

Executive Committee

Wed 10 Jun
2009
7.00 pm

Committee Room 2
Town Hall
Redditch



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Ivor Westmore
Committee Support Services**

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e.mail: committee@redditchbc.gov.uk Minicom: 595528**

Welcome to today's meeting.

Guidance for the Public

Agenda Papers

The **Agenda List** at the front of the Agenda summarises the issues to be discussed and is followed by the Officers' full supporting **Reports**.

Chair

The Chair is responsible for the proper conduct of the meeting. Generally to one side of the Chair is the Committee Support Officer who gives advice on the proper conduct of the meeting and ensures that the debate and the decisions are properly recorded. On the Chair's other side are the relevant Council Officers. The Councillors ("Members") of the Committee occupy the remaining seats around the table.

Running Order

Items will normally be taken in the order printed but, in particular circumstances, the Chair may agree to vary the order.

Refreshments : tea, coffee and water are normally available at meetings - please serve yourself.

Decisions

Decisions at the meeting will be taken by the **Councillors** who are the democratically elected representatives. They are advised by **Officers** who are paid professionals and do not have a vote.

Members of the Public

Members of the public may, by prior arrangement, speak at meetings of the Council or its Committees. Specific procedures exist for Appeals Hearings or for meetings involving Licence or Planning Applications. For further information on this point, please speak to the Committee Support Officer.

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If you discover a fire, inform a member of staff or operate the nearest alarm call point (wall mounted red rectangular box). In the event of the fire alarm sounding, leave the building immediately following the fire exit signs. Officers have been appointed with responsibility to ensure that all visitors are escorted from the building.

Do Not stop to collect personal belongings.

Do Not use lifts.

Do Not re-enter the building until told to do so.

The emergency Assembly Area is on the Ringway Car Park.

Declaration of Interests: Guidance for Councillors

DO I HAVE A "PERSONAL INTEREST" ?

- Where the item relates or is likely to affect your **registered interests** (what you have declared on the formal Register of Interests)

OR

- Where a decision in relation to the item might reasonably be regarded as affecting **your own** well-being or financial position, or that of your **family**, or your **close associates** more than most other people affected by the issue,

you have a personal interest.

WHAT MUST I DO? **Declare the existence, and nature, of your interest and stay**

- The declaration must relate to specific business being decided - a general scattergun approach is not needed
- **Exception** - where interest arises only because of your membership of another **public body**, there is no need to declare unless you **speak** on the matter.
- You **can vote** on the matter.

IS IT A "PREJUDICIAL INTEREST" ?

In general only if:-

- It is a personal interest **and**
- The item affects your **financial position** (or conveys other benefits), or the position of your **family, close associates** or bodies through which you have a **registered interest** (or relates to the exercise of **regulatory functions** in relation to these groups)

and

- A member of public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably believe the interest was likely to **prejudice** your judgement of the public interest.

WHAT MUST I DO? **Declare and Withdraw**

BUT you may make representations to the meeting before withdrawing, **if** the public have similar rights (such as the right to speak at Planning Committee).



Executive

10 June 2009

7.00 pm

Committee

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs: C Gandy (Chair) W Hartnett
M Braley (Vice- N Hicks
Chair) C MacMillan
P Anderson M Shurmer
J Brunner
B Clayton

<p>1. Apologies</p>	<p>To receive the apologies of any Member who is unable to attend this meeting.</p>
<p>2. Declarations of Interest</p>	<p>To invite Councillors to declare any interests they may have in items on the agenda.</p>
<p>3. Leader's Announcements</p>	<p>1. To give notice of any items for future meetings or for the Forward Plan, including any scheduled for this meeting, but now carried forward or deleted; and</p> <p>2 any other relevant announcements.</p> <p>(Oral report)</p>
<p>4. Minutes (Pages 1 - 8) Chief Executive</p>	<p>To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on the 20 May 2009.</p> <p>(Minutes attached)</p>
<p>5. Policy on the Funding of Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations (Pages 9 - 30) Head of Strategy and Partnerships</p>	<p>To consider and approve a Policy on the funding of voluntary and community sector organisations.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>6. Financial Management Action Plan (Pages 31 - 66) Chief Executive</p>	<p>To review and make recommendations to improve the Financial Management Processes and arrangements within the Council.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>

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<p>7. Capital Programme - Outturn 2008/09</p> <p>Head of Financial Revenues and Benefit Services</p>	<p>To consider the actual expenditure on the Capital Programme compared to the final revised estimate for 2008/09.</p> <p>(Report to follow)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>8. Consolidated Revenue Outturn 2008/09</p> <p>Head of Financial Revenues and Benefit Services</p>	<p>To consider the Council's overall revenue outturn for the 2008/09 financial year.</p> <p>(Report to follow)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>9. Benefits Service Improvement Plan</p> <p>(Pages 67 - 84)</p> <p>Head of Financial Revenues and Benefit Services</p>	<p>To seek Member's approval of the Benefits Service Improvement Plan.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>10. Partnership Governance Framework</p> <p>(Pages 85 - 136)</p> <p>Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services</p>	<p>To request adoption of a Partnership Governance Framework.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>11. CCTV - Audio and Help Point Scheme - Review</p> <p>(Pages 137 - 144)</p> <p>Head of Housing and Community Services</p>	<p>To consider a review of the use of Interactive CCTV.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>12. Shared Services Board</p> <p>(Pages 145 - 148)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider the minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 28 May 2009.</p> <p>(Minutes attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>

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<p>13. Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>(Pages 149 - 160)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 30 April 2009.</p> <p>The recommendations were considered at the Executive Committee meeting on 20 May 2009.</p>
<p>14. Minutes / Referrals - Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels, Neighbourhood Groups etc.</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To receive and consider any outstanding minutes or referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels, Neighbourhood Groups, etc. since the last meeting of the Executive Committee, other than as detailed in the items above.</p>
<p>15. Advisory Panels - update report</p> <p>(Pages 161 - 164)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider, for monitoring / management purposes, an update on the work of the Executive Committee's Advisory Panels and similar bodies, which report via the Executive Committee.</p>
<p>16. Action Monitoring</p> <p>(Pages 165 - 166)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider an update on the actions arising from previous meetings of the Committee.</p>
<p>17. Exclusion of the Public</p>	<p>It may be necessary, in the opinion of the Borough Director, to consider excluding the public from the meeting in relation to the following items of business on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged. It may be necessary, therefore, to move the following resolution:</p> <p>“that, under S.100 I 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(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, as amended.”</p>
<p>18. Confidential Minutes / Referrals (if any)</p>	<p>To consider confidential matters not dealt with earlier in the evening and not separately listed below (if any).</p>



Executive Committee

20 May 2009

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Carole Gandy (Chair), Councillor Michael Braley (Vice-Chair) and Councillors P Anderson, J Brunner, B Clayton, W Hartnett, N Hicks, C MacMillan and M Shurmer

Also Present:

Councillors A Clayton and Field

Officers:

C Flanagan, E Hopkins, R Kindon, T Kristunas, G Revans, J Staniland, E Storer, A Teepe, J Walker and D Wright

Committee Services Officer:

D Sunman

295. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence from members of the Executive Committee.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Smith as it had been his intention to be present for Item 10, Housing Mutual Exchange Task and Finish Group – Recommendations.

296. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hartnett declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in Item 8 - Easemore Road – Sale of Land and Consortium Update, as a member of a Registered Social Landlord (Redditch Co-op Homes).

297. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that she had accepted the following matter as Urgent Business:

Item 11 – Referral from the Member Development Steering Group.

.....
Chair

298. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meetings held on 1 April and 22 April 2009 be confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

299. ANNUAL CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Members considered a report outlining the work undertaken on Health and Safety during 2008/09 together with the work programme for the 2009/10 municipal year.

RESOLVED that

the work on Health and Safety be noted and the Health and Safety work programme outlined for the following year be endorsed and supported.

300. HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION AND AFFORDABLE WARMTH

The Committee considered a report on the introduction of National Indicator 187 (NI 187) with effect from April 2008. Officers reported that NI 187 had been included in Worcestershire County Council's Local Area Agreement (LAA) and, therefore, the Council would be obliged to identify those people living in fuel poverty in poor housing conditions. Monitoring of performance in tackling fuel poverty would be required from April 2009.

Members were informed that applications to three schemes would be managed as follows:

Over 60's Scheme

Applications be limited to the first 200 installation measures at an approximate cost to the Council of £40,000 in total.

Landlord's Scheme

Applications be limited to the first 100 installation measures at an approximate cost to the Council of £20,000 in total.

Town Centre Scheme

Applications be limited to a budget of £40,000.

Officers reported that the British Gas Council Tax Insulation Scheme would continue in 2009/10 and that the Government's

Executive Committee

Warmfront Grant scheme was ongoing. The results of a heat imaging project would be available in June 2009 and would provide information to target areas more effectively.

Members suggested that the scheme be publicised through the Council's Climate Change website.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **applications be invited from house owners in the Borough aged 60 or over, living in a Council Tax band A to D property and not in full time employment or in receipt of benefits, to have loft and / or cavity wall insulation installed in their homes free of charge;**
- 2) **applications be invited from accredited private landlords in the Borough, owning tenanted properties in a Council Tax band A to D, to have loft and / or cavity wall insulation installed free of charge; and**
- 3) **applications be invited from the owners of pre-1919 houses in the Town Centre area to apply for lifetime loans, to enable their homes to be adequately insulated and heated, on a non-means tested basis covering 50% of the cost of the work.**

301. PAOLOZZI MURAL TRUST

The Committee received a report which required them to consider what actions would be required to regularise the Council's Trusteeship of the Paolozzi Murals and the Paolozzi Mural Fund.

Officers suggested that this could be achieved by registration as a charity and appointment of Trustees. The Trustees would then be able to consider what actions were required to fulfil the primary objectives of the Trust, namely to promote the viewing of the Murals, their maintenance and safety. Members were informed that interest accrued to the Mural Fund might be used to support the Visual Arts in Redditch. The Charity Commissioners, on request, might also allow the use of capital.

Members were asked to consider the name under which the Trust would be registered and the appointment of Trustees.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **authority be delegated to the Legal Services Manager to take all necessary steps required by law to register the**

Trust as a charity with the Charity Commission;

- 2) **the Trust be registered as a charity with the name “Redditch Paolozzi Mural Trust;**
- 3) **the Leader of the Council and the Council’s Chief Finance Officer be appointed by the Council to perform the Council’s Trustee role for the Trust; and**
- 4) **the Trustees report any recommended spend to Executive Committee before distribution of funds.**

302. EASEMORE ROAD - SALE OF LAND AND CONSORTIUM UPDATE

Members were advised of the current position regarding the sale of land at Easemore Road and approval was sought for a revised consortium.

RESOLVED that

the Council lead the consortium and progress a sale of the combined site, for open market or affordable housing on the best terms possible, in agreement with the other members of the consortium.

(Prior to consideration of this item, and in accordance with the requirements of Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000, Councillor Hartnett declared a personal, but not prejudicial interest in view of him being a Member of Registered Social Landlord (Redditch Coop Homes).

303. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members received the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8 April 2009. There were no matters for the Executive Committee’s decision.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 April 2009 be received and noted.

