



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Mon 14 Oct  
2024  
6.30 pm

Oakenshaw Community Centre,  
Castleditch Lane, Redditch, B98 7YB

**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**

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

### **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 flu 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 flu 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

Monday, 14th October, 2024

6.30 pm

Oakenshaw Community Centre

## Agenda

### Membership:

Cllrs:	Matthew Dormer (Chair)	Joanna Kane
	Craig Warhurst (Vice-Chair)	Sachin Mathur
	William Boyd	David Munro
	Claire Davies	Rita Rogers
	Andrew Fry	

### 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 speak to the Committee.

### 4. Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy - Pre-Scrutiny

The report will follow in a supplementary pack for the meeting after the report has been published for the meeting of Executive Committee (due for publication on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October).

### 5. Proposed Reconfiguration of Adult Mental Health Inpatient and Rehabilitation Services and Closure of Hillcrest Ward in Redditch

As per the resolution agreed by Overview and Scrutiny on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024, the Chairman of Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and the representative from Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust (H&W NHS Trust) have been invited to attend to discuss the subject of the reconfiguration of Adult Mental Health Inpatient and Rehabilitation Services, Redditch, and the closure of Hill Crest Ward.

### 6. Post-16 Education Task Group - Draft Scoping Document (Pages 7 - 8)

The Committee is asked to consider the Terms of Reference for the Post-16 Education Task Group.

# Overview and Scrutiny

Monday, 14th October, 2024

## **7. Executive Committee Minutes and Scrutiny of the Executive Committee's Work Programme - Selecting Items for Scrutiny (Pages 9 - 32)**

## **8. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 33 - 38)**

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

- a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Warhurst
- b) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Warhurst
- c) Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Task Group – Chair, Councillor Dormer
- d) Post-16 Education Task Group – Chair, Councillor Warhurst

## **10. External Scrutiny Bodies - Update Reports**

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

## **11. Exclusion of the Public and Press**

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 1 – any individual;
- Para 2 – the identity of any individual;
- Para 3 – financial or business affairs;

# Overview and Scrutiny

Monday, 14th October, 2024

- Para 4 – labour relations matters;
- Para 5 – legal professional privilege;
- Para 6 – a notice, order or direction;
- Para 7 – the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime;  
and may need to be considered as ‘exempt’.

## **12. Minutes** (Pages 39 - 70)

The minutes of the meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committee which took place on 29<sup>th</sup> August and 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024 will be considered at this meeting.

Please be advised that should Members wish to discuss the content of the exempt records of these meetings, the Committee will need to consider moving into private session and exclude the public and press from participation in this part of the meeting.

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**Scrutiny Proposal Form**

(This form should be completed by sponsoring Member(s), Officers and / or members of the public when proposing an item for Scrutiny).

**Note:** The matters detailed below have not yet received any detailed consideration. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee reserves the right to reject suggestions for scrutiny that fall outside the Borough Council's remit.

Proposer's name and designation	Councillor Jane Spilsbury	Date of referral	04 March 2024
Proposed topic title	Review of Post-16 education provision		
Link to local priorities including the strategic purposes	Run and grow a successful business Aspiration, work and financial independence  Improving outcomes for young people in terms of education, employment and training (EET)		
Background to the issue	Redditch Borough Council seeks to review the range of post-16 provision to ensure that residents of all ages are able to access a broad offer of courses from level 2 to level 4 and beyond in the immediate area of Redditch.		
Key Objectives Please keep to SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)	To compile a register of the range of current post-16 education provision; To gather views of local residents, including pupils, students and parents and carers about the quality and breadth of the current offer; To gather views from local businesses of the necessary knowledge and skills for employment; To identify any gaps in provision; To gather views from local post-16 providers to identify capacity and potential to deliver courses to address identified needs; To make recommendations to Redditch Borough Council on how best to take forward the findings to enhance provision and improve education employment and training outcomes for young people in Redditch.		
How long do you think is needed to complete this exercise? (Where possible please estimate the number of weeks, months and meetings required)	It is anticipated that this review will take no more than 3 months.		

Please return this form to: Democratic Services Officers, Redditch Borough Council, Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH  
Email: [democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

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# Executive Committee

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Tuesday, 3rd September,  
2024

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Joe Baker (Chair), Councillor Sharon Harvey (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Wanda King, Jen Snape, Jane Spilsbury, Monica Stringfellow and Ian Woodall

### Officers:

Peter Carpenter, Nicola Cummings, Anne-Marie Harley, Sue Hanley and Judith Willis

### Democratic Services Officers:

Jo Gresham

### 21. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Barker Smith and B. Hartnett.

### 22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 23. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader welcomed all those present to the meeting. Members were advised that a number of Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings had taken place since the previous meeting of the Executive Committee.

At the Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2024, Members had pre-scrutinised the Award of a Contract to Upgrade the Town Hall and Update on Towns Fund report, which was due to be considered at the

Chair

Executive Committee meeting that evening. No recommendations had been made as a result of this pre-scrutiny.

In addition to this report, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also pre-scrutinised the Shopmobility report, also considered at the Executive Committee meeting that evening. Members were advised that there had been no recommendations made during pre-scrutiny of this report. However, there had been some conditions noted during their discussions. The conditions would need to be considered when this report was discussed later in the meeting.

Furthermore, at a meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2024, Members had pre-scrutinised the following reports:

- Quarter 1 Finance and Performance Monitoring report
- Finance Recovery report
- Initial Budget Setting report.

It was noted that no recommendations had been made by Members following pre-scrutiny of these reports

The Leader thanked all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Budget Scrutiny Working Group for their hard work in pre-scrutinising these reports prior to their consideration at this meeting. It was stated that the scrutiny work undertaken by Members was valued and an important part of the decision-making process.

#### **24. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED that**

**The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024 be approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.**

#### **25. REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL REBRAND**

The Communications & Marketing Manager presented the Redditch Borough Council Rebrand report for Members' consideration. In doing so it was reported that the current logo had been in use since 2009 and it had been thought that it was an appropriate time to

implement a refresh of the branding to demonstrate the direction of travel for the Council going forward and to create a fresh modern look.

In consultation with the Leader and the Deputy Leader, several ideas had been presented by Officers and were considered carefully before the final version was identified, as presented to Members at this meeting.

