proposals and mitigation plans will need to be drawn up
 - Change of corporate direction/priorities

Robustness Statement

- 3.39 For Tranche 1, the opinion of the Interim Director of Finance is that the 2023/24 budget estimates contain considerable risk due to the level of uncertainty in the Council's operating environment, making it problematic to develop meaningful assumptions.
- 3.40 The revenue budget and capital programme have been formulated having regard to several factors including:
- Funding Available.
 - Inflation.
 - Risks and Uncertainties.
 - Priorities.
 - Service Pressures.
 - Commercial Opportunities.
 - Operating in a Post C-19 environment.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**25th October 2022

- 3.41 The MTFP highlights that the current financial position is untenable without some form of intervention. Whilst a balanced budget for 2022/23 was approved with the use of reserves and balances in February 2022, the Council is currently forecasting a £1.7m overspend in 2023/24 due to the additional demands placed on it due to the present rates of inflation, which in turn is utilising the remaining available reserves balances to fund these pressures.
- 3.42 Given all the uncertainty which encapsulates this MTFP, the assumptions have been based on the best available information to the Council at this time. Work will continue in validating all assumptions, robustly challenging estimates, ensuring the delivery of existing saving plans. Updates will be included in Tranche 2 of the MTFS and balanced budget setting process.

Tranche 1 Feedback

- 3.43 Tranche One is the first Phase of the 2023/24 budget process. The proposals are set out in Appendix C the Savings Proposal Document. A feedback section is included at the end of that document. Any feedback can then be reported. The draft consultation timetable is in Table 5.

Savings Proposals and MTFP Published	17 th October 2022
Budget Scrutiny Committee	19 th October 2022
Executive	25 th October 2022
O&S Scrutiny	tbc
Feedback Closing Date	5 th December 2022
Executive	6 th December 2022
Council	30 th January 2023

Table 5 Consultation Timetable

- 3.44 Hard copies of the Savings Proposal Document (Appendix A) can be available on request. The Savings Proposal Document will be published on the website and internal intranet (Orb) for residents, businesses and staff to view and provide responses via an online survey. The Council has raised awareness of the budget proposals via use of social media.

4. IMPLICATIONS**Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Financial implications are set out in section 3.

Legal Implications

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**25th October 2022

- 4.2 A number of statutes governing the provision of services covered by this report contain express powers or duties to charge for services. Where an express power to charge does not exist the Council has the power under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to charge where the activity is incidental or conducive to or calculated to facilitate the Council's statutory function.

Service / Operational Implications

- 4.3 Monitoring will be undertaken to ensure that income targets are achieved.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 4.4 The implementation of the revised fees and charges will be notified in advance to the customer to ensure that all users are aware of the new charges and any concessions available to them.
- 4.5 Initial Equalities Impact Assessments will be taken where required and details provided in Appendix B.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 There is a risk that if fees and charges are not increased that income levels will not be achieved, and the cost of services will increase. This is mitigated by managers reviewing their fees and charges annually.

6. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Savings Proposal Document

Appendix B – Existing Capital Programme and New Bids

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

7. KEY

None

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**25th October 2022

Appendix B – Capital Programme

Capital Pr.	Capital Project Name	21/22 - 22/23 B	21/22 - 22/23 sp
100001	AVCP - Open Space and Sports Improvement	0	971
100003	Camera Replacement Project	0	31,431
100004	Car Park Maintenance	50,000	17,837
100007	Disabled Facilities Grant	2,834,847	765,269
100008	Energy & Efficiency Installation	160,065	19,227
100009	GF Asbestos Programme	90,000	84,062
100010	Grassland Mitigation Measures - MS & AVCP	146,590	0
100011	Hedgerow Mitigation AVP	21,500	0
100012	HMO Grants	79,515	0
100013	Home Repairs Assistance	80,000	0
100014	Improved Parking Scheme	800,000	-4,950
100015	Improvement of Parking Arrow Valley South	98,535	16,796
100016	Improvement of Morton Stanley Open Space	25,633	24,898
100017	Improvement of Morton Stanley Play Area	79,686	35,823
100018	Improvement to Pump Track at Arrow Valley	60,806	0
100021	Improvement to Business Centres	73,614	106,818
100023	Locality Capital Projects	0	46,587
100026	Morton Stanley Park Sport and Open Spaces Improvements	298,403	257,396
100027	New Finance Enterprise System	0	269,315
100028	North Moors Moat Open Space Improvement	3,000	0
100032	Public Building	500,000	414,283
100035	Vehicle Replacement Programme	1,819,500	304,568
100036	Regeneration Fund	4,354,670	1,655
100037	Arrow Valley Weir Works	437,000	2,818
100040	Terry Field Outdoor Facilities Improvements	9,000	19,504
100043	Wheeler Bin Purchase	170,000	94,576
100044	New Digital Service	127,454	42,129
100045	Fuel pump upgrade and tank monitoring equipment	25,000	0
100046	Fleet Management Computer System	16,600	0
100047	Environmental Services Computer System	157,200	143,025
100048	Green Lane Studley	200,000	0
100049	Café and Infrastructure Morton Stanley Park	100,000	110,000
100062	Stock Condition Survey	0	6,305
100069	Locality - Landscape Improvement	1,825	8,230
100071	Salix Project	0	1,543,442
100072	Bathroom Renewals	0	12,604
100088	Improvement Holly Trees children's Centre	0	8,560
100089	Greener Homes	255,000	-80,710
100092	Passing bay at main access AVCP	24,700	6,000
100093	Resurfacing of pathway at AVCP	0	19,356
100094	Public Realm phase 2	0	32,400
100095	Bomford Hill pathway	0	31,272
100096	7kw electric vehicle charge points	160,000	0
100097	Widen access road to Arrow Valley Country park	25,000	0
110007	Forge Mill and Bordelsey Open Space Improvements Draw down- S106 - 2016/109/FUL and	18,684	0
110008	Arrow Valley Entrance Improvements draw down - S106 - 18/01049	10,000	0
110009	MUGA at Greenlands Sports Pitches draw down - S106 - 2018/169/FUL	137,649	0
110010	Play Area I and POS improvements at Birchfield Road Rec Ground drawdown - S106 -	32,833	0
110011	Play Area and POS improvements at Batchley and Brockhill Park drawdown- S106 -	32,379	0
110012	Play Area improvements at Birchfield Road Headless X Rec drawdown- S106 - 17/00737/FUL	7,575	0
110013	Play area, Open space and Sport improvements at Mayfields Park drawdown-S106 - 11/019/FUL	55,101	0
110014	Play Area and POS improvements at Wingates drawdown- S106 - 2016/290/FUL	40,449	0
110018	Cisco Network Update	53,561	0
110019	Server Replacement Est(Exact known Q2 2022)	83,250	0
110020	Laptop Refresh	5,000	0
110017	Purchase a new ride on Scag Tiger Cat mower	16,000	0
110021	Ipsley Church Lane Cemetery	195,000	0
NEW	Provide the Crossgate Depot site with a new and Compliant Diesel Fuel installation	56,000	0
Total Schemes		14,028,624	4,391,499
Schemes Not Started		1,561,492	

