



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thu 14 Mar
2024
6.30 pm

Council Chamber
Redditch Town Hall

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

**Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH
Tel: (01527) 64252 (Ext. 3095)
email: mateusz.sliwinski@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk**

GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

Please note that this is a public meeting. You are able to see the agenda documents for this meeting 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.

Please note that Members, Officers and members of the public will only be able to gain access to this meeting via the entrance off the Town Hall car park.

GUIDANCE FOR ELECTED MEMBERS AND PUBLIC ATTENDING MEETINGS IN PERSON

Meeting and public attendees are encouraged not to attend a Committee if they have any of the following common symptoms of 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.

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, 14th March, 2024

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. Minutes (Pages 7 - 16)

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 19th February 2024 will be considered at this meeting.

4. 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 noon on Tuesday 12th March 2024.

5. Social Housing Repairs - Overview (Pages 17 - 34)

6. Executive Committee Work Programme - Selecting Items for Scrutiny (Pages 35 - 36)

7. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 37 - 40)

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

a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Kane

b) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Holz

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

9. External Scrutiny Bodies - Update Reports

- 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 – Council representative, Councillor Marshall; and
- c) Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) – Council representative, Councillor Marshall.



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2024

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Sid Khan (Chair), Councillor Sharon Harvey (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Imran Altaf, Karen Ashley, Chris Holz, Joanna Kane, Emma Marshall 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)

Officers:

Sue Hanley, Judith Willis, Matthew Bough and Della McCarthy

Democratic Services Officers:

M Sliwinski

78. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Spilsbury.

79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

Councillor Marshall declared an Other Disclosable Interest in minute number 81, Redditch Partnership – Annual Report Update – in the she sat in meetings of the Redditch Partnership in the capacity of an observer. It was deemed agreeable that the nature of the interest declared did not preclude Councillor Marshall from participating in the debate on the aforementioned item.

80. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no public speakers registered to speak at this meeting.

81. REDDITCH PARTNERSHIP - ANNUAL REPORT UPDATE

Chair

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The Redditch Partnership Manager introduced the report and in doing so noted that Redditch Partnership was the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and aimed to bring together representatives from a wide variety of agencies across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors to enable partnership working for the benefit of local residents.

It was reported that when the current Partnership Manager had first started in the post, the main groups were the Redditch Business Leaders and the Redditch Community Wellbeing Trust – this group having recently been restarted.

It was noted that the Cost of Living Partnership Group was a group operating across Redditch and Bromsgrove that was chaired by the Council's Head of Community and Housing Services. Asset based community development was covered and it was noted that this was linked to the District Collaborative.

It was highlighted that the biggest change in recent years had been the formation of a Redditch District Collaborative, which was a first district collaborative in Worcestershire to be set up, was formed due to changes nationally with the development of Integrated Care Systems (ICS). A District Collaborative brought together organisations from across the health and community sectors.

It was explained that the Wellbeing in Partnership E-Bulletin was received by all Councillors and provided local information on voluntary and community developments that could be used to pass on to local residents. The Knowledge Bank, which was a Redditch and Bromsgrove directory of community services, had recently been updated with content and made more user friendly. A fully searchable directory was available on the Council's website and publicly available to use.

Following the presentation, the Leader of the Council and Members of the Committee thanked the officers for their hard work in facilitating the work of the Partnership and thanked for the update report.

The following matters were discussed following the presentation:

- Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) – Members were encouraged to attend the in-person ABCD workshops, the training being available to all elected members. It was noted that the post of a community builder for under-represented communities on ABCD was currently vacant

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(BME ABCD position). Officers responded that there had been conversations with other community builders and partner agencies including BARN about the exact requirements and needs (including being place-based) that this post would address.

- Youth Leaders Group within Redditch Business Leaders – It was explained that the Leader of the Council initiated this group, which was set up by inviting all high schools in Redditch area to send a small group of representatives to the Youth Leaders Business Board meetings. It was reported that the local college was also now represented on the Youth Leaders Group Board. The meetings of the Group had been hosted at different businesses as well as schools to provide young people to engage with local businesses. The Leader commented that it was hoped the next step for this initiative would be to organise a ‘travelling jobs fair’ type engagement, where business leaders would attend job events at the schools.
- Redditch Partnership support for the work of Redditch Collaborative – Community Wellbeing Trust tried to bring together different community organisations. The Redditch Partnership facilitated and enabled agencies and organisations to come together more quickly and easily and share information and contacts. One of the aims of the Partnership was to enable community outreach workers from different voluntary and charitable organisations to engage and make connections with an array of organisations operating across Redditch and Bromsgrove.
- Terms of reference for the Cost of Living Partnership Group – It was asked by Members that the updated terms of reference for this group be shared with Members.
- Local community directory – It was requested that the local community directory, the Knowledge Bank, be provided in the Member Induction Pack for new Members in 2024.
- It was highlighted that it was important that the partnership groups did not overlap in their aims and are created or stepped down as required depending on the issues most pertinent at given time.

