



Council

Mon 30 Jan
2023
7.00 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
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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 the meeting if they have common cold symptoms 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.

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

PUBLIC SPEAKING

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

Members of the public will be able to access the meeting in person to observe proceedings if they wish to do so. Seating will be placed in such a way as to achieve as much space as possible for social distancing to help protect meeting participants. It should be noted that members of the public who choose to attend in person do so at their own risk.

Members of the public 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 the meeting if they have common cold symptoms or 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.

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.



Council

Monday, 30th January, 2023

7.00 pm

Council Chamber Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs:	Ann Isherwood (Mayor)	Peter Fleming
	Tom Baker-Price (Deputy Mayor)	Alex Fogg
	Salman Akbar	Andrew Fry
	Imran Altaf	Lucy Harrison
	Karen Ashley	Bill Hartnett
	Joe Baker	Sharon Harvey
	Juliet Barker Smith	Joanna Kane
	Joanne Beecham	Sid Khan
	Juma Begum	Anthony Lovell
	Juliet Brunner	Emma Marshall
	Michael Chalk	Nyear Nazir
	Brandon Clayton	Timothy Pearman
	Luke Court	David Thain
	Matthew Dormer	Craig Warhurst

1. Welcome

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest

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

4. Councillor Gareth Prosser

To pay tribute to late Councillor, Gareth Prosser, in recognition of his contribution to the Borough and its residents.

5. Minutes (Pages 7 - 28)

6. Announcements

To consider Announcements under Procedure Rule 10:

- a) Mayor's Announcements
- b) The Leader's Announcements
- c) Chief Executive's Announcements.

7. Questions on Notice (Procedure Rule 9) (Pages 29 - 30)

8. Motions on Notice (Procedure Rule 11)

9. Executive Committee

Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 6th December 2023

9.1 Improvements to Vehicular Entry and Exit Arrangements (Pages 41 - 48)

9.2 Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2025/256 - Update (Pages 49 - 62)

Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 13th December 2022

Members are asked to note that, as there were no recommendations arising from the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 13th December 2022, Council will be asked to consider whether there are any questions of clarification on the content and to adopt the minutes.

Minutes from the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 10th January 2023

9.3 Council Tax Base 2023/24 (Pages 81 - 84)

9.4 Final Council Tax Support Scheme (Pages 85 - 114)

9.5 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Rent Setting 2023/24 (Pages 115 - 118)

9.6 Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budget 2023/24 - Recommendations (Pages 119 - 140)

10. Outside Body Appointment

To appoint a Councillor to replace late Councillor Gareth Prosser on PATROL – the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (Civil Parking Enforcement).

(Members are asked to note that this appointment will apply until the new Annual Council meeting in May 2023.)

11. Urgent Business - Record of Decisions

To note any decisions taken in accordance with the Council's Urgency Procedure Rules (Part 9, Paragraph 5 and/or Part 10, Paragraph 15 of the Constitution), as specified.

(None to date).

12. Urgent Business - general (if any)

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

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



Council

Monday, 14th November,
2022

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Ann Isherwood, Tom Baker-Price, Imran Altaf, Karen Ashley, Joe Baker, Juliet Barker Smith, Joanne Beecham, Juliet Brunner, Michael Chalk, Brandon Clayton, Luke Court, Matthew Dormer, Peter Fleming, Andrew Fry, Lucy Harrison, Bill Hartnett, Sharon Harvey, Joanna Kane, Sid Khan, Anthony Lovell, Emma Marshall, Timothy Pearman, David Thain and Craig Warhurst

Also Present:

Dr Anita Sharma-James (Motor Neuron Disease Association)

Officers:

Peter Carpenter, Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton and Sue Hanley

Principal Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley-Hill

50. WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed all those present to the meeting.

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Salman Akbar, Juma Begum, Alex Fogg, Nyear Nazir and Gareth Prosser.

52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sid Khan declared a pecuniary interest in Minute Item No. 61 – Urgent Business – Record of Decisions - in his capacity as a private sector landlord. However, Members were advised that declarations were not required on this occasion as the decision had already been taken and the item was for information only.

53. MINUTES

The Mayor advised that a typographical error had been identified in the minutes, whereby Councillor Juliet Barker Smith had not been

Chair

recorded as present at the meeting when she had been in attendance.

RESOLVED that

subject to the amendment detailed in the preamble above, the minutes of the meeting of Council held on Monday 10th October 2022 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Mayor.

54. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) The Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor circulated a list of 33 civic engagements that she had attended since the previous meeting of Council (Appendix 1).

The Mayor highlighted the following engagements that had taken place during this period:

- The awards distributed at the children's reading club held on 10th October 2022.
- The Redditch Business Awards evening on 23rd October 2022, which had been the first such event in the town. Members were informed that there had been over 800 nominations.
- The Kingfisher 10k on 30th October, which had been well attended by residents from a range of ages and diverse backgrounds.
- The Remembrance Sunday service on 13th November 2022, which had been well attended.

b) The Leader's Announcements

The Leader advised that since the previous meeting of Council, he had attended meetings of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board as well as the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP). There had also been a meeting of the young Business Leader's Group at St Augustine's High School.

During consideration of this item, the Leader thanked the Royal British Legion for their hard work organising the Remembrance Sunday commemorations. Members were asked to note that, in addition to the service in Redditch town centre, the event at Astwood Bank had also been well attended.

c) Chief Executive's Announcements

The Chief Executive confirmed that he had no announcements to make on this occasion.

55. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 9)

Two Questions on Notice were considered in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.

Section 106 Funding

Councillor Sharon Harvey asked the Leader the following Question on Notice:

“How much section 106 money has been raised during this financial year, and what current and future projects will this fund?”

The Leader responded by explaining that Section 106 agreements were legal obligations entered into only where it was necessary to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal, to make it acceptable in planning terms. As a result of this criteria, so far during the 2022/23 financial year, no Section 106 agreements had been required to enable the granting of planning permission in the Borough. However, monies had been received during the financial year as a result of the trigger points being met for Section 106 agreements that had been attached to planning permissions granted in earlier financial years.

So far, in the 2022/23 financial year, a total of £115,403.63 had been received by the Council for Section 106 obligations. Specifically, £19,994.47 had been received by the Council to be forwarded to Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust (WAHT) as funding towards acute and planned healthcare services. A further £72,366.04 had been received towards mitigation for open space, play and sports facilities. This would fund projects at Glover Street, Bromsgrove Road, Batchley Pond, Rowan Crescent, Heronfield Close and Petton Close/Costers Lane. In addition, £17,764.32 had been received for improvements to the public realm in Redditch town centre and would contribute to funding of The Canopies project. A further £3,016.80 had been received to cover the cost of providing bins to new dwellings on Edward Street.

There was a £2,262 monitoring fee that had been received to fund the cost of officers monitoring and reporting on Section 106 agreements. Since 2019, there had been a requirement to submit a monitoring report to Government in December each year known as the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS). The IFS for 2021-22 was in the process of being prepared to be reported in December

Council

Monday, 14th November, 2022

and would be uploaded to the Council's website. The IFS for 2020-21 was already available to view on the Council's website.

Additional background information was also provided by the Leader in response to this Question on Notice. This provided the following breakdown in detail for each development project:

- 19/00134/FUL land at Ipsley Street:
 - £6,438.06 for open space at Glover Street.
 - £20,563.16 for play at Glover Street.
 - £8,120.46 for sports at Redditch Cricket, Hockey and Rugby Club.
- 19/01630/FUL St Benedict's Social Club, Rowan Road:
 - £25,927.29 total index link for contributions for open spaces, sport, play and pitches.
 - £4,864.18 (plus index linking) for open spaces and sport at Batchley Pond.
 - £14,488.80 (plus index linking) for play at Rowan Crescent.
 - £3,451.57 (plus index linking) for pitches at Rowan Crescent.
- 20/01060/FUL Land adjacent to Clive Works, Edward Street:
 - Monitoring fee £2,262.
 - Town centre contribution £6,813.08.
 - Waste and recycling contribution - £3,016.80 – to fund the cost of providing bins to the new dwellings
- 20/00044/FUL Churchill Medical Centre, Tanhouse Lane:
 - £6,619.88 open spaces at Heronfield Close play area.
 - £4,697.19 pitches at Petton Close / Costers Lane.
 - £10,951.24 town centre public realm improvements to Market Place/Church Green.
 - Also £19,994.47 for Worcestershire NHS trust to be applied towards acute and planned healthcare.

Councillor Harvey subsequently asked the following supplementary question:

“A few months ago, it was reported that Section 106 money might be a useful funding stream to support bus services. Would you consider putting this forward for bus services in the future?”

The Leader answered this question by commenting that Section 106 funding agreements were considered on a case-by-case basis in relation to planning applications. Should a request be received from local bus operators for Section 106 funding in relation to a planning application, and should this request be considered relevant to the application, then this could potentially occur.

Section 24 Notice – Finance System

Councillor Joe Baker asked the Leader the following Question on Notice:

“Now that the controlling group has led us into another section 24 notice. Can the leader explain why measures were not in place to ensure if the new system failed that our accounts would still run smoothly with an implemented back up plan to enable the audit was done on time?”

The Leader responded by commenting that the Council’s previous financial system and cash receipting system were both at the end of their useful lives in 2018. A tender process had been undertaken for the delivery of a replacement System and Tech1 were the successful bidder via a Crown Commercial Services (CCS) G Cloud mini competition process.

Any replacement of a Council’s financial system was a complicated process, so a programme team was established to ensure an implementation plan was timetabled and delivered.

It had not been possible to dual run an implementation of a financial system alongside an older system; there had to be full transfer on a set date to the new financial system. For the transfer from the old to the new system to take place, a “go live” checklist needed to be completed to the appropriate standard. This included months of testing of the configuration in various scenarios. In the period just before the transfer date, a process was then followed to copy the data as at that date from the old system to the new system. Members were asked to note that the majority of this process was run remotely as the Council was operating under Covid-19 restrictions for much of the implementation period, which was a new way of working for everyone.

Initially, the finance part of the system, not HR and Payroll, was due to go live in the Autumn of 2020 but the “go live” checklist was not approved as completed to the appropriate standard by the board and so the implementation was delayed until 8th February 2021. At this time, the programme team approved the checklist and agreed that it had been completed to the appropriate standard and the system went live.

After implementation on the 8th February 2021, there was another important factor in the delivery of the financial system to a steady state. For various reasons, all of the Corporate Finance Team left the organisation. This meant that a new team needed to be recruited. The Council were not successful with the process in the autumn of 2021 and only three new staff joined at that time.

Council

Monday, 14th November, 2022

However, following the campaign in the spring of 2022, another 10 staff were recruited. This meant that by August 2022, the Council were back to a working establishment of Finance staff. It should be noted that in this period there had been an acute issue in availability of finance staff both for Councils and for Auditors. It would have been impossible to deliver a full set of accounts without a finance team in place, whatever the Council's finance system.

The system was working in all aspects apart from cash receipting, and Members were advised that the Council was the only implementer to date of the Tech1 cash receipting solution (alongside Bromsgrove District Council). Significant work had been undertaken by both the Council and Tech1 to correct this over the previous four months and the final corrections went live over the weekend of the 5th and 6th November 2022.

Members were asked to note that 2020 and 2021 were years when the Council was subject to Covid-19 restrictions. During this period, the Council delivered Covid-19 support to its stakeholders and completed all the associated assurance requirements for the Government for the additional support granted.

The Leader concluded by commenting that, once the Council made the decision to go live with a new system it had to move to using that system and there could be no parallel running. The authority had undertaken new system implementation during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic and, following the launch of the system, lost the Corporate Finance Team that would have taken the system through to steady state running. This would have been the team that undertook the corrections of defects/errors and delivered the financial statements. Now that the team was up to capacity and the system could be fully supported, the Council had resolved the cash receipting issues and were moving to provide draft 2020/21 accounts by the end of November 2022.