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive 10 January 2023****Quarterly Risk Update**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor – Karen Ashley Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling
Portfolio Holder Consulted	-
Relevant Head of Service	Michelle Howell – Head of Finance and Customer Services
Report Author Peter Carpenter	Job Title: Interim Section 151 Officer Contact email: peter.carpenter@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	An effective and sustainable Council
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

This report sets out Council activity to identify, monitor and mitigate risk.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive are asked to:

- The present list of Corporate and Departmental Risks and request any additional risks to be considered.

3. KEY ISSUES**Background**

- 3.1 In 2018/19, an audit of Risk Management provided an assurance level of limited assurance due to weaknesses in the design and inconsistent application of controls. As a result of the audit, a review was commissioned and undertaken by Zurich Municipal to consider the Council's risk management arrangements and to advise of any recommendations. In response to the Zurich review a Risk Management Strategy was produced for both Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council.
- 3.2 A follow-up review was carried out by Internal Audit in March 2021 (Final Report June 2021) with the purpose of identifying what progress had been made against the Risk Management Strategies. At that time there was a lack of evidence that the actions within the Risk Management Strategies had been fully completed and embedded within the Councils and therefore no assurance could be given.
- 3.3 CMT that acknowledged that the embedding of effective risk management needed to be driven and led by senior management and cascaded down throughout the Council. It recommended that:

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive 10 January 2023**

- An initial Officer Risk Board to take place on in the first week of April 2022. This happened on the 8th April. Three further rounds of the Officer Board have now taken place on the 22nd June, the 21st September, and the 21st December to embed processes.
- Each department nominate a representative to a Risk Board. These representatives meet on a quarterly basis and report back to management teams.
- Each department to complete an updated Risk Register by Wednesday 6th April. This Report is the third update of the Risk Register following that initial re-baselining on the 6th April.
- That the Audit Committee, which met in the week commencing the 11th April, be verbally updated on Progress. The Audit Committee reviewed Risk Registers in July and October and this Report is the third round of updates being reported to embed that process. These reports have also been presented to Executive.
- CMT be updated at their meeting on 13th April on progress and ongoing on progress. CMT were presented with an initial draft Corporate Risk Register for approval, and further updates were presented to Executive at the end of June, the end of September, and the end of December to embed the overall process.
- That updated reports are prepared for next cycle of Audit, Governance and Standards Committee. This cycle is in January 2023 and is the third series of updates.
- That the Officer Group update the Risk Register and formally report for CMT on a quarterly basis. These quarterly updates happened on the 29th June, 28th September, and 21st December.

The Definition of a Corporate Risk

- 3.4 The definition of a Corporate Risk remains unchanged. The Officer Risk Board review at their quarterly meetings risks that should be raised to Corporate Risks and those that should be reduced to Departmental Risks. This definition is below:

“For a **Risk** to move from being **Departmental** in nature to being **Corporate** in nature that it ***must have significant impact on Councils finances, be cross departmental in nature and/or result in Serious reputational damage.*** The Officer Risk Board will vet departmental risks using this definition to move then to Corporate Risks at their quarterly meetings.”

- 3.5 At the June Officer Risk Board it was agreed that “Green” Departmental Risks should be taken off this list if they have been to two consecutive meetings and mitigating actions have been fully put into place for them. This report takes account of this requirement being 2 meetings since the original baseline was reported.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive 10 January 2023****The 4Risk System**

- 3.6 The Council have reviewed the use of the 4Risk system to manage its risks. It was the view of the Officer Risk Board, and endorsed by CMT, that this was fit for purpose but like any system it needed to be properly completed and updated. The Officer Risk Board reviews this on a quarterly basis.

The baseline Departmental Risks are included in the following table – this was prior to any Risk Board meetings in April which started to actively challenge, mitigate and remove/add where relevant Risks.

Original Baseline April 2022

Service Area	Red	Amber	Green	Total
Customer Access and Financial Support	12	20	13	45
Finance	0	0	4	4
Environmental Services	0	2	11	13
Leisure & Cultural Services	0	3	3	6
Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services	0	0	7	7
ICT	2	4	5	11
Planning Services	0	1	1	2
Housing	1	11	11	23
Community Services	1	1	5	7
HR	0	0	1	1
Total	16	42	61	119

- 3.7 The Officer Meetings at the end of June, **which was not reported to Committee due to timing differences** saw the number of risks reduce as follows to 96 Risks:

Service Area	Red	Amber	Green	Total
Customer Access and Financial Support	0	6	12	18
Finance	0	2	2	4
Environmental Services	0	2	11	13
Leisure & Cultural Services	0	3	3	6
Legal, Equalities, Democratic Services & Property	0	3	9	12
ICT	2	6	2	10
Planning Services	0	2	1	3
Housing	1	10	10	21
Community Services	0	2	6	8
HR	0	0	1	1
Total	3	36	57	96

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive 10 January 2023**

The Three departmental red risks were:

- ICT 7 - Failure to identify, maintain and test adequate disaster recovery arrangements
- ICT 11 - System functionality to manage records.
- HOU 26 - Failure to deliver a service to QCQ requirements at St David's House.

3.8 The Update as at the end of September sees that Departmental total reduce to 83

Service Area	Red	Amber	Green	Total
Customer Access and Financial Support	1	5	13	19
Finance	0	2	2	4
Environmental Services	0	1	11	12
Leisure & Cultural Services	0	1	0	1
Legal, Equalities, Democratic Services & Property	0	1	9	10
ICT	2	4	4	10
Planning Services	0	1	0	1
Housing	1	9	7	17
Community Services	0	2	6	8
HR	0	0	1	1
Total	4	26	53	83

Red Departmental Risks are now

- REV7 - Revenues - Performance Indicator data is not robust.
- ICT7 - IT - Failure to identify, maintain and test adequate disaster recovery arrangements.
- ICT11 - IT – System functionality to manage records.
- Hou26 - Housing – Failure to deliver a service to QCQ requirements at St David's House.