RESOLVED that

the annual update report be noted.

82. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT (DFG) - OVERVIEW

The Strategic Housing Services Manager provided an overview of the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). It was noted that these were

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mandatory grants to support the provision of adaptations to promote independent living within the home, subject to the provisions of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

It was explained that the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) provided each local authority in England with a DFG allocation contained within the Better Care Fund paid to the County Council and passported to Local Housing Authorities (including Redditch).

It was explained that the grant was means-tested and there was a robust process followed to arrive at grant allocation decisions, starting with a comprehensive assessment of the applicant's needs.

It was noted that it was considered good practice to offer a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service to support a disabled person and their family through the complicated process of carrying out major building works. In Worcestershire a partnership of the 6 Local Housing Authorities and Worcestershire County Council commissioned a HIA referred as the Worcestershire Promoting Independent Living Service and this was provided by Millbrook Health Care under a contract until March 2025.

Performance data was provided on the use of DFG in 2022-23, including on the types of building jobs carried out to enable a home adaptation, expenditure on the home adaptations by type, breakdown of the types of recipients of DFG by tenure and breakdown by age. It was noted that over 50 per cent of DFGs were for bathroom and stairlift adaptations.

Following the presentation, Members asked questions regarding the DFG and the following responses were noted:

- Funds for home adaptations in Council stock (HRA) properties – It was stated that as part of the regulations housing authorities were required to set aside funds within their Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA) capital programme fund for adaptations – this was an equivalent funding to DFGs called Equipment and Adaptations, funded purely from social housing rents. This fund was separate to the general repairs fund in the HRA and could be reviewed internally by the Council as necessary.
- Signposting residents to DFG – It was explained that the funding was for an adaptation because of a disability, so it was not possible to signpost as a preventative measure. It was noted that the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) for Redditch, Millbrook Healthcare, did advertise their services.

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- Median waiting times for delivery of an adaptation – It was noted that the long waiting time for the DFG process from application and assessment stage to the delivery of an adaptation was due to the number of steps including the Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment, undertaking technical drawings on the works required and going out to tender for the works. The Council funded extra OT involvement to reduce the waiting times for OT assessments.
- It was highlighted that the application for an adaptation could only be approved once an OT assessment and checks with land registry on the property to have an adaptation had been completed. It was requested as an action that officers find out and report to Members on where there were delays in the DFG grant application process.
- The 6-month maximum period for the Council to assess a DFG grant application from the date valid application is received – Officers reported that this was a legislative timeframe set by the Government, and it was currently taking the Council on average 9 days to assess a DFG grant application.
- Tender process for a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) contract after March 2025 – Officers reported that the Council was currently at the early stage of undertaking a new tender process. Foundations, a national body of home improvement agencies, had been employed to assist the Council with compiling a new specification for the service. Permission would be sought from Members to go out to tender for a new service in summer 2024.
- It was clarified that waiting times listed in the report were from the date the Occupational Therapist (OT) examining the applicant opens the case to the date of installation of an adaptation. The Council did not have information on OT waiting times.
- DFG Capital Allocation – It was noted that the Government's DFG allocation to the Council was £710,000 and just over £545,521.60 was allocated to recipients in 2022-23. Any unspent amount was carried forward to the next financial year.
- Prioritisation of DFG Applications – The Officer reported that DFG applications were not prioritised unless the OT requests the Council to prioritise the application as urgent.
- It was requested by a Member that information be provided on why some cases for adaptation installation took in excess of one year to complete.
- Alternative funding options for people eligible for DFG grant requiring home adaptation – It was explained that there were various reasons why people would choose alternative ways

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to fund adaptation works. It was noted that the charge for works from DFG was placed against a property meaning it would need to be paid back from property sale proceeds if the property is sold.

- Using Frameworks to undertake joint procurement for DFG items – The Strategic Housing Services Manager explained that frameworks had been used to order stocks of some adaptation items in bulk such as showers and stairlifts and the Council would look to further develop this approach.
- Possibility to use own builders to install home adaptations instead of the contractor assigned by Home Improvement Agency (HIA) – It was stated that there was no requirement for recipients of DFG grant for adaptation to use the HIA; where the valid applicant wishes to use own builder to carry out the works, the Council would provide the estimate for the value of the works, and the grant would only be provided up to the amount of the estimate.
- It was explained that when the landlord provides a permission for DFG adaptation works, the landlord must guarantee that the tenant would be allowed to remain in the property for five years.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

83. COUNCIL MOTION - PROPOSAL FOR A SHORT SHARP REVIEW OF POST-16 EDUCATION

The proposed Council motion with regard to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioning a short sharp review of post-16 education was considered.