Councillor Joe Baker subsequently asked the following supplementary question:

“Now that the Section 24 Notice is in place and given the Leader implemented an untested finance system, will he and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling apologise for the embarrassment this has caused to the Council?”

The Leader replied by commenting that nobody could have foreseen the combination of factors that contributed to the delays in submitting the Council's 2020-21 accounts. The Council had been open and transparent about the causes and a lot of work had been undertaken to address this. There was also no option to run different finance systems in parallel meaning that the Council could

not fall back on the earlier system. In this context, the Leader advised that he did not feel that anybody needed to apologise.

56. MOTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 11)

The Mayor advised that two Motions on Notice had been received prior to the Council meeting.

Bulky Waste Collection

Councillor Sid Khan submitted the following Motion on Notice for Members' consideration:

“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 calls upon the Head of Environmental Services to bring a report to the Executive, 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 Motion was proposed by Councillor Sid Khan and seconded by Councillor Sharon Harvey.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Khan commented that by approving the Motion, Members would help to reduce the levels of fly tipping in the Borough. The Motion would also support efforts to address the green thread, which was one of the key priorities for the authority in the Council Plan. A similar Motion had recently been considered at a Council meeting at Worcestershire County Council, although that had requested a free Bulky Waste Collection service. By contrast, the Motion that Councillor Khan had submitted was requesting that the matter be investigated further by Officers, who could subsequently present a report on the subject at a meeting of the Executive Committee. There were a number of other Councils in the country, including Reading Borough Council, which had already made allowances for the provision of free bulky waste collection services, which demonstrated that this was possible to implement.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Harvey commented that the Motion was being proposed at a time of a cost of living crisis. Many residents, particularly those who were vulnerable or on low incomes, would struggle to pay for a bulky waste collection service, even when they had items that needed to be collected. A free service for residents in this position would help them to dispose of domestic goods. The Motion called for the potential provision of a

Council

Monday, 14th November, 2022

free bulky waste collection service to be investigated further and reported back to the Executive Committee.

Members subsequently discussed the Motion and in so doing noted that the Council had a duty to provide a bulky waste collection service. Some Members questioned whether a free bulky waste collection service would deter certain residents and unscrupulous businesses from fly tipping.

Reference was made to the businesses that offered to collect bulky waste items, both from households and from companies. Members commented that many of these companies were reputable and disposed of goods in an appropriate manner. However, there were also disreputable companies that charged to collect items and then resorted to fly tipping to dispose of those items. It was suggested that the activities of these businesses should be investigated further.

Consideration was also given to the costs involved in facilitating a bulky waste collection service. Members noted that the Council was already subsidising the service and a free service would cost the Council more to support. Fly tipping could not be eradicated altogether but action was already being taken to address fly tipping; Members were asked to note that reports of fly tipping had declined in 2022 compared to 2021. However, concerns were also raised that many residents might struggle to pay for a bulky waste collection service at a time of rising inflation and therefore might conclude that they had no alternative but to take part in fly tipping domestic goods. The suggestion was made that, if there were concerns about the potential financial costs to the Council involved in providing a free bulky waste collection service, this could be trialled for a short period and the costs could subsequently be assessed.

During consideration of this item, the Leader proposed an amendment to the Motion. The amended Motion was worded in the following way:

“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 amendment was proposed by Councillor Matthew Dormer and seconded by Councillor Karen Ashley.

In proposing the amendment, Councillor Dormer commented that a Task Group could investigate various arrangements that could be put in place for the delivery of bulky waste collection services and could bring forward recommendations on this subject that had an evidence basis. Members were also asked to note that a Task Group could investigate the enforcement powers available to the Council to address fly tipping.

Consideration was subsequently given to the proposal to launch a Task Group investigation into the subject of fly tipping. On the one hand, Members commented that a Task Group investigation would involve elected Members, rather than Officers, reviewing the subject in detail. On the other hand, concerns were raised that there was already one Task Group due to launch and another waiting to start and it was suggested that a review of this subject was too urgent to wait. Indeed, Members commented that, should the amendment be agreed, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be asked to consider the proposal to launch a Task Group exercise at the following scheduled meeting of the Committee on 1st December 2022.

At the end of these discussions, Councillor Khan, as the proposer of the original Motion, confirmed that he would be happy to accept the amendment to the wording of the Motion.

RESOLVED that

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.

Motor Neurone Disease Charter

Councillor Joanna Kane submitted the following Motion on Notice for Members' consideration:

“That this Council adopts the Motor Neurone Disease Charter in support of local people living with this terminal disease and their carers.

The aim of adopting the Charter is to promote awareness and understanding of Motor Neurone Disease among elected members and staff. This will help to provide people with MND, their carers and families with appropriate support or signpost them to relevant services."

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Kane and seconded by Councillor Juliet Barker Smith.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Kane commented that she had brought the Motion forward following a discussion with a local resident who had informed her that adopting the charter would make a big difference to people living with Motor Neurone Disease and their carers. Councillor Khan thanked Dr Anita Sharma-James, Chairman of the Worcestershire branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association, who had provided valuable information and advice.

Council was informed that Motor Neurone Disease was a rapidly progressing disease, which had no cure and was unfortunately always fatal. The disease attacked a person's nerve endings and made it impossible for the brain to send signals to the muscles. People with Motor Neurone Disease ended up living in a shell of a body, unable to move, communicate or look after themselves and eventually became unable to breathe.

Motor Neurone Disease was difficult to diagnose, and this could typically take between nine months to a year. As a result, life expectancy after diagnosis could be very short, with one third of people dying within 12 months of a diagnosis. This short life expectancy was one of the reasons why it was so important that elected Members and frontline staff had a clear understanding of how to improve the quality of life of people living with the disease as well as their carers. In addition, because the disease progressed so rapidly, it was essential that people living with Motor Neurone Disease received adaptations to their homes as quickly and as easily as possible. The Council had an important role here, particularly in terms of supporting Council tenants with the disease.

The Motor Neurone Disease charter called for five simple rights:

- Early diagnosis and information.
- Access to quality care and treatment.
- To be treated as individuals with dignity and respect.
- The right to maximise their quality of life.
- The right for carers to be valued, respected, listened to and well supported.

Council

Monday, 14th November, 2022

Adopting the charter would send a clear message to the public that Redditch Borough Council was supportive of these five rights. If the Council agreed to adopt the charter, Redditch Borough Council would be joining 96 other local authorities, including Bromsgrove District Council, Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council. Adopting the charter would also enable the Council to work more closely with the Motor Neurone Disease Association, which could provide support to complement the work of the authority. For example, the charity could provide information for Members and Officers about what it was like to live with Motor Neurone Disease and could also arrange both training and speakers for events.

Members were asked to note that, in Worcestershire it was estimated that there were 100 people living with Motor Neurone Disease. One in 300 people were likely to develop Motor Neurone Disease during their lifetimes. In total, six people died every day from the disease.

Councillor Kane concluded by commenting that it was vitally important that people living with the disease were able to access rapid support when they needed it, due to the quick progression of the illness. People living with the condition could quickly reach a point, post diagnosis, where they could not speak, swallow or move. In this context, the Council's support for the charter would be invaluable.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Barker Smith commented that she had been keen to second the Motion as Motor Neurone Disease was an illness that was of particular interest and concern to her. Members were reminded that Professor Stephen Hawking, the late Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at the University of Cambridge, had been diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease early in his career and had relied on advances in technology to communicate with people as the illness progressed. The husband of a friend of Councillor Barker Smith had also been diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease but, whilst her friend had recorded his speech, he had not been able to access the same advanced technology and he had struggled to communicate before he sadly died from the disease.

In responding to the Motion, the Leader commented that by adopting the Motion and supporting the charter, the Council could help to raise awareness of the disease and its impact on those in the local community who were affected by it. The Council would, in line with the aim of the charter, endeavour to raise awareness and understanding of Motor Neurone Disease through the development of a dedicated page on the Council's website. Action would also be taken to create a Motor Neurone Disease Charter page on the

Council

Monday, 14th November, 2022

website, which would explain what the charter was and provide links to the Association's website. That website was a comprehensive resource that provided easy access to further advice and support, which was available through the Association and its local branches.

Members subsequently discussed the Motion in detail and in doing so commented that, as with any diagnosis of a terminal illness, people with Motor Neurone Disease could experience fear and isolation. Reference was made to the relatively recent diagnosis of the former England Rugby International player, Mr Rob Burrows MBE, as well as the coverage of his diagnosis and the progression of his illness by the BBC Breakfast News service, which had helped to raise awareness nationally of the disease.

Reference was made by Members to their personal experiences of Motor Neurone Disease, including family members who had been diagnosed with the illness as well as Members who had cared for people with the disease during their careers. Members thanked Councillor Kane for submitting the Motion and for raising awareness of the charter at the Council meeting in a sensitive manner.

During consideration of this item, Dr Anita Sharma-James, from the Motor Neurone Disease Association, who was in attendance at the meeting, was invited to address Council. In speaking on the matter, Dr Anita Sharma-James thanked Members for their kind words and explained that she too had had personal experience of a close member of her family receiving a diagnosis of Motor Neurone Disease. The Motor Neurone Disease Association raised funding and provided support to people living with Motor Neurone Disease, their carers, social services departments and to Councils. Members were advised that carers were particularly important to people with Motor Neurone Disease and they had often been the only people to maintain contact with those who had been diagnosed with the disease throughout the Covid-19 lockdowns.

RESOLVED that

this Council adopts the Motor Neurone Disease Charter in support of local people living with this terminal disease and their carers.

The aim of adopting the Charter is to promote awareness and understanding of Motor Neurone Disease among elected members and staff. This will help to provide people with MND, their carers and families with appropriate support or signpost them to relevant services.

Council

Monday, 14th November, 2022

(At the end of the debate in respect of this item there was a brief adjournment from 20.14 – 20.20.)

57. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Town Hall Hub

The Leader of the Council presented a report on the subject of the Town Hall Hub. Officers were thanked for their hard work on the report, particularly the Interim Section 151 Officer and the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services. The report formed part of ongoing work on the regeneration of Redditch town centre.

During consideration of this item, Members raised the following points:

- The length of time that had passed since the Council first started to consider regeneration of Redditch town centre as part of work on the One Public Estate project, which was debated by Council in March 2018.
- The range of public services that would be accommodated in the Town Hall Hub.
- The extent to which it would be appropriate for the central library in Redditch to relocate to Redditch Town Hall to form part of the Hub.
- The level of public support in the local community for the relocation of the library to Redditch Town Hall.
- The consultation that had already been undertaken by Redditch Borough Council in respect of proposals for the regeneration of the town. Members commented that public consultation had taken place in 2020/21, although the forms of consultation available at that time had been restricted by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The public consultation that was in the process of being undertaken by Worcestershire County Council as the lead authority responsible for the provision of Library Services.
- The potential for there to be a vibrant public sector hub without the library being moved into the Town Hall.
- The risks to the Council involved in working on the project, including the relocation of the library.
- The potential challenges for the Council, in terms of the external auditor's expectations following the issuing of the Section 24 Notice, should the works at the Town Hall fail to be delivered on time and on budget. Members were reminded that the Section 24 Notice related to the non-submission of the Council's 2020-21 accounts and not to financial sustainability.
- The fact that the introduction of a public sector hub in the Town Hall formed part of the regeneration plans for the town,

Council

Monday, 14th November, 2022

which also included redevelopment of the railway quarter and establishing an innovation hub.