The Executive Committee was informed that the colour palette of the new logo was inspired by the Redditch Palette which had been shaped through a number of community workshops where the colours had been chosen. It was also noted that the colours were also reminiscent of the colours seen in the Kingfisher a notable symbol of the Town. In addition, the new logo contained an image of a needle and spring. This also reflected the heritage of Redditch.

The rebranding had been designed in-house by Officers, and it was planned that there would be a staggered roll out of the logo in order to save on the costs of a large-scale immediate roll out. This would result in letterheads, systems, and digital versions of the logo being updated very quickly. However, it was noted that the Council logo could also be found in a very large number places across the Town, such as on waste bins, work wear and livery on vehicles. These would be replaced when needed, therefore money would not need to be spent on a large scale, immediate roll out. However, this would result in an ongoing project that could take some time to implement fully.

The Communications & Marketing Manager explained that communications were planned in the local press and on social media to inform residents of the changes in order for them to be able to identify that a rebrand was being undertaken. Customer Services officers were also available in order to advise residents who contacted the Council with any concerns.

Following the presentation of the report Members expressed their sincere thanks to Officers for all of their hard work in preparing the modern and fresh rebranding so quickly and Members were excited to see the logo in the community. Members were particularly pleased with the wording also included in the new logo; 'Working Together for our Communities'. This highlighted the importance of

listening to communities and reflected inclusion and collaborative working for the future.

It was also noted that the costs had been very low by utilising the in-house design team skills and that this had also been a positive outcome of this work.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) The new logo for Redditch Borough Council be formally adopted; and**
- 2) The staggered roll-out and implementation of the branding programme be launched immediately.**

**26. QUARTER 1 REVENUE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2024/25**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Quarter One Revenue and Performance Monitoring 2024/25 report for the consideration of the Executive Committee.

In considering the report, Members were asked to note the current Revenue overspend of £164,000. This overspend was mainly due to the current issues being experienced with the Council's fleet, which Members were aware of. Another area that had impacted on the overspend was the pay award which was yet to be ratified. It was noted that there were mitigations being put in place in order to address the overspend and that the Government had indicated the potential of any pay award amount being covered through Central Government funding.

There was also a projected overspend of £2.79m across service areas. This overspend would be offset by additional income of £2.46m in Corporate Financing from additional grant income of £1.18m together with increased investment interest receivable of £260,000 and lower interest payable of £386,000.

Members were advised that the current expenditure in the Capital Programme was £1.28m and that the Council was in a strong position in terms of the Earmarked Reserves which were currently at £5.242m.

# Executive Committee

Tuesday, 3rd September, 2024

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Members were informed that, as part of the Capital Programme a project was underway in order to improve the Arrow Valley Country Park Visitors' Centre. The capital funding for this project would be £350,000 in the first year with a further £100,000 in the next financial year. However, it was proposed that the £100,000 be brought forward to allow the works to be carried out earlier and in the 'quieter' period for the park in order to maximise income on the improved facilities in the Spring / Summer of 2025 and increase engagement with communities at the Arrow Valley Country Park Visitors' Centre.

It was further noted that the Housing Revenue Account was in a strong position, however there may need to be some variances to a number of budget lines as a result of some areas that would need to be addressed such as structural repairs and electrical upgrades.

Also included in the report was the Council's debt and borrowing position for Quarter One. This outlined how the Council was using its working Capital as well as the Council's Prudential Indicators. It was noted that only one of the prudential indicators had been non complaint. This was a short-term loan between Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council. Members were informed that this loan had been repaid at the start of Quarter Two.

Members attention was drawn to the information included in terms of the Procurement Pipeline and the contracts expected to be reprocured and new procurement projects. There were currently fourteen contracts between the threshold of £50,000 and the new key-decision threshold of £200,000 and a further fourteen contracts over the new key-decision threshold of £200,000. With a further thirteen contracts procured by Bromsgrove District Council on behalf of Redditch Borough Council all of which related to ICT contracts.

The Performance Measures information included within the report on the whole presented a positive picture for the Council. Areas of particular note were the increase in take up of startup business grants, the increase in residents accessing energy advice and the staff retention rates which continued to be higher than the national average.

Following the presentation of the report, Members reiterated that mitigations were in place to address the current £164,000

# Executive Committee

Tuesday, 3rd September, 2024

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overspend. It was also stated that it seemed sensible to agree the proposal that the funds be released for the upgrade at the Arrow Valley Country Park Visitors' Centre which would be beneficial for the next busy season in 2025.

It was also noted that the engagement with young people was positive, and this was an area where Members hoped would continue to improve into the future.

**RESOLVED to note:**

- 1) **The current Revenue overspend position of £164k and actions the Council was taking to mitigate this position.**
- 2) **The current Capital spending of £1.28m against a budget of £20.5m.**
- 3) **The HRA Position.**
- 4) **That the balance sheet monitoring position, including the Treasury position.**
- 5) **There was an updated procurement position set out, with any new items over £200k to be included on the forward plan.**
- 6) **The Q1 Performance data for the Period April to March 2024 and that this might change over the year to link into the new Administrations priorities.**

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 7) **There be an advancement of £100k of Capital projects for Rubicon.**

**27. FINANCIAL RECOVERY PROGRAMME REPORT**

The Deputy Chief Executive present the Financial Recovery Programme for Members' consideration.

Included in the report was information regarding the process the Council had been following since the implementation of the new financial system in 2021; and discussions undertaken following the issuing of the Section 24 Notice Statutory Recommendations that had taken place at the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and at Executive and Council in November and December 2022 and 2023.

# Executive Committee

Tuesday, 3rd September, 2024

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Of the six Statutory Recommendations only one serious weakness remained, which was in relation to the opening balances linked to the budget which should be resolved with the delivery of the Accounts. All other Recommendations had been mitigated. Members were informed that there was one new Key Recommendation linked to the Organisational Capability and Capacity which, it was reported, would be mitigated by the Council's Workforce Strategy currently being implemented.

Since the previous Finance Recovery report there had been several areas to note. These were as follows:

1. Financial monitoring had been undertaken on TechOne (the Council's finance system).
2. The 2020/2021 Accounts had been passed through public inspection. However, it was still unclear as to when these Accounts would be audited.
3. The continuation of the monthly Accounts Payable training.
4. The recruitment of the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services in April 2024.
5. The appointment of four new members of the Finance team and interviews for five more officers to join the team. This would reduce the reliance on agency staff in the future.