304. HOUSING MUTUAL EXCHANGE TASK AND FINISH GROUP - RECOMMENDATIONS

Councillor Field attended representing the Housing and Mutual Exchange Task Group.

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A report was presented from the Housing and Mutual Exchange Task Group, which had reviewed the Council's Housing Mutual Exchange and Home Swap procedures. The Task Group had concluded that the current procedures operated by the Council were satisfactory and that no further scrutiny was required. However, the Task Group recommended that existing inspection practices should be more explicitly stated in the Council's Housing Mutual Exchange Policy and Procedure to ensure that the process was transparent.

RESOLVED that

subject to suitable rewording by Officers the following details be incorporated into the Council's Housing Mutual Exchange Policy and Procedure:

“The Repair and Maintenance Officers should be employed to make the initial checks on each property to establish that no unauthorised alterations have been made to the properties and whether any rechargeable works need to be undertaken.

Any defects should be photographed and the details placed on file together with written reports concerning both properties.

Electrical tests for both properties should be arranged by Repairs and Maintenance.

The Tenancy Officer who is responsible for the mutual exchange together with the tenants involved should be advised in writing of any works required to be undertaken by them or the Council.

Normal Housing Mutual Exchange and Home Swap procedures should commence after the actions listed above have been completed satisfactorily. (i.e. the Tenancy Officer responsible for the exchange should visit both properties with both tenants).”

305. MINUTES / REFERRALS - MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP 6 MAY 2009

The Committee was asked to consider a range of recommendations arising from a meeting of the Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) regarding Member Development and Members' Support budgets for 2009/10

Executive Committee

RESOLVED that

- 1) **in the light of recent Council budget decisions, the Member Support budget be divided to now provide £300 for each Member's individual support needs and £200 x 29 = £5,800 to be held centrally for Member Development purposes;**
- 2) **individual Members' existing commitments above £300 (and up to £500) be honoured at the present time;**
- 3) **the budgetary situation be reviewed at half year;**
- 4) **no new IT equipment be provided to Members until the question of funding is settled; and**
- 5) **consideration be given to the baseline provision of equipment to Members, and how this might be established, with a view to its implementation in May 2010, subject to the Council's approval of the necessary bids.**

(This report had been accepted as a matter of Urgent Business - not having met the publication deadline - and was considered at the meeting as such, with the approval of the Chair, in accordance with the Council's constitutional rules and powers vested in the Chair by virtue of Section 100 (B) (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 to agree matters of urgency being discussed by reason of special circumstances.)

In this case the special circumstances were that the information, which was not available at the time of the agenda going to print, was required to be considered at the present meeting to provide clarification of an earlier Council decision and allow officers to allocate money from these budgets.)

306. REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL ESTABLISHMENT

The Committee received a report which provided an update on the Council's establishment and the number of vacant posts as at 31 March 2009. Officers agreed to provide information on employment of Agency staff to Councillor Hartnett.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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20 May 2009

307. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

Members considered an up-date report on the work of the Executive Committee's Advisory Panels and similar bodies.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

308. ACTION MONITORING

Members noted the Action Monitoring Sheet.

The Meeting commenced at 7.06 pm
and closed at 9.07 pm

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Chair

Executive Committee

No Specific Ward Relevance

10 June 2009

POLICY ON THE FUNDING OF VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

(Report of the Head of Strategy and Partnerships)

1. Summary of Proposals

The Committee is asked to agree two new policies that will implement key recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Third Sector Task and Finish Group. In addition, the Committee is asked to agree recommendations for how future work proposed by the Third Sector Task and Finish Group is undertaken.

The first policy will implement the Shopping, Investing and Giving model for funding voluntary and community sector organisations.

The second will introduce a new policy for the Council to provide grant funding to voluntary and community organisations within the Shopping, Investing and Giving framework.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that

- 1) the policy for funding voluntary and community sector organisations using the Shopping, Investing and Giving framework, attached to this report at Appendix 1, be approved; and**
- 2) the policy for award of grants by Redditch Borough Council to voluntary and community sector organisations, attached to this report at Appendix 2, be approved; and**
- 3) further work is undertaken into the Council's relationship with the voluntary and community sector, as recommended by the Third Sector Task and Finish Group, in the manner outlined in paragraphs 5.10 to 5.15 of this report.**

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

Financial

- 3.1 The policies will define a new framework for how the Council provides financial assistance to voluntary and community sector organisations.
- 3.2 The current voluntary and community sector grants budget is £244,800. However, the total financial assistance from the Council to the voluntary and community sector is much higher than this,

including both direct financial assistance and assistance in kind, for example through discretionary rate relief and subsidised rents. These policies will introduce a framework for developing a corporate overview of all this assistance, giving a better overall indication of the financial contribution made by the Council to the voluntary and community sector.

Legal

- 3.3 Under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to incur expenditure which in its opinion is in the interest of and will bring direct benefit to its area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants. The direct benefit accruing must also be commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred. There is further power to make grants to voluntary organisations providing recreational facilities under Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Policy

- 3.4 The Council does not currently have a policy on the funding of voluntary and community sector organisations.

Risk

- 3.5 Unless a policy is in place, requests for financial assistance from voluntary and community sector organisations may not be dealt with in a consistent manner. This could both leave decisions open to challenge, and adversely affect the Council's reputation as a fair and transparent grant-maker.
- 3.6 The Council needs to put a policy in place to demonstrate that it is meeting its obligations under the Worcestershire Compact. Failure to demonstrate this may result in an adverse Comprehensive Area Assessment score.
- 3.7 The proposed policies will bring current grant-funding arrangements to an end. This may pose a risk to the future viability of one or more voluntary sector organisations that have received regular funding under current arrangements.

Sustainability / Environmental

- 3.8 No direct implications.

Report**4. Background**

- 4.1 The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned the Third Sector Task and Finish Group to undertake a thorough investigation of the Council's grants process and of the various options that could be utilised to improve these arrangements from 2010/11 onwards. The Group was chaired by Cllr Diane Thomas, and undertook its work between June and December 2008.
- 4.2 On the 19 January 2009, Council resolved to accept the recommendations of the Third Sector Task and Finish Group.
- 4.3 The Third Sector Task and Finish Group recommended that the Council adopt a written Grants Policy and Procedure (recommendation 1). The Group's final report provided detail on the Group's recommendations regarding the content of this policy.
- 4.4 The Third Sector Task and Finish Group recommended that the Council's purpose for funding the third sector should be aligned to the following mission statement "Redditch Borough Council supports Voluntary and Community Sector organisations because we believe that a vibrant third sector is vital to our community" (recommendation 2a), and that the criteria for grants applications be aligned to the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy priorities (recommendation 2b).
- 4.5 The Third Sector Task and Finish group recommended that the Shopping, Investing and Giving funding framework be adopted for the Council's grants process (recommendation 3).
- 4.6 The Third Sector Task and Finish group recommended that further work be undertaken in six areas relating to the Council's relationship with the voluntary and community sector. On the 19 January 2009, Council resolved to accept these recommendations.

5. Key Issues

- 5.1 The proposed policies address a number of issues with the Council's current grants process, as identified by the Third Sector Task and Finish Group. These are:
- a) a lack of continuity in the grants process;
 - b) inconsistent linking of grants to Redditch Borough Council's priorities;
 - c) weak monitoring arrangements;
 - d) a cycle of dependency amongst a number of third sector organisations on Council sources of funding;

- e) procurement issues, particularly overlaps between the grants process and procurement arrangements that have not been resolved;
 - f) a lack of confidence in the Council within the sector, mainly for the reasons listed in a) to f) above.
- 5.2 For several years, the Council has provided 'core-funding' to five organisations and 'donations' to a further two organisations. These arrangements represent a total allocation of £207,500 from the total voluntary sector grants budget of £244,800 for 2009/10.
- 5.3 These seven organisations were given written notice in August 2008 that the Council would be introducing a new grants process with effect from 1st April 2010. These letters "strongly advised" the organisations to plan "for the possibility of receiving no funding from Redditch Borough Council after 1st April 2010".
- 5.4 There is a risk that the Council will be perceived negatively should any of the previously 'core funded' organisations experience difficulties following the introduction of the new policies.
- 5.5 Some individual services of the Council provide funding to voluntary and community organisations to support specific objectives of their service. The proposed policies will cover this financial support, and so regularise voluntary sector grant-giving across the Council.
- 5.6 The Shopping, Investing and Giving Policy (Appendix 1) provides a framework for all arrangements where the Council provides assistance to voluntary and community sector organisations. This includes support 'in-kind' and contractual arrangements as well as grant-giving.
- 5.7 The introduction of the Shopping, Investing and Giving Policy will require a review of other areas where the Council provides support to voluntary and community sector organisations, such as peppercorn rents. This may require the introduction of further policies in these areas in order to fully implement the Shopping, Investing and Giving model.
- 5.8 The proposed policies will meet the Council's obligations under the Worcestershire Compact for an open and transparent approach to funding voluntary and community sector organisations.
- 5.9 The Third Sector Task and Finish Group made six recommendations for further work to be undertaken regarding the Council's relationship with the voluntary and community sector. The Executive Committee on 13 January 2009 requested that officers provide recommendations on how these pieces of work could be progressed. Initial officer recommendations were presented to portfolio holders on 9 April 2009, and have been amended according to the

instructions of portfolio holders. Paragraphs 5.10 to 5.15 present the six areas for future work as recommended by the Third Sector Task and Finish Group (in bold), and recommendations for how this work should be progressed.

- 5.10 **A review of ways to enhance Voluntary and Community Sector involvement in Redditch Partnership.** Officers consider that the current arrangements provided for Voluntary and Community Sector involvement in Redditch Partnership are adequate and responsive to the needs of the sector. The Partnership Management Board has a representative from the Voluntary and Community Sector through BARN, the infrastructure organisation for the Borough, and the board has also agreed that a representative from the Community Forum will join the Management Board.
- 5.11 **A review of the Council's provision of non-grant support to the Voluntary and Community sector.** Officers are requested to undertake an exercise to determine the full extent of the Council's support to the voluntary and community sector.
- 5.12 **A review of how the Council should meet its responsibilities as set out in the Worcestershire Compact agreement.** The Worcestershire Compact Steering Group are currently undertaking a review of the Compact, its codes of practice and how well it has been working. Redditch Borough Council has an officer representative on this theme group and officers consider that the Council's active engagement in this wider review will enable the Council to identify any shortfalls in meeting the responsibilities of the Compact.
- 5.13 **A review of how the six equalities strands could be embedded in the working practices of Redditch Borough Council and Redditch Partnership.** Officers consider that the formation of the Community Forum and ongoing training and the completion of equality impact assessments will enable both the Council and Redditch Partnership to undertake sufficient action to embed the six strands of diversity.
- 5.14 **A review of the Council's procurement code.** Work is currently being undertaken to review the Council's procurement code by the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services. This review will incorporate the Shopping, Investing and Giving funding framework contained in Appendix 1.
- 5.15 **A review of how multi-year funding arrangements should be implemented as part of the Council's grants process.** Options for provision of multi-year funding will be presented to the Executive Committee in advance of the launch of the next grants round in October 2009.

