



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thu 26 Oct  
2023  
6.30 pm

Redditch Town Hall  
Walter Stranz Square

**REDDITCH** BOROUGH COUNCIL

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**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact  
Mat Sliwinski**

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## **GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS**

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**Please note that you are able to see the meeting agenda papers from the Committee Pages of the Council's website.**

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

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

Meeting attendees are encouraged not to attend a Committee if they have any of the following common symptoms of cold, flu, or Covid-19 on the day of the meeting; a high temperature, a new and continuous cough or a loss of smell and / or taste.

### **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 Overview and Scrutiny.

### **PUBLIC ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

Members of the public are encouraged not to attend a Committee if they have any of the following common symptoms of cold, flu, or 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.**



# Overview and Scrutiny

Thursday, 26th October, 2023

6.30 pm

Council Chamber Town Hall

## Agenda

### Membership:

Cllrs:

Sid Khan (Chair)  
Sharon Harvey  
(Vice-Chair)  
Imran Altaf  
Karen Ashley  
Chris Holz

Joanna Kane  
Emma Marshall  
Jane Spilsbury  
Monica Stringfellow

### 1. Apologies and named substitutes

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

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

### 3. Public Speaking

To invite members of the public who have registered in advance of the meeting to address the Committee. Please note that the deadline to register to speak at this meeting is 12 noon on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

### 4. Domestic Abuse - Council Support Provided to Third Sector Organisations (Pages 5 - 20)

### 5. Pre-Decision Scrutiny - Garden Waste Service

*This report will follow in an Additional Papers pack once the report has been published for consideration of the Executive Committee (due for publication on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023).*

### 6. Executive Committee Minutes and Scrutiny of the Executive Committee's Work Programme - Selecting Items for Scrutiny (Pages 21 - 48)

### 7. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 49 - 54)

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

a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Kane

# Overview and Scrutiny

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- b) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Holz
- c) Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Task Group – Chair, Councillor Khan

## 9. External Scrutiny Bodies - Update Reports (Pages 55 - 62)

- a) West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Council representative, Councillor Marshall;
- b) West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Transport Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Council representative, Councillor Marshall; and
- c) Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) – Council representative, Councillor Marshall.

## 10. Exclusion of the Press and Public

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

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

These paragraphs are as follows:

Subject to the “public interest” test, information relating to:

- Para 3 – financial or business affairs;

and may need to be considered as ‘exempt’.

## 11. Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 7th September 2023 (Pages 63 - 76)

**Overview & Scrutiny Committee**26<sup>th</sup> October 2023**Domestic Abuse Support Briefing Paper**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Lucy Harrison, Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Head of Community and Housing Services
Report Author: Judith Willis	Job Title: Head of Community and Housing Services Contact email: Judith.willis@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.ukl
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	N/A
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that:-

- 1) The report be noted.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At the July meeting of the RBC Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members asked to receive a paper on the support that Council offers to third sector organisations in the Borough, particularly to those providing support to victims (or helping to prevent the occurrence) of domestic violence. This included the funding streams that are made available to these organisations, and Council involvement in any partnership projects with such organisations.

**3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

- 3.1 This paper sets out all the support that is provided to support residents that are affected by domestic abuse and services that aim to prevent domestic abuse. The information is included below in Appendix 1 to the report.

**4. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 – Domestic Abuse Prevention Grants in 2023-24 - table.

# Overview & Scrutiny Committee

26<sup>th</sup> October 2023

## Appendix 1

The table below set out the source of funding, provider of the service, Service title, the grant amount received in 2023/24 (unless otherwise stated) and a description of the service:

<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant amount</b>	<b>Service Description</b>	<b>Geographical area</b>
<b>Homelessness Prevention Grant</b>	<b>Redditch Night stop</b>	Safe Accommodation and Support (16-21 year olds). Floating support (21-35 year olds)	<b>£23,217.00</b>	Redditch Nightstop is a homelessness prevention charity supporting 16 to 35 year-olds to secure safe accommodation and develop skills to maintain their tenancies, engage with their local community, improve health and wellbeing and be financially independent, avoiding cyclical homelessness including victims/survivors of domestic abuse.	Redditch Borough
<b>Homelessness Prevention Grant</b>	<b>St Basils</b>	Young Person Pathway Worker Smallwood Almshouses	<b>£18,742.00</b>	St Basil's provides 24 hour supported accommodation for vulnerable, homeless young people, aged 16 - 24 years of age, as well as the support provision for 16 young families accommodated at Smallwood Almshouses including those who are victims/survivors of domestic abuse.	Redditch Borough

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<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant amount</b>	<b>Service Description</b>	<b>Geographical area</b>
<b>Homelessness Prevention Grant</b>	<b>Newstarts</b>	Preventing and alleviating homelessness through the provision of free pre-loved furniture	<b>£5,000.00</b>	NewStarts provide clients who are homelessness or in temporary accommodation due to domestic abuse free household items when they secure permanent accommodation. As well as the provision of free items they also offer debt and budgeting advice to ensure that individuals are best equipped to manage their finances.	Redditch Borough
<b>Homelessness Prevention Grant</b>	<b>Citizens Advice Bromsgrove and Redditch</b>	Targeted Debt Intervention	<b>£8,167.00</b>	Targeted debt relief advice for clients who are at risk of homelessness including victims/survivors of domestic abuse.	Redditch Borough
<b>Homelessness Prevention Grant</b>	<b>Batchley Support Group</b>	Homeless Support Co-ordinator (part time post)	<b>£5,000.00</b>	Batchley Support Group offer tenancy support to clients across the borough to support them in maintaining their tenancy as well providing food to clients on low or no income and access to shower and laundry facilities. They work with victims of domestic abuse as well as with perpetrators and are registered as a Safe House with Worcester County Council and follow their protocols for dealing with / supporting victims.	Redditch Borough

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<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant amount</b>	<b>Service Description</b>	<b>Geographical area</b>
<b>Redditch Borough Council</b>	<b>The Redditch Borough Council Community Safety Team</b>	Through officer time and co-ordination provides direct support to victims and survivors of DA by providing Sanctuary and Safe Accommodation Security Assessments to properties	<b>Officer Time</b>	Through officer time and co-ordination provides direct support to victims and survivors of DA by providing Sanctuary and Safe Accommodation Security Assessments to properties, <u>MARAC</u> co-ordination and providing advice and guidance to other council service areas crime risk and victim support measures.	Redditch Borough
<b>Redditch Borough Council</b>	<b>Starting Well</b>	Provides access to Worcestershire Reducing Parental Conflict Service	<b>Via Starting Well contract</b>	The service offers 4-6 bespoke sessions with both parents, in line with the Harmony at Home toolkit to support parents in reducing conflict in order to build healthy and happy family units. These sessions may be in the home, in a community venue or virtually. It recognises at times how challenging parenting can be, and the need to support parents to prevent the breakdown of relationships, this may include parents who are married, separating, co-parenting or divorced.	Redditch Borough



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<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant amount</b>	<b>Service Description</b>	<b>Geographical area</b>
<b>Through the Council's Grants to voluntary bodies scheme the following VCS organisation have been funded over the last 5 years</b>	<b>Old Needle Works</b>	Parenting Provision, problem solving parents, Moving on Project.	<b>£16,255.00</b>	The Old Needle works is a wellbeing centre, with a focus on positive mental health. It aims to help people feel emotionally well, enjoy their lives, and reach their full potential. 1-2-1 sessions and support groups, use a trauma informed approach and evidence-based interventions to help people heal from early life experiences. The service works with children, young people and adults so that they can break free from their past and self-limiting beliefs, to live to their potential. by emailing us at <a href="mailto:info@theoldneedleworks.co.uk">info@theoldneedleworks.co.uk</a>	Redditch Borough
<b>Through the Council's Grants to voluntary bodies scheme the following VCS organisation have been funded over the last 5 years</b>	<b>Batchley Support Group</b>	Safe Space	<b>£7,415.00</b>	The Group provides a space in their Centre for anyone experiencing domestic abuse. It can be isolating and difficult to find support or think about options. As a consequence UK SAYS NO MORE created Safe Spaces. Batchley Support Group provide this service at their Centre on Salters Lane. It provides a safe and discreet way to reach out to friends and family, and contact specialist support	Redditch Borough

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<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant amount</b>	<b>Service Description</b>	<b>Geographical area</b>
				services in a private room with trained workers.	
<b>Through the Council's Grants to voluntary bodies scheme the following VCS organisation have been funded over the last 5 years</b>	<b>Sandycroft</b>	The Sandycroft Centre offers an array of support services and education opportunities.	<b>£6,500.00</b>	The Sandycroft Centre offers an array of support services and education opportunities. Primary activities are Counselling, Mental Health & Wellbeing Support, Domestic Abuse Specialist Services and Programmes, Family Support, Education & Training as well as being a hate Crime Reporting Centre.	Redditch Borough
<b>Through the Council's Grants to voluntary bodies scheme the following VCS organisation have been funded over the last 5 years</b>	<b>Home-Start North East Worcestershire</b>	Home-start offer support to families who are struggling to cope.	<b>£10,000.00</b>	Home-start offer support to families who are struggling to cope. It provides support parents in situations as diverse as isolation, bereavement, debt, housing issues, domestic abuse, depression & other mental health issues, alcohol & substance abuse, multiple birth, illness, disability, learning difficulties or just finding parenting a struggle. Services offered are Home-visiting Support, Family Groups, Mums In Mind (PND Group), Circle of Security, Pre- Birth Teen Service, Baby Massage, Weaning, Freedom Programme	Redditch Borough