The Executive Committee were informed that some actions had been agreed by the Councils' external auditors which included the presentation of the draft Accounts of 2021/22 and 2022/23 at the next meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in late September 2024. However, there was the caveat that these would be presented without the 2020 or 2021/22 Audit adjustments.

It was highlighted that the new Minister of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government had written to Local Councils in July 2024 and noted the unacceptable number of unaudited accounts, the number of which was likely to continue to rise to one thousand later in 2024. In order to rectify this, the Minister would implement secondary legislation to introduce a backstop date for financial years up to and including 2022/23 of 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

Any updates in this area would be reported to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and then on to the Executive Committee.

Following the presentation of the reports Members were pleased with the further clarity provided in respect of the Accounts for previous years. They also noted that the TechOne implementation, although difficult in the first instance, it was now working well and this was a sophisticated system that provided effective planning for the finance status of the Council.

**RESOLVED to note:**

**1) The progress made on the financial recovery including:**

- **Delivery of the Statutory Accounts.**
- **Delivery of Statutory Financial Returns.**
- **Improvements in the Control Environment.**

**2) The work still under way to move back to a best practice operation and the associated timetable for completion of this work, as contained in this report.**

**28. INITIAL BUDGET SETTING REPORT**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Initial Budget Setting report for Members' consideration.

In doing so, it was noted that the report set out the process which Officers planned to undertake in two-phases for 2025/26 to 2027/28. This had been the process in the previous two financial years and had resulted in quicker implementation of the budget proposals.

Members were informed that the new Chancellor of the Exchequer had issued a statement on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024 that had set the date of the next Budget for 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and had commissioned a forecast from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) for this date. This would involve a significant amount of work. It was thought that the next Local Government settlement would be for one year, however it was hoped that in future years this would be a three-year settlement providing more stability for Local Authorities.

As part of the Budget statement, it was expected that there would be further information provided regarding increases in public sector pay awards and several other areas such as winter fuel payments,



adult social care caps and council tax reforms. It was expected that there would be significant changes in these areas.

The risks included in the report that were associated with the Budget setting process for 2024/25 to 2026/27 were highlighted for Members information and noted accordingly. However, Officers reported that any risks would be mitigated as much as possible.

Members noted that this was a difficult time for Local Authorities. However, this report provided a positive response for the future.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) The two Phase Budget Process be followed again for the 2025/26 to 2027/28 Medium Term Financial Plan.**

**29. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Treasury Management Outturn Report.

It was explained that the Council had adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the CIPFA Code) which required the Authority to approve, as a minimum, treasury management semi-annual and annual outturn reports. It was noted that this monitoring appeared as part of the regular financial monitoring reports presented to Council on a quarterly basis.

It was important to note that Councils were not permitted to invest for profit and any returns received were used only for operation and regeneration purposes.

The Treasury Management Strategy had been approved by Members in February 2023 and only one indicator had been breached, which as discussed earlier during the course of the meeting was a loan between Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council and this loan had been repaid.

**Executive  
Committee**Tuesday, 3rd September, 2024

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**RECOMMENDED that COUNCIL approve**

- 1) the Council's Treasury performance for the financial year 23/24.
- 2) the position in relation to the Council's Prudential indicators.

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

The Leader explained that there were no outstanding recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members were informed that as a result of the change in Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Councillor Jen Snape would be appointed Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Panel for the remainder of the municipal year.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) Councillor Jen Snape be appointed as the Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Panel for the remainder of the municipal year.

**31. TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE HEAD OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROPERTY SERVICES PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING AND WHICH THE CHAIR, BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, CONSIDERS TO BE OF SO URGENT A NATURE THAT IT CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING**

There was no Urgent Business on this occasion.

**32. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****RESOLVED that**

the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024 be noted.

**33. SHOPMOBILITY FUTURE OPTIONS**

The Assistant Director for Housing and Community Services presented the Shopmobility report for Members' consideration.

It was reported that the service had been operating for thirty-five years in collaboration with the Kingfisher Shopping Centre. Due to the reduction in footfall within the Centre during the Covid-19 pandemic and a recent change of ownership there had been a reduction in the amount funding provided to the Council to support the Shopmobility service.

Members were presented with six potential options for the future running of the service as follows:

That the Shopmobility service:

1. Remained in Car Park 3
2. Be provided from The Canopies
3. Be moved to Kingfisher Retail Unit – 9 George Walk
4. Be transitioned to Kingfisher Shopping Centre
5. Be managed by a third party
6. Ceased to operate

Members were informed that this was an important social function that fed into the Council's priorities and enabled users to get out and about in order for them to live independent and healthy lives.

It was noted that Option Three was the preferred option for the future of the service. This option would enable a broadening of the service, as there would no longer need to be lone working arrangements in place. This option would also result in one officer being in the Shopmobility location and another potentially carrying out assisted shopping duties for residents.

Following the presentation of the report, Members expressed that this was a vital service for residents and highly thought of across the Borough by its users and staff.

Members agreed that Option Three was the most suitable option going forward and that this option would result in an accessible and welcoming location for users. In light of the new logo and rebranding for the Council and its commitment to working with

communities, it was agreed that it was vitally important to protect this service.

The importance of promoting Shopmobility was highlighted by Members, and it was suggested that a campaign of promotion by the Councils' Communications Team be undertaken in the press and on social media in order to inform residents of the changes to the service.

During consideration of this item the Executive Committee reported that there had been a robust debate at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024 regarding this matter. Whereby Members had suggested that as part of the consideration of the report that there should be a review of the service in the future. The Leader suggested that this was part of good governance of any Council service and that a review would be carried out at an appropriate time.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) Redditch Borough Council provide the Shopmobility service from a rented retail unit within the Kingfisher Centre as set out as Option 3 in the report.**

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 2) The additional costs of £46,835 the Shopmobility Service in 2024/25 be met from balances; and**
- 3) The ongoing position be integrated with the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2025/26 process to reflect the additional ongoing costs of £28,835 thereafter.**

**34. AWARD OF A CONTRACT TO UPGRADE THE TOWN HALL AND UPDATE ON TOWNS FUND**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Award of a Contract to Upgrade the Town Hall and Update on Towns Fund report.