It was agreed that the short sharp review should be undertaken and it should commence after the local elections in May 2024.

It was recorded that Councillors Ashley, Harvey, Marshall, and Spilsbury (proposer of the Motion) had expressed provisional interest in joining the review group. This would be subject to agreement of Members in the new municipal year.

RESOLVED that

the Short, Sharp Review of Post-16 Education be undertaken, with the review to commence in the new municipal year (after May 2024).

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

The Executive Committee Work Programme was submitted for Members' consideration.

It was noted that the Executive report on Future Plans for Auxerre House would not be considered by Executive Committee and available for pre-scrutiny until the new municipal year.

RESOLVED that

the contents of the Executive Committee's Work Programme be noted.

85. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

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

RESOLVED that

the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

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

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

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

Councillor Kane reported that the last meeting of the Working Group took place on Monday 5th February, at which reports on the pay policy, non-domestic discretionary rate relief policy were scrutinised in addition to the Tranche 2 report for Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-25 to 2026-27 and the Finance Recovery Plan Update.

Councillor Kane explained that the two pertinent challenges facing the Council at the moment were high levels of vacancies against establishment and the need to review the establishment to ensure employee and departmental budgets were at the right level. Clearing the backlog of the unaudited statements of accounts for the Council for years 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23 was another

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key challenge, which needed to be addressed in the context of delays to audits of local bodies accounts across the country.

It was noted that clarification would be sought from the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer regarding which of the Council's outstanding statements of accounts had been provided to date to the external auditors and when this took place. A communication would be sent out to Members regarding this.

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

Councillor Holz reported that the next two meetings of the Working Group were due to take place on 5th and 12th March respectively.

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

Councillor Khan reported that the last meeting on 8th February, the Task Group received a presentation from Birmingham City Council's Portfolio Holder for Environment, Councillor Majid Mahmood, on Birmingham's Mobile Household Recycling scheme. The date for the next meeting was currently being arranged.

87. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS

Councillor Marshall provided a verbal update on the meeting of Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) which took place earlier today (19th February 2024). Some of the matters highlighted as discussed at that meeting were:

- Patient access to GP appointments – It was reported at the HOSC meeting that across Hertfordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System area, there were 19 per cent more GP appointments offered than in the pre-pandemic period (this figure included telephone appointments). It was noted that the HOSC Members challenged officers on this point stating that it was still extremely difficult to receive face-to-face appointments.
- Support doctors at GP surgeries – It was noted that there were plans to provide availability of specialist doctors at GP surgeries to offset the need for directing people to Accident & Emergency.
- Section 106 developer contributions – It was reported that at the meeting, officers reported that developer contributions play a significant role in providing capital for the NHS to build new infrastructure and services as communities expand. It

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was during the planning application stage that Section 106 contributions from developments could be directed to health could be directed to health-related matters.

RESOLVED that

the External Scrutiny Bodies updates be noted.

88. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee agreed that exclusion of the press and public was not necessary for item 12 (Minute No. 89) – Minutes of the meeting of 1st February 2024 – as it was agreed that discussion would only concern the accuracy, not the content, of the public and restricted versions of the minutes. Subsequently, when item 12 was under consideration, no discussion took place on the content of the restricted minutes record of the meeting of 1st February 2024.

89. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 1ST FEBRUARY 2024

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1st February 2024 were considered, including the exempt minutes record of the exempt session of that meeting (Minute Item No. 77 – Pre-Decision Scrutiny – Termination of Shared Service Arrangement – North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration). No information regarding the exempt minutes was disclosed or discussed during consideration of this agenda item.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Thursday 1st February 2024 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Meeting commenced at 6.31 pm
and closed at 7.46 pm

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**Overview and Scrutiny
2024meetingdatedm****14th March****Social Housing Repairs**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Craig Warhurst
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Simon Parry – Interim Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services
Report Author	Job Title: Interim Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services Contact Email: simon.parry@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	Finding somewhere to live; Living independent, active, and healthy lives; and Communities which are safe, well maintained, and Green
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS**That Overview and Scrutiny note the contents of the report.****2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Within the work programme for Overview and Scrutiny for 2023/4 an item for Social Housing repairs was identified. To provide an update based on a range of key questions. The following sets out those questions and provides a response updating members on progress across Repairs and the wider Housing Revenue Account Capital Investment Programme.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 **What is the process the tenant goes through to report an issue to Repairs and Maintenance Team?**

There are multiple ways that a tenant can currently report a repair to their council house including by telephone, email, online, in person. We are also looking to provide a portal for individual tenants that will allow

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them to report issues as well as view details about their properties and statements of account including rents.