- The impact that the relocation of the library might have on the area in the town centre where the existing library was located.
- The extent to which the Council and partner organisations would be able to attract businesses, including restaurants, to the public square area that would be created as part of the plans, should the library be relocated.
- The disposal of Council assets and whether this had the support of the public.
- The benefits to residents arising from the NHS and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) renting space in the Town Hall.
- The future location of the Redditch archives should the library be relocated into Redditch Town Hall.
- The condition of the current building in which the central Redditch library was based.
- The fact that there was no guarantee that the relocation of the library to Redditch Town Hall would occur as this was subject to consultation.
- The reasons why Worcestershire County Council would not pay rent for a period of time to Redditch Borough Council for space in the Town Hall for the library, should the relocation proceed. Members were advised that Worcestershire County Council would benefit from a rent-free period because Redditch Borough Council was asking for control of a separate building in return.
- The petition that had been submitted to Worcestershire County Council in relation to the relocation of the library.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 17.5 a recorded vote was taken and the voting was as follows:

Members voting FOR the resolution:

Councillors Imran Altaf, Karen Ashley, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, Brandon Clayton, Luke Court, Matthew Dormer, Peter Fleming, Lucy Harrison, Anthony Lovell, Emma Marshall, Timothy Pearman and Craig Warhurst (13).

Members voting AGAINST the resolution:

Councillors Joe Baker, Juliet Barker Smith, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Sharon Harvey, Joanna Kane and Sid Khan (7).

Members voting to ABSTAIN on the resolution:

Councillors Juliet Brunner, Ann Isherwood and David Thain (3).

The vote on the resolution was therefore carried.

(Prior to the vote in respect of this matter, Councillor Michael Chalk left the room and so was not present when the recorded vote was taken.)

Climate Change Strategy / Carbon Reduction Implementation Plan

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change presented the Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Reduction Implementation Plan for Members' consideration. Council was informed that climate change impacted on everyone and was increasingly evident, including through the excessively hot summer that there had been in the UK in 2022. The Council was only one organisation among many in the Borough responsible for carbon emissions and could not control how other groups and individuals behaved, although it could contribute to reductions in emissions as well as set a positive example. Action was needed urgently to tackle climate change, which was already having a negative impact on biodiversity. The Climate Change Cross Party Working Group had discussed the content of the strategy and Members had had a chance to contribute their suggestions as part of this process.

Members were asked to note that there had been carbon literacy training provided to Members and staff earlier in the year. This accredited training had been very informative and the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change recommended that those Members who had not had a chance to do so should attend climate change training when a further opportunity arose.

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

- The potential for the Council to be more ambitious about tackling climate change.
- The debate in respect of the item that had taken place at a recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at which Members had made suggestions about potential changes that could be made to the Local Plan to encourage developers to build more energy efficient properties. Whilst recommendations on this subject had not been agreed by the Committee, it was noted that Members could influence the content of the Local Plan by participating in meetings of the Planning Advisory Panel (PAP).
- The fact that the Climate Change Strategy represented a starting point that would help the authority to work towards becoming carbon neutral.
- The frequency with which meetings of the Climate Change Cross Party Working Group had taken place. Members noted that four meetings of the group took place each year and three

meetings of the group had already taken place in 2022 with a further meeting due to take place in December.

- The extent to which it would be possible to arrange for meetings of the Climate Change Cross Party Working Group to take place in public.
- The timing of the report which was being considered at the same time that the COP27 summit, dedicated at an international level to tackling climate change, was occurring in Sharm El-Sheik, Egypt.
- The work that had already been undertaken at the Council to reduce carbon emissions in the Borough, including through the installation of solar panels on various Council owned properties and the upgrading of the windows and insulation in the Town Hall.
- The Council's carbon reduction plans in terms of how these compared to other Councils in the region. Members commented that the Council's actions and strategy compared favourably to those in place at many other local authorities.
- The need for appropriate measures to be in place for tackling carbon emissions so that Members could monitor progress.
- The potential for Redditch to have a greener, digital economy moving forward and the positive impact that this could have on carbon emissions in the Borough.
- The many trees in the Borough which made a positive contribution to tackling CO² emissions and the benefits arising from planting more trees.

Voluntary Bodies Scheme

The Leader presented the Voluntary Bodies Scheme for Members' consideration. Council was advised that the report had been drafted following consultation with Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations concerning the various options available to support the sector moving forward. The option that had been proposed was in line with the feedback that had been received from VCS groups.

Members discussed the options in the report and in so doing made reference to the fact that support for concessionary rents would be withdrawn under the proposals that had been put forward. Concerns were raised about the impact that the withdrawal of concessionary rent support could have on some VCS groups and questions were raised about the extent to which the sector would be supportive of this measure.

Reference was made to discussions that had been held at a recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when the report had been pre-scrutinised. At this meeting, it had been made clear that, whilst there was cross party consensus amongst Members

about the benefits of moving to a system of two types of grant application depending on the size of the funding requested, this consensus did not extend to the removal of support for concessionary rents. Instead, some Members asked for it to be noted that they were opposed to the removal of the concessionary rents support.

Consideration was given to the fact that Redditch Borough Council was one of a small number of local authorities that still provided grant support to VCS organisations. This was something that Members agreed the Council could be proud of moving forward.

Fees and Charges 2023/24

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling presented the Fees and Charges 2023/24 report for Council's consideration.

Members discussed the proposed changes to the Council's fees and charges and in so doing noted that there would be a 10 per cent increase to most fees and charges under the proposals. Increases at this level corresponded with the level of inflation on the date of the Council meeting and would help to ensure that the authority could secure full cost recovery for service delivery.

Concerns were raised that people on low incomes might struggle to pay for Council services given the proposed increases. However, Members also noted that there was a need to manage the Council's finances in a sustainable manner and this would be best achieved through securing full cost recovery where possible.

During consideration of this item, the following areas were queried:

- The commentary for the fees recorded for replacement pendants and for key safes for the Lifeline service and the reasons why the basis for calculating this had changed from actual cost plus a 17 per cent administrative fee to full cost recovery.
- The service charges that had been recorded for the three storey flats, the Woodrow Estate, Evesham Mews and the communal blocks and the reasons why these fees were set to achieve full cost recovery rather than being a fixed fee.
- The heating charges recorded for Bredon House, Mendip House and Malvern House, the reasons why these were set at full cost recovery rather than a fixed price and the regularity with which tenants needed to pay these charges. Members were advised that the Council had moved to achieving full cost recovery for these charges in 2021/22.

Council was informed that further information would be provided to Members in response to these questions outside the meeting.

Reference was made to the fact that many fees had been increased in order to achieve full cost recovery. Questions were raised about what this meant in practice and Members suggested that it would have been useful for examples to be provided. Concerns were also raised about the proposed 35 per cent increases to fees for the Dial a Ride and Shopmobility services and the extent to which the new charges would be affordable for customers. However, Members also commented that the Council could not subsidise all services and, wherever possible, the costs of service delivery needed to be covered in order to ensure that they remained sustainable.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee held on 11th October and 25th October 2022 be received and all recommendations adopted.

58. REGULATORY COMMITTEES

Section 24 Notice

Council considered the Section 24 Notice that had been issued to the authority by the external auditors, Grant Thornton. Members agreed that the Council should accept the Section 24 Notice and the points that the external auditors had raised in this notice, which related to the non-submission of the Council's 2020-21 accounts.

Reference was made to discussions that had taken place at a meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held on 10th November 2022 in respect of this matter. During this meeting, Members had been advised that there were three key factors which had contributed to the delays in submitting the accounts:

- Problems with the implementation of the new Tech1 finance system, particularly the cash receipting part of this system, which had been introduced at the Council in 2021.
- Significant staff turnover in the Corporate Financial Services department at the time when the new system was being introduced.
- The Covid-19 pandemic.

Consideration was given to the hard work that had been undertaken by officers to rectify problems with the Tech1 system, once new staff had been appointed to the Financial Services team. Members thanked Officers for their hard work and expressed their hopes that

Council

Monday, 14th November, 2022

the action that had already been taken would enable the Council to return to submitting accounts in a timely manner in future.

Members noted that the external auditors had indicated at the meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee that the Council might need to pay an additional fee for the audit of the 2020-21 accounts once these were submitted, depending on the amount of work required. Questions were raised about how much this additional fee was likely to cost the Council. The Interim Section 151 Officer explained that the additional fee would depend on the level of extra work required from the external auditors to audit the accounts, but it was likely this could be approximately £20,000.

The additional training in respect of the Tech1 finance system that was due to be provided to staff was also discussed. Members queried the length of time that would be required to deliver this training to staff as well as the financial costs. The Interim Section 151 Officer explained that there would be a two-day training session held between the completion of the 2020-21 accounts and start of work on the 2021-22 accounts. This training would be in addition to the general expenditure training which had been provided to staff on an ongoing basis.

Concerns were raised about the delay in submitting the Council's 2020-21 accounts and Officers were asked to clarify whether the authority's 2019/20 accounts had been submitted and whether the delays with the 2020-21 accounts would impact on submission of the 2021-22 accounts. The Interim Section 151 Officer explained that the Council's 2019-20 accounts had already been submitted. Councils could only work on one set of accounts at a time, so the 2021-22 accounts had not yet been started. However, as soon as work on the 2020-21 accounts had been completed, Officers would commence work on the 2021-22 accounts. The problems with the cash receipting part of the system had been resolved and Officers were on track to submit the 2020-21 accounts by the end of November 2022 and for this reason, there would need to be an extra meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in December to consider the statement of accounts.

During consideration of this item, Members noted that the Council had been transparent in terms of reporting on the issues that had been identified by the external auditors in both the Section 24 Notice and the Interim External Auditor's Annual Report 2020-21. In addition, Members had discussed the introduction and roll out of the new Tech1 finance system at various meetings, including at meetings of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group.

Council

Monday, 14th November, 2022

The impact that the Section 24 Notice had had on staff morale and mental wellbeing was briefly considered. Members commented that staff welfare needed to be prioritised and with this in mind suggested that a sense of isolation arising from working at home could have a negative impact on some staff. Concerns were also raised that the Section 24 Notice could encourage more staff to leave the authority. However, it was also noted that the Council had an agile working policy and this provided flexibility over working arrangements to suit the needs of both the employer and employees.

Interim External Auditor's Annual Report 2020-21

Members considered the Interim External Auditor's Annual Report 2020-21. Reference was made to the recent discussions with respect to this report at a meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and Members noted that the external auditors had made recommendations that were designed to improve various processes at the Council. In particular, the key recommendations in the report focused on the need for transparency in financial monitoring and reporting arrangements.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Section 24 Statutory Recommendation is accepted and that Council endorse the actions included in the management responses which form the rectification process required as per legislation;**
- 2) the 6 Key Recommendations and 13 Improvement Recommendations within the Interim External Auditor's Annual Report 2020-21 be agreed; and**
- 3) it be agreed that the Management Actions contained within the Interim External Auditor's Annual Report 2020-21 will rectify these issues.**

59. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

The Mayor advised that there had been one urgent decision, on the subject of the implementation of the Energy Efficiency Regulations 2015, since the previous meeting of Council.

60. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL (IF ANY)

The Mayor explained that she had agreed to receive an item of urgent business for consideration at the meeting, following consultation with the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer. This urgent business requested a waiver on the six-month rule, for

Council

Monday, 14th November, 2022

attendance at Council and Committee meetings, for Councillor Gareth Prosser, due to continuing ill health. The decision was taken to consider this as urgent business as a request to extend the time for non-attendance beyond six months had to be approved at a Council meeting before that six-month period was due to expire and there were no further Council meetings due to take place before Councillor Prosser's six months since last attending a meeting would have passed.

Members considered the report and in doing so expressed their hopes that Councillor Prosser would experience a full recovery soon. In addition, Members commented that their thoughts were with Councillor Prosser and his family at this time.

RESOLVED that

in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, Council approves Councillor Gareth Prosser's non-attendance at meetings until the end of the 2022/23 municipal year on the grounds of continued ill health and that the Council's best wishes be conveyed to him.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 10.13 pm

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**Redditch Borough Council
30th January 2023**

Questions on Notice

1. From Mr James Fardoe to the Leader:

“As a young person, I have a great interest in the project surrounding the Innovation Centre, would you be able to update us on the timeline regarding the demolition of the current police station and the budgeting of this project?”