Members were reminded that a detailed report had been presented to the Executive Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024 in respect of the updated direction for the Town Hall. At this meeting the decision had been made that the move of Redditch Town Centre Library was

no longer taking place. It was noted that Worcestershire County Council had been informed of this decision. Also included in that report were the implications of the changes to the Town Hall Hub and the potential response from the external auditors and the implications on the Towns Fund projects and funding.

During the presentation of the report was noted that Seddons, who had been contracted previously to carry out the works in the Town Hall, would carry out the design and build for the revised plans. This, it was hoped, would expedite the works.

This report provided an update on the timescales of the revised enabling works and that the costs, which were estimated to be £500,000, subject to confirmation by Seddons. These were significant works and would entail more remediation works prior to the refurbishment and refit. It was noted that there would be some savings made from the original designs, as the major works, such as the staircases would no longer be needed in the new design. These costs would be presented to the Executive Committee in November 2024.

Members were advised that there would be tenants on the lower ground floor, an enhanced facility on the ground and first floor. The second floor would be occupied by a further tenant and Council staff would be located on the third floor.

In terms of the Towns Board projects, there were number of potential options to consider. However the options were limited by cost or deadline to spend the funding, which was 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. It was noted that a request for an extension to Central Government for these projects was currently being made by the Redditch local MP.

Members were informed that all Council buildings were expected to achieve Level 3 energy rating by 2026. It was noted that this was unlikely to be an issue for the Council as it had previously received funding to replace windows and install heat pumps and that these works had been carried out successfully.

Once again, the risks of the changes to the projects were outlined for Members' attention and that some areas of change could be challenged by the external auditors in the future.

Members were pleased to see the changes that had been presented in this report. It was outlined that there had been a significant step change since the new administration had been elected in May 2024 and that this project was exciting and a satisfactory outcome for the residents of Redditch.

Although there was still some uncertainty in terms of funding, Members were comfortable that new tenants would be found to help provide funding in a new, vibrant and exciting new space. The outcome of the chamber remaining on the lower floor of the Town Hall was welcomed by Members and it was hoped that this would become a state-of-the-art facility along with face-to-face customer service with Officers working in the Town Hall again.

In terms of the Towns Fund, alternative options were being considered which would be reported in due course and would result in a positive outcome for the Town.

Following the detailed discussion, it was noted that Claire Felton, Julie Heyes, John Homer and Mark Hanwell had been key Officers in working through the changes to the plans and it was requested that this be noted and placed on record.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) The progress towards the new Town Hall Hub design be noted.**
- 2) Revised works to RIBA stage 4 as per this report be agreed as the best route forward.**
- 3) Work continues to determine the most effective alternative use of the Towns Funding as set out in this report.**
- 4) Members continue to note and approve the consequential risks associated with the revised proposals detailed within this report.**
- 5) Authority be delegated to the Interim Director of Finance and Resources and the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services to enter the consequential contractual arrangements following consultation with the Leader.**

**Executive**  
Committee

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Tuesday, 3rd September, 2024

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 7.55 pm

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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 November 2024 to 28 February 2025**

(Published as at 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024)

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 Joe Baker - Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Governance  
Councillor Sharon Harvey – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services  
Councillor Juliet Barker Smith - Portfolio Holder for Leisure  
Councillor Bill Hartnett - Portfolio Holder for Housing  
Councillor Jen Snape – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change  
Councillor Jane Spilsbury - Portfolio Holder for Performance  
Councillor Monica Stringfellow - Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services  
Councillor Ian Woodall - Portfolio Holder for Finance  
Councillor Wanda King – Executive Member without Portfolio

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
Response to the Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system. <b>Key:</b> No	Council 11 Nov 2024		Report of the Assistant Director of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1325
* Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan Annual Review <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 26 Nov 2024 Council 27 Jan 2025		Report of the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services	Matthew Eccles, Climate Change Manager Tel: 01527 881259
Food Waste Business Case and Associated Waste Related Issues <b>Key:</b> Yes	Executive 26 Nov 2024		Report of the Executive Director (Leisure, Environment and Community Services)	Guy Revans, Executive Director (Leisure, Environment and Community Services) Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3292
Half Yearly Treasury Management Report <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 26 Nov 2024 Council 27 Jan 2025		Report of the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services	Peter Carpenter, Section 15 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205

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
Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 26 Nov 2024		Report of the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services	Amanda Delahunty, Acting Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1269
** Medium Term Financial Plan - Tranche 1 Budget including Fees and Charges (prior to consultation) <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 26 Nov 2024		Report of the Executive Director of Finance and Resources	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
** Q2 Revenue and Performance Monitoring 2024/2025 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 26 Nov 2024		Report of the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
Council Tax Base 2025/2026 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 14 Jan 2025 Council 27 Jan 2025		Report of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205

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 Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 14 Jan 2025 Council 27 Jan 2025		Report of the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070
** Discretionary Reduction - Council Tax Section 13a1(C) Policy <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 14 Jan 2025 Council 27 Jan 2025		Report of the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070
** Final Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/2026 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 14 Jan 2025 Council 27 Jan 2025		Report of the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070
** HRA Rent Setting 2025/26 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 14 Jan 2025 Council 27 Jan 2025		Report of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205

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
* Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendations <b>Key:</b> Yes	Executive 14 Jan 2025 Council 27 Jan 2025		Report of the Deputy Chief Executive	Darren Whitney, Electoral Services Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 2547
** Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Rate Relief Policy <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 14 Jan 2025 Council 27 Jan 2025		Report of the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070
** Medium Term Financial Plan - Tranche 2 Budget including Fees and Charges (following consultation) <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 4 Feb 2025 Council 24 Feb 2025		Report of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
Pay Policy 2025/26 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 4 Feb 2025 Council 24 Feb 2025		Report of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	Becky Talbot, Human Resources and Organizational Development Manager Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3385

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 2025/2026 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 24 Feb 2025 Council 24 Feb 2025		Report of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
* Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report <b>Key:</b> No	Council 24 Feb 2025		Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Mateusz Sliwinski, Democratic Services Officer
** Finance Recovery Programme Report <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 18 Mar 2025		Report of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
** Q3 Revenue and Performance Monitoring 24/5 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 18 Mar 2025		Report of the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070

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
* Shareholders' Committee Annual Report <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 18 Mar 2025  Council Not before 2nd Jun 2025	This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session.	Report of the Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205