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<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant amount</b>	<b>Service Description</b>	<b>Geographical area</b>
				(Domestic Abuse), SNAPS (Disability Support) and remote support.	
<b>Department for Leveling Up, Housing &amp; Communities (DLUHC)</b>	<b>West Mercia Women's Aid</b>	Domestic Abuse Advice and Support Service	<b>637,000</b>	Domestic Abuse Advice and Support Service (including refuge and trauma informed support to children)	County Wide
<b>DLUHC</b>	<b>Social Care</b>	Worcestershire County Council Social Worker	<b>52,892</b>	Adults with health and care needs. Enhanced Domestic Abuse and housing support.	County Wide
<b>DLUHC</b>	<b>Sarah Wigley Domestic Abuse Training</b>	Domestic Abuse Training	<b>£30,000.00</b>	Mandatory training to frontline social care, elected members and nominated partners.	County Wide
<b>DLUHC</b>	<b>Bromsgrove Council on behalf of all Districts</b>	Worcestershire Housing Officers Group Domestic Abuse Housing Officers Support	<b>£202,000.00</b>	Worcestershire Housing Officers Group Domestic Abuse Housing Officers - Supporting the victims of DA in/into safe accommodation	County Wide
<b>DLUHC</b>	<b>Lived Experience Advisory Group</b>	Advisory Group	<b>£30,000.00</b>	Understand the experience of DA Survivors and particularly those from groups with protected characteristics	County Wide
<b>DLUHC</b>	<b>Worcestershire Children's First (WCF)</b>	Worcestershire Childrens First Domestic abuse element(s) of Family Safeguarding Model	<b>£150,000.00</b>	WCF Domestic abuse element(s) of Family Safeguarding Model - Supporting the tripartite activity in support of families experiencing DA	County Wide

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<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant amount</b>	<b>Service Description</b>	<b>Geographical area</b>
<b>DLUHC</b>	<b>Worcestershire County Council</b>	Sanctuary Scheme	<b>£97,500.00</b>	Sanctuary Scheme - Target hardening accommodation, enabling survivors of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes.	County Wide
<b>DLUHC</b>	<b>Worcestershire County Council</b>	DRIVE Programme	<b>185,815</b>	DRIVE programme – Worcestershire County Council contribution to the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator programme to address behaviours, reduce risk and reoffending.	County Wide
<b>West Mercia Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b>	<b>Victim's Advice Line</b>	Victim Advice Line	<b>£820,515</b>	For the provision of the Victim Advice Line (VAL), a team of expert and fully trained Victim Care Coordinators helping victims of crime to cope and recover, regardless of whether they have reported to Police or not. The victim may then be referred onto other specialist services, dependent on the level of support they need. This type of model is being seen as best practice and a flagship across the country in delivering support to victims	West Mercia Wide
<b>West Mercia Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b>	<b>Victim Support</b>	Helping victims of crime in West Mercia	<b>£481, 474.00</b>	Helping victims of crime in West Mercia to cope and recover and delivering a restorative justice (RJ) service by bringing those	West Mercia Wide

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Funding source	Provider	Project	Grant amount	Service Description	Geographical area
				that have been harmed by crime, and those responsible for the harm, into communication, enabling everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in repairing harm and finding a positive way forward. The funding includes provision for 1 x 0.8 FTE Modern Slavery and Human trafficking worker, who will specialise in MSHT referrals, working with victims to identify and manage their support needs, and support with information, guidance and advice on the National Referral Mechanism	
<b>West Mercia Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b>	<b>West Mercia Rape &amp; Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRASAC)</b>	Support victims of sexual abuse/violence.	<b>£1,530,959.00</b>	Support victims of sexual abuse/violence. This grant maintains the current key frontline Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA), Male ISVA, Family ISVA and Children & Young Peoples (CHISVA) service provision within WMRSASC and to support continued delivery of the SELFIE training and awareness raising programme. This funding includes £100,000 to provide	West Mercia Wide

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<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant amount</b>	<b>Service Description</b>	<b>Geographical area</b>
				immediate crisis support to reduce and reopen the counselling waiting list which was closed in June 2021.	
<b>West Mercia Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b>	<b>West Mercia Rape &amp; Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRASAC)</b>	To provide specialist Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) support	<b>£305,000.00</b>	To provide specialist Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) support – the Branch and Purple Leaf Projects provide education, intervention and support to children and young people (CYP) who are at risk of or have been a victim of CSE in Worcestershire, Shropshire, and Herefordshire.	West Mercia Wide
<b>West Mercia Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b>	<b>NHS England SARS</b>	Regional CYP Sexual Assault & Referral Service (SARS)	<b>£155,161.00</b>	To provide the Regional CYP Sexual Assault & Referral Service (SARS) which is a region-wide service providing expert care for children and young people who have disclosed sexual assault, or who may have been subject to sexual abuse. Clients are seen by an experienced paediatrician with specialist training in forensic examination and are supported by a crisis worker	West Mercia Wide

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<b>West Mercia Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b>	<b>West Mercia Women's Aid (WMWA)</b>	IDVA Contract - For the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service	<b>£1,081,259.00</b>	IDVA Contract - For the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service: IDVAs represent an accredited and co-ordinated response to standardise and support the delivery of advocacy services for victims of domestic violence. Serving as a victim's primary point of contact, IDVAs normally work with their clients from the point of crisis to assess the level of risk, discuss the range of suitable options and develop safety plans. IDVAs usually work with cases deemed to be at high risk of harm or	West Mercia Wide
<b>West Mercia Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b>	<b>West Mercia Women's Aid (WMWA)</b>	Children and Young People's service.	<b>£41,200.00</b>	Grant pays for a Children and Young People's service to engage with those between the ages of 5-13 who are identified as at risk of suffering significant negative outcomes as a result of domestic abuse within their family/home environment. Age-appropriate activities promote knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse and its impact on children and young people and	West Mercia Wide

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				help them to understand how to avoid or conclude unhealthy relationships themselves. The Project Worker will also visit schools, raising awareness of domestic abuse with both staff and pupils.	
<b>West Mercia Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b>	<b>DRIVE Herefordshire &amp; Worcestershire</b>	DRIVE is a RESPECT accredited high-risk perpetrator programme	<b>£579,384.00</b>	DRIVE is a RESPECT accredited high-risk perpetrator programme run in both Herefordshire and Worcestershire by Cranston which aims to reduce the number of child and adult victims of Domestic Abuse. It is a whole system approach, which uses an intensive individual case management intervention alongside a multi-agency response. Drive challenges and supports perpetrators to change their behaviour and works with partner agencies (like the police and social services) to disrupt abuse. This funding is made up of contributions from the PCC and other partner agencies.	West Mercia Wide



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<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant amount</b>	<b>Service Description</b>	<b>Geographical area</b>
<b>West Mercia Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b>	<b>Victim Advice Line (VAL)</b>	Advice Line	<b>£33,250.00</b>	for the Domestic Abuse proactive intervention project, to enhance the existing VAL provision and increase the opportunities to proactively reach out to DA victims and survivors who have not been referred for support and provide them with a point of contact through their cope and recovery and criminal justice journeys.	West Mercia Wide
<b>West Mercia Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b>	<b>Additional MoJ Funding</b>	The OPCC was awarded £677,613 per annum over the next 3 years (£2,032,838 in total) from the MoJ to support victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.	<b>£677,613.00</b>	The OPCC was awarded £677,613 per annum over the next 3 years (£2,032,838 in total) from the MoJ to support victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. The funding was apportioned as follows:-  <b>Victims Advice Line</b> £12,500 <b>AXIS</b> - £223,054 <b>Connexus</b> - £30,448 <b>Worcester Community Trust</b> - £43,772 <b>WMRASAC</b> - £293,327 <b>WMWA</b> - £74,484	West Mercia Wide

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<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant amount</b>	<b>Service Description</b>	<b>Geographical area</b>
<b>West Mercia Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b>	<b>DRIVE Programme</b>	Two DA Support Officers	<b>£63,740.00</b>	for to provide support to the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Panel in Worcestershire and Herefordshire as part of the DRIVE project	Worcestershire and Herefordshire
<b>Worcestershire Community Foundation</b>	<b>Worcestershire Community Foundation</b>	Support to DA survivors and Victims.	<b>£90,000.00</b>	have allocated £90,000 of grants to local organisations, some of which are projects to support DA survivors and Victims. Sandycroft are included in the latest round of successful allocations here: - <u>15 grassroot organisations receive share of £90,000 - Worcestershire Community Foundation (worcscf.org.uk)</u>	Worcestershire wide
<b>North Worcestershire Community Safegy Partnership (CSP)</b>	<b>North Worcestershire CSP</b>	Respect Mentoring Programme, Youth Outreach and Detached Youthwork	<b>£17,000.00</b>	Provides £17,000 of funding for projects to young people via the Respect Mentoring Programme, Youth Outreach and Detached Youthwork some of which provides support and guidance to young people involved in unhealthy relationships either as victims or perpetrators.	North Worcestershire wide

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<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant amount</b>	<b>Service Description</b>	<b>Geographical area</b>
<b>North Worcestershire CSP</b>	<b>North Worcestershire CSP</b>	Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR)	<b>£20,000</b>	The Partnership also funds the statutory Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) process at £20,000 per year to carry out independent reviews into cases where a death may have a link to Domestic Abuse	North Worcestershire Wide

Judith Willis

Head of Community & Housing Services

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## Executive Committee

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Tuesday, 12th September,  
2023

### MINUTES

#### Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor Gemma Monaco (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joe Baker, Joanne Beecham, Brandon Clayton, Luke Court, Lucy Harrison, Bill Hartnett and Craig Warhurst

#### Also Present:

Councillors James Fardoe, Sharon Harvey, Kerrie Miles, Jane Spilsbury and Monica Stringfellow

#### Officers:

Matthew Bough, Peter Carpenter, Claire Felton, Sue Hanley and Kevin Hirons

#### Principal Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley-Hill

#### 25. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 27. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that at the latest meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023, Members considered and endorsed recommendations arising from a recent meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group. These recommendations focused on the Financial Outturn Report and the Finance and Performance Quarter 1 Monitoring Report, both of which were due to be considered at the Executive Committee meeting. In addition, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had pre-scrutinised the Town Hall Hub - Final Report, which was also due to be debated by the Executive Committee. All of these recommendations had been published in a supplementary pack for the Executive Committee meeting and needed to be considered in relation to the relevant items on the agenda.