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Executive Committee

Tuesday, 6th December,
2022

MINUTES

Present:

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

Officers:

Peter Carpenter, Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton, Kevin Hiron, Matthew Mead, Deb Poole and Becky Talbot

Democratic Services Officers:

Jo Gresham

79. APOLOGIES

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

80. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

81. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that during the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 1st December 2022, Members pre-scrutinised the Workforce Strategy which was due to be debated at the Executive Committee meeting. The Committee had endorsed the recommendation in the report. Members were urged to refer to this when debating this item.

82. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

Chair

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 25th October 2022 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

83. HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT / PEOPLE STRATEGY

The Head of Transformation & Organisational Development and Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager presented the HR and Organisational Development / People Strategy for the Executive Committee's consideration.

The Executive Committee was advised that the strategy set out the Council's aspiration for the Council's workforce now and for the future. It was reported that the HR and Organisational Development / People Strategy was designed to ensure that the right people with the right skills were in the right place within the workforce.

In developing the HR and Organisational Development / People Strategy, Officers had outlined three key themes. These were as follows:

1. Workforce Planning and Talent Management – this included how the workforce were recruited and retained.
2. Engagement - this included how the workforce could be motivated.
3. Health, Safety and Wellbeing – this included how to provide a safe and healthy workplace for Council staff.

Members were informed of the importance of a diverse workforce, and that the HR and Organisational Development / People Strategy took this into account in the hope that this would produce a workforce that better understood customers' needs.

During consideration of the report Members were pleased to see that wellbeing had been given such a high priority within the HR and Organisational Development / People Strategy. It was noted that showing an interest in the wellbeing of people was important as the biggest asset to an organisation was its people, and looking after their wellbeing would help to get the best out of staff. It was also noted that the work being undertaken in culture and engagement would also motivate staff and was fundamental to the success of a

workforce. In addition to this, Members expressed that it was pleasing to see that work was actively being undertaken to attract younger people to the Council and that planning, and succession plans were in place.

RESOLVED that

The approach taken by the Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service, to address the Workforce Strategy be endorsed.

84. INTRODUCTION OF VIRTUAL PARKING PERMITS FOR REDDITCH AND OFF STREET PARKING ORDER FOR STAFF CAR PARKS

The Environmental Services Manager presented the report on the subject of Introduction of Virtual parking Permits for Redditch and off street parking order for staff car parks. Prior to consideration, Officers informed Members that there were two errors on pages 48 and 52 of the Equality Impact Assessment appendix and that two extra rows within the table should have been removed prior to publication.

It was reported to Members that the Council had operated a Residents' Parking Scheme (RPS) since 2009 with an average number of 550 permits issued each year. Members were informed that currently the permits were printed, laminated and posted or emailed to residents for printing and the permit displayed in the windscreen in order to avoid a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN). However, if the virtual parking permit system was agreed this process would effectively be eliminated. In addition to this, residents would be able to update their details through the online Mii Permit App. It was reported that this system had been successfully implemented in across the County in Worcester City, Wyre Forest and Bromsgrove and would certainly be beneficial in light of the shared future use of the Town Hall and Trafford Car Parks with the NHS.

The Executive Committee was advised that if agreed, it was hoped that the virtual permits would go live for staff car parks on 1st April 2023 and 1st April 2024 for residents' virtual parking permits. Members were advised that residents who qualified for the virtual parking permits, would be provided with information on how to access and use the Mii permit scheme and open evenings would be

arranged prior to the launch for any residents who required additional assistance.

During consideration of this item, it was reiterated by Members that support would be provided to residents during the transition to the virtual parking permits.

RESOLVED that

the Council adopts a Virtual Parking Permit system for all Residents' Parking Schemes and Town Hall Staff Car Parks, including adding these latter car parks to the existing Off-Street Parking Order.

85. IMPROVEMENTS TO VEHICULAR ENTRY AND EXIT ARRANGEMENTS, ARROW VALLEY CAR PARK, BATTENS DRIVE

The Environmental Services Manager was invited to present the Improvements to Vehicular Entry and Exit Arrangements, Arrow Valley Car Park, Battens Drive report.

Members were advised that the new Lidl retail store located on Battens Drive, Redditch shared access with Arrow Valley Country Park. It was noted that this current format was not ideal. The Executive Committee were informed that Officers had negotiated with the consultants for Lidl, the Woodbine Group Ltd, that these access arrangements be improved. As part of negotiations regarding an easement located on Council land, the Woodbine Group Ltd had agreed to provide funding for changes to access arrangements and Members were advised that the monies had already been received by the Council.

During consideration of this report, it was discussed that the outcome had been a result of Officers within Environmental Services and Leisure Services working together to progress these plans. It was highlighted that these changes would improve safety in terms of access. It was noted, however, that a number of parking spaces would need to be removed from Arrow Valley Park as a result of the new access arrangements. There was a suggestion from Members that perhaps a plan could be implemented in the future to replace any lost spaces.

RECOMMENDED that

A budget of £28.3k be added to the 2022/2023 Capital Programme to be funded from monies already received from Woodbine Group Ltd in order to pay for the improvement works set out in this report.

86. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 2 2022-23

The Interim Director of Finance presented the Financial and Performance Monitoring Report - Quarter 2 2022-23 and in doing so explained that this was the second of such reports presented to Members during this municipal year.

The Executive Committee were advised that in Q1 2022/23 the budget had included £595k of organisational cross-cutting efficiency targets which had not been allocated to services. The projected figure at Q2 was reported as a £369k overspend. It was noted, however that this overspend did not take into account the pay award which had been agreed by employers at £1,925 per pay point. This pay award would result in an extra £700k of pressure on the Councils' finances and as it was not funded would have to be funded from reserves.

In terms of Capital Monitoring, it was reported to the Executive Committee that projects included in the Capital Programme of £4.1m approved in March 2022 were moving forward. Furthermore, Members were advised that as at Q2 the overall spend was £1.5m of the £4.1m overall budget.

Members were advised that £15.2m of spending would be available as a result of the Towns Fund. In addition to this, it was hoped that the outcome of the Levelling Up 2 funding application would soon be available. Members were informed that the Towns Board had recently met regarding the UK Shared Prosperity funding.

During the presentation of this report Members were reminded that as previously reported any projects that had not been started in Q1 would have to be reviewed. This would allow resource to be allocated as necessary to the Towns Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund projects which were a priority and needed to be delivered within a specific time limit.

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 6th December, 2022

Members were informed that one of the recommendations contained within the report, if agreed, would result in the allocation £150k of funding split between HR and ICT. The funding would be used to clear any current backlogs in HR, and to invest in automated and robotics projects in ICT in order to provide more streamlined processes in the future and deliver savings to the Council.

In respect of the HRA, it was reported to Members that currently there was a surplus in the region of £141k which would be transferred to HRA Balances. In addition, Officers noted that its Capital Programme was £10.1m against £14.m budget. Members were reminded that this was a result of a number of projects that had only recently been through the procurement process and that spending would catch up at the beginning of the next financial year.

The Interim Director of Finance advised that the report set out the second series of Performance Indicators for the Council. The areas of collections rates were highlighted for Members' attention, and it was noted that the collection rates on Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates were below expected levels. Officers noted that this was expected to continue as a result of the current cost of living crisis.

During discussion of this item Members noted that this was a robust and comprehensive report. Further clarification was requested in respect of the collection rates and Members were keen that any debt management schemes be signposted to local residents. It was confirmed that there were schemes in operation and that the Council, could arrange payment plans for residents who required assistance. In addition to this, it was noted there had been communications produced that contained information of support available during the cost of living crisis. Furthermore, Members were advised that the new Civica Housing system that had recently been implemented would enable the Council to work more proactively with its tenants.

There was a discussion regarding the impact of inflation and Members highlighted the difficulty in predicting what could happen in the future and the importance of remaining cautious when managing the budgets in such an uncertain landscape. Another area that was highlighted by Members was the potential that a

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 6th December, 2022

higher number of residents may require housing support from the Council in the future due to the cost of living crisis. It was reported that £263k had already been provided in respect of this area and that more funding may be available in the future.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the current financial position in relation to Revenue and Capital Budgets for the period July to September 2022 be noted; and**
- 2) the Q2 Performance data for the Period July to September 2022 be noted; and**
- 3) That £150,000 is allocated from the Financial Services Reserve to fund cross council improvements in HR and ICT.**

87. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 TO 2025/26 - UPDATE

The Interim Director of Finance provided the Executive Committee with the Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2025/26 – Update.

As Members were already aware, the Council's budget was being delivered in two tranches for this financial year. The first tranche had been published on 17th October 2022 and had identified over £1.5m worth of savings. In addition to this, it was reported that as detailed in the previous report, that £400k of unallocated savings had been addressed. It had been hoped that more detail would be available from Government, however at the time of the meeting the details of Local Government Settlement was not available and would not be until the final week in December 2022, much later than in previous years. It had been recognised by Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) that this would make the budget setting difficult for local authorities and an update on the provisional Settlement would be provided imminently by DLUHC.

Although there were a number of areas that were still to be confirmed there were some known areas within the budget setting process. These were the potential to increase Council Tax by 1% providing £70k. In addition to this, the Council no longer were

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 6th December, 2022

required to pay National Insurance contributions of 1.25% on all salaries. The Government had reported that a cap would be placed on rents at 7% and further detail would be made available in a future Executive Committee report. In addition to this, the Government had announced £13b worth of funding for protection of rate payers alongside a further £1b worth of Household Support funding.

Inflation was again highlighted during the presentation of this report and Members were informed that the Council was being extremely cautious in terms of the potential inflation on utilities in the future. The Interim Director of Finance reported that he had allowed for an increase of 200% on utilities but it could potentially be more. It was highlighted that the Council's utilities contracts were due to expire in April 2023 and due to the long notice period in concluding such contracts, it may be necessary to extend the existing contracts. This could help mitigate any potential increases if contracts were made with a new provider.

Members thanked Officers for a clear and comprehensive report and were pleased that the Finance team were operating with caution at such an unpredictable time.

RESOLVED that

That Officers continue to work on additional options, as outlined in the Strategy section of the Tranche 1 Report for presentation to Executive in February as Tranche 2 of the Budget.

RECOMMENDED that

The Tranche 1 savings proposals, the updated WRS Fees and Charges proposals and the single Growth item in respect of the Climate Change Officer are approved for implementation to ensure maximum benefit as at 1st April 2023.

88. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Interim Director of Finance presented the recommendation from the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee as recommended at its meeting that took place on 27th October 2022.

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 6th December, 2022

It was reported that number of cyber-attacks across the Public Sector had increased by 42%. As a result, it was reported that it had been very difficult for the Council to obtain insurance in respect of cyber security for this year. It was envisaged that insurance renewal may not be possible for future years as had already been experienced by a number of Councils nationally.

The Audit, Governance and Standards Committee had felt, that in light of the difficulties experienced in securing insurance for this year, it would be prudent to contact the Local Government Association to see what plans were in place in order to facilitate a process to help Local Government in the future.

RESOLVED that

given the possibility of no Cyber Security insurance in future years, recommend to the Local Government Association (LGA) that they facilitate a process to help local government cover this deficiency.

89. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee was advised that there were no minutes from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration on this occasion.

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

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

91. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The following verbal updates were provided on the Executive Advisory Panels and other groups:

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

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 6th December, 2022

Councillor Lovell explained that the fourth meeting of the Climate Change Cross Party Working Group was due to take place on 21st December 2022.

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

The Executive Committee was advised that the next meeting of the Constitutional Review Working Party was due to take place in March 2023.

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

As Councillor Nazir had submitted her apologies for this meeting there were no updates from the Corporate Parenting Board on this occasion.