- 5.16 The Third Sector Task & Finish Group requested that consideration of Officer support and capacity building for the sector be increased within the Strategy & Partnerships department. A report will be presented to the Executive Committee on the 1 July 2009 regarding this request.

6. Other Implications

- Asset Management - Some voluntary sector organisations currently rent premises from the Council. If the future viability of organisations is at risk, as outlined in paragraph 3.6, this may reduce rents received and increase vacant Council properties.
- Community Safety - The award of grants to organisations may involve provision of services that address issues related to Community Safety.
- Human Resources - The proposed policies will be administered within existing staffing structures of the Strategy and Partnerships unit.
- Social Exclusion - The award of grants to organisations may involve provision of services to individuals who may experience social exclusion.

7. Lessons Learnt

- 7.1 It has been acknowledged that by not having a written voluntary and community sector grants policy, the Council can be accused of not operating an open and transparent grants process. This in turn has led to the sector having a lack of confidence in the Council.

8. Background Papers

Third Sector Task and Finish Group Final Report
Worcestershire Compact and Codes of Practice
Executive Committee minutes 13 January 2009
Full Council minutes 19 January 2009
Letters to 'core funded' organisations 8 August 2008.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Borough Council Officers
- 9.2 Extensive consultation with representatives of external bodies, including local voluntary and community sector organisations, was undertaken as part of the Third Sector Task and Finish Review. The draft policies have taken full account of the recommendations made by the Third Sector Task and Finish Group.
- 9.3 The draft policies have been circulated to voluntary and community sector organisations. A record of comments received and action taken is contained in Appendix 3.

10. Author of Report

The author of this report is Peter Rose (Policy Officer), who can be contacted on extension 3527 (e-mail: peter.rose@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Policy for funding voluntary and community sector organisations using the Shopping, Investing and Giving framework.

Appendix 2- Draft Policy for award of grants by Redditch Borough Council to voluntary and community sector organisations.

Appendix 3- Record of consultation responses

DRAFT POLICY



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POLICY FOR FUNDING VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR ORGANISATIONS USING THE SHOPPING, INVESTING AND GIVING FRAMEWORK

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Redditch Borough Council supports Voluntary and Community sector organisations because we believe that a vibrant Third Sector is vital to our community. The Council is committed to supporting organisations that deliver projects and activities which have a beneficial impact on the local community.
- 1.2 Under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to incur expenditure which in its opinion is in the interest of and will bring direct benefit to its area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants. The direct benefit accruing must also be commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred.
- 1.3 There is further power to make grants to voluntary organisations providing recreational facilities under Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all arrangements where Redditch Borough Council provides assistance to voluntary and community sector organisations.
- 2.2 This policy applies primarily to direct financial payments from Redditch Borough Council to voluntary and community sector organisations such as grants and contracts, but also applies to support in kind such as discretionary rate relief or concessionary use of Redditch Borough Council facilities.

3. Funding Framework

- 3.1 The Council uses the ***Shopping, Investing and Giving*** funding framework

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- 3.2 **Shopping** refers to procurement and contractual arrangements with external providers to deliver services on behalf of the Council that the Council has a statutory duty to provide. The Council is committed to extending the opportunities available to voluntary and community sector organisations to be involved in the delivery of services.
- 3.3 **Investing** refers to the Council providing funding to develop the capacity of the voluntary and community sector. This may include making funding and resource contributions to voluntary and community sector infrastructure support services, or making funding or other resources available for training or business development activities within organisations.
- 3.4 **Giving** refers to the Council providing funding or other resources to voluntary and community sector organisations to support work that contributes to the Council's aims, but which the Council does not have a statutory duty to provide.
- 3.5 The Executive Committee will consider and make a decision on which services and funding mechanisms the Council will seek to provide under the Shopping element of this framework subject to agreement by full Council.

4. Purposes of the Shopping, Investing and Giving Framework

- 4.1 The following outcomes are intended to be the result of this framework:
- a) A corporate overview of the total support provided for the voluntary and community sector;
 - b) Consistency, clarity and equality in the processes to determine what support is given to which organisations;
 - c) A voluntary and community sector that understands how to engage with the Council, and is confident of fair and open treatment;
 - d) Council resources targeted to support those groups providing services which support current Council priorities.
- 4.2 This framework is to be integrated into all policies and procedures that are relevant to Council relationships with the voluntary and community sector.

5. Which Organisations are covered by the Shopping, Investing and Giving Framework?

- 5.1 The voluntary and community sector is diverse, with organisations ranging from small community associations to large national or international organisations.

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This framework applies to all organisations that exist principally to further social, cultural or environmental objectives and do not generate money that is distributed for the private benefit of the people who run the organisation or their associates.

5.3 To qualify for any support under the Shopping, Investing and Giving framework, an organisation must:

- a) not be run for personal gain, and must use all profits or income of the organisation for the public good;
- b) work for the benefit of a community of interest or a geographical community;
- c) have no undue restrictions on membership;
- d) promote equality of opportunity;
- e) operate independently, defining its own aims and objectives;
- f) be formally constituted and have a management committee who do not receive payment for managing the organisation;
- g) not be a political party, have the nature of a political party, or be engaged in campaigning for a political purpose or cause.

5.4 The Council will not provide funds for the furtherance or propagation of a faith promoted by any organisation which is, or is deemed by the Council to be, of a religious nature. This will not preclude religious organisations applying for assistance to provide social or welfare work connected with their organisation and which do not directly promote a religious aspect.

5.5 Individual support opportunities may include additional restrictions on the nature of the organisations that can benefit. These will be clearly and openly stated, with appropriate justification.

6. Worcestershire Compact

6.1 Redditch Borough Council is a signatory of the Worcestershire Compact, and is committed to embedding the terms of the Compact and its Codes of Practice within the Council's policies and procedures.

6.2 Review and development of this policy will be undertaken to ensure compliance with Worcestershire Compact and to support development of the Compact.

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POLICY FOR AWARD OF GRANTS BY REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL TO VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Redditch Borough Council supports Voluntary and Community sector organisations because we believe that a vibrant Third Sector is vital to our community. The Council is committed to supporting organisations that deliver projects and activities which have a beneficial impact on the local community.
- 1.2 Under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to incur expenditure which in its opinion is in the interest of and will bring direct benefit to its area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants. The direct benefit accruing must also be commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred.
- 1.3 There is further power to make grants to voluntary organisations providing recreational facilities under Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- 1.4 This policy is written in conjunction with the “Let’s Do It Smarter – Worcestershire Compact: Funding and Procurement Code of Good Practice”. The Compact is a commitment to improve relationships between public and voluntary and community sector organisations, with a mutual objective of ‘delivering high quality, good value services and support to the local community’.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies only to the allocation of grants to voluntary and community sector organisations. It does not apply to any other means of financial support from the Council that may be available under other schemes.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all grant funding from Redditch Borough Council to voluntary and community sector organisations. This includes grants made available from individual service budgets.

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3. Funding Framework

- 3.1 The Council uses the ***Shopping, Investing and Giving*** funding framework
- 3.2 ***Shopping*** refers to procurement and contractual arrangements with external providers to deliver services on behalf of the Council that the Council has a statutory duty to provide. The Council is committed to extending the opportunities available to voluntary and community sector organisations to be involved in the delivery of services. However, this policy does not apply to those arrangements which will be managed using a contract.
- 3.3 ***Investing*** refers to the Council providing funding to develop the capacity of the voluntary and community sector. This may include making funding contributions to voluntary and community sector infrastructure support services, or making funding available for training or business development activities within organisations.
- 3.4 ***Giving*** refers to the Council providing funding to voluntary and community sector organisations to support work that contributes to the Council's aims, but which the Council does not have a statutory duty to provide.
- 3.5 This policy applies to grants made to support the ***Investing*** and ***Giving*** elements of the Council's funding framework. For the purposes of this policy, a **grant** is a financial contribution to an activity designed and delivered by a voluntary and community sector organisation which the Council has chosen to support because it is broadly aligned with the Council's own objectives. A grant can be given either to contribute towards organisational costs, or to wholly or partly fund a specific piece of work. A grant is a financial contribution with an expectation of mutually agreed, clearly defined outcomes. These outcomes are specified in a grant funding agreement, and monitoring arrangements are commensurate with the value of grant given.
- 3.6 Small Grants are regarded as sums of up to and including £5,000, and Large Grants are regarded as sums valued at over £5,000. These limits will affect risk considerations (section 7), grant assessment criteria (section 9) and monitoring requirements (section 11).

4. Purpose of Grant Funding

- 4.1 The Council provides grants to assist the development of a vibrant voluntary and community sector that delivers projects and activities of value to the local community.

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- 4.2 Funding will only be provided where it can be demonstrated that a defined impact will be made. Organisations should demonstrate an outcomes focus in applications for funding.
- 4.3 The Council will require that all grant awards will support Council objectives. The specific objectives to be supported will be made clear in all publicity relating to each grant opportunity. Demonstrating support of Council objectives may include:
- a) linking grant awards to an approved list of Council priorities, such as the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy;
 - b) the Council choosing one or more specific outcomes in advance that will be achieved with the grant award. This will be particularly appropriate for individual departments wishing to make grants available to support the delivery of a particular service aim.

5. Which Organisations are eligible to apply for a Grant?

- 5.1 In order to be eligible to apply for a grant, an organisation must be able to prove that:
- a) it is voluntarily run, non-profit making and operated with no undue restrictions or limitations on membership;
 - b) it has a democratic structure and can demonstrate effective management of the organisation's business;
 - c) it has a bank account that requires the authorisation of at least two people who are unrelated to each other to make payments or withdrawals of any kind from the account;
 - d) it operates in the Borough of Redditch on behalf of Borough residents;
 - e) it can demonstrate the need for financial assistance. An organisation will not normally be eligible for grant assistance if it holds reserves in excess of six months' average expenditure, unless the Council is satisfied that this position is justified by the organisation's reserves policy. Reserves are defined as those assets in the unrestricted funds of an organisation that can be made available for all or any of the organisation's purposes, once known commitments and planned expenditure have been provided for;
 - f) it can demonstrate the service it is providing by giving details of its activities and the number of people it is in contact with;
 - g) it meets all applicable legal requirements;
 - h) it actively promotes equality issues within its structure and operations;
 - i) all previous grants received from Redditch Borough Council have been spent in accordance with the grant award conditions attached to them.

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5.2 The Council will not make grants to any organisation that it deems to be a political party, has the nature of a political party, or is engaged in campaigning for a political purpose or cause.

5.3 The Council will not provide funds for the furtherance or propagation of a faith promoted by any organisation which is, or is deemed by the Council to be, of a religious nature. This will not preclude religious organisations applying for assistance to provide social or welfare work connected with their organisation and which do not directly promote a religious aspect.

6. What will and will not be funded by a grant

6.1 Grant aid will only be considered for work that will be undertaken in the Borough of Redditch, and/or will be wholly or principally for the direct benefit of residents of the Borough of Redditch.

6.2 Grants cannot be used for retrospective funding; that is to replace money that has already been spent, or to cover items or services that have already been bought.