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**Overview & Scrutiny**

Committee

14<sup>th</sup> October 2024**WORK PROGRAMME 2024-25**

<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 Consideration of the Executive Committee Work Programme Call-ins (if any) Pre-scrutiny (if any) Task Groups / Short, Sharp Review Groups – feedback Working Groups - feedback Committee Work Programme	Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chair of Task Group / Short, Sharp Review Chair of Working Group Chief Executive

**Overview & Scrutiny**

Committee

14<sup>th</sup> October 2024

MEETING DATE	ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED	RELEVANT LEAD
14 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	Post-16 Education Task Group – Terms of Reference	Democratic Services
14 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy – Pre-Scrutiny	Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services
14 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	Reconfiguration of Adult Mental Health Inpatient and Rehabilitation Services and the Closure of Hill Crest Ward – Invitation to Chairman of Worcestershire HOSC	Assistant Director Community and Housing Services
25 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	Play and Parks Provision – Overview Report	Assistant Director Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services / Parks and Events Service Manager
25 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	Review of Health Inequalities – Revisiting outcomes of previous health inequalities reviews by Redditch Councillors	Democratic Services
25 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan Annual Review – Pre-Scrutiny	Climate Change Manager
13 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendations – Pre-Scrutiny	Electoral Services Manager
3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2025	Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25	Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
18 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	Medium Term Financial Plan – consideration of any recommendations arising from the Budget Scrutiny Working Group	Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
17 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	Shareholders' Committee Annual Report – Pre-Scrutiny	Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer

**Overview & Scrutiny**

Committee

14<sup>th</sup> October 2024**ITEMS IDENTIFIED BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR WHICH DATE IS STILL TO BE SCHEDULED**

MEETING DATE	ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED	RELEVANT LEAD
<b>To be considered when reports on Town Hall appear at Committee</b>	Modelling financial implications of various decisions relating to Redditch Library	Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
<b>TBC</b>	Parking Enforcement – Management of Contract (Executive report to be scrutinised when it becomes available)	Assistant Director Environmental and Housing Property Services
<b>TBC</b>	Water quality and invasive species issues along brooks and streams to the River Arrow	Executive Director
<b>TBC</b>	Decarbonisation of the Council's Capital Programme (via a written update to Overview and Scrutiny Committee)	Assistant Director Environmental and Housing Property Services

**Overview & Scrutiny**

Committee

14<sup>th</sup> October 2024**Working Groups:**

- **Budget Scrutiny Working Group**

MEETING DATE	ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED
21 <sup>st</sup> November 2024	Q2 Revenue and Performance Monitoring 2024/2025  Medium Term Financial Plan – Tranche 1 Budget including Fees and Charges (prior to consultation)
Wed 8 <sup>th</sup> or Thu 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Rate Relief Policy  HRA Rent Setting 2025/26  Final Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26  Discretionary Reduction - Council Tax Section 13a1(C) Policy  Council Tax Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums
29 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	Medium Term Financial Plan – Tranche 2 Budget including Fees and Charges (following consultation)
17 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	TBC
11 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	Q3 Revenue and Performance Monitoring 2024/2025  Finance Recovery Programme Report

# Overview & Scrutiny

## Committee

14<sup>th</sup> October 2024

- **Performance Scrutiny Working Group**

MEETING DATE	ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED
16 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	Upkeep of Verges
11 <sup>th</sup> December 2024	Road Maintenance and Cleanliness
8 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	Tree Maintenance Update

### Task Groups

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

The next meeting is due to be arranged.

- **Post-16 Education Task Group**

First meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024.

- **Speeding and Road Safety Task Group**

Members are asked to note that at the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 (Minute Item 71 (2021-22) Refers), it was agreed to establish this Task Group. Officer research has been undertaken in respect of providing examples of road safety and speeding prevention initiatives at other authorities, however, the group has yet to hold a meeting.

The Committee is asked to note that this group can proceed once the above task groups had concluded. The Scrutiny Proposal Form and Terms of Reference of this Task Group, submitted in February 2022, would need to be approved (or amended) by the Committee prior to this Task Group commencing.

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# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 29th August, 2024

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor Craig Warhurst (Vice-Chair) and Councillors William Boyd, Claire Davies, Joanna Kane, David Munro and Paul Wren

### Also Present:

Councillor Joe Baker (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Ian Woodall (Portfolio Holder for Finance)

### Officers:

Peter Carpenter, Claire Felton and Sue Hanley

### Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley-Hill and Jo Gresham

## 19. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Andrew Fry and Rita Rogers and it was confirmed that Councillor Paul Wren was attending as Councillor Rogers's substitute.

## 20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

## 21. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no registered public speakers on this occasion.

## 22. MINUTES

### RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

Chair

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 29th August, 2024

## 23. 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 paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 of the said act, as amended.**

## 24. **Minute Item No. 24 – Award of a Contract to Upgrade the Town Hall and Update on Towns Fund – Pre-Scrutiny AWARD OF A CONTRACT TO UPGRADE THE TOWN HALL AND UPDATE ON TOWNS FUND - PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer presented a report concerning the awarding of a contract to upgrade the Town Hall and providing an update on the Towns Fund award to Redditch.

The Committee was advised that, following the Executive Committee's decision to endorse the proposals detailed in the previous report on the subject of the Town Hall Hub, which had been considered in July 2024, Officers had completed a number of actions. This had included notifying Worcestershire County Council that the library would no longer be moving into the Town Hall Hub.

The floor designs in the Town Hall Hub had been reviewed. The Council Chamber and civic suite would now remain on the ground floor, rather than moving to the second floor of the building. Some aspects of the previous designs, including the new entrance and additional stairwell, had been removed from the plans, although the building would still be upgraded.

Seddons, the Council's contractor, could continue to undertake work on behalf of the Council under a framework agreement. This would entail a strip out of the building. The Council had also arranged for Seddons to undertake design work for the authority moving forward, as this was considered to be more cost effective than involving additional architects. Final designs were expected to be available by mid-October 2024.

A significant portion of the Towns Funding that had been allocated to Redditch had been due to be allocated to the move of the library



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 29th August, 2024

into the Town Hall. As this would no longer be happening, alternative potential uses of that funding needed to be considered. A number of options had been considered and use of a portion of the funds on public realm works had been identified as a potential suitable route forward. As part of this process, Members were asked to note that up to 20 per cent of the Towns Funding could be allocated to public realm works without the need for further Government approval.

Other options that had been suggested by the former Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) had been:

- To invest the £4.2 million funding in the Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (DMIC).
- To invest in a building that would result in similar outputs to those that had been intended when the library had been due to move into the Town Hall Hub.