3.9 As at the 21st December, Risks and their categorizations have fallen to the levels in the following table with just 62 risks in total.

3.10 December, being the third cycle following the baselining exercise has seen a complete review of all departmental risks. Twenty risks have been removed and a number of others have been re-categorised. This review process has been done in two stages:

- All items have been reviewed by Risk Champions and respective DMT's in each Service Area. Service representatives continue to challenge individual items, which is on the data in the following Tabs underneath each Risk, to ensure that all controls and assurances are properly monitored.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive 10 January 2023**

- The Risk Board on the 14th December also went through all open risks to assess their validity, to ensure that assessment practices were consistent across service areas. This took account of the view that “Green” Departmental Risks should be taken off this list if they have been to two consecutive meetings and mitigating actions have been fully put into place. This was tested in the case of all remaining Green Risks.

Service Area	Red	Amber	Green	Total
Customer Access and Financial Support	1	5	10	16
Finance	0	2	2	4
Environmental Services	0	5	3	8
Leisure & Cultural Services	0	1	0	1
Legal, Equalities, Democratic Services & Property	0	1	5	6
ICT	0	2	2	4
Planning Services	0	1	0	1
Housing	0	9	6	15
Community Services	0	1	5	6
HR	0	0	1	1
Total	1	27	34	62

Red Risks – 1 in total

REV7 - Revenues - Performance Indicator data is not robust.

The previous two ICT Risks and the Housing Risk have been mitigated.

- 3.11 A new risk will be added in Housing for the various implications of the Damp and Mould issues (which include rectification and also what the Council needs to undertake to ensure that the HRA and Private Landlords comply with the regulations).
- 3.12 Green risks, which have come off this report are and how they are getting mitigated.

Corporate Risks

- 3.13 The Officer Risk Board reviewed the risks in the above table at their meetings on the 8th April, 22nd June, 21st September and the 21st December using the new definition of “Corporate Risks”. The table below sets out the updated Corporate Risk Register that the Risk Board took to CMT and gained their approval.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive 10 January 2023**

Risk Ref	Risk Title	Action	Narrative
COR9	Non-Compliance with Health & Safety Legislation	Remain	Is an issue across all Departmental Risk Registers
COR10	Decisions made to address financial pressures and implement new projects that are not informed by robust data and evidence	Remain	High Risk Projects are brought to CMT on a quarterly basis and CMT also need to monitor those Projects.
COR14	Non-Adherence with Statutory Inspection Policy	Remain	Is an issue across all Departmental Risk Registers
COR15	Impact to changes in Partner Funding Arrangements	Remain	This was in relation to both Leisure Providers and WRS. Risk should remain but closely tied to New01
COR16	Management of Contracts (should not be Conveyances reading the backing documents)	Remain	CMT on 30/3 had a report on levels of non-compliance on contracts. This risk needs to be updated to reflect that Audit Report.
COR17	Resolution of the approved Budget Position in both Councils	Remain	Both Councils have approved budget plans which reduce reserve levels to dangerous levels over the MTFS period. Budgets need to be balanced and reflect national changes and the funding envelope and associated pressures Councils now find themselves in
COR18	Protection from Cyber Attack	Remain	Councils are under increasing danger of Cyber attack which affects service delivery and associated recovery plans. It has taken Hackney over 18 months to recover from such an incident. It is imperative that the Council has defences in place to minimise the risk of such an attack.
COR19	Adequate Workforce Planning	Remain	That the Council have an available workforce to discharge its duties to the public.
COR20	Financial Position Rectification	Remain	The Council is presently over a year behind in financial returns and this potentially affects service delivery and reputation. That the Council rectify this position in a timetable agreed with all major stakeholders.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive 10 January 2023**

COR22	Delivery of Levelling up, Towns Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund work	Remain	Delivery of Levelling UP, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Towns Fund Projects are a high risk due to status, level of external funding, resource implications and the requirement to spend all funding before April 2025 and April 2026 respectively
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There is no change to the existing Corporate Risks. However, an overarching Corporate Risk relating to the “cost of living” crisis will need to be added as this impacts numerous services and is specific in nature.

The Risk Management Framework

3.14 Risk Management Training. Given the active management of risks by service departments, we have seen numbers of departmental risks reduced by almost 50% although Corporate Risks have increased by 20%. At this time, it is felt that a series of Risk Management Training is not required as processes seem to be being embedded in the organisations.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 No Legal implications have been identified.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The Council spend significant sums insuring itself and must also hold Reserves to mitigate the costs of risks should they happen. A comprehensive Risk Management approach ensures risk and its consequences, including financial ones, are minimised.

6. Strategic Purpose Implications**Relevant Strategic Purpose**

6.1 A comprehensive Risk Management approach ensures **Risk and its Consequences** is minimised for the Council.

Climate Change Implications

6.2 The green thread runs through the Council plan. This includes risks linked to activities and actions that link to our climate.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive 10 January 2023****7. Other Implications****Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 7.1 If risks are not mitigated it can lead to events that have Customer/Equalities and Diversity implications for the Council.

Operational Implications

- 7.2 Risks are inherent in almost all the Councils operational activities and therefore significant risks need to be identified, monitored and mitigated.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 This report is about Risk Management.

9. APPENDICES

None

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 20th October,
2022

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Joanna Kane (Vice-Chair in the Chair) and Councillors Imran Altaf, Joe Baker (substituting Councillor Bill Hartnett) Tom Baker-Price, Brandon Clayton, Sid Khan and Timothy Pearman.

Also Present:

Councillor Joanne Beecham (Portfolio Holder for Leisure)
Councillor Matthew Dormer (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Commercialism and Partnerships)
Councillor Anthony Lovell (Portfolio Holder for Climate Change)
Rachel Fowler (Leisure Strategy Consultant) (via Microsoft Teams)
Alex Pearson (Net Zero Projects Manager, Midlands Net Zero Hub) (via Microsoft Teams).

Officers:

Ruth Bamford, Claire Felton (via Microsoft Teams), Sue Hanley, Judith Willis, Jonathan Cochrane and Ishrat Karimi-Fini (via Microsoft Teams)

Democratic Services Officers:

Jo Gresham and Mat Sliwinski

56. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Akbar, Chalk and Hartnett (Chair), with Councillor Baker attending as a named substitute for Councillor Hartnett.