6.3 Any grant awarded must only be spent for the approved purpose, i.e. applicants must be able to demonstrate that the funding has been spent as outlined in the grant application form as amended by the final grant offer letter for example by providing receipts.

7. Risk considerations in grant giving

7.1 The Council has a duty to ensure that best use is made of its resources. This section considers risk in grant giving related to failure to achieve best use of Council resources. It does not consider risk assessment of, for example, items related to health and safety, which should form part of the grant assessment criteria as outlined in paragraph 9.6.

7.2 The Council acknowledges that the creativity and innovation of the voluntary sector can carry risks for non-delivery, for example where a new idea does not work out as intended.

7.3 The Council uses the general principle of requiring a lower level of risk the higher the amount of funding provided. Maximum levels of funding will only be provided where the risk of non-delivery is very low.

7.4 In order to achieve an appropriate balance between managing risk and supporting innovative ideas or new organisations, a grant limit of £5,000 will apply to:

- a) organisations that have been in existence for less than one year;
- b) organisations that do not have audited accounts;
- c) organisations that are not registered with either the Charity Commission or Companies House, or other appropriate government regulator;
- d) innovative pieces of work testing a new approach to service delivery.

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- 7.5 Assessment of all voluntary and community sector grants made by the Council will look more favourably on applications that:
- a) have a strong evidence base of need;
 - b) provide strong evidence that the proposed approach is likely to achieve the desired outcomes;
 - c) do not contain high revenue costs that cannot be sustained;
 - d) demonstrate how a lasting benefit will be achieved.
- 7.6 The higher the sum of money applied for, the greater the need for applications to:
- a) be from organisations with a good track record of delivery;
 - b) be from organisations with a range of funding streams;
 - c) meet wider aims and objectives of the Council;
 - d) support delivery of Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy or other appropriate document;
 - e) demonstrate co-operative working relationships with other organisations.
- 7.7 Payment schedules will balance the need for the Council to ensure proper accountability for use of public money with appropriate recognition of cash-flow issues that may be experienced by voluntary and community sector organisations. The general principle will be that payment is made in advance of project delivery, with instalment frequency and size commensurate with the overall size of the grant awarded. General guidelines for payment schedules are:
- a) Grants of a total of £1,000 or less will be paid in full in advance of the project being delivered, with monitoring information required following the project;
 - b) Grants of between £1,000 and £10,000 will be paid in two instalments of 50% each. The first instalment will be paid in advance of the project being delivered. The second instalment will be paid after satisfactory monitoring information has been supplied on the progress of the project. For projects lasting one year, the second instalment will usually be due to be paid six months after the start of the project.
 - c) Grants in excess of £10,000 will be paid by quarterly instalments in advance of project activity. Each instalment will only be released after satisfactory monitoring information has been supplied on progress of the project.

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8. Grant Conditions

- 8.1 Information on the conditions that will apply to a grant will be made available to applicants before they apply.
- 8.2 Monitoring information will be required on all grants, as outlined in section 11.
- 8.3 All grant offers will be subject to the grant recipient accepting the grant conditions. A full set of grant conditions and monitoring requirements will be agreed with grant recipients before the final grant award is made. No changes will be made after this time.

9. Assessment Process

- 9.1 All opportunities for Voluntary and Community Sector grant funding from Redditch Borough Council will be openly advertised using a minimum of:
- Notice of the opportunity on the 'Voluntary Sector Support' section of the Redditch Borough Council website;
 - Notice of the opportunity circulated among an appropriate network or infrastructure organisation.
- 9.2 In addition to the minimum requirements outlined in paragraph 9.1, other advertising may be undertaken to promote grant opportunities as openly as possible.
- 9.3 Information provided to grant applicants will include as a minimum:
- The amount of money that is available in total;
 - The minimum and maximum amount of money that is available to each applicant;
 - Clear information on the purposes for which funding is offered;
 - Clear information on eligibility criteria;
 - Details of the full assessment criteria against which applications will be judged;
 - A full list of conditions that will apply to the grant, including payment schedules and required monitoring information;
 - The deadline by which applications must be submitted;
 - The date by which applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application.
- 9.4 Grant application forms will be made available in paper and electronic formats.
- 9.5 Applicants must complete a Standard Application form and provide relevant supporting documents. This is to ensure objective assessment of all grant applications. The Council will not award any grant to an organisation whose application has not been formally assessed.

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- 9.6 All grant applications will be assessed using pre-selected assessment criteria. The details of the assessment criteria will be made available to all applicants before they apply for funding. The assessment criteria will be chosen as relevant for the funding opportunity, but as a minimum will include:
- Clear outline of how the purposes for which the grant is made available will be met;
 - The outcome(s) that the proposal will achieve;
 - The structure and delivery plan that will support the achievement of the stated outcomes;
 - The clarity of the proposal's financial outline;
 - The organisation's ability to successfully manage finance, evidenced by submission of accounts, bank statements and cash flow forecasts as appropriate;
 - The approach to health and safety, duty of care, and other appropriate best practice requirements, and the organisation's ability to successfully manage these on the project;
 - The sustainability of work after the period of grant aid.
- 9.7 All assessment criteria will be based on meeting need within the community. There will be no pre-determined demographic allocation of funds. Some funding opportunities may be restricted to a particular delivery area, e.g. to a specific ward, but only where this is to address a specific identified need.
- 9.8 Full cost recovery is the process of sharing an organisation's core costs proportionately between its projects and areas of work. The Council supports the principle of full cost recovery for all grants over £5,000. However, applicants must provide clear explanations and justification for all calculations related to full cost recovery, which will be judged on a case by case basis.
- 9.9 All grant applications will be assessed by the Council's Grants Panel. The Grants Panel will consist of a minimum of five elected Members, with a minimum of three Members required to make decisions regarding grant awards. Conflicts of interest will be recorded, and members with a conflict of interest for a particular grant round will not participate in the assessment of any application in that grant round.
- 9.10 The Grants Panel will receive appropriate training in grant assessment, and will be supported by at least one officer with appropriate knowledge and expertise in the area for which the grant is being offered.
- 9.11 The Grants Panel will report its recommended decisions on grant applications to the Council's Executive Committee for approval.
- 9.12 Unsuccessful applicants will be offered feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their application, and will be signposted to appropriate organisations for support with securing funding from alternative sources.

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9.13 Appeals against the process used to award a grant will be dealt with using Redditch Borough Council's complaints procedure. The Head of Strategy and Partnerships will handle the initial complaint. There is no right of appeal as to the decision itself.

10. Assessment Timescales

10.1 Applications for the central Redditch Borough Council voluntary sector grants process will be sought from October of each year for projects commencing after 1st April of the following year.

10.2 Decisions on the award of grants from the central Redditch Borough Council voluntary sector grants process will be made in February of the following year with projects commencing after 1st April.

10.3 Other opportunities may be made available to apply for grants, for example from individual Council services seeking to deliver a specific objective. In all cases, there will be a minimum of three weeks from announcement of the grants opportunity to the closing date for applications, and a maximum of 12 weeks from the closing date for applications to applicants receiving notification of the outcome.

11. Monitoring

11.1 All grant funded projects will be regularly monitored with applicants obliged to submit details of how the project is progressing. Monitoring requirements that will apply to a grant will be commensurate with the amount of money awarded, and will be agreed with the funded organisation before final confirmation of a grant award is made.

11.2 Receipts and other monitoring information must be submitted to the Council as proof of spend within six months of the grant being received by the organisation (till slips, credit card vouchers, photocopied or altered receipts will not be accepted).

11.3 The Council reserve the right to withhold future payments and reject any further applications if they are dissatisfied with how grants funds have been used.

12. Collaborative Working

12.1 The Council recognises the potential benefits of working collaboratively with other funders. The Council will investigate all opportunities for working with other funders where this will provide a better use of Council resources.

RECORD OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The draft policy for funding voluntary and community sector organisations using the Shopping, Investing and Giving framework (Appendix 1) and the draft policy for award of grants by Redditch Borough Council to voluntary and community sector organisations (Appendix 2) have been circulated to voluntary and community sector organisations and Council officers.

No comments were received that required amendment to the draft Shopping, Investing and Giving framework (Appendix 1).

The table below records the responses received regarding the draft policy for award of grants by Redditch Borough Council to voluntary and community sector organisations (Appendix 2), and the changes made to this policy as a result.

Comment From	Comment Made	Action Taken
Phil Hunt, Carers Careline	<p>I think that the review panel have done an excellent job in researching the whole area of funding local voluntary and community sector organisations. The proposals give a clear way forward and, more importantly, a level playing field for all those organisations wishing to seek the support of the Council.</p> <p>Priorities, either nationally or locally will always change just the same as the aims and/or make up of voluntary and community sector organisations can themselves change. With a well written policy in place that sets out clearly the expectations of the Council and monitoring etc requirements to be met we will all know where we stand. The Council will have greater control not only over how funding is distributed but also over what then happens to it - monitoring is key. This obviously also comes in line with funding requirements at County Level and removes any taint of 'favouritism' by having all applications vetted by a panel of independent elected members.</p> <p>I believe that this will be a great step forward for Redditch and the funding that it provides to local groups.</p>	No amendments made
Jim D Smith, North Worcestershire DIAL	<p>I'm pleased to comment on the draft policies and especially to complement the authority in undertaking this exercise. I think the most significant aspect is the ongoing commitment to ensuring that the Borough had a thriving and vibrant Voluntary and Community Sector.</p> <p>The commitment to the Worcestershire Compact principles is one which will require a degree of culture change and training for all which has not been</p>	No amendments made

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	<p>always taken on board by statutory bodies when planning service delivery and monitoring.</p> <p>The potential for using other business models for public services delivery is one that fits well with the economic climate of today and the Shopping, Investing and Giving model meets this need.</p>	
Internal Audit	Definition of a 'small grant' in paragraph 3.6 is vague	Paragraph 3.6 reworded
Internal Audit	Paragraph 5.1c may not provide sufficient protection regarding bank account requirements.	Paragraph 5.1c reworded to ensure all account transactions require authorisation by at least two people.
Internal Audit	Paragraph 6.3 should be strengthened to ensure that spending is evidenced.	Paragraph 6.3 reworded to ensure evidenced spend of money for approved purposes.
Internal Audit	Paragraph 9.6 should require audited accounts.	Many small organisations are not legally required to have audited accounts and it would be unreasonable for the Council to require organisations to incur this expense with no guarantee of funding. However, paragraph 9.6 reworded to require evidence of sound financial management within the organisation.
Internal Audit	Paragraph 9.12 appears to commit the Council to securing funding for organisations.	Paragraph 9.12 re-worded to clarify that the commitment is only to signpost to other sources of funding advice, not to ensure that funding is secured.
Charity Commission (review of best practice guidance)	Funders should be clear about their policy on how an organisation's reserves will affect funding applications.	Paragraph 5.1e reworded to make explicit the Council's consideration of reserves in grant assessment.
Policy Team	Little information is provided on payment schedules.	New paragraph 7.7 added, providing payment schedule guidelines.
Policy Team	Paragraph 9.8 does not provide a clear approach to full cost recovery.	Paragraph 9.8 reworded to provide the Council's working definition of full cost recovery.
Policy Team	Paragraph 9.9 does not provide a quorum for the Grants Panel to make decisions.	Paragraph 9.9 reworded to define Grants Panel quorum.
Policy Team	The assessment timescales presented in section 10 do not make clear the difference between the central Council grants process and other grant processes.	Section 10 reworded to highlight differences in processes.
Housing Options	The application timescales in section 10 are too restrictive.	Minimum application window reduced from four weeks to three weeks.