In order to receive, allocate and manage the requests for service from our tenants, within the Housing Property Services Team, we have the Business Support Unit (BSU). They carry out a range of functions to support the delivery of our repairs, voids and adaptations services including answering telephone calls, monitoring emails, work allocational and scheduling, as well as ordering materials from suppliers. Their primary purpose therefore is to receive the issues raised by tenants through several formats as follows.

3.1.1 Telephone

We have a dedicated telephone number for our tenants to call for repairs including general repairs, gas related repairs and gas servicing queries. Since June 2023 we have had a dedicated, permanent team who have been responsible for call handling and this has seen a sharp increase in performance levels, as well as a significant reduction in complaints, prior to this period, regarding wait times and general poor service.

Tel: **01527 534074**

Our Normal Working Hours are

9-5 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

9-4 Wednesdays

In the event of any of Emergency related issues outside of the normal working hours including weekends and bank holidays then the telephone number is **01527 67666**

3.1.2 Emails

We also have a dedicated email address rm.xgates@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk which is monitored by the BSU team and responses given as appropriate based on the request/content.

We clearly also receive emails from advocates including Local Councillors through a range of emails directly to officers or our Housing.enquiries@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk . This latter email is for the use of Members only and should not be given to members of the public. This allows the Housing Team to track individual responses

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and to identify any performance issues related primarily to lateness of responses and or trends.

3.1.3 *Online*

Through our website there are forms that can be filled in for repairs which contains a range of information requests including

- Name
- Address
- Contact Details - Telephone Number and Email
- Details of the repair required
- Dates and times where the tenant is unavailable
- What room is affected
- To underpin this information the tenant can attach photographs

There is a similar form that can be used specifically for gas repairs.

Also, on our website, as you move to the online form, there is a Repairs Handy Hint digital booklet. This provides information to tenants on terminology, to more accurately identify the type of repair required, as well as providing information on tenant's responsibilities and general handy hints.

A link to the "report a repair" page and the digital booklet is here [Report a repair - redditchbc.gov.uk](https://redditchbc.gov.uk)

The website also includes information related to out of hours emergency repairs which include

- **Gas Escapes,**
- **Exposed live electrical cables,**
- **Severe water leaks**
- **Major drainage problems**

3.1.4 *Other methods*

Whilst tenants could also visit any of our Council Offices and report any repairs in person, all of the above methods will provide a more timely response to the issues raised.

Similarly, a tenant may wish to write a letter, these could be addressed to Crossgates House, Crossgate Road, Park Farm Industrial Estate, Redditch, B98 7SN.

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Again, in the interests of ensuring the issue is dealt with as quickly as possible we advocate any of the other methods to provide a timely response.

3.2 How long does it currently take, on average, to respond to repair queries /and then undertake the repair?

The Council has established three categories of responsive repair:

- Emergency 2 hrs
- Urgent 5 working days
- Routine 20 working days

3.2.1 *Emergency repairs*

Those that need to be carried out to avoid serious danger to the health and safety of the occupants or where a failure to carry out the repair could cause extensive damage to buildings and property. The Council, or a suitable appointed contractor, will attend emergency repairs within two hours of receipt of the call.

3.2.2 *Urgent repairs*

Those that impact on tenants if not dealt with in the appropriate timescales including

- partial loss of electric power partial loss of water supply
- total or partial loss of space or water heating between 30th April and 1st November
- blocked sink, bath or basin, tap which cannot be turned
- loose or detached banister or handrail, rotten timber flooring or stair tread
- leaking roof
- door entry phone not working
- mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working

3.2.3 *Routine repairs*

These will be assessed and prioritised however these typically do not pose an immediate risk to health and safety nor imminent danger to the structure and will be attended to at a time suitable to the tenant within the parameters of resource availability and the target timescales.

3.3 How can the Council improve its repair turnaround times?

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Within Housing Property Services there are a number of actions taking place and planned to further improve service delivery to ensure that we deliver a modern, efficient, customer focussed repairs service. The service needs to be accessible by all users, easy to contact, responsive and to provide updates/information about our tenants repairs current status. The key actions identified cover a range of areas including recruitment, training, review of processes, implementation of new systems and performance measures in order to improve service delivery.

3.3.1 Recruitment

Currently there is a round of recruitment being undertaken which will see, as with the Business Support Unit, a range of roles being recruited into on a permanent basis. This covers our trade operatives, supervisors, management and administrative support for the teams. This will allow us to further build on the progress that has been made regarding morale, output and standards. As part of this we want to ensure we have a committed workforce who treat our customers and their homes with respect, are tidy and undertake their work to high standards.