The Towns Board was in the process of considering the available options. Members were represented on this Board by Councillor Bill Hartnett. Consideration was being given to requesting an extension for use of the funding and the MP for Redditch was liaising with DLUHC in respect of this matter.

Once the report had been presented, Members discussed the following points in detail:

- The value of the loss of revenue for the Council arising from the decision not to move the library into the Town Hall Hub. Officers clarified that the Council's present ongoing loss of revenue was valued at £220,000 per annum.
- The potential design costs (up to £400,000) that now could not be attributed to the project that would need writing off.
- The potential for the Council to attract tenants in future that would lease space in the Town Hall Hub, thereby helping to address the budget gap.
- The risk that the Council could receive a Section 24 Notice from the external auditors as a consequence of the change to the plans for the Town Hall Hub and use of Towns Funding. Officers confirmed that until agreements had been reached with tenants, this risk remained.
- The extent to which the Council's new external auditors had already been made aware of this situation. Officers confirmed that the new external auditors had been notified but would not issue an official response until they formally took over as the Council's auditors.

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 29th August, 2024

- The fact that the Council would have to write off previous design costs for work undertaken prior to the decision to no longer relocate the library into the Town Hall Hub.
- The division between revenue and capital costs arising from the works on the Town Hall Hub. Members were advised that the strip out costs for the building would be paid for using capital funding as would design costs. Previous design costs that had been written off would need to be paid for from revenue funds.
- The extent to which DLUHC were likely to agree to an extension on the use of the £4.2 million funding originally allocated to the relocation of the library. Officers clarified that DLUHC would require further information about potential schemes before making any decisions.
- The six-month extension that would have needed to have been requested in relation to the previous plans for the Town Hall Hub.
- The level of investment that had already been allocated to public realm works as part of the project.
- The role of Worcestershire County Council in undertaking public realm works and the extent to which allocating further funding for this purpose represented the best use of resources.
- The likelihood that the MP for Redditch would be able to encourage DLUHC to grant an extension. The Leader advised that the MP for Redditch was optimistic about the potential for an extension and Members were asked to note that lots of Councils were requesting extensions, meaning that this was not unusual.
- The possible tenants that might agree leases with the Council for use of office space in the Town Hall. The Committee was informed that there was some optimism about the potential for tenants to be in place by 2026.
- The potential for the current planning application for the DMIC to still be submitted with an alteration subsequently submitted at a later date if an extension was granted for an additional floor, subject to this being the agreed route forward for the use of the existing “library funding”, which would provide more time to work on this option. Officers noted that this would be possible to do, however, the Council would still need to go out to tender in December and that process could be complicated by any changes at a later date to the plans.
- The accessibility of the facilities at the upgraded Town Hall Hub and the potential for a changing places toilet to be installed as part of this process. Members were advised that whilst there would be disabled toilets on site, changing places toilets had not been included in the designs. However,

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

---

Thursday, 29th August, 2024

Members were asked to note that there was a changing places toilet in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre.

- The extent to which the Council's telephone systems in the new Town Hall Hub would be accessible for customers who were deaf and hard of hearing. The Committee was advised that the Equalities Officer at the Council would be consulted on final designs, including in respect of accessibility.
- The requirements in respect of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings for public buildings, which would need to reach a minimum grade C by 2026 and the potential for a valid extension to be applied to the Town Hall Hub. Members questioned why an extension might be required. Officers clarified that the legislation had allowed organisations to apply for extensions in valid circumstances, however, given all of the action that had already been taken to date in respect of energy efficiency at the Town Hall, including in respect of the new windows in the building, it was suggested that this was unlikely to be needed for this building.
- The potential for the civic suite on the ground floor to be used as a conference centre. Officers clarified that the civic suite was unlikely to be large enough to use as a formal conference centre facility.
- The timescales for completion of the works by Seddons and the extent to which these works were likely to be completed according to deadline. Officers explained that the original intention was to complete the works within 46 weeks and Officers were aiming for these timescales to continue to apply.
- The consultation that had been held with the public in respect of the original plans to move the library into the Town Hall Hub.
- The views of younger residents in respect of the future facilities that would be available to access in the town.
- The plans for the public realm and the impact that additional facilities within the town centre could have on the night time economy in particular.
- The vacant units in Redditch, including in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre, and how increased occupancy of these units could have a positive impact on the vibrancy of the town centre.

At the end of the debate, Members considered and voted on each of the recommendations detailed in the report in turn. Whilst discussing these recommendations, an alteration was proposed by Councillor Matthew Dormer to the wording of the fourth recommendation detailed in the report. This alteration was proposed as follows:

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 29th August, 2024

“Members continue to note and approve the consequential risks associated with the revised proposals detailed within the report, *subject to more action being taken to mitigate those risks.*”

This alteration was seconded by Councillor Craig Warhurst.

On being put to the vote, the alteration was defeated.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the progress towards the new Town Hall Hub design be noted;**
- 2) revised works to RIBA stage 4 as per the report be agreed as the best route forward;**
- 3) work continue to determine the most effective alternative use of the Towns Funding as set out in the report;**
- 4) Members continue to note and approve the consequential risks associated with the revised proposals detailed within the report; and**
- 5) authority be delegated to the Interim Director of Finance and Resources and the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services to enter the consequential contractual arrangements following consultation with the Leader.**

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

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 8.18 pm

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

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# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Monday, 2nd September,  
2024

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor Craig Warhurst (Vice-Chair) and Councillors William Boyd, Claire Davies, Andrew Fry, Joanna Kane, Sachin Mathur, David Munro and Rita Rogers

### Also Present:

Councillor M. Stringfellow, Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services

### Officers:

Guy Revans and Judith Willis

### Democratic Services Officers:

Pauline Ross

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chair announced that the running order of the agenda had been changed and that Agenda Item No. 10 (Minute No. 35) - Shopmobility Future Options (Pre-Scrutiny) would be presented after Agenda Item No. 4 (Minute No. 33) – Motion on Notice Concerning Acute Mental Health Services – Referral from Council.