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No Direct Ward Relevance

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FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

(Report of the Acting Joint Chief Executive)

1. Summary of Proposals

To review and make recommendations to improve the Financial Management Processes and arrangements within the Council following the 2009/10 – 2011/12 budget process.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND** that

- 1) the action plan as detailed in Appendix 2 be approved;
- 2) the business planning timetable as detailed in Appendix 3 be approved;
- 3) the proposed format for revenue budget monitoring as detailed in Appendix 4 be approved; and
- 4) any consequential changes to the Constitution arising from the above decisions be made.

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

Financial

- 3.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from the report as the recommendation to appoint an Interim Director of Finance to oversee the improvements to financial management is not supported by the Strategic Management Team. This is due to the current skill set of the management team and the fact that Serco will be producing the business case for further potential shared services / joint working between Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils which may include changing the management structure.
- 3.2 The report recommends changes to the current financial management processes that operate within the Council.

Legal

- 3.3 None

Policy

- 3.4 The report makes recommendations for improvement to the Council's financial procedures.

Risk

- 3.5 The current financial processes if not reviewed may result in a less than robust budget process leading to poor decision making by members which could ultimately impact on the borough and the services it provides. Additionally the current financial processes may have a negative impact on the Use of Resources judgement.

Sustainability / Environmental

- 3.6 The report seeks to make improvements to the financial processes within the Council in order to improve financial sustainability and to improve decision making processes.

Report**4. Background**

- 4.1 When the six month review of the Acting Joint Chief Executive arrangements was undertaken one of the issues that had arisen was that the budget process at the Council had not been as robust as perhaps it should have been. The following is an extract of the report (on the six month review) that was considered by the Shared Services Board on 9 February 2009:
- 4.2 Whilst not intended as a criticism of the current finance team at Redditch or the previous Borough Director it has to be acknowledged that the budget process has not gone as smoothly as it should have done. It is acknowledged that the previous Borough Director had a significant amount of involvement in previous budget exercises and that due to the Joint Chief Executive arrangements this is no longer possible. A review of the budget process, forward planning and clear timetables for future years will address this matter."

5. Key Issues

- 5.1 Early in January when the magnitude of the budget savings became clear it was agreed with all Group Leaders that the Council should commission a financial health check to ensure that the budget proposals were robust. To this end Bill Roots, ex Chief Executive of Westminster City Council was commissioned to undertake the work. Bill is also often utilised by central government to undertake financial diagnostics of councils that are struggling. This review was not a full financial diagnostic.

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- 5.2 The financial health check, whilst initially focussing on the validity of the budget proposals being put to members for consideration, quickly broadened out to become a wider review of the financial processes in operation at the Council. Bill's report is attached at Appendix 1 with an Action Plan at Appendix 2.
- 5.3 The majority of issues raised in the report with regard to the specific budget proposals were addressed as part of the budget setting process – indeed the Council acknowledged the comments at paragraph 16 of the report which suggested returning to a 3 year planning cycle in the spring of 2009. This report focuses on the other improvements suggested within the report.
- 5.4 The Strategic Management Team accept the report and acknowledge the need for improvements to be made to the financial processes within the Council however it should be noted that the majority of these improvements had already been identified by the Acting Joint Chief Executive.
- 5.5 The action plan has been amended to include a section for comments from the Management Team which includes a response to all recommendations however specific points are as follows:
- a) Appoint an Interim Finance Director – Not accepted as it is felt by the Senior Management Team that as the Acting Joint Chief Executive is a qualified accountant and with Serco due to report at end of July it would be a waste of tax payers money to appoint an Interim Director of Finance. Monthly meetings will be set up between Acting Joint Chief Executive, Acting Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Financial, Revenues and Benefits to oversee progress.
 - b) Propose future Business Planning Process and Annual Timetable to Cabinet – Agreed – there is a separate report on this agenda setting out new Performance Management Framework.
 - c) Reviewing the business and financial planning process – the proposed new planning timetable is attached at Appendix 3.
 - d) Propose content and style of future financial monitoring to cabinet and agree with members – agreed. An example of the recommended format for revenue monitoring is attached at Appendix 4. It is recommended that this is presented to Executive (whilst also being available for Scrutiny) on a monthly basis to further improve the accountability of the Executive Committee. It is recommended that as each monthly monitoring report will look at estimated outturn that there is no longer any need to produce a revised estimates report.

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6. Other Implications

Asset Management	-	None identified
Community Safety	-	None identified
Human Resources	-	None identified
Social Exclusion	-	None identified

7. Lessons Learnt

It is felt that, whilst perhaps not as robust as could have been the case, the Council, both Members and Officers, learnt some very valuable lessons as a result of the process which have been incorporated in this report and in the proposals as to the way forward.

8. Background Papers

Budget papers 2009/10 – 2011/12

9. Consultation

This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Borough Council Officers including the Acting Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Financial, Revenues and Benefits.

10. Author of Report

The author of this report is Kevin Dicks (Acting Joint Chief Executive), who can be contacted on extension ????. (kevin.dicks@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Financial Health Check

Appendix 2 – Financial Health Check Action Plan

Appendix 3 – Business Planning Timetable

Appendix 4 – Budget Monitoring Format

Redditch Borough Council
Financial Health Check --report by W Roots
February 2009

A. Introduction

1. I was asked on the 13th January by Kevin Dicks (Acting Joint Chief Executive) of Redditch Borough Council to undertake a brief and rapid review of the Council's declared budget position for 2009/10 to 2011/12.
2. An extract from my terms of reference is set out at Appendix A. I must stress that the exercise that I have undertaken in a couple of days, which allows for reading and interviews undertaken, is narrow in scope and does not represent what is normally called a full financial diagnostic. Those people that I have interviewed are listed in Appendix B and I would like to thank them for responding to my questions and comments in an open and candid manner. I would also like to thank Susan Tasker for the excellent administrative support provided to me.
3. I set out at Appendix C for completeness the additional aspects that I would have needed to consider and the additional persons that I would have needed to meet had I set out to undertake a full financial diagnostic.
4. Given that the Council needs to determine its budget and the Council Tax level for 2009/10 in February; time is short and for this reason I have deliberately limited my analysis and questioning.
5. Also for this reason and since the Council is effectively paying for my advice, experience and judgement I have adopted a style of directly reporting and commenting based upon setting out my findings and recommendations rather than elaborating on the pros and cons of each issue addressed. Thus the points that I make will appear as stark and focus on areas where change is needed rather than seeking to present a balanced overall assessment of overall financial practice. I am of course more than willing to explain my thinking and the rationale behind my comments, if so required.

B. Findings

Monitoring

6. I have started here since I do not believe that an effective budget process or budget setting can occur in the absence of a robust and effective monitoring process. This is because while variations occurring need to be examined to establish why they are occurring and remedial action taken where appropriate they also vitally inform options for future plans. Effective monitoring is also necessary to ensure proper financial control.
7. The Council's monitoring processes need urgent attention for the following reasons:-
 - a. While I understand that spending officers are expected to review their financial position monthly from computer printouts (I have not checked whether they actually do) only quarterly information is produced for wider consumption. Until recently this information went to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and not the Cabinet. The information produced compares the Annual Budget with cumulative quarterly expenditure to date but only seems to reflect payments that have actually reached the accounts ledgers. The information produced is very detailed but the key messages are not drawn out of the morass of figures and in reality it is of little value in terms of effective financial management information for senior decision makers.
 - b. Periodic overall monitoring reporting against the Council Capital, Revenue and HRA budgets and the impact on balances is weak. No apparent assessment is made as to the forecast end of year position which is where monitoring should focus apart from a predicted out turn report produced once each year in January (see paragraph 10). No reports on this basis have been to the Council's Senior Management Team or to members although I am aware that some portfolio holders do discuss performance with their Heads of Service.

APPENDIX 1

- c. All monitoring should be on an exception basis—at present far too much detail is produced from which it is very difficult to draw out the key messages.
- d. No formal corporate Capital monitoring currently occurs at all although I understand that monitoring of spending does occur at Directorate level.
- e. Budgets have yet to be profiled.
- f. The intentions of finance staff to improve the information produced have been affected by the inability of systems to provide information in the required format. Interim arrangements although crude could have been made to monitor the most volatile areas of spending.
- g. Service and financial monitoring are not integrated thus operational performance can not really be judged. It is spending officers who should account for both their financial and service achievements.
- h. The understandable demand for change needs to be focused and certain if finance staff are to successfully improve the current weaknesses.

Financial Planning

- 8. The Council did produce a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) but not until December 2008. The Council's "Corporate Process Year Planner" shows that this should be produced in July. I am told that the delay was to enable the priorities of the new Administration to be established. I believe that it is vital that the first version of the annual update of the Medium Term Financial Plan and indeed the Corporate Plan (which would contain key actions and service indicators –see paragraphs 26 to 28 below) should be produced by June in each year at the latest. This would as I comment below give time to ensure that effective planning and decision making occurs for the coming three years. I set out in Appendix E a blue print of a systematic process which the Council may wish to follow.

9. Since inadequate monitoring information was available the December version contains, not surprisingly, an “inaccurate” forecast of the net budget gap to be filled for the coming three financial years.
10. The Council produces an estimated out turn report (January 2009 for 2008/09) which updates the original budget and shows the forecast outturn for the year. It is virtually a full budget statement showing budget lines together with a subjective analysis and full recharges.
11. This document updated the budget gaps forecast in the MTFP (reducing them). The document must be time consuming to produce as it is virtually a restatement of the complete revenue budget. It is only needed however because of the weak monitoring arrangements that currently operate in the Council. An effective monitoring system would give this information in a more timely, focused and less time consuming manner. Frankly the detail is of little real value as it is only a forecast, but what is important is what are the significant variations that are occurring and what are their impact on future years and balances. In other words the 23 Appendices are not needed and, in any event the commentaries on variations occurring are not complete to the extent needed for understanding the position as an outsider to the Council.
12. There are two figures in the report on the summary table on page 3 where it is not readily easy to see where the figures have come from. They are the “other variations” figure of £217,400 credit and the “other adjustments” figure of £192,800 credit. A brief note summarising the content and source of these two figures would be helpful.
13. I am not sure how much priority is given to risk management is within the Council but at face value it needs attention which I believe is recognised by senior officers.