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, Councillor Joanna Kane, chaired the meeting.

The Vice-Chair welcomed Councillor Tom Baker-Price as a new member of the committee.

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 20th October, 2022

Councillors Baker-Price and Baker declared an Other Disclosable Interest in relation to Minute Items No. 50 (Leisure Strategy – Pre-Decision Scrutiny) and No. 51 (Asset Disposal Strategy – pre-scrutiny) as a school governor at Tudor Grange Academy Redditch and a school governor at an education establishment respectively.

58. MINUTES

There were no minutes available to be presented for the Committee's consideration at today's meeting.

59. PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Vice-Chair confirmed that there were no registered public speakers on this occasion.

60. LEISURE STRATEGY - PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

The Vice-Chair welcomed to the meeting the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services together with the Cultural Services and Parks Manager, the Development Services Manager and the Leisure and Culture Strategy Consultant who provided a detailed presentation on the Leisure and Culture Strategy. During the presentation Members' attention was drawn to the following:

- At its meeting on 25th October 2022, the Executive Committee would be asked to endorse the Leisure and Culture Strategy 2022-2032 in its current format, as provided to the Overview and Scrutiny at Appendix A.
- The strategy comprised several different parts, including the main Leisure and Cultural Strategy and two other strategies which underpinned this document, including the Arts and Culture Strategy and the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy. Two further leisure strategies were due to be presented for the consideration of the Executive Committee in 2023 on the subjects of built facilities strategy and playing pitches strategy.
- As such the Leisure and Culture Strategy covered a wide range of topics including arts, heritage, physical activity and sport, events, parks, open space facilities, venues, sites and services.
- The Executive Committee was also asked to approve the implementation of a number of priority actions and recommendations across leisure and culture services, as described in Table 4 extract to the main report, to deliver the Leisure and Culture Strategy's vision.

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- Recommendations 27 to 39 for Built Sports Facilities were in development stage and would be reported for approval at a later date.
- In developing the Leisure and Culture Strategy, Officers and the consultants had identified a number of actions that could be taken within budget to enhance leisure and cultural service provision in the Borough. These actions were the subject of recommendations detailed in table 4 extract to the main report within the Leisure Strategy. Any actions that would require additional financial expenditure would need to be outlined in business cases and presented for Members' consideration.

The Leisure and Culture Strategy Consultant summarised the status with regards to the different elements of provision. For country parks and open spaces, the priority remained investment into tree planting and children play areas so that more parks in the Borough could achieve the Green Flag Award.

It was noted that in general there was very little spare playing pitches capacity in the Borough. There was an overall undersupply of 11v11 football pitches, and a small undersupply of rugby union pitches. Meanwhile there was sufficient provision for hockey and a small surplus in cricket and bowls grounds. In addition, there was an undersupply of waterways and an undersupply of publicly available swimming facilities.

Overall, it was noted that in strategic terms the Council would need to move from being a direct supplier to an enabler of leisure and community services.

Following the presentation, Members made a number of observations and asked questions to which the following responses were provided:

- Some Members put on record their disappointment that papers for some items on the agenda were provided very late which did not allow sufficient time for Members to read the reports before the meeting.
- It was explained that recommendations 27 to 39 were not yet finalised and would be presented in 2023, but it was deemed important that Members were able to consider the overarching Leisure and Culture Strategy as soon as possible.
- It was clarified that the reason for the ambition that the voluntary sector should be doing more activities was to engage community groups and enable them to have greater

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say in organising local events as opposed to Council dictating terms from above.

- Officers indicated that voluntarily organisations would be signposted to funding opportunities, including the funding which had been received through Arts Council funding.
- Some Members were concerned that the intention behind undertaking a natural capital assessment of the value of the Borough's parks and open spaces, as proposed in recommendation 4, was to sell parks and open spaces when their capital value rises. In response, Officers assured Members that the purpose of a natural value assessment was to make parks and open spaces better known at the local level and allow for implementation of solutions to bolster the value of parks and open spaces to users. Defining the value of parks and open spaces also enabled comparisons to be made on the relative strengths and shortcomings of the Borough's open spaces as compared with other areas.
- Officers explained that recommendation 3 concerned managing land in a way that maximised biodiversity growth. This included such actions as leaving meadows to grow wild in some parts of the Borough (in land under Council control).
- Satisfaction was expressed by some Members that key performance indicators (KPIs) were being introduced for the Leisure and Culture Strategy and it was proposed that they be discussed at a meeting of Performance Scrutiny Working Group before they were finalised.
- Officers stated that currently it was envisaged that most of the funding for implementing the Leisure and Culture Strategy would come from external grant funds.
- On recommendation 10, it was explained that Section 106 under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, allowed local authorities to seek contributions from developers towards the costs of purchasing community assets when new developments take place. The Council's Leisure and Culture Strategy, because it defined targets for what community facilities were needed, improved the Council's negotiation position with the developers with regards to obtaining Section 106 funds for things such as playground equipment and park benches.
- On recommendation 11, it was reported that an application for the Levelling Up Parks Fund had already been submitted to the Government, in line with the October 2022 deadline. It was explained that funding was allocated only for upgrading parks in the most deprived areas and Abbey ward had not met the criteria for this fund, whereas Winyates ward had.

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- On recommendation 16 regarding developing a roadmap for the self-management of allotment sites, Members queried whether this meant the allotment committees would be given the opportunity to purchase allotment land from the Council. In response, it was noted that at this point a feasibility study was to be undertaken to consider the options for allotment management. There were also legal matters to consider around the scope within which allotment committees could operate so no decisions could be taken at this point.
- It was noted that, as the highways authority, Worcestershire County Council (WCC) was responsible for issuing traffic regulation orders, for example concerning the opening of new cycle routes in parks or open spaces.
- On recommendation 14, it was clarified that there might be cost implications to some active travel routes within parks and open spaces and if cost implications arise, these would need to be agreed by Members.
- Officers explained that the 8 Hills project was initiated by the National Trust to make Lickey Hills a regional park for the Worcestershire/West Midlands area. There was a contingency that the Council would need to contribute to the funding of this regional park through its Section 106 money, subject to the project coming to fruition.
- It was explained that the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) had awarded the Council some funding in 2021 for the Heritage Corridor North Worcestershire. As Redditch had been classed as one of the top three areas in England in terms of untapped heritage sector potential, this was one of the strategic initiatives for the Council as stated in recommendation 41.