### 30. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

### 31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of party whip.

### 32. PUBLIC SPEAKING

Chair

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Monday, 2nd September, 2024

33. There were no public speakers registered to speak at this meeting.  
**MOTION ON NOTICE CONCERNING ACUTE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES - REFERRAL FROM COUNCIL**

The Assistant Director Community and Housing Services briefly presented the report on the Motion on Notice – Referral to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as follows:-

“That the Council asks Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust to reconsider the proposed closure of Hillcrest Ward in Redditch and the consequential transfer of all adult mental health inpatient treatment to the Elgar Unit at the Worcester Royal Acute Hospital site.”

As detailed in the report, the Motion on Notice was considered at the Council meeting held on 29th July 2024. In making this referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Council had noted that the subject of Adult Mental Health Acute Inpatient and Rehabilitation Redesign had been discussed at the meeting of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) held on 8th July 2024. Councillor D. Munro, the Council’s representative on HOSC had attended the meeting.

When this Motion was discussed at the Council meeting, the following was added to the start of the Motion:-

“Council asks the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the proposals for Reconfiguration of Adult Mental Health Inpatient and Rehabilitation services.”

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Munro explained that he had proposed the Motion on Notice, following his attendance at the Worcestershire HOSC meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024, whereby discussions as detailed in the preamble above had taken place.

Councillor Munro stated that questions needed to be asked as to what was happening / going to happen. Had the decision already been made to close Hill Crest Ward, which was another erosion of services in the Borough. The nearest adult mental health services would be in Worcester or Hereford. A recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) review of mental health services was quite damaging. The Council had no statutory powers to compel health bodies to attend meetings in order to provide evidence or to consider any recommendations the Council may make. However, questions needed to be asked and residents of Redditch needed to



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Monday, 2nd September, 2024

be reassured that the Council would be asking questions, as follows:-

- Suitability of the building. Were there structural issues with the building?
- Was only the secure acute inpatient services closing?
- Would outpatient services be retained at Hill Crest Ward?
- Would Community Mental Health Services continue?
- What acute adult mental health services would be provided for the residents of Redditch, who used or needed to access services?.
- Were there staffing issues at Hill Crest Ward?
- How would future Adult Mental Health Inpatient and Rehabilitation Services look / be funded for Redditch?
- Where would the nearest secure facility be located for anyone sectioned under the Mental Health Act 1983?

Whilst Members acknowledged that service delivery and organisational arrangements for the NHS Acute Health Trusts were out of the Council's remit, Members agreed that questions should be asked; and that further information was needed. Members were of the opinion that no real consultation had taken place and people should be held accountable for reducing / cutting services in the Borough without any consultation.

Members were in agreement that a Task Group was not the best way forward and that the quickest way to achieve answers would be to invite the Chair of Worcestershire HOSC and the relevant representative(s) from Hereford and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust to a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; with regards to questions being asked on the future of Adult Mental Health Inpatient and Rehabilitation Services for the Borough.

## **RESOLVED that**

**the Overview and Scrutiny Committee investigate the subject of the reconfiguration of Adult Mental Health Inpatient and Rehabilitation Services Redditch, and the closure of Hill Crest Ward, by inviting the Chairman of Worcestershire HOSC and the relevant representative from Hereford and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust to attend a meeting with Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; for the reasons as detailed in the preamble above.**

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Monday, 2nd September, 2024

## 34. 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 matter on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said act, as amended.**

**Minute Item No. 35 – Pre-Decision Scrutiny – Redditch Shopmobility Future Operating Model.**

## 35. SHOPMOBILITY FUTURE OPTIONS (PRE-SCRUTINY)

The Assistant Director Community and Housing Services presented the report and in doing so informed the Committee that the Redditch Shopmobility Service customer visits had declined since Covid-19 and had never fully returned to the 15,000 customer visits each year that the service used to have; the customer visits now were approximately 3,000 per year.

Members' attention was drawn to the 5 possible future operating models for the service, that Officers had considered; with a 6<sup>th</sup> option of no longer providing the service, as detailed on pages 8 and 9 of the additional papers 1 agenda pack.

The Vice-Chair commented that the opportunity to move the control of the service to Kingfisher Shopping Centre had been considered quite a while ago, why was this not Option 1 now?

The Assistant Director Community and Housing Services referred to Option 4 – The service was to transition to Kingfisher Shopping Centre and the one-off cost implications, of £54,000, to transfer the service. To move the service to a retail unit provided the opportunity to promote and expand the service. The other risk associated would be that the Council would lose control of the service and that Kingfisher Shopping Centre could decide that they did not want the service.

The Vice-Chair queried as to where was the public consultation, and that only 83 people had completed the survey, this was not a public consultation. With regards to the survey, 69% of

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Monday, 2nd September, 2024

respondents said maybe or no, when asked 'If the location of Redditch Shopmobility was to move to be within the Kingfisher Centre, would this help make the service more accessible?'

The Assistant Director Community and Housing Services informed Members that an Equality Impact Assessment had been carried out.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services stated that the survey undertaken was one of things that Officers were looking at. The current service was not being properly promoted. It would have been nice to have had a larger survey, however, the survey did show that customers needed this service. If the service were moved to a retail unit within the Kingfisher Shopping Centre, this would provide Officers with an opportunity to promote and expand service.

The Assistant Director Community and Housing Services added to move to a site within the Kingfisher Shopping Centre would provide the opportunity to promote the service, review hours and staffing/opening times; with further opportunity to promote an assisted shopping service and delivering scooters to customers waiting in the Kingfisher car park or bus station. Staff occasionally took scooters out to customers, but this was not possible on a regular basis at the current site in Car Park 3; due to the Council's Lone Working Policy, which meant that for health and safety reasons, two members of staff were required for every shift at the current site.

Members referred to the cost implications, as detailed in the report, of moving the service to a retail unit within the Kingfisher Shopping Centre, as follows: -

- The first-year cost of improving the facility and service cost would be approximately £125,000.
- The future annual cost to the Council would be approximately £107,000.

In comparison the report showed that Kingfisher Shopping Centre would require the Council to purchase 5 new scooters, this would equate to a one-off cost to the Council of £54,000 if the service were to transition to Kingfisher Shopping Centre; as detailed in Option 4 (page 9 of the additional papers 1 agenda pack).

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

---

Monday, 2nd September, 2024

In response to questions from the Committee, the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services explained the Council's current staffing levels to run the service.

Members further commented that it was a regrettable situation with a lot less customers accessing the service, but also with Kingfisher Shopping Centre struggling to draw people in. However, most shopping centres had similar schemes to shopmobility for accessibility for all customers. It was important to have such a service, but with declining customer numbers using the service, there was a need to monitor how the service was used going forward.