Budget Options

14. I had hoped that I could go behind the one line descriptions of the budget options, both Growth and Savings, for revenue and for capital and comment on them. However the basic information that I need to do this is currently being prepared. While I understand that pro formas

- do exist for Capital bids and for revenue service bids the same can not be said for revenue savings options. I have now (26th January) received an extract of the information under pinning some of the revenue bids and an early version of information supporting some of the savings options. In so far as the revenue bids are concerned I think that the Council should examine carefully those described as of “High Priority” to establish whether they are all needed in 2009/10 or whether some can be deferred. It is of course the savings options where the most sensitive decisions will need to be taken and further information is needed to facilitate this.
15. I have set out in Appendix C the information that I would expect to see to support a proposed expenditure reduction or increase in income.
16. I understand that a fairly rigorous process has been gone through by officers to identify the scope for savings and growth options have been minimised. I am however concerned about timing given the need to set a budget shortly allowing time for the involvement of those Councillors who have yet to see any of the proposed changes. It may thus be sensible to only approve the specific changes needed to set the 2009/10 budget and return to a three year planning and budgeting process in the spring of 2009. If this approach is adopted there would no need to await the formal budget timetable for 2010/11 onwards and the planned changes for 2010/11 and 2011/12 could be announced in the spring of 2009.
17. The fact that the Council faces the need to find economies stems primarily from the impact of inflation, capital expenditure and increased energy costs and a low increase (well below inflation) in government grant.
18. From my discussions there are a few issues that need to be dealt with, namely:-
- a. A summary note explaining the content of the two figures of £217,400 credit and £192,800 credit shown in the estimated out-turn report of 28th January 2009 would be helpful and reassuring (see paragraph 12 above)

- b. Where is the redundancy cost provided for should there be any arising from specific savings options selected? Some of the potential options as listed could involve redundancy.
- c. Pension costs in 20011/12 are likely to represent a much larger burden on the Council than forecast.
- d. Are all of the “High Priority” bids needed for 2009/10 or can they be deferred and can more of them be of a short term nature?
- e. Can more savings be found from the staff vacancy provision?
- f. What is the overall impact of efficiency savings and are all the options shown in the detailed sheets?
- g. Is the Council undertaking outsourcing/competitive tendering (per its stated priorities) sufficiently vigorously?
- h. Is the shared service agenda going to produce the economies sought and in what timescale?
- i. What is the impact of latest interest rate changes?
- j. While I have suggested that only making the decisions needed to balance the 2009/10 budget may be sensible if the Council can achieve greater savings and earlier than planned this adds to balances and makes managing future years easier.
- k. I believe that the options identified do at face value provide the scope to readily achieve a balanced budget in 2009/10 without the need to adopt risky options however the changes needed in later years will present a challenge to the Council and merit close analysis. Some radical options may need to be revisited e.g. the transfer of Housing Stock.
- l. The Council is clear that it wishes to avoid “salami slicing” budget reductions and it is important to adhere to this principle because “salami slicing” is an ineffective way in which to achieve economies.
- m. Is the Council doing enough to use its property assets either to generate capital receipts or maximise revenue or redevelopment opportunities?
- n. Ensure that all the recurring variations arising from 2008/9 have been reflected in the revised gap analysis now available (copy received 26th January) for 2009/10 onwards and where permanent economies can be made, they are reflected in the budget options.

Culture

19. It was very apparent to me that there are risks that practices, which have existed in the Council for many years, may possibly become engrained as the only way to do business. There is a question mark over whether there is sufficient knowledge amongst Council Officers as regards what other best practice Council's do and whether they have the ability to lead the change in practice needed, without further guidance.
20. The manner in which decisions were taken by the previous Administration was I was advised significantly different to that sought by the new Majority Party. I am not clear that all staff fully appreciate that the changes in practice being made are intended to represent the manner in which the Council will undertake its business in future.
21. The impact of the changes being sought should not be underestimated and there is a need to ensure that the relevant staff really do understand what is needed, there is certainty on the changes being sought, and that the resources to effect the changes are adequate. I have not examined these points in any detail but they do need to be addressed.
22. I think the fact that the Council's most senior Finance officer is at third tier level does not assist with the need to restore belief in the capability of the finance function and ensure a strong regime of financial control. I would also add that contact with the portfolio holder is not as close as it should be. I know that bringing certainty to the future officer structure of the Council is understood and planned by members but rapid attention to the top two tiers beneath the Chief Executive is pressing.
23. I am aware that the business case for shared services and in particular the joint officer structure will address this issue. Members will however wish to consider whether the timescale to address the top structure of the Council will in reality be early enough to meet their needs. It may well be appropriate depending upon timing to effect an interim solution.

24. The quality of reports also needs attention. They are overly long; contain some unnecessary errors, are not written with the audience in mind, and adopt a laborious rather than a smart approach to decision making. A classic example of the last point is the February 2008 Capital Programme approval report which had 18 recommendations and ran to some 80 pages.
25. There is however a professional pride within the finance function that needs to be channelled since it is apparent to me that there is a desire to fulfil their role in an effective way. Competent and strong leadership will be needed to deliver the type and quality of service required by the Council.

An integrated Business Planning and Performance Management System

26. I have commented above about some of the core weaknesses that the Council suffers from as regards its financial processes. Much of what I have said is not news to the Council but confirmation of the concerns already held by senior officers and members. I believe it to be vital that the Council adopts an effective process for Business Planning and Performance Management. My experience in visiting under performing and problematic local authorities throughout the country is that almost inevitably that such a system is lacking or non-existent.
27. In the Council's case I can find no evidence of a reliable system in recent years and I believe that this goes to the heart of why the concern about the quality of financial information exists. I attach at Appendix E an outline of the process that I would recommend coupled with a diagrammatic presentation and an outline annual timetable.
28. The proposals are based upon best practice but the Council will need to adapt such a system to suit its own management and member structure. Monitoring must be on the basis of projected outturn for the year with service and financial performance being considered together. In implementing such a system training for both members

and officers will be needed to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly understood.

C Conclusion

29. The Council has a number of the features in place to achieve an effective finance function such that it can rely on the quality, relevance and timeliness of information provided. There are however a number of weaknesses in current arrangements which need to be addressed to achieve level of service required by senior officers and members.

30. Action being taken or planned by the Council is appropriate with the immediate focus understandably being the setting of the 2009/10 budget however to achieve the desired standard in the future the Council will need to

- a. Implement an effective Business Planning and Performance Management process
- b. Recast the officer structure,
- c. Strengthen the role of Finance and review the level of resources available within the function, and
- d. Make it very clear that the Council is undoubtedly seeking a change of culture and practice in its core processes.

31. I understand that a number of the points that I have raised above have already been actioned by the Acting Joint Chief Executive but I have commented issues as extant at the time of my view. In taking further action the Council will need to allow for action already in train.

D Recommendation

32. That the Council considers the points that I have raised in this report and prepares a plan to address them having regard to both the timescales needed to determine the 2009/10 budget and where action is already being taken to change current practice.

Appendix A

Redditch Borough Council

Outline of Specification—Financial Health Check

The review will focus on the declared budget gap faced by the Council for 2009/10 to test its accuracy and voracity.

The process to arrive at the figure will be examined to establish how robust it is.

The context in which the gap has been arrived at and whether any particular factors have a significant bearing on the Council's financial position will be identified.

Options identified to meet the gap will be examined to test the service and political implications and any other options that may exist will be identified.

The review will comprise pre reading where I would ask that the Council supplies, initially, the following documents in advance of my visit:-

1. The budget setting report for 2008/09—which will need to cover capital expenditure too.
2. The last two monitoring reports both capital and revenue.
3. Any reports on the forecast gap for 2009/10.
4. The list of options to close the gap plus the list of additional commitments built into the budget forecast.
5. The latest version of any Medium Term Plan.
6. The latest Annual External Audit letter.
7. The final accounts report for 2007/08.

I anticipate that I would want to have 45 minute discussions with:-

1. The lead member for Finance
2. The Leader of the Council
3. The Chief Executive
4. A senior Service Director
5. The opposition spokesperson for Finance
6. The chief Accountant or their equivalent

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I would want at least a 1 hour discussion with the S151 officer. Hopefully all interviews could be arranged on the same day to avoid costs and delays.

I anticipate that the task would take no more than 4 chargeable days comprising:-

1. 1 day pre reading and travel assuming only one trip for interviewing
2. 1 full day interviewing provided all on the same day
3. 1 day report writing and follow up
4. Up to 1 day for report presentation to members and management team if required

Appendix B

Persons Interviewed

Mike Braley, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder Corporate Management

Kevin Dicks, Acting Joint Chief Executive

Carole Gandy, Leader of the Council

Malcolm Hall, Leader of Lib Democrats

Sue Hanley, Acting Deputy Chief Executive

Bill Hartnett, Leader of Opposition (Labour)

Teresa Kristunas, Head of Finance & Sam Morgan, Finance Manager

Colin MacMillan, Portfolio Holder Environment etc

Appendix C

Main Additional Issues which would need to be covered to achieve a Financial Diagnostic

Corporate Planning process and content
Community Plan process and content
Strategic Partnerships
Performance Management in practice
Service Planning process, outcome and monitoring
Integrated Performance Monitoring
Internal Audit effectiveness
Balance sheet control—debtors, creditors etc.
Financial regulations and Standing Orders
Relationships
Asset Management
Risk Management
Selective service reviews and External Audit reviews.

I would wish to meet some key external partners, the External Auditor, 3 or 4 Heads of Service, all Directors, a group of Accountants, the Chief Internal Auditor, and a group of back bench members in addition to those persons set out in Appendix B

APPENDIX 1

Appendix D

Information to support an expenditure reduction proposal or income increase

Option no. and description of proposal			
Budget Code			
Base budget	£	Last real change	
Justification for change (including market and OLA comparisons for income)			
Link to Council Priorities			
Impact on public			
Impact on performance indicators			
Impact on Staff			
Incidence of change	2009/10 2010/11 2011/12 Full Year		

Appendix E

Business Planning Summary

A Business Planning and Monitoring Process in a nut shell

Planning

1. The Council like all local authorities is required to produce numerous plans and is influenced by the plans of other organisations.
2. The key plan of any Council is the Council Plan (or Corporate Plan). It is heavily influenced by the Community (Strategy) Plan, individual statutory Service Plans, and major specific Project Plans. It sets out the Council's vision, values, key priorities, the resources available and the actions required and performance standards to be achieved.
3. Underpinning the Council Plans are individual Service Business Plans which set out in more detail how the issues highlighted in both the Council Plan are to be achieved and to what standard. In addition more detailed service specific information is set out to inform and guide management action on service issues which although operationally important are in themselves not identified as corporate priorities in the Council Plan.
4. While a detailed capital and revenue budget analysis exists, the summary service financial information shown in the Council Plan is the basis for corporate financial monitoring with more detailed monitoring being undertaken by Departmental Management Teams.
5. The Council Plan is subject to formal approval by the Council. The Cabinet should be responsible for approving the Key Actions and Service Standards sections of individual Service Plans.
6. The plans also form the basis for the objectives set for Council officials against which they are appraised.
7. Annex 1 (overleaf) sets out in brief diagrammatic form an effective Council Planning and Monitoring process. It allows for those authorities that have Local Strategic Partnerships and Improvement Plans as a result of low scores from the Audit Commission
8. Annex 2 shows an alternative diagrammatic presentation