Following the debate, Councillor Baker-Price proposed that the Committee approve the recommendations as contained in the main report.

Councillor Khan then proposed the following amendment to the recommendation:

“Overview and Scrutiny to advise the Executive Committee on Social Prescribing as there is no mention in the strategy of the Council working with the NHS, CCG and Rubicon. Other Councils (e.g. Cannock Chase) have such arrangements where patients who have recently been discharged from hospital with e.g. Stroke/ Heart Conditions can greatly benefit from gentle exercise. I think this strategy has missed an opportunity and I ask executive to consider including such a strategy. The benefits are many to individuals and the costs are low to the NHS.”

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The amended motion, as proposed by Councillor Khan, was debated and Officers advised that social prescribing was indirectly referenced through much of the Leisure and Culture Strategy. Some Members felt a separate social prescribing strategy would be extremely useful as an added reference for consideration before decisions were being made on the use of available facilities. In addition, those Members highlighted this issue deserved a standalone strategy as it had the potential to deliver a considerable health benefit to residents of Redditch.

After a detailed debate, the amended recommendation as proposed by Councillor Khan was put to the vote and was carried.

RECOMMENDED to the Executive:

that Overview and Scrutiny advise the Executive Committee on Social Prescribing as there is no mention in the strategy of the Council working with the NHS, CCG and Rubicon. Other Councils (e.g. Cannock Chase) have such arrangements where patients who have recently been discharged from hospital with e.g. Stroke/ Heart Conditions can greatly benefit from gentle exercise. I think this strategy has missed an opportunity and I ask executive to consider including such a strategy. The benefits are many to individuals and the costs are low to the NHS.

61. ASSET DISPOSAL STRATEGY - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services presented a report on the proposed implementation of an Asset Disposal Strategy and in doing so had drawn Members' attention to the following:

- The Council held substantial non Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Land, Property and Equipment. The 2019/20 Statement of Accounts valued these assets at £52m.
- The Council possessed a comprehensive asset register which provided a valuation of those assets in monetary and service delivery terms. This was imperative in terms of providing assurance to the external auditors.
- The Council had a duty to ensure that its fixed assets were reviewed on a continual basis to ensure they remained fit for their strategic purpose, complied with legislative and regulatory requirements, and did not lose value. A comprehensive affordable repairs and maintenance programme was required to fulfil these requirements.

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- Appendix C to the main report contained an update letter from Savills on the high level assessment they undertook of all assets owned by the Council. In the Savills report sites were identified which had a high development potential and/or were deemed surplus to requirements.

Following the presentation, Members asked a number of questions to which the following responses were provided:

- Members queried if the extract from stratification of fixed assets from the latest Statement of Accounts (2019/20), as included in paragraph 9.2 of appendix A to the report, contained figures for sales of assets in the previous financial reporting period.
- It was clarified that appendix B to the report contained details of EPC ratings given to Council-owned commercial properties as of August 2022.
- Officers undertook to provide Members with a list of assets that had been declared surplus to requirements by the Council.
- Officers also undertook to provide a list of all non-domestic Council owned property assets which were currently below the minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of 'E'.
- It was requested that for future meetings copies of agenda be produced in a format suitable for colour-blind people.

It was proposed by Councillor Baker that a recommendation be made to the effect that all future reports regarding asset disposal be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to consideration by the Executive and/or the Council. It was noted in response that all asset disposals above the key decision threshold of £50,000 were required to be on the Executive Forward Plan and it was within the existing remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to pre-scrutinise any item on that Forward Plan. Therefore, it was noted that the recommendation was unnecessary. Councillor Baker agreed to withdraw the proposed motion.

Councillor Clayton then proposed that the recommendation as contained in the report be agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

On being put to the vote this recommendation was carried.

RECOMMENDED to the Executive:

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that the Asset Disposal Strategy be approved for implementation.

62. CLIMATE CHANGE/CARBON REDUCTION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN- PRE-SCRUTINY

The Vice-Chair welcomed the Net Zero Projects Manager from the Midlands Net Zero Hub to the meeting who provided a detailed presentation regarding the Redditch Borough Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy and Action Plan. During the presentation Members' attention was drawn to the following:

- Redditch Borough Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy and Action Plan covered exclusively the carbon dioxide emissions of the Council (including direct emissions from the activities of the Council and the emissions that the Council had influence over).
- The Strategy and Action Plan would need to be reviewed annually and progress against targets monitored twice a year.
- The Council's carbon reduction targets were set in line with the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) target of 50% carbon reduction by 2030 and the ambition of becoming net zero by 2040.
- To reach an interim target of 50% carbon emissions reduction by 2030, the Council would need to reduce its emissions by approximately 110 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year. To achieve net zero in the remaining 10 years to 2040 a target of approximately 87 tonnes of emission savings per year was needed.
- Even though the Council's own emissions were only a small part of the borough's total, it was in a strong position to exert influence on the wider geographical area.
- For the purposes of carbon reduction strategies, carbon dioxide emissions were categorised as coming from three sources – direct use of fuel (such as transport, gas heating), use of electricity, and indirect emissions (such as via the supply chain).
- A climate change officer would be appointed (a shared post between Redditch and Bromsgrove) and there would be further resource requirement as the Strategy was implemented. This would be accounted for in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- There had been significant investment planned for the Town Hall such as putting heat pumps and new glazing.

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Following the presentation, a question was asked regarding how many times the Council's Climate Change Steering Group met since the Council declared a climate emergency in 2019. The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change stated that the group met on average four times a year since 2019, and three times in the municipal year 2021/22 which included having speakers from various stakeholder groups coming to the Steering Group meetings. Some Members considered this insufficient and stated that the Council must be bolder in tackling climate change.

Members asked about how the Council could encourage developers to build carbon neutral homes and asked whether planning policy powers were available to the Council in this area. Officers responded that the only way to require new builds to be carbon neutral standard was to make this a requirement in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan that acted as the Borough's statutory development plan. Such a requirement would be, however, far in excess of any current national Building Regulation standards and could be challenged by developers on legal grounds. This issue would therefore need to be carefully considered before any commitment be made. There was also the need for any consideration of carbon reductions in the local plans to be underpinned by viability assessments to ensure that the demands placed on developers did not have an overly adverse impact on housing delivery.

Some Members expressed the view that changes to the Local Plan needed to be implemented in a measured way and stated that the Carbon Reduction Strategy Implementation Plan that was before the Committee represented an ambitious plan which had carbon reduction targets that were more ambitious than those set at a national level.