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

Councillor Dormer explained that the next meeting of the Member Support Steering Group was due to take place on 14th December 2022.

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

Members were informed that the next meeting of the Planning Advisory Panel was due to take place on 4th January 2023.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.06 pm

Executive Committee

06 December 2022

**IMPROVEMENTS TO VEHICULAR ENTRY AND EXIT ARRANGEMENTS
ARROW VALLEY CAR PARK, BATTENS DRIVE**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillors Peter Fleming and Joanne Beecham
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Heads of Service	Guy Revans - Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services Ruth Bamford - Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services
Report Author	Job Title: Engineering Team Leader Contact email: pete.liddington@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 534108
Wards Affected	Winyates
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green
Non-Key Decision	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- i) **A budget of £28.3k be added to the 2022/2023 Capital Programme to be funded from monies already received from Woodbine Group Ltd in order to pay for the improvement works set out in this report.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The new Lidl retail store that is located on the former Health Club site, off Battens Drive, is accessed both for their customer and delivery use, via the existing vehicular access serving both the main Arrow Valley Park (AVP) car park and Countryside Centre. An agreement existed between the Council and the owners of the former Squash Centre (original use of the private site before changing to the Health Club), whereby vehicular access was permitted over this Council's owned access.
- 2.2 Discussions were held between Council Officers and the Consultants acting on behalf of Lidl during the Planning process, to try and come to an agreement on the proposed vehicular access arrangements. The Consultant's initial proposals were that the main access to the AVP car

Executive Committee06 December 2022

park/Countryside Centre should take secondary status, in that they are to be served off the access to their store, which would take primary status (refer to Appendix 1 showing extract from the Planning application drawing).

- 2.3 In addition to the demotion of the Council's main vehicular access to its premier leisure park, allowing access to a retail store to take preferential treatment, the existing position of the access and egress serving the Council's main car park was also considered unacceptable. During certain periods, there will be a continuous traffic flow utilising all facilities, creating a major conflict point for vehicles at this car park entry/exit point, particularly as its located so close to the junction with Battens Drive.
- 2.4 After discussions with Lidl's Consultant, they agreed to alter the access layout to accord with Appendix 2. However, they refused to close the existing access/entry to the AVP car park, and construct a new access at their expense, in the position shown, together with ancillary works. However, during the construction works period of the Lidl site, Woodbine Group discovered that they required an unplanned separate easement across Council owned land, for a new electricity service to be laid that served the new retail store. They obviously approached the Council requesting such an agreement, with the proviso that it was completed in haste, so as not to affect their programmed opening date. With this available opportunity, Officers granted such an easement, within the time period requested, in exchange for a financial payment equal to the estimated cost for completion of the outstanding car park access and exit works. Woodbine Group agreed, and consequently easement agreements were completed, with the required payment being made

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Payment of £28,300 received from the Woodbine Group Ltd.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

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

Executive Committee06 December 2022

- 5.1 **Communities which are safe, well maintained and green** – As highlighted within the report, the completion of the improvements to the vehicular entry and exit arrangements for the AVP car park, will significantly improve the highway safety aspect of the access road serving AVP car park, Countryside Centre and Lidl's retail store.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 There are no Climate Change implications arising from this report.

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

- 6.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

Operational Implications

- 6.2 There are no operational implications arising from this report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 If the works as described were not undertaken, and if vehicular collisions occurred, resulting in injuries to persons, then it would be of course the responsibility of the parties involved to settle any claims through their own Insurance Companies. This Council should not be involved in any such matters, albeit occurring on a Council owned site. However, depending on the severity of any resulting injuries to persons involved, the responsible Insurance company may take the view that the Council has a case to answer, due to the 'poor' engineering layout of the junction with the existing car park exit/entry. Consequently, the proposed improvements would eliminate any such legal possibilities.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Extract of Lidl Planning application drawing showing proposed vehicular access arrangements.

Appendix 2 – Proposals put forward by Council for required completed vehicular access arrangements.

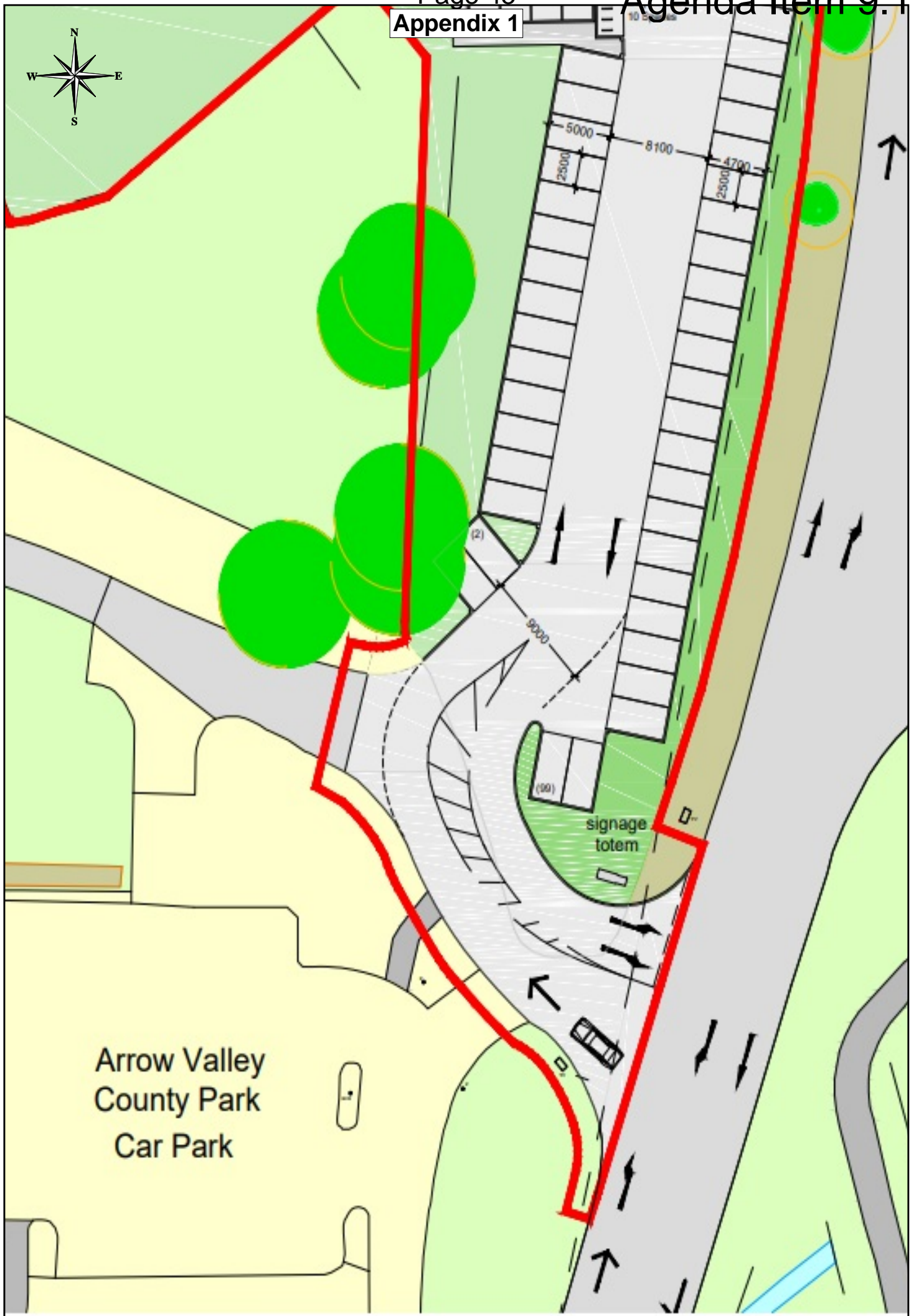
Executive Committee

06 December 2022

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

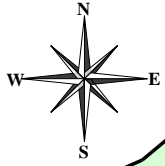
Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holders	Councillors Peter Fleming and Joanne Beecham	17.10.2022
Lead Director/Head of Services	Guy Revans - Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services Ruth Bamford - Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	17.10.2022
Financial Services	Peter Carpenter Director of Finance	22.09.2022
Legal Services	Claire Felton - Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	22.09.2022
Policy Team	Emily Payne Engagement and Equalities Advisor	22.09.2022
Climate Change Officers	Kath Manning - Climate Change and Energy Support Officer Anna Wardell-Hill Environmental Policy and Awareness Officer	22.09.2022

Appendix 1



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Appendix 2



New lay-by for high vehicles waiting to enter through height barrier

Existing height barrier replaced with new design

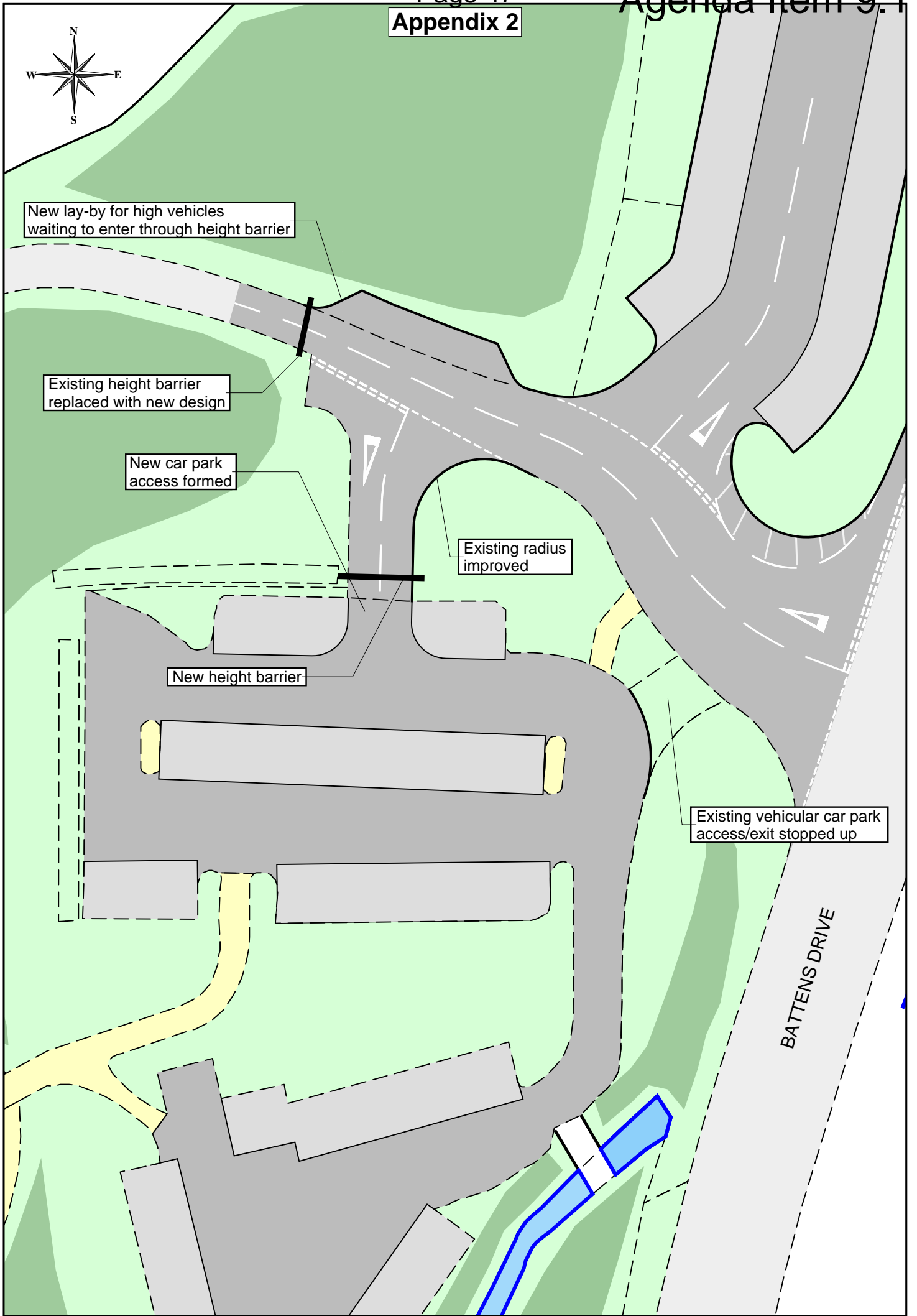
New car park access formed

Existing radius improved

New height barrier

Existing vehicular car park access/exit stopped up

BATTENS DRIVE



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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**6th December 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.	