Members further commented that they liked the idea of delivering scooters to customers in Kingfisher Shopping Centre car parks and the bus station, however the quality of the scooters needed to be 'top notch' thereby reliable. Providing good equipment and promoting the service could draw customers in. The Council had a responsibility to make the Town Centre accessible. The Council's social responsibility was different to the social responsibility of Kingfisher Shopping Centre. This was highlighted in the report, which showed that the direct running cost of the service was originally 50:50 between the Council and Kingfisher Shopping Centre. This was capped at £40,000 for 2009/10, with a further reduction in 2010 to £30,000 per annum. The Kingfisher Shopping Centre then provided the accommodation at a peppercorn rent and covered the cost of utilities. This changed in July 2024 and the utility bills were now the responsibility of the Council. The Kingfisher Shopping Centre had also changed ownership and were looking to reduce costs.

Some Members therefore felt that Kingfisher Shopping Centre had no desire to fund or run Shopmobility going forward. If the Council retained the service, it would retain control. However, as mentioned during the course of the debate, there was a need to review the service after an appropriate period of time.

Some Members felt that Kingfisher Shopping Centre would not want the service to go as it was also beneficial to them, with non-residents of the Borough also visiting the shopping centre.

Members further commented that people using the service did not only use it to access the shopping centre, but they also used the service to access appointments in the Town Centre, e.g. Doctors

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

---

Monday, 2nd September, 2024

appointments. Members needed to consider what was best for the residents.

In response to the Chair, the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services informed the Committee that 70% of users of the service were residents of Redditch. There was no viable option to change to a 'Tap and Go' credit card system and staffing costs were a huge inhibitor for the voluntary and community sector (VCS), so no interest had been expressed to run the service.

The Vice-Chair asked if the possibility of some people purchasing and transporting their own scooters had also added to the decline in numbers of customers using the service.

Following a very lengthy debate the Vice-Chair proposed an Alternative Recommendation in that Members considered Option 4 - The service was to transition to Kingfisher Shopping Centre; this was seconded by the Chair.

On being put to the vote, the Alternative Recommendation was lost.

In response to the Chair, the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services explained that 5 new scooters may not be enough and that eventually all of the existing equipment would need modernising. During peak times, the 5 new scooters could be a minimum requirement with a clear booking system being put in place.

Members sought clarification on some of the suggestions made during the course of the debate, and what they were to be asked to vote on.

The Democratic Services Officer clarified that Members had suggested that the following caveat / conditions be applied: -

- that the Shopmobility Service be reviewed after an appropriate period of time.
- that the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services and the Assistant Director Community & Housing Services look at the possibility of reducing the costs to the Council, by scoping if a retail unit is needed and if the Shopmobility Service could be run by volunteers.

With Members in agreement, and on being put to the vote, it was

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Monday, 2nd September, 2024

**RECOMMENDED to the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE that**

- 1) **Redditch Borough Council provide the Shopmobility service from a rented retail unit within the Kingfisher Centre as set out as Option 3 in the report; and**
- 2) **The caveats / conditions as detailed in the preamble above, be included.**

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 3) **The additional costs of £46,835 the Shopmobility Service in 2024/25 are met from balances; and**
- 4) **The ongoing position be integrated with the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2025/26 process to reflect the additional ongoing costs of £28,835 thereafter.**

(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 of exempt matters on the grounds that information would be revealed which related to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) However, there was no exempt information in this record of the debate)

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

The Executive Committee Minutes from the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024, were submitted for information only.

The Executive Committee Work Programme from 1 October 2024 to 31 January 2025, was submitted for Members' consideration.

It was noted that the DRAFT Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

Officers confirmed that there would be an All-Member Briefing on the Food Waste Business Case and Associated Waste Related Issues.

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

---

Monday, 2nd September, 2024

The Chair queried if the HRA Rent Setting 2025/26 would be going to a Budget Scrutiny Meeting, if so, there was no need for the Committee to pre-scrutinise this item.

**RESOLVED that the following items be presented to future meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for pre-scrutiny: -**

- **Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy**
- **Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan Annual Review**
- **Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendations**
- **Shareholders' Committee Annual Report**

## **37. 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 updated to include the items, as agreed by Members (and detailed at Minute No. 36), from the Executive Work Programme 1 October 2024 to 31 January 2025, for pre-scrutiny.**

## **38. 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 Warhurst

Councillor Dormer reported that he had attended the Group meeting held on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August. Councillor Warhurst had submitted his apologies.

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

The next meeting was still to be scheduled. The Democratic Services Officer agreed to scope a future meeting date.

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

---

Monday, 2nd September, 2024

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

The Democratic Services Officer to review progress to date and agree a future meeting date with the Chair and Members of the Task Group.

- d) Post-16 Education Task Group – Chair, Councillor Warhurst

The date of the first meeting to be arranged once the terms of reference for this Task Group had been approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor C. Davies asked if any work / research had been carried out prior to agreeing to a Speeding and Road Safety Task Group. The Democratic Services Officer agreed to look into this.

## **RESOLVED that**

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

### **39. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS**

Updates on the meetings of External Scrutiny Bodies were provided by the representatives as follows:

- a) West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Council Representative, Councillor Kane

Councillor Kane reported that a meeting had taken place (that morning) 2<sup>nd</sup> September and that she had drafted a brief report. At the suggestion of the Chair, Councillor Kane agreed to email out the brief update to all Members of the Committee and the Democratic Services Officer, for noting.

- b) West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Transport Delivery Overview and Scrutiny – Council Representative, Councillor Munro

Councillor Munro reported that there was nothing to report that was of relevance to the Borough.



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

---

Monday, 2nd September, 2024

- c) Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) – Council Representative, Councillor Munro.

Councillor Munro reported that he attended the last meeting of this body (8<sup>th</sup> July) and as a result of the discussions held with regards to the Adult Mental Health Acute Inpatient and Rehabilitation Redesign, specifically the proposed closure of Hillcrest Mental Health Unit; that he had asked for Council to consider a Motion on Notice, as referred to at Agenda Item No. 4 (Minute No. 33). Councillor Munro further informed the Committee that the next meeting of Worcestershire HOSC was scheduled for 9th September.

**RESOLVED that**

**the External Scrutiny Bodies updates be noted.**

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 7.50 pm

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