3.3.2 Training

We are also developing a robust training programme for the team so that individual's skills are improved reducing the need for follow up trades or more than one operative to be booked for a job. We will undertake a skills matrix when all recruitment is complete in order to establish current skills sets and identify areas for further development and or training.

3.3.3 Systems

We currently operate a diary system for our trade operatives which is labour intensive and has limited flexibility. We are working with our partner Total Mobile Solutions to configure their Mobilise and Connect ICT systems. These systems will provide each of the operatives with the ability to work in a more mobile way, receiving their jobs via a mobile device, rather than the current paper-based systems. This functionality will allow real time updates for each job to understand when it was completed, if there is a need for follow up works or there was no access. The system will then provide updates and reports on individual performance as well as the whole team.

This in turn will increase productivity by removing the need for manual intervention and updates to systems that currently exists which will

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then create greater capacity to deliver services. This system will also provide timely updates to our customers by alerting them, via contact details held, that the operative is on the way, has arrived, finished or was unable to access to complete the works. Where the latter exists the system will provide a new appointment date and time which the tenant will receive via their preferred communication route.

The Connect software allows us to have a comprehensive job management system delivered via a dashboard. It will allow more automated systems for our materials management including the material kept on the vans from which our operatives work, minimising the impact of not having the right materials on the van at the time of carrying out the work.

3.3.4 *Review of processes*

There are ongoing reviews of the various processes in operation to deliver the service, some will be remodelled as a consequence on the implementation of the Total Mobile Solution however in the interim we are working with the teams to understand how we can remove duplication. One such area is the volume of pre inspections undertaken. At the start of the repairs process it is imperative to gather as much information upfront from tenants in order to schedule more accurately the time required to undertake works rather than our current over reliance on pre inspections by one of our senior tradesperson or operatives.

Our Senior Trades who undertake a range of tasks including supervision of the operatives, will be undertaking more post work inspections in order to ensure that the quality of work is to the required standards.

With access critical to the success of our service we want to minimise the number of visits needed to complete the repair.

3.3.5 *Data review*

We are looking to undertake more data analysis to understand from our systems the number of times that repairs have been undertaken to properties in order to establish key course of actions including, instead of multiple repairs, whether an element e.g. a roof, requires replacement. We have stock condition data that assists us with this and will be shortly commencing a rolling programme of stock condition surveys that will see 20% of our stock reviewed each year in order to update data that assists in creating our planned programmes of capital investment.

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3.3.6 Customer Feedback

We are looking to work on developing our systems to enable a customer satisfaction for each repair to be undertaken in order to use this data to influence our service delivery.

In September 2022 the RSH launched a 'Tenant Satisfaction measures' (TSM) document which places a responsibility on all social housing landlords in England to return performance information, so that each provider can be assessed for how well it is providing good quality homes and services. This is part of the strategy to improve services for people living in social housing that is covered by the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.

The TSM document sets out 22 measures covering 5 themes.

1. Keeping Properties in good repair
2. Maintaining Building Safety
3. Respectful and helpful engagement
4. Effective handling of complaints
5. Responsible neighbourhood management

Of the 22 measures they are split between those that the landlord is required to measure directly (10 No.) and those that are measured by tenant perception surveys (12 No.)

These tenant perception surveys will be sent out to all tenants that have provided us with a mobile phone number to undertake this short survey. We will also be providing hard copies for those tenants that wish to undertake the survey in those way and will also be asking customers who contact the council to assess if they would undertaken the survey over the phone. For those with internet access our website will have a link to the survey that our tenants can also complete.

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TP - Measured by doing tenant perception surveys
TP01: Overall satisfaction
TP02: Satisfaction with repairs
TP03: Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair
TP04: Satisfaction that the home is well maintained
TP05: Satisfaction that the home is safe
TP06: Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them
TP07: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them
TP08: Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect
TP09: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints
TP10: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained
TP11: Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods
TP12: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour

3.3.7 Performance

More robust performance reporting for individuals and teams will be provided through the new systems being implemented and will be used through formal, regular meetings undertaken with operational managers.

3.4 What is the system for prioritising repairs so that more urgent repairs are given priority and attended to?

The priority of repairs is as set out above at 3.2 and is a standard that is used commonly across the Social Housing Sector.

3.5 Policy details regarding damage caused to Council properties – including for damage caused by tenants, the Repairs and Maintenance Team and the contractors?