Chair

**28. MINUTES**

Reference was made to a request that had been made at the previous meeting for further information about a £5 million loan to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Officers were asked to provide clarification on this point prior to the Council meeting.

**RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2023 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.**

**29. FUTURE OF BRICK ARCHED FORMER RAILWAY BRIDGE, GREEN LANE, STUDLEY**

The Environmental Services Manager presented a report on the subject of the future of the brick arched former railway bridge at Green Lane, Studley. The bridge had been the subject of a number of previous reports considered by the Executive Committee. Warwickshire County Council had since completed a survey of the site and had suggested that there needed to be further, regular inspections in future. Based on the proposed way forward, which would involve retaining the structure for the future, the capital funding required to manage the bridge had reduced in amount and the Council could update the capital programme accordingly. The remaining funding for the bridge would be used to fund any works proposed during future inspections that would be undertaken by Warwickshire County Council.

Following the presentation of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services commented that the Council had owned the bridge since 1985. The bridge had recently been offered for sale to a number of local authorities but there had been no interest in the purchase. Consideration had also been given to applying for planning permission to remove the bridge, but ultimately this option had not been pursued. The bridge was located on National Cycle Route 5 and would remain available for the public to use. Whilst the Council would remain financially liable for the upkeep of the bridge, the proposed way forward would result in some savings for the authority.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the 2023/24 Capital Programme be reduced by £113,000 to provide a total budget of £80,000, for undertaking remedial works to the bridge structure as highlighted by the Principal Inspection; and**

- 2) A budget of £5,000 for Warwickshire County Council to undertake Principal Inspections on a six-year cycle commencing 2029/30, and a General Inspection on a two-year cycle, commencing 2025/26, be included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan for future years, as shown below.

2025/26 - £5,000	General Inspection
2027/28 - £5,000	General Inspection
2029/30 - £5,000	Principal Inspection
2031/32 - £5,000	General Inspection
2033/34 - £5,000	General Inspection
2035/36 - £5,000	Principal Inspection
2037/38 - £5,000	General Inspection
2039/40 - £5,000	General Inspection

### 30. FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT 2022/23

The Interim Director of Finance and Resources presented the Financial Outturn 2022/23 report, detailing the provisional revenue and capital outturn for that financial year, for Members' consideration. Whilst the Council had been on a finance recovery programme since April 2022, Members were informed that it was important to note that the authority had not yet closed the 2020/21 and 2021/22 accounts and these could impact upon the final 2022/23 position.

From a revenue perspective, the Council had a £10.520 million full year revenue budget which was approved by Council in February 2022. The 2022/23 budget had included a £595,000 cross-cutting efficiency target, which was allocated to services based upon forecast underspends at Quarter 1 predominantly linked to vacancies.

The Finance Team had undertaken a detailed review of the 2022/23 accounts since the end of March 2023, and there were a number of assumptions and manual adjustments that had been made to arrive at the provisional outturn position detailed in the report. They included:

- Anticipated accruals and prepayments,
- Recharges to/from the HRA,
- Grants were applied to known expenditure and remaining balances were carried forward,
- Reserves were applied to expenditure,
- Shared service recharges between Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council were manually reflected, and
- Transfers between the Collection Fund and the General Fund.

There was still work to be done to clear the backlog of entries in suspense and any miscoding. Therefore, the provisional position detailed in the report was subject to change and a further update would be provided in due course.

Overall, it was anticipated that the provisional revenue overspend position would be a £685,000 overspend against the £10.520 million budget. This was a £65,000 reduction over the forecast at Quarter 3 which was a £750,000 overspend position.

The 2022/23 pay award - £1,925 pay award across all pay scales – had created a variance against the budget for a number of service areas. In addition to this, income pending reallocation had resulted in unfavourable variances for Community Transport, Shopmobility and Bereavement Services. Overspends were also anticipated within Environmental Services due to a reallocation of stores stock pending in the Depot, increased fuel and fleet maintenance costs in Waste Management and the Place Teams as well as insurance claims in Tree Management.

From a Treasury Management perspective, the Council had no short-term borrowing at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and long-term borrowing had not changed from the £103.9 million taken out some time ago. The Council also held £10.6 million in short-term investments.

An updated capital programme totalling £5.431 million was approved in the budget for 2022/23 in March 2023. Of this, £2 million was funded from Council resources whilst £3.4 million was externally funded. The provisional capital outturn expenditure was expected to be £2.137 million against the overall £5.431 million budget. The £3.292 million budget underspend would be rolled forward from 2022/23 to the 2023/24 financial year.

Information had been provided regarding anticipated reserves over the medium term to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. At the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, it was projected that the Council held £7.5 million of earmarked reserves and the General Fund balance would stand at £2.686 million.

In respect of the HRA, it was anticipated that the Council would outturn with a surplus of £34,000 against the £25.4 million revenue budget. There were a number of variances that had contributed to this surplus including:

- Anticipated efficiencies due to improved work planning,
- Vacant posts and reduced consultancy/professional fees,
- Reduced depreciation per dwelling,



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- Greater interest receivable due to increased interest rates,
- Offset by an increase in the bad debt provision due to an increase in arrears.

The HRA capital programme would outturn with a spend of £7.8 million against the £14.2 million budget for 2022/23. The £6.4 million underspend was as a result of delays in project start dates and changes in assumptions regarding housing one-for-one purchases. The £6.4 million budget would be rolled forward to 2023/24.

Following the presentation of the report, Members noted that a number of projects in the capital programme had been delayed and the funding had been rolled over into the 2023/24 municipal year. Questions were raised about the impact that these delays would have on the capital programme and whether the Council was on track to catch up on this work. Officers confirmed that there had been some delays in the procurement process but these had mostly been addressed and the Council was progressing with the necessary works.

Consideration was also given to the financial costs relating to works on the relocation of the library to the Town Hall as well as the new innovation centre in the town. Members commented that, given the increase in projected costs for the Town Hall Hub, there might similarly be increases to costs for these projects and Officers were asked to clarify whether this had been reviewed in recent months. The Committee was advised that the costs for the library had taken into account potential increases already. In terms of the Innovation Centre, the Redditch Town's Deal Board had been reviewing costs. The Council was eligible to receive £1.5 million from funds previously managed by the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP), which no longer existed and there was a further £8 million fund that had been held by the GBSLEP, and all partners previously in that LEP could bid for funds from that budget. It was confirmed that Birmingham City Council was managing the budget but that local authority could not use those funds for their Council alone and would need to ensure that funding was distributed amongst the previously eight members of the former LEP. Members were advised that the need for this funding to be shared between former partners who had been members of that LEP would also be raised at a meeting of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board.

Reference was also made to the sixth recommendation in the report and Members questioned the purpose of this recommendation. Officers clarified that, due to the importance of income from Council Tax to the Council's finances, it was important to provide Members with assurance that the authority was collecting Council Tax at an

appropriate level. The recommendation aimed to help provide Members with this assurance.

Members also discussed the position of the HRA and noted that Officers were working hard to invest in developing new Council properties as well as to purchase existing properties that could be incorporated into the Council's housing stock. These actions would enable the Council to increase the number of properties in the Council's housing stock and help to meet continuing demand in the local community for social housing.

During consideration of this item, Members noted that the report had been pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group held on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and a recommendation had been made on this subject. Members commented that the proposed action detailed in the recommendation would be helpful and therefore it was agreed that the recommendation should be approved. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling thanked the Budget Scrutiny Working Group for permitting him to attend the meeting and for undertaking thorough scrutiny of the report.

**RESOLVED to note**

- 1) **that the 2022/23 provisional outturn position in relation to revenue budgets would be a projected revenue overspend in the region of £685,000;**
- 2) **that the 2022/23 provisional outturn position in relation to Capital expenditure would be £2.137 million against a total approved programme of £5.431 million;**
- 3) **the provisional outturn position in respect of the General Fund Reserves;**
- 4) **the provisional outturn position in respect of Earmarked Reserves;**
- 5) **the HRA net revenue expenditure would be £34,000 better than expected although Capital Expenditure would be £6.4 million less than budget;**
- 6) **financial performance in respect of Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates Collection;**
- 7) **that at the time of writing the Council was yet to formally close its accounts for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years. This could therefore result in adjustments to actual expenditure and income in those years and could have a consequential impact on the 2022/23 accounts;**

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- 8) that work continued to refine the position including addressing the backlog of entries that were in suspense and any miscoding, therefore the provisional position detailed in this report would be subject to change, and a further update would be presented to Members in due course; and
- 9) that Officers be asked to prepare a public statement on the Council's position regarding the submission of the Statements of Accounts to external auditors in order to provide assurance to the public about the Council's financial situation.