Monitoring

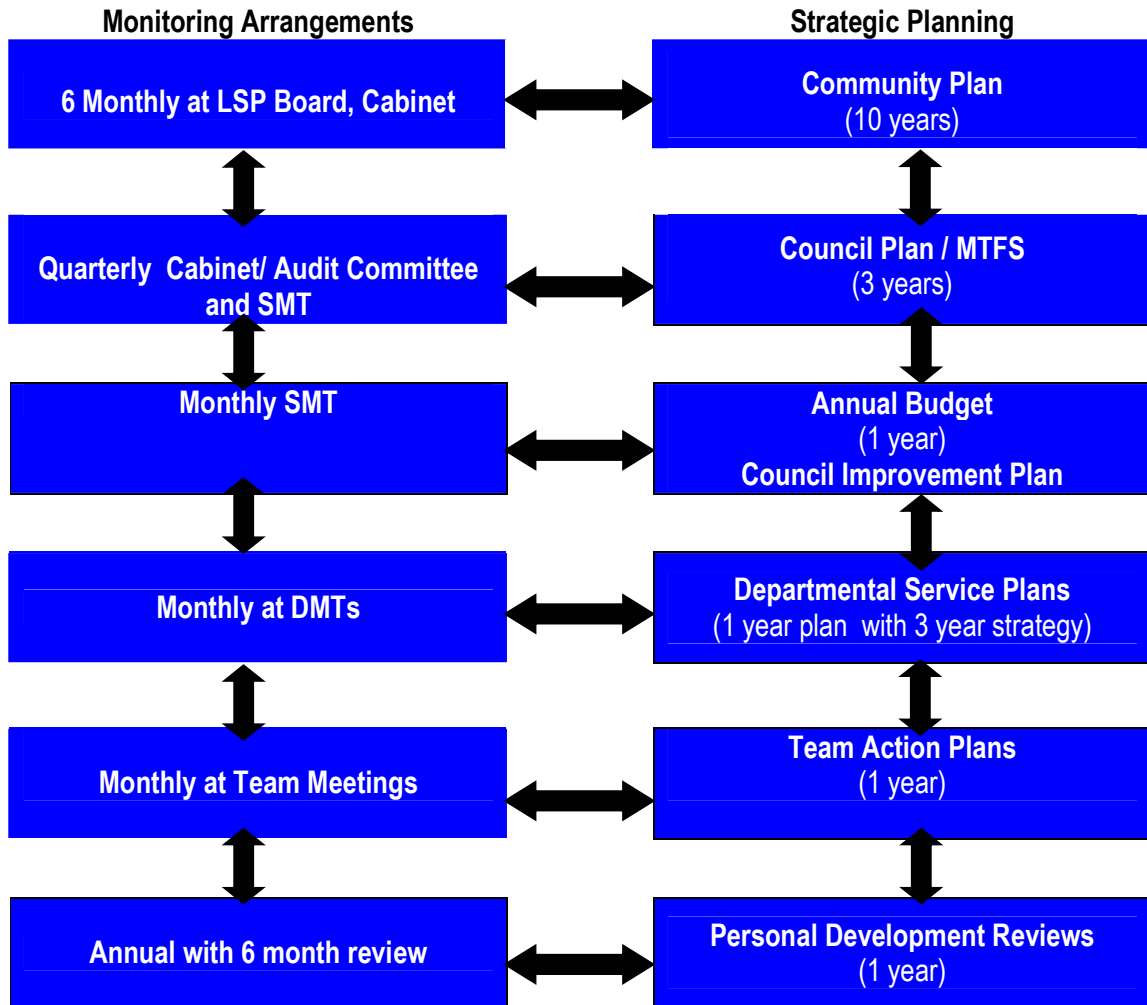
9. Departmental Management Teams are required to monitor their performance against the Council Plan, and their own Service Plan on a monthly basis. Some service issues which are sensitive or difficult to fully control are subject to more frequent monitoring. Progress is discussed monthly with the appropriate Cabinet portfolio holder.
10. Performance against the Council Plan is reported to the Senior Management Team on a monthly basis with a quarterly summary report going to the Council's Cabinet and the Audit Committee. Reports cover resources (capital and revenue on a projected out turn and exception basis), progress on key actions and service performance data.
11. Performance against Departmental Service plans is undertaken by Departmental Management Teams (with staff from central support functions e.g. finance being available at the meeting to give advice) and any significant service or additional financial performance issues are drawn to the attention of the Senior Management Team for upward reporting if necessary.
12. The monitoring of staff performance is achieved through the staff appraisal process which is annual with a half yearly review.

The annual timetable

13. A summary of the Annual Timetable is set out in Annex 3 using 2009/10 as the base year.

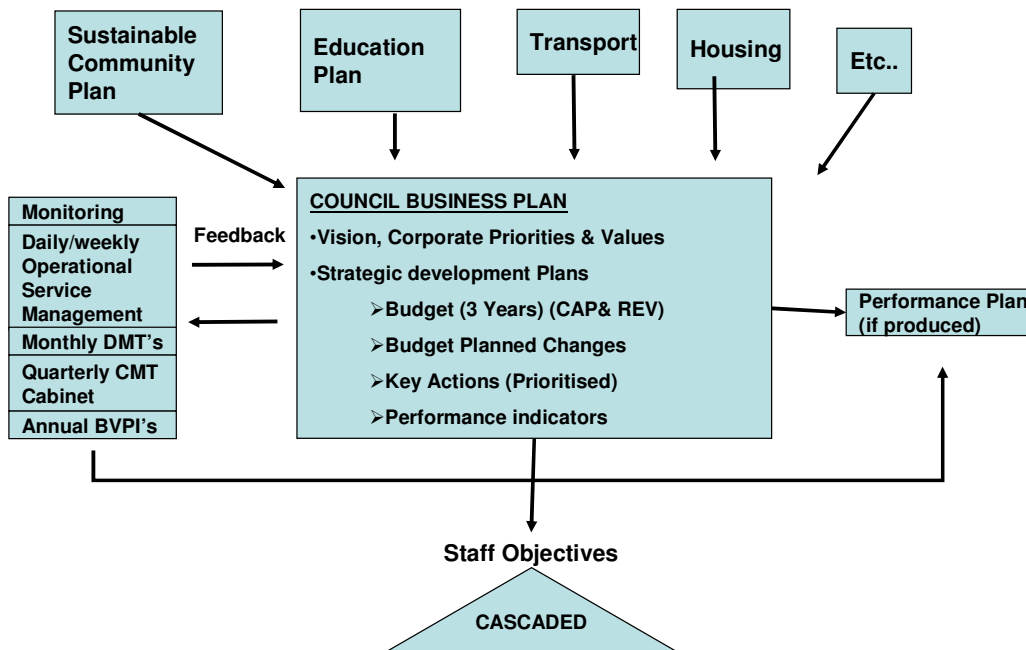
Annex 1

Diagrammatic Presentation of XYZ's Planning and Monitoring Process



Business Planning and Performance Management

- So What does it look like?



**Outline Business Planning and Performance
Management Annual Timetable-**

(Outline for actions in the year 2009/10 shown)

DATE	ACTION OR EVENT	PERIODS AFFECTED		
		2008/9	2009/10	2010/11 to 2012/13
March 09	-Set Council Tax (includes revenue and Capital budgets)		√	
April 09	-Council Plan and Service Business plans published		√	√ (2010 and 11/12 only)
	-Issue Council Imp Plan (If needed)		√	
June 09	-Financial Out turn 2008/9 revenue and capital reviewed and reported	√		
	-Key performance indicators out turn reviewed and reported	√		
	-Month 1 monitoring report (finance; key actions and PI's to SMT **		√	
	-Month 1 Imp Plan monitoring report to SMT and Cabinet **		√	
July09	Financial prospects reported and MTFP updated			√
Aug 09	-First quarterly monitoring report to Cabinet/committee (covering finance; key actions and PI's)		√	
Sept 09	-Detailed budget timetable issued			√
	--Budget Remit set			√
Oct 09	-Draft options for growth and savings considered by SMT having regard to Council and service priorities			√
Nov 09	-Star chamber meetings with Majority group			√
	-Second quarterly monitoring report to SMT ,Cabinet /committee		√	

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Dec 09	-Budget Options reported to the Council prior to public consultation			√
	-Preparation of draft Service Business Plans and Council Plan			√
	-Public Consultation re 2010/11 budget and plans for 2011 to 2013			√
	-Scrutiny review of budget			√
Jan 10	- Finalise Council			√
	• Budget			√
	• Service Plans			√
	• Council Plan			√
Feb 10	- Third quarterly monitoring report to SMT, Cabinet		√	
March 10	-Set Council Tax			√ (2010/11 only)
	-Distribute Council Plan and Service Plans			√
	-Finalise Staff Objectives and complete PDR's			√ (2010/11 only)
April 10	Process starts again as above			
May 10	-Fourth quarterly monitoring report to CMT, Cabinet and Council		√	
	** These reports are repeated monthly but not shown here to avoid cluttering this document			

Redditch Borough Council---Action Plan

Action	Who	Dε Dates												Comments	
		Mar-09	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09	Jul-09	Aug-09	Sep-09	Oct-09	Nov-09	Dec-09	Jan-10	Feb-10		Mar-10
A. 2009/10 Budget															
Determine 2009/10 budget	Cabinet	√													Budget agreed by full Council on 6th April
Profile 2009/10 budget	Head of Fin		√	√											Work currently progressing
B. Interim Fin Director															
Appoint Interim Finance Director	C.Ex/Cab		√												Not accepted - felt by the Senior Management Team that as the Acting Joint Chief Executive is a qualified accountant and with Serco due to report at end of July it would be a waste of tax payers money to appoint an Interim Director of Finance. Monthly meetings will be set up between Acting Joint Chief Executive, Acting Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Financial, Revenues and Benefits to oversee progress.
Initial work for new Interim FD Set out impact of pensions	Interim FD			√											The impact of pensions increase (based on the current actuarial valuation) was included in the base estimates.
Oversee closure of Accounts	Interim FD	√	√	√	√										Undertaken by Acting Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Financial, Revenues and Benefits
Update Med Term Fin Plan	Interim FD				√										Undertaken by Head of Financial, Revenues and Benefits but overseen by Acting Joint Chief Executive
Present draft budget decisions 2010/11 & 2011/12 to Cabinet based on new MTFP	Interim FD				√										Will be undertaken as part of the outturn report.
Oversee new budget setting timetable	Interim FD					√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	Undertaken by Head of Financial, Revenues and Benefits but overseen by Acting Joint Chief Executive
Review risk management arrangements and ensure it is embedded	Interim FD						√								Work currently being undertaken - includes review of corporate and departmental risk registers as well as identification and management of risks in reports.