3.5.1 Damage Caused by tenants

The Council approved a new Rechargeable Repairs Policy which sets out Housing Property Services. This policy sets out RBC's approach to recharging for repairs in and clearances from within the property, its boundary, gardens, and any communal spaces and are deemed by

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RBC to be the responsibility of the licensee, tenant, lessee, or former tenant due to:

- Neglect
- Wilful damage
- Hoarding
- Termination or transfer of tenancy

The tenant will be provided with opportunity and a reasonable amount of time to either undertake the repair themselves to a satisfactory standard to RBC or elect to have RBC complete the repair at the current rate.

Repairs will always be recharged in accordance with the current National Schedule of Rates (SOR) plus a fair and reasonable administration charge as agreed in Fees and Charges.

In an emergency situation (defined by an incident requiring emergency repairs to be undertaken because there is a risk to life, of serious injury or any effect on health and safety or property or persons) and it is deemed by RBC that such a situation has been caused by the agreement holder knowingly failing to report a repair, or giving access in accordance with Repairs Policy, then RBC will recharge all the costs to the responsible agreement holder, including gaining entry and / or repairing the property or properties to the responsible agreement holder.

When a tenancy is legally terminated by either party to the agreement, the ending tenancy procedure will usually be followed. This would usually include a recorded inspection or inspections of the entire property and communal areas by RBC officers within the legal notice period, to identify repairs and / or clearances that are or would have been the agreement holder's responsibility, again giving the agreement holder the opportunity to rectify the identified potentially rechargeable repairs themselves, to RBC satisfaction, or elect for RBC to complete and recharge during the notice period or after moving out.

RBC reserves the right to charge and will always attempt to secure payment in advance, in full for some repairs deemed to be rechargeable before they are undertaken.

However, RBC acknowledges that some agreement holders will be too vulnerable or not in a financial position to pay in advance in part or in

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full. Where this is deemed to genuinely be the case and / or further damage might be caused to the neighbours or their property, the Housing Revenue Team will be notified promptly to raise the outstanding charge and pursue it in accordance with the Housing Revenue Management Policy.

Examples of the items that are rechargeable are included in the table below:

Trade	Work detail
General	Gain Entry or where a warrant is required
General	Call out charge or make safe + the repair work undertaken
General	Boarding up window or door - Small, Medium & Large
Glazing	Replace single glazed 6mm thick glass pane – S, M or L
Glazing	Replace 28mm double glazed unit - window or door (all sizes)
Plumbing	Unblock sinks, wash basin, bath, or WC
Plumbing	Replacing plugs and chains to baths, sinks and wash hand basins
Plumbing	Replace wash hand basin- Inc. fixtures & fittings
Plumbing	Replace WC pan & cistern - Inc. fixtures & fittings
Plumbing	Replace bath - Inc. fixtures & fittings (not Inc. bath panel)
Plumbing	Replace bath panel
Plumbing	Replace stainless steel sink Inc. F&F
Plumbing	Blocked drainage systems and soil stacks
Plumbing	Replace toilet seat
Carpentry	Replace keys and locks to doors, windows, and garages if they are lost or stolen
Carpentry	Replace lost or stolen key fobs
Carpentry	Replace kitchen unit draw or door
Carpentry	Replace cupboard latches and handles
Carpentry	Repair kitchen unit draw or door
Carpentry	Replace internal doors - none fire door 110/door
Carpentry	Replace external doors (UVPC) - None Fire Door
Carpentry	Replace Wooden door - Fire door Inc. Intumescent strips
Carpentry	Replace door handles and latches (internal doors only)
Electrics	Replace florescent light fitting and tubes/starters
Electrics	Re-fix or renew electrical accessories - switch, sockets, pendant
Electrics	Replace damaged/broken 240v smoke alarm + new test certificate
Electrics	Disconnect/remove illegal wiring & electrical accessories & reinstate wiring + Tests
Electrics	Carry out electrical test certificate
Gas	Turning gas on following capping
Gas	Rehang radiator

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Gas	Replace TRV thermostat
Building	Repair Plastering
Building	Repair of walls/patio's
Environmental	Garden maintenance
Environmental	Garden rubbish removal – small
Environmental	Garden rubbish removal - large (skip load/van load)
Environmental	Bulky Waste removal
Environmental	Loft clearances
Environmental	Property Clean - Easy Clean
Environmental	Property Clean - Deep clean
Environmental	Pest control TBC
External	Non Standard Fencing dividing gardens (other than privacy panels)
External	Gate and shed latches, bolts and catches

3.5.2 *Damage caused by the Repairs and Maintenance Team*

Where the Council has either undertaken a repair and or not undertaken a repair that has been requested, and is the Council's responsibility, and there has been an impact on the personal effects of the tenant, then this would be investigated either through the Complaints process or via our claims team. In order to make a complaint, this can be verbally or in writing/email then this will be logged on our systems and investigated by relevant officers at Stage 1. If there is dissatisfaction with the outcome at this stage, then a tenant can progress to a Stage 2 where a senior manager reviews the case and responds accordingly. Should there still be dissatisfaction then the Housing Ombudsman Service will investigate independently.