## 31. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Leader confirmed that there were no outstanding recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023 requiring consideration.

### **RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023 be noted.**

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

Members noted that there were no referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the Executive Advisory Panels on this occasion.

## 33. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

### **RESOLVED that:**

**Under S100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3, and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 of the said act, as amended.**

**Minute Item No. 34 – Disposal of a Long Lease Interest at 18 – 19 Woodfield Close, Abbeydale, Redditch**

**Minute Item No. 35 – Housing Development Proposal – Loxley Close, Church Hill**

**Minute Item No. 36 – The Town Hall Refurbishment - Final Decision****Minute Item No. 37 – Finance and Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter 1 2023/24****34. DISPOSAL OF LONG LEASEHOLD INTEREST AT 18-19 WOODFIELD CLOSE, ABBEYDALE, REDDITCH**

The Property Manager presented a report focusing on the proposed disposal of a long leasehold interest in 18 – 19 Woodfield Close, Abbeydale Redditch.

Members were advised that the existing tenant, which had a lease with the Council that was due to expire in the 2020s, had requested a long-term lease on the unit. Officers were proposing that the long lease should be set to expire at a point coterminous with a separate lease for the flat located above the unit.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed a number of points relating to this subject:

- The potential value to the community arising from disposing of Council assets and the need to assess each potential asset on a case by case basis.
- The market value of the unit.
- The fact that this was the only retail unit located on the close, which was otherwise surrounded by residential housing.
- The potential benefits to the local built environment arising from the proposed disposal and responsibility for repair and maintenance of the unit under the leasehold arrangements.
- The need for all Council assets to achieve an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of at least a grade C by the mid-2020s.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the Council dispose of the retail unit at 18/19 Woodfield Close, Abbeydale on a long leasehold basis to the current tenant; and**
- 2) the Council's budget is augmented by the capital receipt and reduced by the income as described in Appendix 3.**

(During consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to the

financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

**35. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL - LOXLEY CLOSE, CHURCH HILL**

The Strategic Housing Services Manager presented a report focusing on the development of new Council houses at Loxley Close, Church Hill.

The Council was aiming to develop a number of two-bedroom properties at the site. This would mean the loss of land used by current residents for parking and action had been taken to mitigate against this issue through the provision of visitor parking spaces. The properties would help to meet significant demand in the Borough for two-bedroom properties; Members were advised that on the date of the meeting, there were 365 people on the Council's waiting list for this type of property.

The properties would have a number of features designed to enhance the energy efficiency of the buildings, including air source heat pumps, subject to planning permission. The aim was to ensure that these properties all received an EPC A rating.

In order to fund the works, receipts would be used from Council house sales made under right to buy. Tenants would be charged affordable rents and it was anticipated that the Council would be able to cover the costs of the project from this rental income in just over 30 years' time.

Members subsequently discussed the report in detail and in doing so commented on the following:

- The lessons that had been learned from the Council's work developing new Council houses at Edgeworth Close.
- The potential for more Council houses to be developed by the authority in future years.
- The possibility that the Council could request support from the WMCA's Housing and Land Delivery Board for the development of Council houses in the Borough.
- The location of the new houses in Loxley Close near to a flood plain and the implications of this for residents' house insurance. Officers explained that the houses would be built outside the flood plain.
- The financial costs involved for tenants in operating air source heat pumps using electricity. Officers explained that research indicated that annual costs of heating associated with using air source heat pumps was between £670 and £720 per year per

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household compared to in excess of £1,000 per year per household using conventional heating methods.

- The reason why tenants would be charged an affordable rent for leasing these properties rather than a standard social rent. Officers explained that this was a legal requirement, arising from the Council's use of receipts from the sales of Council houses under the right to buy process.
- The differences between social rents, affordable rents and market rents. The Committee was informed that social rents were approximately between 45 and 50 per cent of market rents whilst affordable rents were around 60 per cent of the rate of market rents.
- The attempts that had been made to develop Loxley Close in previous years and the difficulties that had been caused in relation to concerns about potential flooding at the site.
- The design features that had been incorporated into the properties to help mitigate against the risk of flooding.

During consideration of this item, an amendment was proposed by Councillor Joe Baker to the second proposal detailed in the report. This amendment was as follows:

“Authority is delegated to the Head of Community and Housing Services and Head of Finance and Customer Services to spend the approved budget *following consultation with the ward Councillors.*”

This amendment was proposed by Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Bill Hartnett.

In proposing the amendment, Councillor Baker commented that he felt that ward Councillors understood their communities best. Through requiring officers to consult with ward Members when spending the approved budget, Councillor Baker suggested that this would ensure that best value was achieved for the local community.

Members discussed the proposed amendment and in doing so considered the following points:

- The extent to which it was appropriate for Members to be involved at the level detailed in the amendment.
- The strategic focus of the Executive Committee and Council in respect of setting the budget for the proposed works.
- The potential for the decision-making process to be delayed through the involvement of all ward Councillors in this process.
- The collective decision-making arrangements for the Executive Committee at the Council and the fact that individual Members did not have decision-making powers.

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- The potential for Officers to act on their delegated authority following consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

On being put to the vote the amendment was defeated.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **the HRA capital budget be updated as described in exempt Appendix 2 to undertake all development works for the proposal at Loxley Close;**

## **RESOLVED that**

- 1) **authority be delegated to the Head of Community and Housing Services and Head of Finance and Customer Services to spend the approved budget;**
- 2) **authority is delegated to the Head of Community and Housing Services to submit the development proposal for planning permission;**
- 3) **subject to planning permission authority be delegated to the Head of Community and Housing Services to tender for the construction of the site through a design and build contract and other specialist consultants and surveyors to act for, or advise the Council and the commissioning of necessary reports all subject to the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations; and**
- 4) **the properties to be let as affordable rent capped to local housing allowance (LHA) levels for Redditch.**

(During the consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

## **36. THE TOWN HALL REFURBISHMENT - FINAL DECISION**

The Interim Director of Finance and Resources presented the Town Hall Hub Refurbishment – Final Decision Report for the Committee's consideration.

Members were advised that the report updated the Executive Committee on progress on the movement of the Town Hall to a Community Hub since the previous report on this subject was considered on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022. The report requested approval

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for spending to increase by £1 million to reflect the final design, with this to be financed through the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) and funded from savings over and above the £400,000 requirement in the Medium Term Financial Plan for the 2025/26 financial year.

The report detailed:

- Progress on the NHS Space,
- Final design RIBA Stage 3 drawings,
- Updated costs based on these RIBA Stage 3 designs, and
- That moving the Town Hall to a “Community Hub” was in line with Government guidance to “collect” public services in one place.

The NHS had been working on site since the start of 2023. They were now running through their final snagging process and services were expected to start operating from the site towards the end of October 2023. The NHS had invested significant sums for the delivery of Mental Health services from the hub. Handover was expected to take place on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

For the remainder of the space in the basement, ground and first floors, the Council had been in negotiations with Worcestershire County Council. This had been in parallel with the Library consultation that the County Council had undertaken. Worcestershire County Council had approved the move at their Cabinet meeting held in July 2023.

Significant work had been undertaken with Worcestershire County Council and their subtenants to ensure the design delivered to their existing requirements and at RIBA Stage 3 all partners had signed off that the design met their requirements. There was no reduction of space or facilities for the Library or the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), with ongoing revenue costs being no higher than existing 2022/23 revenue costs for running the existing library site. Any requirements over and above the core existing services were chargeable. An example of this was a separate lobby for the DWP which was up for negotiation.

There was significant additional documentation in the appendices, with the greatest change for the Council being the movement of the Civic Suite from the Ground Floor to the Second floor. Planning permission for the changes was agreed on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023. A remaining key change that would be needed would be an improvement to access to the building from the disabled parking bays in the Town Hall car park.



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Costs of the detailed design had increased from the estimated £5.2 million, as reported to the Executive Committee in October 2022, to £6.2 million.

Redditch Borough Council and Worcestershire County Council had signed:

- Reciprocating Heads of Terms
- Reciprocating 125 year leases

Work was proceeding on assessing locations and the scale of interim arrangements for Council and Committee meetings and staff decanting.

Members subsequently discussed the content of the report in detail and in doing so commented on the following matters:

- The move of the civic suite to the second floor of the Town Hall and whether the pillars in that part of the building would obstruct the view of some meeting participants. Officers noted that there were challenges with the conversion of this part of the building and these had been discussed with group leaders throughout the process.
- The appearance of the new Council Chamber on the second floor of the Town Hall and the extent to which the Council would be investing in new fixtures and fittings.
- The potential for the final Heads of Terms documents with Worcestershire County Council to be shared with Members.
- The financial costs arising from the move of the library to the Town Hall and the extent to which Redditch Borough Council would be liable to cover some of these costs.
- The ICT support requirements for the civic suite in the Town Hall and what this would entail. Officers explained that this related to video conferencing and live streaming equipment and software and Members would need to determine in due course whether to invest in a more professional audio visual system than the current arrangements in place at the Council.
- The need for the Council to future proof hybrid meeting arrangements to take into account potential changes to local government meeting arrangements in future.
- The additional works required in respect of the remodelling of the disabled parking bays in the Town Hall car park and the extent to which there were particular risks arising for wheelchair users.
- The use of indicative plans at this stage in the process and how these should be interpreted.
- The purpose of the street walkway referred to in one of the plans.