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. It contained over £1.5m of savings well excess of the £0.9m required. In addition, the Q2 Finance and Performance Report, which is also on this agenda, sets out how existing unallocated savings of over £400k have been addressed. However, the impact of unprecedented and unanticipated increases in inflation have meant that even more savings are required in Tranche 2. This report updates Members on proposed changes announced in November by the Chancellor along with any feedback received for the savings proposals in Tranche 1 of the budget. The Chancellors Statement did not contain enough detailed information to adjust any budget assumptions or the existing “gap”. It recommends to Council that these savings proposals are Recommended for Council approval in January 2023.

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

- 1 That Officers continue to work on additional options, as outlined in the Strategy section of the Tranche 1 Report for presentation to Executive in February as Tranche 2 of the Budget.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**6th December 2022**Executive are asked to Recommend to Council that:**

- 2 The Tranche 1 savings proposals, the updated WRS Fees and Charges proposals and the single Growth item in respect of the Climate Change Officer are approved for implementation to ensure maximum benefit as at 1st April 2023.

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 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 Pandemic.
- 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 by Executive on the 25th October. 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. Whilst a balanced budget for 2022/23 was approved with the use of reserves 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.
- 3.3 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.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**6th December 2022

- 3.4 Those initial savings proposals to be approved and the position on the Councils budget as per Tranche 1 are set in the following table. Overall, the Council has identified £1.529m of savings items. These offset the £0.949m budget deficit. However, when we add in inflationary pressures (non-utilities) we move to a deficit position of £599k which reduces to £125k over the three-year period. We kept utilities separate, pending possible Government support, however this increases the overall deficit position to £1.7m, reducing to £1.3m on present working assumptions. Appendix A sets out the full set of WRS Fees and Charges. The initial appendix did not contain all the Environmental Health charges.

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

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

6th December 2022

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.

3.6 The Savings Proposal form had a feedback section – the following feedback has been received by residents/stakeholders on the Tranche 1 proposals.

Chancellors Statement 17 November 2022

3.7 The Statement by the Chancellor Jeremy Hunt was delayed from the 31st October to the 17th November. The statement was high level and contained very little detail on allocations of funding for the sector.

3.8 On the 21st November the Council found out that the Local Government Financial Settlement will now not be until the week commencing the 19th December, a week later than expected. However, in this communication, DLUHC has said that ***“in recognition that this Settlement is late in the year, we will also provide an update on the pLGFS soon, including providing an update on the measures we will maintain into 2024/25. It is our intention that this will support your budget setting process, ahead of the publication of the pLGFS.”***

3.9 What we do know from the settlement is that:

- Overall – we will be allowed a 1% increase on our Council Tax base from 2% to 3%. At the 2023/4 base level of £6.941m this is 69k.
- We no longer facing the additional pressure of increased employer National Insurance contributions. However, DLUHC are revising the additional grant funding for councils because of this.
- The Government is capping the amount their rents can increase by next year at 7% compared to c.11.1% under current rules. This means we can now come forward with our 2023/24 HRA rent increases report.
- The Autumn Statement announced a £13.6 billion support package to protect ratepayers facing increase. This includes a freezing of the Business Rates multipliers for 23/24, a Transitional Relief scheme to limit the rate at which bills can increase, a more generous Retail, Hospitality and Leisure relief, and the Supporting Small Business scheme to cap bill increases for business that lose relief due to the revaluation. Local authorities will be fully compensated for any loss of income as a result of these business rates measures and will receive new burdens funding for administrative and IT costs.
- An extension to the Household Support Fund over 2023-24, providing £1 billion additional funding. The Government are in conversations with our sector on how this will be distributed.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**6th December 2022

3.10 The Provisional Local Government settlement will now take place in the week commencing the 19th December. Therefore, the overall timetable changes slightly:

- Initial Tranche 1 Options published - 16th October
- Executive discuss initial options – 25th October
- Chancellors Statement – 17th November
- End of feedback period – 23rd November
- Tranche 1 approved by Executive in December and Council in January
- Provisional Local Government Settlement – w/c 19th 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 Tranche 2.

The Council's Base Assumptions including Inflation and Grants

3.11 Following the Chancellors announcement in November, it is important that the Councils base assumptions are revised. This section sets out those assumptions and any changes that have been made.

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
- 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

3.13 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

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**6th December 2022

- 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 have agreed 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

3.15 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.
- Review of the Councils Leisure contract.

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

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**6th December 2022**Strategic Approach**

- 3.17 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 £7m.
 - Increases in Council Tax are limited at 2% or £5, which is significantly lower than the present rates of inflation.
- 3.18 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.
- 3.19 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.
- 3.20 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

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**6th December 2022

- 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.
- 3.21 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
- 3.22 However, in any situation, the Council must move to sustainability by the 2024/25 financial year.

Impact on Reserves

- 3.23 As per the Tranche 1 Report these will be fully revised in Tranche 2.

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 of Tranche 2.

Robustness Statement

- 3.25 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.
- 3.26 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.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**6th December 2022

3.27 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.

3.28 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 Tranche 2 of the MTFS and balanced budget setting process.

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.

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.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**6th December 2022**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.
In addition, the original report to Executive on the 25th October has a section on risk.

6. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A – WRS Updated Fees and Charges

Background Papers

Tranche 1 MTFP – Executive 25th October 2022: [Tranche 1 Saving Proposals](#)
MTFP 2022/23 – Approved February 2022: [Council agenda February 2022 - Including Approved Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25](#)

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

7. KEY

None

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Regulatory Services

Roundings are to the nearest 5 pips

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 Events Notices					
Fee to issue a Temporary Events Notice (TEN)	£21.00	0.00%	0	£21.00	
Cost of a TEN (fuel or usage)	£70.00	0.00%	0	£70.00	
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)	£16.50	0.00%	0	£16.50	
Fee to notify a change of name or address on a personal licence	£10.50	0.00%	0	£10.50	
Applications for new premises licences or club premises certificates					
Applications for the grant of a premises licence or club premises certificate					
Band A (INDRV 0 - 4000)	£100.00	0.00%	0	£100.00	
Band B (INDRV 4001 - 10000)	£190.00	0.00%	0	£190.00	
Band C (INDRV 10001 - 15000)	£315.00	0.00%	0	£315.00	
Band D (INDRV 15001 - 125000)	£450.00	0.00%	0	£450.00	
Band E (INDRV 125001 - +)	£635.00	0.00%	0	£635.00	
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 (INDRV 0 - 4000)	£100.00	0.00%	0	£100.00	
Band B (INDRV 4001 - 10000)	£190.00	0.00%	0	£190.00	
Band C (INDRV 10001 - 15000)	£315.00	0.00%	0	£315.00	
Band D (INDRV 15001 - 125000)	£900.00	0.00%	0	£900.00	
Band E (INDRV 125001 - +)	£1,905.00	0.00%	0	£1,905.00	
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 - 19999	£2,000.00	0.00%	0	£2,000.00	
20000 - 19999	£4,000.00	0.00%	0	£4,000.00	
30000 - 19999	£8,000.00	0.00%	0	£8,000.00	
40000 - 19999	£16,000.00	0.00%	0	£16,000.00	
50000 - 19999	£32,000.00	0.00%	0	£32,000.00	
60000 - 19999	£64,000.00	0.00%	0	£64,000.00	
70000 - 19999	£48,000.00	0.00%	0	£48,000.00	
80000 - 19999	£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 (INDRV 0 - 4000)	£100.00	0.00%	0	£100.00	
Band B (INDRV 4001 - 10000)	£190.00	0.00%	0	£190.00	
Band C (INDRV 10001 - 15000)	£315.00	0.00%	0	£315.00	
Band D (INDRV 15001 - 125000)	£450.00	0.00%	0	£450.00	
Band E (INDRV 125001 - +)	£635.00	0.00%	0	£635.00	
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 (INDRV 0 - 4000)	£100.00	0.00%	0	£100.00	
Band B (INDRV 4001 - 10000)	£190.00	0.00%	0	£190.00	
Band C (INDRV 10001 - 15000)	£315.00	0.00%	0	£315.00	
Band D (INDRV 15001 - 125000)	£900.00	0.00%	0	£900.00	
Band E (INDRV 125001 - +)	£1,905.00	0.00%	0	£1,905.00	
Application for a motor variation of a premises licence or club premises certificate					
	£89.00	0.00%	0	£89.00	
Annual maintenance fees					
Annual premises licence or club premises certificate fee					
Band A (INDRV 0 - 4000)	£70.00	0.00%	0	£70.00	
Band B (INDRV 4001 - 10000)	£160.00	0.00%	0	£160.00	
Band C (INDRV 10001 - 15000)	£295.00	0.00%	0	£295.00	
Band D (INDRV 15001 - 125000)	£320.00	0.00%	0	£320.00	
Band E (INDRV 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 (INDRV 0 - 4000)	£70.00	0.00%	0	£70.00	
Band B (INDRV 4001 - 10000)	£190.00	0.00%	0	£190.00	
Band C (INDRV 10001 - 15000)	£395.00	0.00%	0	£395.00	
Band D (INDRV 15001 - 125000)	£460.00	0.00%	0	£460.00	
Band E (INDRV 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 - 19999	£1,000.00	0.00%	0	£1,000.00	
20000 - 19999	£2,000.00	0.00%	0	£2,000.00	
30000 - 19999	£4,000.00	0.00%	0	£4,000.00	
40000 - 19999	£8,000.00	0.00%	0	£8,000.00	
50000 - 19999	£12,000.00	0.00%	0	£12,000.00	
60000 - 19999	£16,000.00	0.00%	0	£16,000.00	
70000 - 19999	£32,000.00	0.00%	0	£32,000.00	
80000 - 19999	£24,000.00	0.00%	0	£24,000.00	
90000 - 19999	£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					
	£16.50	0.00%	0	£16.50	
Fee to change the name or address of a designated premises supervisor on a premises licence					
	£10.50	0.00%	0	£10.50	
Fee for a replacement premises licence or club premises certificate (if lost or stolen)					
	£16.50	0.00%	0	£16.50	
Fee to notify licensing authority of a proper interest in a premises					
	£21.00	0.00%	0	£21.00	
Notification of ceasing or club name or address on a club licence					
	£16.50	0.00%	0	£16.50	
Notification of change of registered address of club					
	£10.50	0.00%	0	£10.50	
Interim authority notice following death, incapacity or insolvency 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 Operator Licence (3 years)					
	£162.00	5.00%	£7.50	£169.50	
Dual Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Operator Licence (3 years)					
	£208.00	5.00%	£10.40	£218.40	
Administration Charge - new applications					
	£37.00	5.00%	£1.85	£38.85	
Replacement vehicle licence plate					
	£23.00	5.00%	£1.15	£24.15	
Replacement driver's licence					
	£13.00	5.00%	£0.65	£13.65	
Amendment to paper licence e.g. change of address					
	£12.00	5.00%	£0.60	£12.60	
Temp vehicle licence fees (£7.75)					
	£12.00	5.00%	£0.60	£12.60	
Replacement driver's licence - £13.10 per copy					
	£15.00	5.00%	£0.75	£15.75	
Transfer of ownership of a licensed vehicle					
	£61.00	5.00%	£3.05	£64.05	
Crash Record (DRS) Check					
	£66.00	5.00%	£3.30	£69.30	
ANIMAL ACTIVITY LICENCES					
Setting out boxes, handling of dogs, providing or arranging the provision of boarding for cats or dogs and selling animals in pairs					
	£329.00	0.00%	£0.00	£329.00	
Application fee					
	£184.00	0.00%	£0.00	£184.00	
Licence fee (1 year)					