[Housing complaint or enquiry - redditchbc.gov.uk](https://redditchbc.gov.uk)

Where the case is referred to our Insurance team the link below contains the initial details required to establish a case and for it to be investigated accordingly.

[Submit a claim against the council - redditchbc.gov.uk](https://redditchbc.gov.uk)

3.5.3 *Damage Caused by a contractor*

Where works have been undertaken by a contractor, working on behalf of the Council, and damage is caused directly or indirectly by the works that they have undertaken then the details of the claim will be passed to them to investigate and determine the outcome.

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3.6 Details of specific repairs / upgrades to council properties that the council is prioritising at the moment?

3.6.1 The case and inquest into the death of Awaab Ishak has heightened Damp and Mould cases across the sector and has resulted in consultation and the imminent release of stringent targets regarding these cases. As a consequence of this case over the last 12 months we have undertaken a review of current practices and covered a range of issues included a review of capacity to deliver the works, the products used by our operatives, guidance shared with our tenants and training for staff in identifying mould and damp issues.

3.6.2 Work has been undertaken to carry out mould treatment works to affected properties previously identified. New cases continue to be reported and works are booked in for operatives currently 4 weeks in advance.

3.6.3 Where more complex cases are presented then we utilise mould specialist contractor Quality Eradication Services Today Limited (QUEST) who receive requests to undertake surveys together with associated remedial works.

3.6.4 We have reviewed the training requirements and the treatment that we have traditionally applied in order to ensure it is fit for purpose. Our treatment of properties is principally the removal of mould using anti fungicidal treatments including thereafter the use of anti-fungicidal paints. Moreover, an assessment of ventilation is made regarding trickle vents in windows and also extraction fans. The extractor fans have a humidistat fitted and are activated where humidity levels reach certain levels.

3.6.5 We await the timescales that will be laid down by government in Awaab's Law and will review our operating processes etc at that time to ensure compliance. Whilst we are reliant on our tenants requesting repairs and reporting such cases the stock condition surveys, that are about to commence, will assist in identifying cases that we may be unaware of currently and therefore we will remedy these in due course.

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- 3.7 At its meeting in March 2023 the Council approved a new 30 year Business plan for the Housing Revenue Account. Also included within this report were the Housing Asset management Strategy and a Housing Capital Programme covering 2023-2027. A stock condition survey covering 20% of the Council's housing stock has been commissioned and is due to start shortly as part of refreshing our data to inform future investment requirements
- 3.7.1 The Housing Capital Programme set out a range of Budget lines to improve our Social Housing Stock. This £40m programme was built up of a range of projects and contracts, the following provides a brief overview of some of the key projects and budget lines.
- 3.7.2 The Internal Refurbishment contract has two contractors operating in defined geographical areas (East/West). The scope of works are all 4 main internal elements, Kitchens, bathrooms, Rewires and Gas Central Heating. The works will be individualised based on the stock condition information and surveys undertaken and will contain any combination of these four key elements. Works have progressed well with the new contractors having recently passed the 100th Kitchen to be replaced.
- 3.7.3 Over the last 3 years the Gas Team have reviewed the boilers we have in our housing stock and identified many boilers that were over 10 years old, inefficient and with parts hard to acquire. Over this time more than 1,000 boilers have been replaced for more efficient boilers to assist our tenants with their heating bills.
- 3.7.4 To improve the energy efficiency of our housing stock, Housing Property Services has been successful in attracting external government funding (Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund - SHDF) of over £1.6m to move property Energy Performance Certificate ratings to C or above by undertaking insulation measures including loft, cavity and external wall insulation where applicable.
- 3.7.5 In order to improve security across our low-rise blocks of flats a programme of door entry replacement has been undertaken in the Batchley area with an ongoing programme of replacement continuing across the Borough.