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- The additional support required by the DWP and the likely costs arising from these requirements, which would be subject to negotiation.
- The extent to which a sensory room, which had been referenced at an early stage of the process, would be provided in the children's section of the library. Members were advised that the choice as to whether to include a sensory room in the library would need to be made by Worcestershire County Council's Library Services.
- The asset valuations referred to in the report and whether these were likely to change in light of changes to inflation. Officers explained that higher and lower prices had been factored into the costings and there would be a threshold below which sales would not be made.
- The views that had been expressed by the public on social media with regard to the move of the library from its current site in the town centre to the Town Hall Hub.
- The debate that had been held at the Planning Committee meeting earlier in the year in respect of an application for the Town Hall Hub.
- Previous proposals for the redevelopment of the Town Hall.

During consideration of this item, Members noted that the report had been pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023. At that meeting, scrutiny Members had agreed a recommendation on the subject of the Town Hall Hub. Members discussed this recommendation, and concerns were raised that the action proposed in the recommendation would delay progress with the project. It was acknowledged that projected financial costs had increased since October 2022, but Members also noted that the figures presented the previous year had been based on the best estimates available at that time. In this context, it was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation on this subject would not be accepted.

An alternative proposal to the second recommendation in the report was subsequently proposed by Councillor Joe Baker as follows:

*"That the Council does not agree to the £1 million loan and instead Officers are asked to amend plans to reduce the costs, and the hub be reduced in size, so that the library is not included in the hub and the project can then be delivered for £5.2 million."*

This alternative recommendation was proposed by Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Bill Hartnett.

In proposing the alternative recommendation, Councillor Baker explained that it took into account the proposal that had been made

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at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He expressed concerns that an additional £1 million would need to be invested in order to accommodate the needs of the library. By not including the library in the hub, Councillor Baker suggested that the financial costs involved in delivering the project would be reduced but the town would still retain a valuable community hub from which various public services could be accessed.

In seconding the alternative recommendation, Councillor Hartnett commented that he was concerned about the impact that the additional funding would have on the Council's finances moving forward. Members were asked to consider halting this expenditure and reviewing their plans at this stage, whilst there was still a chance to make a change. Councillor Hartnett also questioned whether this additional investment would represent value for money for Redditch Borough Council, given Library Services were the responsibility of Worcestershire County Council.

The Committee subsequently discussed the proposed alternative recommendation and in doing so commented on the following points:

- The additional income that the Council could expect to receive as a result of taking the action proposed in the report and how this would offset the additional £1 million costs in a relatively short period of time.
- The extent to which the proposed additional £1 million funding had been reported for the consideration of the Council's auditors. Officers confirmed that the Council's external auditors were provided with copies of Council reports for consideration and no feedback had been received from the auditors expressing concerns about this project.
- The potential for the financial costs involved in delivering a large project such as this to rise over time due to the impact of inflation, changes to the availability of resources and other unexpected pressures.
- The impact that not moving the library into the Town Hall would have on Council income and the extent to which this would have a negative impact on the Council's financial position moving forward.

On being put to the vote, the alternative recommendation was defeated.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the Town Hall Refurbishment Capital Budget be increased to £6.2 million;**

- 2) **the £1 million difference from the original approved budget be funded through PWLB debt financed via the additional income, over and above what is in the Medium Term Financial Plan, being delivered; and**
- 3) **authority be delegated to the Interim Director of Finance and Resources to enter into the consequential contractual arrangements.**

(During the consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). However, there is no exempt information in this record of the debate).

### **37. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 1 2023/24**

The Interim Director of Finance and Resources presented the Finance and Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter 1 2023/24.

Members were advised that the report detailed the following Council positions in the first quarter of the 2023/24 financial year:

- the Council's forecast outturn revenue position for the year,
- an update on the Council's capital programme for the year,
- the procurement pipeline, and
- the organisation's performance measures against its strategic priorities.

From a revenue perspective, the Council had a £10.7 million budget for 2023/24 which was approved by Council in February 2023. Overall, the Council was currently forecasting a revenue overspend against the first quarter budget totalling £139,000. This was due to the anticipated 2023/24 pay award, which was yet to be ratified. If this was extrapolated upwards for the full year, it was anticipated that the Council would overspend in the region of £557,000.

It was estimated that utilities increases were running at 70 per cent but in the 2023/24 budget a 100 per cent increase in budget was assumed and a reserve was set up for the same amount. Given the forecast overspend linked to the anticipated 2023/24 pay award and that the Council had not experienced the increases in utility costs anticipated, it was proposed that £557,000 of the utilities reserve for 2023/4 should be released to offset the overspend position. This pay issue would need to be addressed in the 2024/5 budget which would leave the utilities reserve for 2024/5 and 2025/6 untouched.

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There was a small underspend of £4,114 against the £100,000 grants to voluntary bodies budget. The report requested approval to allocate the underspend to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) Redditch branch to gain a physical presence back in Redditch and enable residents to access face to face appointments.

From a capital perspective, the Council had a capital programme of £12.6 million which was approved in the budget in February 2023. Of this, £10.6 million was externally funded whilst £2.0 million was Council funded. As noted from the Financial Outturn 2022/23 report, there was £3.292 million budget slippage from 2022/23 which would be added to this budget. At Quarter 1, the actual spend against the original 2023/24 capital budget was £583,000.

There were a number of capital programme changes detailed in the report including:

- reprofiling of Ipsley Church Lane cemetery budget from 2023/24 to 2024/25,
- increased fleet replacement costs totalling £611,000,
- the leisure changing places budget totalling £21,750 to provide a state of the art toilet facility for visitors to Redditch town centre.

As approved by Executive in July 2023, a list of procurements estimated at a value of over £200,000, and which were delegated for approval to the Executive Committee or to Officers over the following year, were detailed in Appendix D. Whilst Appendix E detailed all procurement estimated at a value of between £50,000-£200,000. Appendix F of the report detailed procurement that impacted on Redditch but which was procured by Bromsgrove district Council due to the shared nature of some of the Councils' services.

At Quarter 1 on the HRA, it was anticipated that there would be budget underspends against repairs and maintenance and supervision and management due to vacancies in some parts of the service. This resulted in an overall projected surplus on services totalling £488,000, which would be contributed to HRA reserves. In addition to this, there was currently a £100,000 projected underspend against the £11.725 million capital programme.

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

- The slippage of the budget for Ipsley church Lane Cemetery to 2024/25 and the extent to which this meant that there would be a delay to the works at the site. Members were advised

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that there had been a delay in respect of the planning process and Officers agreed to provide further clarification as to whether this would result in delays for the introduction of the cemetery.

- The budgets held in reserves and the changes arising to the council's reserves following a review in January 2023. Officers explained that the review had been conducted as a number of reserves had not been spent for many years.
- The inclusion of Covid reserves in the Council's budget. Members were advised that some of this funding remained unspent and there was some uncertainty as to whether the government would require this to be returned.
- The utilities reserve, which had been incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Plan when it was agreed in February 2023, as inflation rates had been significantly higher at that time. The council would need to review this reserve moving forward and whether it needed to be retained.
- The situation with regards to empty retail units in the town, which Members commented had deteriorated further since the report was published.
- The increase in homelessness figures and those in crisis within housing in the Borough, which was in line with national trends. Members were asked to note that the term "crisis", as detailed in the report, referred to residents who were experiencing a housing crisis, rather than suggesting that the council was in crisis.
- The impact of increasing rental fees at a time when median earnings for Redditch residents had reportedly fallen by £4,500 per annum.

During consideration of this item, reference was made to the recommendations on this subject that had been made at a meeting of the Budget Scrutiny working Group when the report had been pre-scrutinised. Members noted that the recommended action would add value and therefore these recommendations were accepted.

## **RESOLVED that**

- 1) the current overspend position in relation to Revenue and Capital Budgets for the period April to June and the full year overspend position of £557,000 be noted;**
- 2) those procurements over £200,000 due to be delivered during 2023/4 be added to the forward plan;**
- 3) the Quarter 1 Performance data for the Period April to June 2023 be noted;**

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- 4) a review of how the Council secures external grants and trust funding to be undertaken at the end of this financial year;
- 5) a review all grant spending commitments to be undertaken as a matter of urgency, to include considering risk relating to inflation and the Local Authority's overspend this year;

## RECOMMENDED to Council

- 6) allocating £557,000 from the Utilities Reserve to mitigate the overspend position in 2023/4;
- 7) changes to the Capital Programme with an ongoing revenue cost of £101,000, £2,000 Leisure Changing Places and £99,000 Fleet replacement;
- 8) approving the £18,200 increase to the Engineering Services base budget from the General Fund and £4,900 increase from the HRA in 2023/4 from reserves and including this change in the 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Plan;
- 9) approving the £23,000 increase to the Bereavement Services base budget in 2023/4 from reserves and including this change in the 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Plan;
- 10) that the underspend of £4,114 from the Grants to Voluntary Bodies scheme be allocated to Citizens Advice Bureau Redditch and Bromsgrove to fund the costs of room hire to enable residents to access face to face appointments.

(During the consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and information relating to consultations and negotiations, including contemplated consultations and negotiations, in respect of labour relations matters. However, there is no exempt information in this record of the debate).