Licence fee (2 years)	£364.00	0.00%	£0.00	£364.00	
Licence fee (3 years)	£546.00	0.00%	£0.00	£546.00	
Application to vary a licence	£240.00	0.00%	£0.00	£240.00	
Recovered at cost	£164.00	0.00%	£0.00	£164.00	Recovered at cost
Veterinary fees (if applicable)					
Local authority inspection (on request of licence holder)					
Kennel or trailer animals for exhibition (cont)					
Application fee	£219.00	0.00%	£0.00	£219.00	
Licence fee (2 years)	£300.00	0.00%	£0.00	£300.00	
Application to vary a licence	£108.00	0.00%	£0.00	£108.00	
Recovered at cost	£163.00	0.00%	£1.00	£164.00	Recovered at cost
Veterinary fees (if applicable)					
Local authority inspection (on request of licence holder)					
ACUPUNCTURE, COSMETIC PIERCING, SEMI-PERMANENT SKIN COLOURING, TATTOOING, ELECTROLYSIS					
Fee to register a premises	£136.00	5.00%	£6.80	£142.80	
Fee to register a practitioner	£93.00	5.00%	£4.65	£97.65	
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	
Blings	£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	
Blings	£639.00	5.00%	£32.00	£671.00	
Adult Gaming Centres	£639.00	5.00%	£32.00	£671.00	
Family Entertainment Centres	£990.00	5.00%	£49.50	£1,039.50	
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	
Blings	£1,090.00	5.00%	£54.50	£1,144.50	
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	
Blings	£746.00	5.00%	£37.30	£783.30	
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	
Blings	£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 holds)					
Betting (including tracks)	£742.00	5.00%	£37.10	£779.10	
Betting Tracks	£742.00	5.00%	£37.10	£779.10	
Blings	£746.00	5.00%	£37.30	£783.30	
Adult Gaming Centres	£746.00	5.00%	£37.30	£783.30	
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	£783.30	
Betting Tracks	£746.00	5.00%	£37.30	£783.30	
Blings	£746.00	5.00%	£37.30	£783.30	
Adult Gaming Centres	£746.00	5.00%	£37.30	£783.30	
Family Entertainment Centres	£666.00	5.00%	£33.30	£699.30	
Premises licence fees (Miscellaneous)					
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 respect 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 renewal 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 renewal 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 renewal 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 issue 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%	£72.35	£1,519.35	
Annual street trading consent - food - renewal	£1,227.00	5.00%	£61.35	£1,288.35	
Annual street trading consent - non-food - initial	£1,207.00	5.00%	£60.35	£1,267.35	
Annual street trading consent - non-food - renewal	£1,088.00	5.00%	£54.40	£1,142.40	
SCRAP METAL DEALERS LICENCES					
Application for a new 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	£148.00	0.00%	£0.00	£148.00	
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	Recovered at cost
Secretary of state inspector and veterinary fees	Recovered at cost			Recovered at cost	

DANGEROUS WILD ANIMALS (DWA) Application for grant or renewal of a licence Veterinary inspection fees	£235.00 Recovered at cost	0.00%	£0.00	£235.00 Recovered at cost	
SEX ESTABLISHMENTS Application for grant or renewal of a licence Application for a Transfer Application for a Variation	£1,020.00 £1,020.00	0.00% 0.00%	£0.00 £0.00	£1,020.00 £00.00 £1,020.00	
HYPONOTISM (entertainment) Application for authorisation			Now	£50.00	
PAVEMENT LICENCE Application for a licence (5 months)	£100.00	0.00%	£0.00	£100.00	
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH Dog Wards Private Veterinary Fees	£25.00	0.00%	£0.00	£25.00	Statutory Fine set by legislation
- Kennelling Fee (£15 per day or part day)	£17.00	5.88%	£1.00	£18.00	Increased to £18.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
- Kennelling Fee for dangerous dog by breed or behaviour - £25 per day	£25.00	4.00%	£1.00	£26.00	Increased to £26.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
- Admin Charge	£15.00	13.33%	£2.00	£17.00	Increased to £17.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
- Levy for out of hours	£45.00	4.44%	£2.00	£47.00	Increased to £47.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
- Repeat offence levy	£40.00	5.00%	£2.00	£42.00	Increased to £42.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
- Treatment Costs (Wormer, Flea) - Per treatment	£10.00	20.00%	£2.00	£12.00	Increased to £12.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
- Veterinary Charges	Recharged at cost		Full cost	Recharged at cost	
- Return Charge	£40.00	5.00%	£2.00	£42.00	Increased to £42.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
WRS Commercial Animal Services (WRS Income)					
Private Water Supplies					
Risk Assessment per hour (minimum 1 hour)	£56.00		£3.00	£59.00	Increased to £59.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
Investigation per hour (minimum 1 hour)	£56.00		£3.00	£59.00	Increased to £59.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
Granting an Authorisation per hour (minimum 1 hour)	£56.00		£3.00	£59.00	Increased to £59.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
Sampling Visit per hour (minimum 1 hour)	£56.00		£3.00	£59.00	Increased to £59.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
Sample analysis per sample taken	£59.00		£3.00	£59.00	Increased to £59.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
+ Laboratory Costs	Full Cost Recovery			Full Cost Recovery	
Sample taken during check monitoring	£56.00		£3.00	£59.00	Increased to £59.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
+ Laboratory Costs	Full Cost Recovery			Full Cost Recovery	
Sample taken during audit monitoring	£56.00		£3.00	£59.00	Increased to £59.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
+ Laboratory Costs	Full Cost Recovery			Full Cost Recovery	
Other Environmental Health Fees					
Trading Certificates - WRS Income					
Health Check					
- Annual Specific expert inspections	£474.00	0%	£23.70	£497.70	
- Certificate	£104.40	0%	£5.20	£109.60	
- Per hour	£47.00	0%	£2.40	£49.40	
FMS re-rating - WRS Income	£168.00	0%	£8.40	£176.40	
155 Certs Condensed Food - WRS Income	Full Cost Recovery			Full Cost Recovery	
Food Hygiene Basic Course fee - WRS Income	Full Cost Recovery			Full Cost Recovery	
Contaminated Land Enquiries - charge per hour - WRS Income	£45.00	2%	£1.00	£46.00	Increased to £46.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts

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Executive Committee

Tuesday, 13th December,
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

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 13th December, 2022

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

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 13th December, 2022

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.

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 13th December, 2022

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.

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 13th December, 2022

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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Executive Committee

Tuesday, 10th January,
2023

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor Nyear Nazir (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Karen Ashley, Joanne Beecham, Peter Fleming, Lucy Harrison, Emma Marshall and Craig Warhurst

Officers:

Peter Carpenter, Sue Hanley and Michelle Howell

Principal Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley-Hill

101. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Anthony Lovell.

102. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

103. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that, with respect to Minute Item No. 105 - the Council Response to the Birmingham Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation – that the reforms to the planning system, published just before Christmas 2022, had created an element of uncertainty for the planning profession. As a result, a decision had been taken to defer the report, which concerned the local plan and duty to cooperate responses. The documents would be reconsidered at an appropriate later date.

104. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 13th December 2022 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

Chair

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 10th January, 2023

105. COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE BIRMINGHAM LOCAL PLAN ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

Members noted that, as detailed during consideration of the Leader's Announcements, this item had been postponed.

106. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2023/24

The Interim Section 151 Officer presented the Council Tax Base report for Members' consideration.

The Committee was advised that the Council Tax Base item was a statutory report. The information provided in the report helped to inform precepting authorities about the amount of income from Council Tax that they could expect to receive during the following financial year. The figures provided in the report had been based on data as of 30th November 2022 for the Borough. The figures also assumed a 98 per cent collection rate, which was standard for Redditch Borough. Members were asked to note that some Councils assumed a 99 per cent collection rate but if the same approach was applied in Redditch, there was a risk that the Council would not collect the extra 1 per cent in income creating an additional pressure on the budget.

Members were advised that only 40 new homes, valued at Council Tax Band D equivalent, had been developed in the previous year adding to the Council Base. This was a relatively low figure.

RECOMMENDED 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

107. FINAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2023/24

The Interim Section 151 Officer presented the Final Council Tax Support Scheme for the Committee's consideration.

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 10th January, 2023

Members were informed that the draft Council Tax Support Scheme had been subject to consultation in October 2022. There had been a total of 94 responses received during the consultation, of which 87 per cent had been in favour of the proposed changes overall to the Council Tax Support Scheme. These changes would result in an additional cost of £141,000, although this figure would be divided between the precepting authorities and the actual cost to Redditch Borough Council would be closer to £13,000.

All of the precepting authorities had been consulted on the proposed changes to the scheme. In the response received from Worcestershire County Council, it had been clarified that that Council was not particularly in favour of the proposed changes. Officers had responded by highlighting that, if no changes were made, it was likely that the level of Council Tax that could not be collected would increase resulting in a loss of income anyway. The Committee was asked to note that whilst all of the Councils in north Worcestershire were proposing changes to their Council Tax Support Schemes, which would increase support available to their most vulnerable residents, no changes had been proposed to the Council Tax Support Schemes in place for the District Councils in the south of the county. However, no Councils in the county were proposing to reduce the Council Tax support they provided to eligible residents.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the process that had been followed in respect of the consultation and questions were raised about how the Council ensured that people did not respond multiple times, thereby skewing the figures. Officers clarified that an external company undertook this consultation on behalf of the Council as well as many other authorities in the country and were therefore experienced at managing consultation processes. The Committee was informed that further information would be requested about how the company managed this risk.

RECOMMENDED that

- 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 in line with 1.2 below;**

and RESOLVED to note that

- 2) the scheme is designed to assist the lowest income households and to allow the Council to operate the scheme more flexibly by:**

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 10th January, 2023

- (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 childcare 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; and
- 3) all other parts of the existing scheme will remain unchanged.

108. FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT 2020/21

The Interim Section 151 Officer presented the Financial Outturn Report 2020/21.

The Committee was informed that an underspend of £291,000 was anticipated for the end of the 2020/21 financial year. This was mainly due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on expenditure and project delivery. The Council had received in excess of £1 million in Covid grant funding during the financial year in a number of different tranches. This had helped to achieve a balanced position, although there had been pressures arising from the pay award to staff. Earmarked reserves had increased to £11.4 million, which was higher than had originally been anticipated, mainly due to the impact of the Covid pandemic. An additional £5.8 million had also been carried forward in the capital programme. The Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT) was reviewing both the earmarked reserves and the capital programme to ensure that these were rationalised as part of the 2023/4 budget process.

In the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) there had been an underspend of £1.9 million and in addition, the HRA capital programme had been underspent by £7 million. Again, the underspends had generally occurred due to the impact of Covid-19 on project delivery.

Following the presentation of the report, Members commented that Covid-19 had had a major impact on expenditure during the 2020/21 financial year. Whilst it was acknowledged that this was

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 10th January, 2023

unavoidable, Members commented that it was important to ensure that Council staff did not assume that this represented a standard pattern of expenditure, as the situation by 2022/23 had changed significantly and inflation was placing a lot of pressure on the costs of service delivery. Officers clarified that the report related to the 2020/21 financial year. CMT was ensuring that current expenditure was managed carefully and the reprofiling of earmarked reserves had already resulted in the allocation of funding to help support an anticipated increase in the cost of utilities services for the Council moving forward.