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- 3.7.6 Ensuring our tenants feel and remain safe within their homes is an important issue and therefore we have been undertaking a series of projects covering gas servicing, electrical installation checks, smoke detection and carbon monoxide detection installations across the Borough.
- 3.7.7 We have a programme of fire prevention upgrades including fire stopping measures and fire door replacements. These works have been focused on our previous sheltered housing schemes where some of our most vulnerable customers live. Ongoing works across various blocks also includes freshening and modernising the decorations and carpeting in the communal areas of these blocks.
- 3.7.7 One of our key priorities over the last 18 months has been to ensure that tenants identified through Occupational Therapist assessment have the adaptations to allow them to live independently. Working with both our internal team and an external contractor we have delivered all category 1 adaptations i.e. those with an immediate need. These works have primarily involved level access showers alongside other measures such as grab rails, second stair rails, stairlifts, ramps and door widening where identified.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The budgets within the Housing Revenue Account and HRA Capital Programme form part of the budget setting programme.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The HRA consists of expenditure on Council owned assets, primarily its Housing. There is a statutory requirement that the Council is obliged to keep its Housing Revenue Account separate from other housing activities in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended).
- 5.2 The Council has a duty to disclose specified information in relation to the HRA and its operation under the Housing Revenue Account (Accounting Practices) Directions 2016.
- 5.3 In November 2020 MHCLG (now DLUHC) published guidance on the operation of the Housing Revenue Account ring-fence and highlighted the need to be fair to both tenants and council taxpayers and that there

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should be a fair and transparent apportionment of costs between the HRA and General Fund.

- 5.4 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a system of Council Housing finance which replaced the HRA subsidy system with self-financing arrangements.
- 5.5 In October 2018 the HRA borrowing cap was abolished allowing local authorities the opportunity to borrow against expected rental income in accordance with the CIPFA Prudential Code 2021 (as amended).

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**Relevant Strategic Purpose**

- 6.1 The contents of this report support the following strategic priorities.
- Finding somewhere to live;
 - Living independent, active, and healthy lives; and
 - Communities which are safe, well maintained, and Green

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 The Government's Clean Growth Strategy 2017 and Heat and Buildings Strategy 2021 sets a target for social housing providers to achieve a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of C by 2030 for all fuel poor properties together with a target to make all homes 'net zero carbon' by 2050.

Improving the Energy Efficiency of our Housing Stock, together with lowering the impact on the climate, are key drivers within the Asset management Strategy with a target of ensuring all of our properties meet a minimum Energy Performance Certificate Rating of C.

- 6.3 The Capital Programme is established to ensure our properties remain compliant with the Decent Homes standard as well as providing thermal comfort through increased Energy performance.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 Understanding the profile and needs of tenants will give greater insight into how specific requirements can be addressed and funded. The ongoing implementation of the new Housing System will assist in the development of a robust and detailed tenant profile, in conjunction with planned tenant engagement and wider local demographic data.

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- 6.5 There are positive equalities implications resulting from the plan of works being delivered including the focus on heating, thermal efficiency, and window replacement, which will benefit physical health and wellbeing, those with long term conditions or disabilities and people in fuel poverty or struggling with the cost of living. The provision for aids and adaptations will also support people with a disability to remain, and remain independent, in their properties.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 A large proportion of the works identified to improve our council housing stock is reliant on the capacity and performance of contractors. Good Contract and performance management will allow us to understand and manage this risk.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Warhurst	01/03/2024
Head of Service	Guy Revans	04/03/2024
Financial Services	Peter Carpenter	06/03/2024
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings.	06/03/2024
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	N/A	

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* 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 April 2024 to 31 July 2024

(published as at 1st March 2024)



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

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 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
* Future Plans for Auxerre House Key: Yes	Executive Not before 1st Jun 2024 Council Not before 1st Jun 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 Ext 3201
Finance and Performance Monitoring Outturn Report 2023/24 Key: No	Executive Not before 1st Jun 2024 Council Not before 1st Jun 2024		Report of the Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan Annual Review Key: No	Executive 26 Nov 2024 Council 27 Jan 2025		Report of the Head of Community and Housing Services	Matthew Eccles, Climate Change Manager

Overview & Scrutiny

Committee

14th March 2024**WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24**

Date of Meeting	Subject Matter	Officer(s) / Member(s) Responsible for report
ALL MEETINGS	REGULAR ITEMS	(CHIEF EXECUTIVE)
	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

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14th March 2024

MEETING DATE	ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED	RELEVANT LEAD
14 th March 2024	Overview – Social Housing Repairs	Simon Parry, Acting Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services

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Working Groups:

- **Budget Scrutiny Working Group**

MEETING DATE	ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED
11 th March 2024	Finance and Performance Quarter 3 Report 2023/24

- **Performance Scrutiny Working Group**

MEETING DATE	ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED
5 th March 2024	Temporary Accommodation update Social Housing – Voids / Waiting Lists (Social Housing Repairs to be covered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
12 th March 2024	Tree Maintenance Place Teams

Task Groups

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

The next meeting of the Group is to take place on Tuesday 19th March 2024.

- **Post-16 Education Task Group**

The overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that this Task Group should commence in the new municipal year (after May 2024).

- **Speeding and Road Safety Task Group**

This is the next Task Group waiting to be started, after the above exercises have been concluded. 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 can commence.

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