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The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 8.44 pm



\* item has been selected for pre-scrutiny by main Committee

\*\* item has been selected for pre-scrutiny by Budget Scrutiny Working Group

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME

1 November 2023 to 29 February 2024

(published as at 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023)



[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)

This Work Programme gives details of items on which key decisions are likely to be taken by the Borough Council's Executive Committee, or full Council, in the coming four months. "Key Decisions" are ones which are likely to:

- (i) result in the Council incurring expenditure, foregoing income or the making of savings in excess of £200,000 or which are otherwise significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (ii) be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in the area comprising two or more wards in the Borough;
- (iii) involve any proposal to cease to provide a Council service (other than a temporary cessation of service of not more than 6 months).

If you wish to make representations on the proposed decision you are encouraged to get in touch with the relevant report author as soon as possible before the proposed date of the decision. Contact details are provided. Alternatively, you may write to the Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Property Services, The Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH or e-mail: [democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

The Executive Committee's meetings are normally held at 6.30pm on Tuesday evenings at the Town Hall. They are open to the public, except when confidential information is being discussed. If you wish to attend for a particular matter, it is advisable to check with the Democratic Services Team on (01527) 64252, ext: 3072 to make sure it is going ahead as planned. If you have any other queries, Democratic Services Officers will be happy to advise you. The full Council meets in accordance the Council's Calendar of Meetings. Meetings commence at 6.30pm.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

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

Councillor Gemma Monaco, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Climate Change

Councillor Joe Baker

Councillor Joanne Beecham Portfolio Holder for Leisure

Councillor Brandon Clayton Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

Councillor Luke Court Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling

Councillor Lucy Harrison Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services

Councillor Bill Hartnett

Councillor Craig Warhurst, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
** Finance and Performance Quarter 2 Report 2023/24 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 5 Dec 2023 Council 29 Jan 2024		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	Michelle Howell, Head of Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252
* Future Plans for Auxerre House <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 5 Dec 2023 Council 29 Jan 2024	This report may contain exempt information which would need to be discussed by the Executive Committee in private session.	Report of the Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services	Simon Parry, Acting Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services Tel: 01527 64252
Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant <b>Key:</b> Yes	Executive 5 Dec 2023		Report of the Head of Community and Housing Services	Amanda Delahunty, Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer Tel: (01527) 881269
** Medium Term Financial Plan - Tranche 1 Budget Update including Fees and Charges <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 5 Dec 2023 Council 29 Jan 2024		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
* Parking Enforcement Service Level Agreement <b>Key:</b> Yes	Executive 5 Dec 2023	This report may contain exempt information which would need to be discussed in private session.	Report of the Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services	Simon Parry, Acting Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services, Simon Parry, Acting Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services Tel: 01527 64252, Tel: 01527 64252
* Play Audit <b>Key:</b> Yes	Executive Not before 5th Dec 2023  Council Not before 29th Jan 2024		Report of the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Ishrat Karimi-Fini, Parks and Events Service Manager Tel: 01527 881204
* Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategies <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 5 Dec 2023		Report of the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Jonathan Cochrane, Development Services Manager Tel: 01527 63051

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
* Proposal for a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in Redditch Town Centre <b>Key: Yes</b>	Executive Not before 5th Dec 2023		Report of the Head of Community and Housing Services	Bev Houghton, Community Safety Manager (Redditch and Bromsgrove) Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3656
* Council response to Local Plan Consultations; Birmingham Development Plan, South Staffordshire Local Plan and South Worcestershire Development Plan <b>Key: No</b>	Executive Not before 9th Jan 2024 Council Not before 29th Jan 2024		Report of the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager Tel: (01527) 881325
* Carbon Reduction Strategy - Annual Review <b>Key: No</b>	Executive 9 Jan 2024 Council 29 Jan 2024		Report of the Head of Community and Housing Services	Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3284

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Council Tax Base and Business Rates Yield 2024/25 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 9 Jan 2024 Council 29 Jan 2024		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Michelle Howell, Head of Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252
Council Tax - Discretionary Council Tax Reduction Policy <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 9 Jan 2024 Council 29 Jan 2024		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	David Riley, Revenues Services Manager Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3382
Council Tax - Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 9 Jan 2024 Council 29 Jan 2024		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	David Riley, Revenues Services Manager Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3382
* Decarbonisation of the Council Fleet <b>Key:</b> No	Executive Not before 9th Jan 2024 Council 29 Jan 2024		Report of the Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services	Kevin Hirons, Environmental Services Manager Tel: 01527 881705

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
** Final Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 9 Jan 2024 Council 29 Jan 2024		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252
** Finance Recovery Plan - Update <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 9 Jan 2024		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252
** HRA Rent Setting 2024/25 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 9 Jan 2024 Council 29 Jan 2024		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252
Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendations <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 9 Jan 2024 Council 29 Jan 2024		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Darren Whitney, Electoral Services Manager Tel: 01527 882547
Non-Domestic Rates - Discretionary Rate Relief Policy <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 9 Jan 2024 Council 29 Jan 2024		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	David Riley, Revenues Services Manager Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3382

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Pay Policy 2024/25 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 9 Jan 2024 Council 29 Jan 2024		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Becky Talbot, Human Resources and Development Manager Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3385
* Review of Governance Arrangements for Rubicon Leisure Limited <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 9 Jan 2024 Council 29 Jan 2024		Report of the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services Tel: 01527 881429
** Medium Term Financial Plan (including Treasury Management Strategy, Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision and Investment Strategy) (Tranche 2) <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 6 Feb 2024 Council 26 Feb 2024		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Council Tax Resolutions 2024/25 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 26 Feb 2024 Council 26 Feb 2024		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Michelle Howell, Head of Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252
Finance and Performance Quarter 3 Report 2023/24 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 26 Feb 2024 Council 26 Feb 2024		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	Michelle Howell, Head of Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252
* Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report <b>Key:</b> No	Council 26 Feb 2024		Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Mateusz Sliwinski, Democratic Services Officer
Finance and Performance Monitoring Outturn Report 2023/24 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive Not before 1st Jun 2024 Council Not before 1st Jun 2024		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252



**Overview & Scrutiny**

Committee

26<sup>th</sup> October 2023**WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Subject Matter</b>	<b>Officer(s) / Member(s) Responsible for report</b>
<b>ALL MEETINGS</b>	<b>REGULAR ITEMS</b>	<b>(CHIEF EXECUTIVE)</b>
	Minutes of previous meeting	Chief Executive
	Consideration of the Executive Committee Work Programme	Chief Executive
	Call-ins (if any)	Chief Executive
	Pre-scrutiny (if any)	Chief Executive
	Task Groups / Short, Sharp Review Groups – feedback	Chair of Task Group / Short, Sharp Review
	Working Groups - feedback	Chair of Working Group
	Committee Work Programme	Chief Executive

**Overview & Scrutiny**

Committee

26<sup>th</sup> October 2023

MEETING DATE	ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED	RELEVANT LEAD
26 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	Overview – Council Support to Third Sector organisations providing prevention services and support to victims of Domestic Abuse	Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services
26 <sup>th</sup> October 2023 (Executive 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2023)	Pre-Decision Scrutiny – Garden Waste Service	Matthew Austin, Environmental Services Manager
30 <sup>th</sup> November 2023 (Executive 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2023)	Pre-Decision Scrutiny – Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategies	Jonathan Cochrane, Development Services Manager
30 <sup>th</sup> November 2023 (Executive 5 <sup>th</sup> December)	Pre-Decision Scrutiny – Parking Enforcement Service Level Agreement	Simon Parry, Housing Property Services Manager
30 <sup>th</sup> November 2023 (Executive 5 <sup>th</sup> December)	Pre-Decision Scrutiny – Proposal for a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in Redditch Town Centre	Bev Houghton, Community Safety Manager
4 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 (Executive 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2024)	Council response to Local Plan Consultations; Birmingham Development Plan, South Staffordshire Local Plan and South Worcestershire Development Plan	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager
4 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 (Executive 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2024)	Pre-Decision-Scrutiny - Future Plans for Auxerre House	Simon Parry, Housing Property Services Manager
4 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 (Executive 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2024)	Pre-Decision Scrutiny – Decarbonisation of the Council Fleet	Kevin Hiron, Environmental Services Manager
4 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 (Executive 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2024)	Pre-Decision Scrutiny – Review of Governance Arrangements for Rubicon Leisure Limited	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services

**Overview & Scrutiny**

Committee

26<sup>th</sup> October 2023

<b>4<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (Executive 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024)</b>	Pre-Decision Scrutiny – Play Audit	Ishrat Karimi-Fini, Cultural Services and Parks Manager
<b>4<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (Executive 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024)</b>	Pre-Decision Scrutiny – Carbon Reduction Strategy – Annual Review	Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services
<b>1<sup>st</sup> February 2024</b>		
<b>19<sup>th</sup> February 2024</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-24	Mat Sliwinski, Democratic Services Officer
<b>19<sup>th</sup> February 2024</b>	Redditch Partnership – Annual Report	Della McCarthy, Bromsgrove and Redditch Partnership Manager
<b>14<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>	Overview – Social Housing Repairs	Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services
<b>Date to be confirmed</b>	Health Priorities in Redditch - Overview item	Sue Hanley, Interim Chief Executive Officer
<b>Date to be confirmed</b>	Outcome of Tenant Consultation on Housing Policies	Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services
<b>Date to be confirmed</b>	Pre-Decision Scrutiny - Matchborough and Winyates Regeneration Proposals	Ostap Paparega, Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development

**Overview & Scrutiny**

Committee

26<sup>th</sup> October 2023**Working Groups:**

- Budget Scrutiny Working Group**

<b>MEETING DATE</b>	<b>ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED</b>
30 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2023 (Executive 31 <sup>st</sup> Oct 2023)	Draft Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25  Finance Recovery Plan - Update
29 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2023 (Executive 5 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2023)	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024 (Executive 9 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2024)	Medium Term Financial Plan - Tranche 1 Budget including Fees and Charges (prior to consultation)  HRA Rent Setting 2024/25  Finance Recovery Plan – Update  Final Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25
5 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024 (Executive 6 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024)	Medium Term Financial Plan – (including Treasury Management Strategy, Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision and Investment Strategy) (Tranche 2)

- Performance Scrutiny Working Group**

<b>MEETING DATE</b>	<b>ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2023	TBC
8 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2024	Climate Change Policy Progress Update
12 <sup>th</sup> Mar 2024	TBC

# Overview & Scrutiny

## Committee

26<sup>th</sup> October 2023

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### Task Groups

- **Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Task Group**

The first meeting of the Group is due to take place on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Further meeting dates will be decided by Members at the meeting.