RESOLVED that

- 1) 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) the final C-19 Grant position is £580,000 at 31st March;**
- 3) the final level of General Fund and Earmarked Reserves are £1,889k and £11,473k respectively; and**
- 4) the final capital position for the year is a £0.266m underspend against approved budget.**

109. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT RENT SETTING 2023/24

The Interim Section 151 Officer presented the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Rent Setting 2023/24 report for Members' consideration.

The Committee was informed that traditionally yearly increases to rent for Council houses had been set in accordance with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1 per cent. However, given the current high level of inflation, the Government had announced that Councils and Housing Associations could increase rent by 3, 5 or 7 per cent.

Members were asked to note that the rent for Council housing would be set in a context where inflation as well as the pay award to staff were both having a significant impact on the Council's costs. There were also likely to be increasing costs arising from new duties placed on housing providers in respect of the management of damp and mould in properties, alongside other compliance issues. To try to minimise the impact on the financial position of the authority, Officers were suggesting that rents should increase by 7 per cent per year over the following two years.

The proposals detailed in the report were subsequently discussed by Members and it was noted that even with a 7 per cent increase in rents, Council tenants would still be paying some of the lowest rents for housing in the Borough. There was a lot of work that the Council's Repairs and Maintenance team needed to undertake on properties and there needed to be the funding available to help pay for repairs, some of which were vital to ensure that homes continued to comply with safety standards.

Reference was made to the tenants who would be paying rent for properties. Members noted that tenants in receipt of benefits could receive funding to help cover this rent increase as per the Chancellor's Statement. Tenants in employment, who might already be struggling with the cost of living, were not necessarily eligible to receive this support and concerns were raised about the impact that increases to rents might have on people in this position. Officers explained that when the Council sent information about new Council Tax rates in the spring to residents, information would be included about support available to help manage the cost of living.

RECOMMENDED that

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

110. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 TO 2025/25 - UPDATE

The Interim Section 151 Officer presented an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2023/24 to 2025/26.

Members were advised that the Council had received confirmation from the Government about the Local Government settlement for the authority on 19th December 2022. The funding allocated included contributions from the New Homes Bonus (NHB) and from the lower tier authority grant. A net total contribution of £468,000 had been allocated to the Council.

The Government had confirmed that District Councils could increase Council Tax by 2.99 per cent, rather than the limit of 1.99 per cent that had previously been in place before triggering a local referendum. Should the Council opt to increase Council Tax by 2.99 per cent in 2023/24, this would result in the authority receiving an additional £69,000 income.

In reviewing the budget position for the Council, Officers had taken into account the impact of the pay award, which had been provided to staff in December 2022 and had created an additional pressure. However, the actuarial figures for the local government pension

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 10th January, 2023

scheme had improved for the Council and this was having a positive impact on the budget moving forward.

The Capital Programme was in the process of being reviewed. Officers were keen to ensure that expenditure in the capital programme focused on areas for which the Council received grant funding from the Government and other external sources. In particular, the Council had received a significant amount of grant funding for town centre regeneration, levelling up and in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and this funding needed to be spent within tight timescales. Other funding included in the capital programme would include that which was derived from Section 106 agreements for specific projects.

Staffing remained a key area of focus for the authority moving forward. The Council remained committed to employing apprentices and opportunities for apprenticeships could be explored further. Staff retention was also considered to be an important priority, and many Councils were struggling to recruit and retain staff, particularly in the West Midlands. The pay award to staff had previously only been calculated for one year but it was important to acknowledge that further awards could be made in subsequent years of the MTFP period. Therefore, Officers were proposing that pay increases should be factored into the budget for each year of the MTFP.

There was a risk that Council reserves could fall below £1.4 million in 2023/24. This situation was not considered to be ideal and the Interim Section 151 Officer advised that it would be preferable to achieve a situation whereby reserves were valued at in excess of £2 million.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the information that had been provided. Reference was made to the figures that had been included in respect of staff redundancies and Members questioned why, at a time when the Council was struggling to recruit and retain staff, some employees were being made redundant. Officers explained that opportunities were frequently made available for staff to apply for Voluntary Compulsory Redundancy (VCR) and all such requests were assessed on a case-by-case basis. Redundancies which were always limited wherever possible, could result where service reviews had been undertaken. In relation to staff redundancies, Members were also asked to note that the Government had recently changed the rules so that staff redundancy costs could no longer be covered using capital funds and this was now being recorded in a different way to previous years. There was a need to retain existing staff as well as to recruit new staff. A particular challenge for Redditch Borough Council was that the average age

profile of staff was 49 and there was a need to plan for the future to ensure service sustainability.

RESOLVED 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 the Executive Committee in February 2023 as Tranche 2 of the Budget.

111. WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BUDGET 2023/24 - RECOMMENDATIONS

The Interim Section 151 Officer presented recommendations concerning the budget for Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) for 2023/24.

Members were advised that the service’s budget had been discussed at a meeting of the WRS Board held on 17th November 2022. During the Board meeting, Members had considered the financial pressures that were impacting on WRS, which included the impact of inflation and the recent pay award to staff. Based on the figures provided, it was proposed that Redditch Borough Council should contribute 17.4 per cent of the costs towards the service. Partner authorities would cover the rest of the costs of delivering the shared service.

The Committee considered the content of the report and in doing so questioned whether funding for some of the services that were delivered by WRS could be suspended on a temporary basis whilst the Council was working to address additional costs caused by the increase in inflation. Officers explained that, theoretically, the Council could temporarily suspend most services, although careful consideration needed to be given to the consequences of this type of action. Members also commented that WRS delivered good quality services that represented value for money.

Consideration was given to the fees that could be charged for delivering pest control services. Members commented that these services were available for free to Council tenants. However, in some cases it was suggested that pest control services might be needed as a consequence of actions that had been taken by the tenant and in those circumstances, Members questioned whether it would be possible for the Council to charge those tenants for use of the service.

Reference was also made to the contribution from Redditch Borough Council and why this was higher than the financial

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 10th January, 2023

contribution from some of the other partner organisations. Members were advised that the contributions took into account matters such as urban deprivation. It was also understood that Redditch Borough Council received more in terms of service delivery than other authorities. Further information, including from measures monitored by WRS, would potentially help Members to assess the reasons for this higher contribution and it was agreed that WRS should be asked to provide this data.

RECOMMENDED 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; and**
- 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.**

112. QUARTERLY RISK UPDATE

The Interim Section 151 Officer presented the Quarterly Risk Update for Members’ consideration.

The Committee was reminded that the Internal Audit team had concluded in March 2022 that there was no assurance in a review of the Council’s risk management arrangements. Since that time, an officer group had been established to manage Council risks and each department was represented at meetings of this group. CMT had also reviewed risks and had a meeting each month which focused on risk assurance.

Initially there had been in excess of 100 departmental risks identified for the Council. However, these had been reviewed on a number of occasions and there were 63 departmental risks by the date of the meeting. It was likely that this would increase to incorporate risks in relation to damp and mould in properties but the lead department for this subject still remained to be confirmed.

During consideration of this item, Members commented on the potential risks arising from staff working from home, particularly in relation to new staff receiving induction and training. It was raised that staff would benefit from meeting with managers and other staff in person and to shadow colleagues in the workplace. Officers acknowledged that this was important and noted that the Council was aiming to address this through the Agile Working Policy and performance management arrangements.

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 10th January, 2023

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

113. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chair advised that at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1st December 2022 Members had discussed the Council's work to address the cost of living. At the end of a detailed discussion in respect of this matter, the Committee had agreed the following recommendation on this subject:

“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.”

Members discussed this recommendation and in so doing commented that the Council had applied on a number of occasions in the past for grant funding, where this became available. Officers were actively encouraged to search for and apply for additional sources of grant funding as and when this became available and where the Council was eligible to apply for funding. In addition, Members noted that it was important to ensure that grant funding continued to be requested to help improve the insulation not just for properties in the private rented sector but also for social housing in the Borough. There had already been some work undertaken to improve the insulation and damp proofing of some Council properties but Members acknowledged that further improvements would always be welcomed. In this context, Members agreed to amend the wording of the recommendation to acknowledge the fact that the Council would be continuing to apply for grant funding and this would be intended to help properties across the Borough, not just in the private rented sector.

RESOLVED that

the Executive Committee continue to actively seek external grant funding to enable a Borough-wide campaign to subsidise the insulation of poorly insulated dwellings across the Borough.

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

There were no referrals from either the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any of the Executive Advisory Panels on this occasion.

Executive Committee

Tuesday, 10th January, 2023

115. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

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

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

Members noted that there had been a meeting of the Climate Change Cross Party Working Group since the previous meeting of the Executive Committee. In the absence of the Chair of the group, Members agreed that an update in respect of this meeting should be considered at the following meeting of the Committee.

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

Councillor Dormer confirmed that a meeting of the Constitutional Review Working Party was scheduled to take place on 23rd January 2023.

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

Councillor Nazir explained that she had been unable to attend the previous two meetings of the Board. However, she was due to attend the following meeting of the Board, which was scheduled to take place later in January 2023.

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

The Committee was informed that a meeting of the Member Support Steering Group was due to take place on 17th January 2023.

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

Councillor Dormer advised that a meeting of the Planning Advisory Panel (PAP) had taken place on 4th January 2023. During this meeting, Members had considered updates on various planning policy matters. Further meetings of PAP were due to take place in the year and all Members were encouraged to attend these meetings.

Executive
Committee

Tuesday, 10th January, 2023

The Meeting commenced at 6.31 pm
and closed at 7.25 pm

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

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**10th January 2023

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.

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

10th January 2023

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 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: [Copies of Previous Council Tax Base Reports for January 2020, January 2021 and January 2022 - background papers pack for Executive Committee](#)

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**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 peter.carpenter@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk email: 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

**Executive
2023**10th January

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.

**Executive
2023**10th January

- 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

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive
2023**10th January

- 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

**Executive
2023**10th January

-
- 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.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Executive
2023

10th January

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"*.

**Executive
2023**10th January

- 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

**Executive
2023**10th January**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

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

**Executive
2023**10th January

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)		

Executive
2023

10th January

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.

**Executive
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%
2	No		0.00%
		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%
2	No		16.67%
3	Don't Know		12.96%
		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**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

**Executive
2023**10th January

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		

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive
2023**10th January**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	

**Executive
2023**10th January

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

**Executive
2023**10th January

14. Do you live in the Redditch Borough Council area?			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		100.00%
2	No		0.00%
		answered	43
		skipped	51

15. Are you currently receiving Council Tax Reduction?			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		27.91%
2	No		72.09%
		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%
2	No		44.19%
		answered	43
		skipped	51

17. Are you liable to pay Council Tax?			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		93.02%
2	No		6.98%
		answered	43
		skipped	51

**Executive
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

**Executive
2023**10th January

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

Executive
2023

10th January

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			Average Weekly Gain / (Loss)
	Numbers	Expenditure	Average Weekly Amount	Numbers	Expenditure	Average Weekly Amount	
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 hte 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.
<p>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).</p>	<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.
<p>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?</p>	<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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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCILEXECUTIVE COMMITTEE10 January 2023HOUSING 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 peter.carpenter@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk email: 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 ISSUESFinancial 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

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCILEXECUTIVE COMMITTEE10 January 2023

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: [Copies of previous HRA Rent Setting Reports for December 2020, January 2021 and January 2022 - background papers pack for the Executive Committee](#)

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Peter Carpenter
Email: peter.carpenter@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel:

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 Board Minutes – 17th November 2022

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

WRS Updated Fees and Charges 2023/24 – Executive 6th December 2022:
[Updated WRS Fees and Charges - 6th December Executive Committee Meeting](#)

WRS Board Papers 17th November 2022: [WRS Board Agenda - 17th November 2022](#)

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

10th January 2022

Tranche 1 MTFP – Executive 25th October 2022: [Tranche 1 Saving Proposals](#)

7. KEY

None

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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