With this view in mind, Councillor Baker-Price proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse the recommendation contained in the report, that is to recommend to the Executive that the Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy and Action Plan be endorsed and adopted

Councillor Khan then proposed the following amendment:

"That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advise the Executive that the following additions be made to the Carbon Reduction Strategy Implementation Plan and the Borough's Local Plan, due to the seriousness of the situation and the need to ensure that the Council does more to reduce carbon emissions for the benefit of all residents of the Borough:

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- i) An amendment to the Local Plan to encourage developers to build carbon neutral, carbon negative, wooden or virtual plastic free housing of which examples already existed in Redditch.
- ii) An additional section in the Carbon Reduction Strategy Implementation to state that the Council would research and seek grant funding and run a campaign promoting the insulation of new build housing.
- iii) A requirement in the Local Plan that all new builds in the Borough should not only have EV chargers but also solar panels.”

This amendment was debated by the Committee.

The Leader of the Council commented that the points raised in the amended recommendation were important and would be taken into account by the Executive Committee as the Council needed to lead by example on this matter. He further noted that a number of important measures were already being implemented such as the Council doubling the amount of tree planting. Lastly, the Leader of the Council commented that considering changes to the local planning policy might better be considered by a planning panel, for example a planning advisory panel (PAP) which could be reconstituted.

Some Members made general observations that the Climate Change Panel was first instituted in 2007 and the Council's first Climate Change Strategy was introduced in 2019. In connection with this, some Members felt there were limitations to the Council's ability to have an influence on climate change, at least in the short term, as was the case with use of motor vehicles by the general population. It was thought that awareness-raising campaigns were the best instrument available to the Council in driving behaviour change on such matters.

Following the discussion, the amended motion proposed by Councillor Khan was put to the vote. On being put to the vote this recommendation was lost.

Councillor Baker-Price's original recommendation was then considered and on being put to the vote this recommendation was carried.

RECOMMENDED to the Executive

that the Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy and Action Plan be endorsed and adopted.

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63. VOLUNTARY BODIES SCHEME PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

The Head of Community and Housing Services presented the Voluntary Bodies Scheme report for consideration by the Committee. The following was highlighted for Members' attention:

- The report outlined options for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Grants Scheme for the next three years after the current scheme expired in March 2023.
- Officers were proposing that the concessionary rents element of the scheme be removed and that there should be a budget of £100,000 from which VCS groups could apply for funding, together with a £50,000 grant for Financial Advice and Problem Solving.
- Section 6.12 of the report set out the four options for the future operation of the scheme.
- The feedback received from a consultation exercise undertaken with VCS groups indicated that the second option would be appreciated by most by the sector.
- This would mean the removal of the concessionary rents scheme, which was expected to deliver savings of £25k per annum.
- £10k was the maximum grant amount that an individual voluntary or community group would be able to obtain under the proposed options.

Some Members queried whether the average annual profit of approximately £10k generated by the community lottery scheme established by the Council, as referenced in section 6.7 of the report, took account of the set-up and operational costs. Officers explained that the figure quoted did include those costs, but Officers undertook to report back regarding whether this figure also included the officer time costs of the grants officer who managed the local lottery scheme.

Some Members expressed concern that options 1 and 2 as currently presented recommended the removal of the Council's concessionary rents offer for community and voluntary sector groups. It was argued that this would have a detrimental impact on smaller, locally based community and voluntary groups in Redditch, which were small entities and would be forced to cease operating without the provision of this support. Such entities, it was argued, would not be able to afford the full market rate for renting buildings.

Other Members pointed out, in contrast, that the concessionary rents element was only available to voluntary organisations

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operating from Redditch Borough Council owned properties. As such options 1 and 2 for the VCS Grants Scheme, as recommended in the report, would create a more merit-based system of allocating grants as no element of the overall scheme would be discriminatory based on whether an organisation was based in a Council-owned property or not.

Officers reminded the Committee that a decision with respect to ending the VCS Concessionary Rents scheme had been taken by the Executive on 29th October 2019, and a transition period had been implemented from April 2020 until 31st March 2022, when the rent concessions were gradually reduced. As such no concessionary rents scheme was currently offered by the Council.

The Leader of the Council commented that a consultation exercise with VCS groups had been undertaken with regards to the future of the voluntary bodies grants scheme and most respondents expressed preference for option 2 to be adopted by the Council. He commented that by adopting option 2 the Council would therefore be listening to what the voluntary and community sector itself wanted.

Following the debate, an amendment to the recommendation as stated in the report was proposed by Councillor Baker, as follows:

that the Executive be recommended by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that option 1 as stated in section 6.12 of the report be approved, subject to a correction that the element in respect of the concessionary rents be retained. The amended Option 1 recommendation would thus read:

“Option 1 – Continue with current scheme (retaining the element in respect of the concessionary grants) for a 3 year period. With a total grant pot of £150k, which would include £50k being available for a Financial Advice and Problem Solving Grant.”

On being put to the vote this recommendation was lost.

Councillor Baker-Price proposed that option 2 be recommended as stated in section 6.12 of the report. The option thus recommended would read:

‘Option 2 – As detailed in option above, but also to update the current policy and break down into 2 types of application – smaller £500 to £2k and larger over £2k up to £10k’

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On being put to the vote this recommendation was carried.

RECOMMENDED that

the Executive approve the funding for the VCS Grants Scheme for a further three year period with option 2 as set out in section 6.12 of the report.

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

During consideration of the Executive Work Programme, Members requested that the following items be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme:

- Parking Enforcement Service Level Agreement
- Review of Governance Arrangements for Rubicon Leisure Limited
- Worcestershire Housing Strategy 2040.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Executive Committee Work Programme be noted.**
- 2) the items from the Executive Work Programme, detailed in the pre-amble above, be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme.**

65. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme was submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that

the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

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

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Kane, provided an update on the Budget Scrutiny and Performance Scrutiny Working Groups in her role as Chair of these Groups. In doing so, Members were informed that a meeting of Performance Scrutiny Working Group took place on 29th September 2022 when matters relating to the Housing Service were discussed, including repairs, voids, and customer response times.

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The Vice-Chair reported that positive developments had taken place in terms of reduction in average void turnaround time from the high of 50 days to 17 days by August 2022, which represented a significant cost saving to the Council. It was noted, however, that concern remained around response times to customer calls, and the Performance Scrutiny Working Group wished to revisit this issue at its future meeting.