- **Speeding and Road Safety Task Group**

Next task group to be launched following the conclusion of the Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Task Group. Please note that Membership, Full Topic Proposal and Terms of Reference of the Task Group will need to be agreed by the Committee before this Task Group is able to proceed.

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**West Midlands Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny – 04/09/2023**

[Agenda for Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Monday 4th September 2023, 10.00 am :WMCA](#)

Agenda items:

**3. Chair's Remarks**

Reminder from the chair that O&S is non political and aims to get the best outcomes for the West Midlands.

Laura informed us the decision had been made that the £14m grant from Government for the 7 constituency areas for social housing fund would be divided by 7 equally if the bid is successful, each area now needs to put forward their own business case.

**6. English devolution framework - scrutiny protocol progress update:**

Report has been delayed and guidance is that the report will be published at the end of September. Officers will send to Members as soon as it is published. A report will come back to us once officers have compared current arrangements with the protocol, initial thoughts are that WMCA would measure up well.

Terms of reference for MP – Mayor O&A sessions are being drawn up as this is a brand-new function. First meeting expected in Autumn.

**7. Affordable homes programme:**

Homes England is looking to invest up to £400m in West Midlands before 2026. This will give opportunities to fill skills gaps and fill the gap where private development is waning due to the cost of living and inflation slowing the rate of purchases.

There will be a mix of all tenures, however, work is to be done on the levels of social rent to affordable rent to affordable purchase or rent to buy.

The team are working on identifying projects including redevelopment of estates. This will give WM an opportunity to fast track many projects which were already in the pipeline, especially brown field sites. There is a good chunk already identified towards the initial £200m but to get to the £400m will be a challenge.

If private developers want to sell properties which were allocated to private over to affordable then Homes England and WMCA will work with them and associations, taking into account if it is also the right decision for the area. The affordable homes programme does not fund developer's contribution through Section 106 as this remains the developer's responsibility to fund.

**8. Affordable Housing Supply Strategy:**

Housing supply strategy has been delayed due to the devolution deal and changes this will bring to the strategy. Even though the housing supply strategy is on pause, progress is still being made and work on delivery has not stopped.

Members asked for benchmarks and KPI's to be developed.

I asked for a section within the strategy to cover biodiversity gain so that we are not just delivering zero carbon well insulated homes but homes in beautiful areas which benefit both the residents and the natural world. This is now going to be included.

9. Affordable Housing Pilot:

WMCA are working to dispose of land for 100% affordable homes to be developed on the site. WMCA would have no controls but will have reporting to assess success of the pilot.

Concerns were made over the build quality of some of the suppliers as they are only building them with a 60-year life expectancy.

Loan to Woking Borough Council: This is from surplus cash deposits held in advance of needing to be spent. These were not new funds handed to a different region. These are part of the normal treasury management operations. Even when in section 114 territory, councils are still very safe institutions as they are underwritten by the Government. This would give better interest rates for the Council and competitive interest rates for the council in question. Short term cash lending between authorities is usual and done through a broker.

With Woking the deal had been struck before the section 114, so still had to go ahead, however, Woking have not defaulted and are still more secure when compared to banking Institutions.

WMCA have since tightened reigns and will not deal with any council who has stated they are in financial difficulty. Can no longer forward a deal for more than a month. As a result, WMCA will have more money in our current account, and now unlikely to get as high a rate of return on investments, which will likely cost £300k a year in lost revenue.

Councillor Emma Marshall

Redditch Borough Council's Representative to the West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee



### WMCA Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny – 04/09/2023

Link to papers: [Agenda for Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Monday 4th September 2023, 1.00 pm :WMCA](#)

Agenda Items:

#### 6. Financial Monitoring report:

Low patronage continues to result in a surplus in the concessions budget which will now be put into a reserve to protect against future risks.

#### 7. City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Re-base Proposal:

The Government is giving the combined authority the opportunity to adjust the City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement project to take account of inflation.

- Projects can be removed from the programme or added but DfT have emphasised this should not be seen as an opportunity to introduce brand new initiatives.
- All projects must align with the objectives of the national CRSTS programme.
- The total funding envelope must remain the same.
- Overall, the target 15-20% local contribution must be met.
- The outputs can be result induced.
- The funding time horizons must remain the same (spend and delivery by March 2027).
- The re-based programme submitted to DfT will need to demonstrate that it still delivers good value for money.

Submission back to DfT is scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> September.

#### 8. Deeper Devolution Deal Scrutiny Implications

The deeper devolution act will ultimately mean WMCA will be treated like a Government department with its own 5 year funding settlement.

This will need strengthened scrutiny with an improved scrutiny protocol. The protocol has not yet been published by Government and is expected in Autumn. A report will be brought to the next committee to assess where WMCA are and where they might need to improve. Having seen early drafts the Officers are confident the governance structures will be adequate.

#### 9. Deeper Devolution (Transport) Implementation Plan:

Work will be done to explore innovative solutions and WMCA will be able to function as a test bed working with the DfT on transport solutions to drive behaviour change, this will take into account not just city areas but towns and more rural areas recognising there is not a one solution fits all approach.

#### 10. Member Engagement Groups:

There are several Member Engagement groups covering several aspects of transport. All of the MEG's have met to discuss their work programme going forward. The MEG groups are as follows:

- Rail, Metro & Sprint
- Passenger & Road Safety
- Air Quality, Congestion & Environmental Impact
- Finance & Performance
- Passenger First
- Sustainability & Active Travel

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**Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 11/10/2023**

Link to papers:

<https://worcestershire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&MId=5774>

Agenda items:

**5. Vice Chairman**

Congratulations to Cllr Christine Wild from Malvern for being elected as the Vice Chair.

**6. Hill Crest Mental Health Ward**

Concerns were raised about the Hill Crest Mental Health facility by the CQC in July 2022. The themes of the concerns raised were:

- Patient care plans and records
- Patient risk assessments
- Incidents reporting
- A reliance on agency staff
- Environment and estates issues
- Sexual safety on a mixed gender ward
- Staff handovers
- Governance of the ward.

Actions have been put in place to improve the situation. These measures include reducing the number of beds from 18 to 10, installing CCTV in hard to see areas, block booking agency staff for continuity and new management. The Leadership team created a multi-level improvement plan which resulted in 56 workstreams and over 200 individual tasks. The improvement plan has been completed with no critical outstanding issues. Workforce continues to be an issue nationally.

The lost beds in this facility have meant the trust has been outsourcing beds to an external supplier Ty Grosvenor in Wrexham; this is not an ideal set up due to the distance away and is not a good long term solution.

Due to the design of the Hill Crest suite, which is no longer a design that would be deemed good within clinical environments and its isolation to other mental health wards the trust are looking at a more permanent solution.

Recently the Trust upgraded Athelon ward with the purpose of it being used for older adult acute care. However due to the new Hospital at Home Team, there is no requirement for this ward after February 2024 and it is likely to be mothballed.

The Athelon ward has had significant investment, is a much better set up with no dormitories and it is close to another mental health ward. The bed capacity is 14 beds. Moving the Hill Crest facility to Athelon will result in the trust no longer needing to outsource beds to Wrexham and will see an improvement in the offering to patients. Ultimately resulting in better outcomes.

It is important to note that beds in Hill Crest are for the entire County and not specific to Redditch and that the building would be repurposed for psychiatry and rehabilitation services and not mothballed.

Currently the Trust are in consultation mode and have consulted with staff involved. There is a listening session scheduled for November 13<sup>th</sup> at 1.30pm at the Ecumenical Centre for residents to ask questions and voice their opinions on the plans.

#### 7. Childrens Hearing Services

In October 2022 inconsistencies in the interpretation of the ABR hearing tests were identified by WHAT. The ABR test is a hearing screening which babies are sent to if a baby fails the newborn hearing screening.

The Trust have re-tested 140 children born after 2018 and so far, found 23 cases of harm due to misdiagnosis have been found. The trust is working with parents to give advice and support.

The trust is now reviewing ABR's conducted on babies born in 2015 to 2018. Children in this age group would likely already be under the speech and language therapist, in specialist education settings or awaiting behavioural testing. The expectation would be that there would be very few children who are still unaware they have hearing loss.

#### 8. Planning for winter

This winter the trust is concentrating on keeping people out of hospital through working with care homes and operating virtual wards. Virtual wards will allow patients who need to be monitored regularly (around 4 times a day) to remain at home. This covers respiratory tract infections and other conditions which do not require continual monitoring. Utilising technology to monitor patients remotely will be an important aspect in the virtual ward.

Covid is no longer seen as a major risk factor. Patients are not entering the hospital because they are sick from Covid at this point. However, patients are being found to have Covid once admitted for another reason. The continuation of the vaccine roll out will continue to be important to maintain this position.

The Trust is creating a single point of contact for doctors, health care professionals etc to contact. This is expected to reduce the numbers of people coming into hospital. Messaging to residents will still be important to ensure patients present at the most appropriate place such as GP or minor injury units rather than A&E.

20 extra beds will be available this winter in community hospitals to reduce the pressures on the acute hospitals.

During the debate I brought up Occupational Therapists and the ongoing need for reports to be generated to facilitate social housing to carry out necessary adjustments on properties to both prevent hospital stays and to allow patients to return home swiftly. OT reports are also vital to allow for the DFG to be spent for those in private properties.

#### 9. Work Planning

In light of the discussion around DFG it was proposed that the Committee have a task and finish on how the current system is working. We are therefore asking all district councils to request a report be brought before their appropriate scrutiny committee. This report will then be fed into the HOSC task and finish group. We need to know how much we are typically spending from the funding, how

much Officer time it is taking up and what the challenges are in delivering the funding efficiently to actively keep residents out of either hospital or care facilities. We must be honest that the current system is not seeing the improved outcomes it is intended for and therefore it is prudent to have a deep dive into the system and what could be done on the Councils side to improve it.

Councillor Emma Marshall

Redditch Borough Council's Representative on Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 7th September,  
2023

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Sid Khan (Chair), Councillor Sharon Harvey (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Imran Altaf, Chris Holz, Joanna Kane, Timothy Pearman (substitute), Jane Spilsbury and Monica Stringfellow.

### Also Present:

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

### Officers:

Peter Carpenter and Claire Felton (on Microsoft Teams)

### Democratic Services Officers:

Jo Gresham and Mat Sliwinski

## 22. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ashley and Marshall. Councillor Pearman attended the meeting as a named substitute for Councillor Marshall.

## 23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of party whip.

## 24. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023 were submitted for Members' consideration.

### RESOLVED that

Chair

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 7th September, 2023

**the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.**

## **25. PUBLIC SPEAKING**

It was announced that one public speaker had registered to speak but was not in attendance. Following deliberation by the Committee, it was decided that the statement provided by the public speaker when registering to speak should be read out by the Democratic Services Officers present.

The statement provided upon registration by the public speaker, Ms. Bish, was read out as follows:

*“Would like to ask questions regarding the library in the town hall at the Thursday meeting 6.30. I have only just seen the agenda so can't yet state the exact questions. They will be about climate impact, energy saving measures and financing allowing for inflation, bearing in mind that Mr Dormer has assured us many times that the £4.2million is the only money being spent on the library area and that construction costs have increased in 2022 by 15% plus 8% inflation in 2023. The allowance was only 6.6% over the whole construction period plus 10% contingency which is supposed to cover all problems, not just inflation. In addition, I would like to know why we are using space in the town hall for a rent free library when it could bring in an income of £200,000 pa. If let to starter businesses – still compatible with the hub idea with business training and economic benefits to the town from generating innovation in local business. (Housing is still another important revenue option, too). Plus, where is the climate impact report? Demolition has major impacts on the environment through carbon emissions. The new library is energy inefficient in design compared to the old and has no room for the extra solar panels that won't fit on the new smaller building. There are very many flat roofs on the new design despite the knowledge that these lose more heat and require more maintenance – every 25 years. Will the council be paying a service charge towards these maintenance costs and what happens if we have another Mr Dormer style leader who fails to keep his buildings up to standard through regular maintenance and then declares the repairs too expensive and demolishes the town hall. What precautions have been taken to ensure we would have a rent free library immediately reinstated in another building?”*

## **26. MEMBERSHIP OF THE FLY TIPPING AND BULKY WASTE TASK GROUP**



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 7th September, 2023

It was confirmed that the membership of the Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Task Group would consist of the following Members: Councillor Sid Khan (Chair), Councillor Monica Stringfellow, Councillor Kerrie Miles, Councillor Karen Ashley and Councillor Anthony Lovell.

It was noted that Members of the Task Group and Officers would be contacted after the meeting to agree dates for the meetings.

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

The Committee reviewed the Executive Work Programme and requested that the following items be added to the Committee's Work Programme as pre-scrutiny for consideration at future meetings:

- Garden Waste Service
- Proposal for a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in Redditch Town Centre
- Play Audit
- Carbon Reduction Strategy – Annual Review
- Decarbonisation of the Council Fleet.

**RESOLVED that as detailed in the preamble above, the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be updated with items from the Executive Committee's Work Programme.**

## 28. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

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

**RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme be noted, and any additional items identified during the course of the meeting be added to the Work Programme for consideration at future meetings.**

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

Updates on the Task Groups and Working groups were provided as follows:

- a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Kane

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Councillor Kane provided a brief update on the meeting of Budget Scrutiny Working Group on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2023. Councillor Kane stated that another meeting of Budget Scrutiny Working Group took place on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at which the following recommendations to the Executive Committee had been proposed in respect of the Executive Committee reports:

## **Provisional Financial Outturn Report 2022-23**

Recommendation: *“That the Executive Committee ask Officers to prepare a public statement on the Council's position regarding the submission of the Statements of Accounts to external auditors in order to provide assurance to the public about the Council's financial situation.”*

## **Finance and Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter 1 2023/24**

Recommendation 1: *“That the Executive Committee be asked to consider a review of how the Council secures external grants and trust funding, to be undertaken at the end of this financial year.”*

Recommendation 2: *“That the Executive Committee be asked to review all grant spending commitments as a matter of urgency and consider risk relating to inflation and the Local Authorities overspend this year.”*

On being put to the vote, the recommendations above were endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- b) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Holz

Councillor Holz informed Members that a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Working Group due to take place on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023 had been cancelled. Alternative dates were being looked at.

- c) Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Task Group – Chair, Councillor Khan

An update on the Task Group was provided earlier in the meeting.

## **RECOMMENDED**

- 1) that the Executive Committee ask Officers to prepare a public statement on the Council's position regarding the**

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submission of the Statements of Accounts to external auditors in order to provide assurance to the public about the Council's financial situation;

- 2) that the Executive Committee be asked to consider a review of how the Council secures external grants and trust funding, to be undertaken at the end of this financial year;
- 3) that the Executive Committee be asked to review all grant spending commitments as a matter of urgency and consider risk relating to inflation and the Local Authorities overspend this year.

## 30. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS

As Councillor Marshall had submitted her apologies for this meeting, there was no update on external scrutiny bodies at this meeting.

## 31. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was agreed that, in relation to the Town Hall Refurbishment – Final decision (Minute Item 32), the Committee would remain in the open session for the initial Officer presentation relating to the Final Design Plans for the Town Hall and be asked to decide whether to go into the private session for the remainder of the consideration of the aforementioned item.

After the initial presentation provided Town Hall Refurbishment – Final Decision (Minute Item 32), the Committee agreed to the following:

**RESOLVED that:**

**Under S100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 of the said act, as amended.**

**Minute Item No. 32 – The Town Hall Refurbishment - Final Decision.**

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## 32. THE TOWN HALL REFURBISHMENT - FINAL DECISION (REPORT TO FOLLOW)

Prior to the Committee deciding to move to exclude the press and public on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular authority (including the authority holding that information), a presentation was provided relating to the Town Hall Refurbishment floor plans and timescales for the building works.

An update was provided on the progress with the move of the Community Hub to the Town Hall. It was stated that significant work had been undertaken with Worcestershire County Council and their subtenants to ensure the design delivered to their existing requirements and at RIBA Stage 3 all partners had signed off that the design met their requirements. There was no reduction of space or facilities for the Library or the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) as a result of the designs. It was noted that any requirements over and above the core existing services were chargeable. Examples of chargeable costs included a separate lobby for the DWP which was up for negotiation and the audio recording equipment for the civic centre meeting spaces.

There was significant additional documentation in the appendices, with the greatest change for the Council being the movement of the Civic Suite from the Ground Floor to the Second floor. Planning permission for the changes was agreed on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023. A remaining key change that would be needed would be an improvement to access to the building from the disabled parking bays in the Town Hall car park. It was noted that during the refurbishment, Council and Committee meetings would need to take place at an alternative location, with several locations being considered. A separate report on the choice of location for Council meetings during refurbishment would be submitted for Members' consideration in due course.

The Leader of the Council was invited to address the Committee and stated that he fully approved of the Town Hall Refurbishment in that it pushed the Council in the right direction as it was a move to provide modern facilities. He stated that he was pleased with the direction the Council was taking. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling that he concurred with the Leader's statement.

During further discussion, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussed the updated financial implications of the Town Hall Refurbishment and the design plans for the NHS part of the Town

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Hall. The Committee deliberated on the alternative recommendation to the Executive Committee and on being put to the vote it was:

**RECOMMENDED that the Executive Committee undertakes a root and branch review to ensure that this project is still achievable within the original budget, that is £5.2 million, and that contractual arrangements are brought back to the Executive Committee.**

(During the consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). However, there is no exempt information in this record of the debate).

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 8.31 pm

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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