The Vice-Chair informed the Committee that two meetings of Budget Scrutiny Working Group had taken place since the last update, on 7th September and 19th October 2022 respectively. At the September meeting, the Group discussed issues around the Council's asset disposal in detail. At the October meeting, the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2023-24 to 2025-26 was discussed and the Vice-Chair presented her main observations from that meeting to the Committee.

RESOLVED that

the Task Groups, Short Sharp Reviews and Working Groups – Update Reports be noted.

67. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS

As Councillor Chalk, the Council's representative on external scrutiny bodies, had submitted his apologies for this meeting, no update was provided.

The Meeting commenced at 6.32 pm
and closed at 8.51 pm



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MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Bill Hartnett (Chair), Councillor Joanna Kane (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Imran Altaf, Tom Baker-Price, Michael Chalk, Brandon Clayton, Sid Khan and Timothy Pearman

Also Present:

Matthew Dormer – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Commercialism and Partnerships (on Microsoft Teams)
Karen Ashley – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling (on Microsoft Teams)

Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Sue Hanley, Guy Revans, Deb Poole (on Microsoft Teams) and Becky Talbot (on Microsoft Teams).

Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley-Hill and Mat Sliwinski

68. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no apologies for absence received from Committee Members.

An apology for absence was submitted by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services, Councillor Nyear Nazir.

69. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no Declarations of Interest nor of any Party Whip.

70. MINUTES

Chair

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The minutes of the meeting held on 6th October 2022 were submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6th October 2022 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

71. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no public speakers who registered to speak on this occasion.

72. SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE COUNCIL TO RESIDENTS IN RESPECT OF THE COST OF LIVING

The Chief Executive Officer presented a report on the cost of living support that was provided to residents by the Council. It was noted that the report outlined all the initiatives that the Council was providing to residents in relation to the cost of living support. The report highlighted what financial support was made available by the Council for residents impacted by the cost of living crisis and how the support provided by the Council was communicated to eligible residents.

It was noted that residents could access information and support not only via various webpages on the Council's website but also through a hard copy leaflet, replicated in the agenda pack, which signposted residents to the various services available. It was highlighted that a number of initiatives would be taking place over the next weeks and months, such as Christmas support digital advent calendar that provided cost of living tips for residents and the cost of living bulletin that provided useful updates on the support available.

Members welcomed the detailed report and expressed appreciation that much work in this area was being undertaken jointly with other organisations, including the community and voluntary sector. It was noted that the cost of living leaflets provided a very good resource for residents and were being distributed by Members in the community.

Members were asked to inform Officers if they were aware of any warm space or had set one up so that residents could be signposted to these spaces. Officers commented that there would be monthly updates to the leaflets and regular updates were in

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place on the Council's webpages so that up-to-date information was available.

The Chairman commented that one aspect that was not included in the report related to financial support for insulation of private sector properties in the Borough, as it was reported that there were 3,500 poorly insulated properties across Worcestershire. In light of this, the following recommendation was proposed:

'that the Overview and Scrutiny asks the Executive Committee to actively seek external grant funding to enable a borough-wide campaign to subsidise the insulation of poorly insulated dwellings in the private sector'.

A discussion on the proposed recommendation followed and Members largely spoke in support of the motion, with some Members highlighting that the Council was already proactive in this area, for example with loft insulation works being undertaken at Council properties over the last few years.

Some Members commented that it was unlikely the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) or the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) would be in a position to offer grant funding support at present, but that it might be obtained from the wider health system, such as the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System (ICS), as lack of proper insulation was a wider determinants of health issue. Officers added that Council had received grant funding for energy efficiency improvements and further opportunities would be sought through Act on Energy, the organisation appointed as the Council's official Energy Advice Service in June 2022, and which provided energy support services for residents. With regards to Council properties, it was highlighted that an insulation programme was ongoing to undertake insulation improvements to the small number of social housing properties which were not covered by the similar insulation initiatives in previous years.

On being put to the vote this recommendation was carried.

RECOMMENDED

that the Executive Committee actively seek external grant funding to enable a borough-wide campaign to subsidise the insulation of poorly insulated dwellings in the private sector.

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73. HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT / PEOPLE STRATEGY / WORKFORCE STRATEGY - PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

The Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy presented the report on the Council's Workforce Strategy.

The following was highlighted for Members' attention:

- There were three key themes to the Workforce Strategy, namely workforce planning and talent management, engagement, and health, safety and wellbeing.
- The key aim of the Council's Workforce Strategy 2022-2026 was to have a workforce that was fit for the future and able to deliver the Council Plan and Strategic priorities whilst promoting the wellbeing of the workforce.
- Action plans would be devised and implemented during the course of this Workforce Strategy to ensure that the aims of the strategy were being implemented in practice.

Following the presentation of the report, Members made a number of comments and questions were responded to as follows:

- Concern was expressed regarding the low rates of staff who provided their disability and ethnicity data at 18 and 23 per cent respectively,
- Officers responded that there was currently an annual survey where staff had the opportunity to provide data. In addition, staff were encouraged to keep their information up to date on the employee self-service portal.
- Officers commented it was preferable not to overload staff with surveys but instead combine multiple surveys and work on engagement with staff, including addressing any concerns that staff had about taking part in internal surveys.
- It was explained that this was a completely new workforce strategy and was not a refresh of any previous strategy.
- Some Members queried why this executive report was not classed as a 'key decision'. In response, the Principal Democratic Services Officer explained that whilst this report concerned an important matter, there was a definition of an executive key decision set out in legislation. The above report did not meet the criteria of a key decision under the legislation.
- Officers explained that the Workforce Strategy would be underpinned by a number of action plans
- Some Members commented that remote working was not ideal in all circumstances as it could lead to lack of social

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interaction and, consequently worsening staff mental health. It was therefore deemed important that staff be provided with opportunities to work in the officer if they wished to do so.

- Officers commented that the Council operated a hot desking policy so that most staff could work from office but needed to book a desk in advance. The main consideration was, however, being customer-centred and needs of the customers dictated working arrangements.
- The strategy and action plans were still in the initial period but work was advancing on a number of areas, including streamlining the recruitment process by utilising recruitment platforms and business planning processes.
- Members requested that this Workforce Strategy, and the key performance indicators (KPIs) that were being developed in relation to the strategy and associated action plans, be reviewed by the Performance Scrutiny Working Group. It was agreed to refer this topic for consideration by the Working Group.

RECOMMENDED

that the Executive Committee endorse the approach taken by the Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service, to address the Workforce Strategy.

74. REVISITING ITEMS IDENTIFIED AT THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRAINING HELD ON 6 JUNE 2022

Members were informed that there were a number of items identified at an overview and scrutiny training event held on 6 June 2022 which had not yet been scheduled on the Committee's work programme. Members were asked to decide which of the outstanding items they wished to add to the work programme for the rest of the municipal year.

Members were also informed that a number of task and finish group reviews previously requested by Members had not been launched yet. Members were requested to prioritise the task and finish review they wished to undertake in the first instance as there was limited Officer resource and time left in the municipal year to undertake a substantive task and finish group review.

In the discussion that followed, Members agreed that a Task and Finish Group review of bulky waste collections should be prioritised by the Committee in the first instance and that it was possible to tie this topic together with the issue of fly tipping. Members present pointed out that a Council motion was agreed by the full Council to

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the effect that a task and finish group on bulky waste be launched and, as such, it was important that this issue be prioritised. Time and resource permitting, the Committee could then investigate launching the other task groups which were previously agreed by the Committee – Health Inequalities within the BME Committee Task Group and the Road Safety and Speeding Task Group.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the updates to the issues raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Training Event held in June 2022, as detailed in the Appendix 1 of the report as submitted, be noted;**
- (2) that, out of the four outstanding issues detailed in Appendix 1, the Committee proceed with consideration of fly tipping and bulky waste collections in the first instance;**
- (3) that the remaining items identified at the Overview and Scrutiny Training Event held in June 2022 be scheduled individually at future meetings of the Committee, subject to Members' agreement.**

75. COUNCIL MOTION - BULKY WASTE COLLECTION

Councillor Khan, the proposer of the original motion in relation to bulky waste at the full Council meeting on 14th November 2022, introduced the Council motion and spoke of the importance of undertaking a task group review into the issue of subsidising bulky waste collection at a time when many residents struggled due to the cost-of-living crisis. It was added that offering a free bulky waste collection service would likely contribute to reduction in fly tipping. The substance of the amended motion that was agreed at a full Council meeting was reiterated and it read as follows:

“Council is concerned about the cost-of-living crisis having a new impact on fly tipping, with the cost of bulky waste collection becoming a disincentive for many residents. Council asks the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to set up a Task and Finish review, to consider the costs, consequences and benefits of a pre-booked, free household bulky waste collection service for those Redditch residents who are low paid, elderly, disabled or in receipt of benefits, which will enable Members to consider options and determine what action, if any, to take.”

The Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services commented that the Council had a duty to provide bulky waste

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collections for domestic properties, although it was entitled to charge for the collection of waste that could not be presented in a normal household waste collection, waste over 25 kg in weight, and waste that did not fit into the black bins provided by the Council. Currently the Council charged for the collection of bulky items from households. It was added that at present the bulky waste collection service was a net cost to the Council and the current service provision in this area was not deemed to have a major effect on fly tipping incidence.

It was agreed by Members and Officers that linking the issues of fly tipping and bulky waste collections in one task group review was a sensible proposal. It was suggested that Members be provided with a presentation on bulky waste collections and fly tipping before embarking on the task group review to better understand the Council's current position on these issues. It was confirmed that a scoping document for the task group would also need to be submitted for approval by the Committee in advance of the launch of the Task Group.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Committee receive an Officer presentation on fly tipping and bulky waste collections; and,**
- (2) the Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Collection Task Group be launched, subject to the approval of a scoping document for the Task Group by the Committee.**

76. ROAD SAFETY TASK GROUP

As discussed earlier during the meeting under Minute Nos. 74 and 75, it was agreed that the Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Collection Task Group be launched in the first instance, and the decision on the launch and membership of the Road Safety and Speeding Task Group be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee.

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

The Executive Work Programme was submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that

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the contents of the Executive Committee's Work Programme be noted.

78. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

There was a request for a report on Rubicon Finances to be added to the Committee's Work Programme for the February meeting. During the discussion that followed, Officers highlighted that the Council's Shareholders Committee covered oversight of Rubicon from the financial perspective and as Rubicon was a limited company most financial matters would need to be discussed in a closed session. Members requesting the update clarified that a general overview of Rubicon finances would be sufficient. It was additionally requested by some Members that a report on finances should be considered alongside the executive report on the review of governance arrangements of Rubicon that was due to be pre-scrutinised by the Committee. Following further discussion, the Committee agreed to add Rubicon Finances as an item on the Work Programme.

RESOLVED that

the Work Programme be updated as in the pre-amble above.

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

Councillor Kane provided Members with an update in respect of the Budget Scrutiny and Performance Scrutiny Working Groups. In doing so, Members were informed that a meeting of Performance Scrutiny took place on 24th November 2022 when Members considered skills development in Redditch in terms of how to upskill young people and ensure they could be provided with suitable employment in the local area. Councillor Kane reported that one of the initiatives that had been discussed was a youth hub for career advice which would be set up in Redditch early in 2023. It was reported that numeracy and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects were identified as a major gap in skills among young people in Redditch. With this mind, Councillor Kane asked all councillors, and particularly those who were school governors, to promote in their local schools the Primary STEM challenge that was organised by the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP).

It was reported that the energy advice service quarterly update was discussed in the second part of the meeting on the 24th November.

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It was further reported that the next meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group was due to take place on 5th December 2022.

RESOLVED that

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

80. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS

Councillor Chalk provided an update in respect of the External Scrutiny Bodies. In doing so, Members were informed that there had been meetings of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee and of the Worcestershire Health and Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), both of which took place on 17th October 2022.

Councillor Chalk drew the attention of Members to the £88 million in UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) funding that would be given to the WMCA over the next three to four years and the need for the Council to have Officer resource to make bids for some of this funding pot. Officers responded that colleagues from the North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) worked on behalf of the Council in bidding for funding from the national funds.

In response to a question with regards whether a bid for funding could be made to the WMCA with respect of obtaining funds to provide subsidies for insulation of poorly insulated private sector dwellings, it was reported that most funding pots within the WMCA were restricted to the constituent member authorities of the WMCA. Councillor Chalk and Officers undertook to make enquiries with WMCA with respect to any funding, either from the WMCA's UKSPF allocation or other WMCA funding pots, that were available to non-constituent authorities.

Councillor Chalk reported that at the 17th October meeting of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) the discussion centred on the issue of patient flow and the associated challenges presented by bed shortages and a shortage of staff at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.

RESOLVED that

the External Scrutiny Bodies updates be noted.

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The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 8.05 pm