Redditch Borough Council---Action Plan

Action	Who	Dε Dates												Comments		
		Mar-09	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09	Jul-09	Aug-09	Sep-09	Oct-09	Nov-09	Dec-09	Jan-10	Feb-10		Mar-10	
Undertake review with CEx of property assets	Interim FD					√										Asset Management Plan sets out the timetable for this - currently working with County to establish feasibility of working more closely with them.
Demonstate achievements on efficiency savings	CMT				√											Undertaken by Head of Financial, Revenues and Benefits but overseen by Acting Joint Chief Executive
C Future Planning																
Make draft budget decisions 2010/11& 11/12	Cabinet				√											Undertaken by Head of Financial, Revenues and Benefits but overseen by Acting Joint Chief Executive
Propose future Business Planning Process and Annual Timetable to Cabinet	C.EX			√												Report to Executive Committee in June setting out new Performance Management Framework.
Approve & publish new arrangements	Cabinet			√												Report to Executive Committee in June setting out new Performance Management Framework.
Commence 2010/11 to 12/13 budget process	Interim FD					√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	As per attached business planner.
D. Monitoring																
Propose content and style of future financial monitoring to cabinet and agree with members	CMT			√												As per attached format
Demonstrate firm grip on staffing budgets	Head of Fin				√											As part of budget monitonng
Adopt exception based reporting	CMT					√										First reports to Executive in new style from end of June.
Commence new style monitoring	CMT					√										First reports to Executive in new style from end of June.
Integrate financial & non financial information	CMT							√								To be incorporated into single report from September to align budget and financial information.
Monthly monitoring to CMT and Cabinet but then switch to quarterly for Cabinet	CMT				√	√	√	√	√	√	√					Agreed
Give particular focus to 2009/10 savings	Head of Fin					√			√				√			As part of budget monitonng but specific plans formulated for more difficult savings.

Redditch Borough Council---Action Plan

Action	Who	Dε Dates												Comments	
		Mar-09	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09	Jul-09	Aug-09	Sep-09	Oct-09	Nov-09	Dec-09	Jan-10	Feb-10		Mar-10
E. Financial Practice															
Determine pro forma for future bidding processes and savings	Head of Fin							√							Agreed.
Assess regularly the impact of monitoring information on future plans	Head of Fin				√	√			√			√			As part of monitoring information the estimated outtrn will be assessed removing the need to undertake a revised estimates process.
Always identify the earliest date to find potential savings	Head of Fin		√												Agreed.
Ensure savings proposals always identify redundancy cost	Head of Fin		√												Agreed.
Review achievement against new KLOE'S	Head of Fin		√	√											Will be incorporated into Improvement Plan which will underpin delivery of Corporate Plan and Service Business Plans.
Determine future officer structure	Cabinet				√										Agreed but timescales need to be end of July to align with production of Serco report.
Determine strength of Finance function	Int FD& Cex			√											As part of business case.
Cabinet to reassess progress with shared services and outsourcing	Cabinet					√									As part of business case and regular updates to Shared Services Board.
F. Administrative action															
Be clear about to whom, when and in what form reports are needed	CMT		√												Highlight reports will be submitted to CMT and Executive on a monthly basis.
Determine in detail future style of reporting	CMT		√												As per attached format - more work will be needed for Capital and this will be agreed by end of June.
Set out report writing quality standards and importance of audience awareness	CMT		√												CMT to provide quality check.
Set out future officer training needs for															
a) Financial skills	CMT				√										Agreed
b) Communication skills	CMT				√										Agreed
c) Other	CMT				√										Agreed
Review members financial training needs	CMT			√											Currently being reviewed by Member Development Group.

KEY CORPORATE PROCESS YEAR PLANNER

VFM – Rolling Programme
Assurance Framework – Rolling Programme

May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections • AGM • Revisions to Constitution incl. SOs, Financial Regs and Scheme of Delegation • Monthly monitoring of progress against corporate improvement plan (including key projects) • Monthly monitoring of progress against key priority performance indicators both national and corporate 	<p>-</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Plans (report on previous year) • Annual Governance Statement • Annual Efficiency Statement – report on previous year • Statement of Accounts Finalised including Annual Governance Statement (30 June – statutory requirement). Including assessment of impact of Outturn on Medium Term Financial Strategy • Budget Monitoring to start – monthly to CMT • Performance Indicators outturn for previous year • Guidance on service business planning timetable and process for forthcoming year including template for service business plans • Monthly monitoring of progress against corporate improvement plan (including key projects) • Monthly monitoring of progress against key priority performance indicators both national and corporate 	<p>Executive/ O & S</p> <p>Audit Committee</p> <p>Audit Committee</p> <p>Executive/Council</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Monitoring and monitoring of progress against key priority performance indicators both national and corporate PIs (report on Apr – Jun of current year) • Medium Term Financial Strategy – setting out the financial parameters within which the strategy will be developed • Budget Monitoring • Reporting on Corporate Plan / Risk Management (Oct-Mar of previous year) • Asset Management Plan (report on PIs) • Monthly Monitoring of progress against corporate improvement plan (including key projects) • Quarterly Monitoring of progress against corporate improvement plan (including key projects) (April – June) • Monthly monitoring of progress against key priority performance indicators both national and corporate 	<p>Executive / O & S</p> <p>Executive/Council</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>CMT</p>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan process starts • Away day with Executive and Senior Management Team to review priorities for forthcoming year • Service Planning starts (including CPA , KLOEs, Risk Management) • Team away days to start to compile Service Business Plans • Budget Monitoring 	<p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p>

Key Issues: Planning Monitoring	Political Financial	Management External Assessment
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Guidelines issued Monthly Monitoring of progress against corporate improvement plan (including key projects) Monitoring of progress against key priority performance indicators both national and corporate 	<p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Awards - nominations Revenue and Capital Bids prepared (for following financial year) Detailed work on budgets commences Council Plan Part 1 report submitted to Executive Draft service business plans submitted Monthly Monitoring of progress against corporate improvement plan (including key projects) Monitoring of progress against key priority performance indicators both national and corporate All day SMT on draft service business plans Budget Monitoring 	<p>-</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>CMT/HoS</p> <p>CMT/HoS</p> <p>-</p> <p>CMT/HoS</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Monitoring and monitoring of progress against key priority performance indicators both national and corporate PIs (report on Apr – Sept of current year) Detailed work on budgets continues Fees and Charges prepared (for following financial year) Monthly Monitoring of progress against corporate improvement plan (including key projects) Quarterly Monitoring of progress against corporate improvement plan (including key projects) (July - Sept) Consultation on priorities Monthly monitoring of progress against key priority performance indicators both national and corporate Budget Monitoring 	<p>Executive / O&S</p> <p>CMT/HoS</p> <p>CMT / HoS</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting on Corporate Plan / Risk Management (Apr – Sep of current year) Asset Management Plan and Update Detailed work on budgets continues Health and Safety Audit Revenue and Capital Bids Finalised (to build into budget for following financial year) First cut of subsequent years budget Budget Monitoring Monthly Monitoring of progress against corporate improvement plan (including key projects) Monitoring of progress against key priority performance indicators both national and corporate Presentation to Executive Committee of Budget process, capital programme and draft revenue budget 	<p>Executive / O&S</p> <p>Executive / O&S</p> <p>CMT/HoS</p> <p>-</p> <p>Finance</p> <p>Finance</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>Executive</p>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fees and Charges setting in December / January (for following financial year) Revenue Support Grant Figures received Budget Monitoring 	<p>Council</p> <p>Finance</p> <p>CMT</p>

Key Issues: Planning Monitoring	Political Financial	Management External Assessment
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to O&S of Budget process, capital programme and draft revenue budget • Monthly Monitoring of progress against corporate improvement plan (including key projects) • Monitoring of progress against key priority performance indicators both national and corporate 	<p>O&S</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p>
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 year Capital Programme (for following 3 years) approved • Medium Term Financial Strategy including Revenue and Capital budgets approved • Capital Strategy Update • Budget Monitoring • Set CT base • Staff Awards – presentation • Budget Monitoring and monitoring of progress against key priority performance indicators both national and corporate PIs (report on Apr – Dec of current year) • Monthly Monitoring of progress against corporate improvement plan (including key projects) • Quarterly Monitoring of progress against corporate improvement plan (including key projects) (Oct-Dec) • Monthly monitoring of progress against key priority performance indicators both national and corporate 	<p>Executive</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>Executive /Audit Committee</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>Executive / Council</p> <p>-</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>CMT</p>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent Setting • Budget Monitoring • Insurance Inventory (including up-to-date Property Portfolio) • Service Plans Finalised • Corporate Plan approved • Corporate Improvement Plan approved • Corporate Risk Management Register (review) (done as part of Corporate Plan review) • Monthly Monitoring of progress against corporate improvement plan (including key projects) • Monitoring of progress against key priority performance indicators both national and corporate 	<p>Council</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>Finance</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>Audit Committee</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Monitoring • Council Tax Setting (by no later than 11 March) • Set Prudential Indicators / (Treasury Management Policy) Statement and Annual Investment Strategy) • Publicity Restrictions start (because of elections) • Monthly Monitoring of progress against corporate improvement plan (including key projects) • Monitoring of progress against key priority performance indicators both national and corporate 	<p>Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>-</p> <p>CMT</p> <p>CMT</p>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicity Restrictions (because of elections) 	<p>-</p>

Key Issues: Planning Monitoring	Political Financial	Management External Assessment
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Quarterly Monitoring General Fund Summary

Directorate	Revised Budget	Profiled YTD Budget	YTD Actuals	Commitments	Actual + Commitments	Variance to date	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance
Chief Executive	3,348,520.00	2,681,441.52	3,009,794.40	0.00	3,009,794.40	328,352.88	0.00	0.00
Environment & Planning	5,680,590.00	5,259,645.60	5,032,137.78	0.00	5,032,137.78	-227,507.82	0.00	0.00
Housing Services	997,470.00	1,380,040.04	1,196,269.75	0.00	1,196,269.75	-183,770.29	0.00	0.00
Leisure Customer & Bus Sup	3,295,270.00	3,061,346.63	3,003,065.97	0.00	3,003,065.97	-58,280.66	0.00	0.00
General Fund Total	13,321,850.00	12,382,473.79	12,241,267.90	0.00	12,241,267.90	-141,205.89	0.00	0.00

Quarterly Monitoring Directorate Summary

Head of Service	Revised Budget	Profiled YTD Budget	YTD Actuals	Commitments	Actual + Commitments	Variance to date	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance
Chief Executive								
Corporate Management	665,600.00	610,559.16	554,554.51	0.00	554,554.51	-56,004.65	0.00	-665,600.00
Head Of Financial Revs & Bens	915,050.00	743,070.01	1,434,089.77	0.00	1,434,089.77	691,019.76	0.00	-915,050.00
Head Of Legal, Demo & Prop	215,830.00	128,067.52	-25,010.65	0.00	-25,010.65	-153,078.17	0.00	-215,830.00
Head Of Strategy & Partnership	1,552,040.00	1,199,744.83	1,046,160.77	0.00	1,046,160.77	-153,584.06	0.00	-1,552,040.00
Directorate total	3,348,520.00	2,681,441.52	3,009,794.40	0.00	3,009,794.40	328,352.88	0.00	-3,348,520.00
Environment & Planning								
Director Eps	0.00	110.00	-1,103.71	0.00	-1,103.71	-1,213.71	0.00	0.00
Head Of Environment	2,820,570.00	2,555,428.34	2,477,418.04	0.00	2,477,418.04	-78,010.30	0.00	-2,820,570.00
Head Of Human Resources & Comm	204,840.00	201,109.17	250,303.24	0.00	250,303.24	49,194.07	0.00	-204,840.00
Head Of Operations	1,720,110.00	1,645,438.09	1,605,263.22	0.00	1,605,263.22	-40,174.87	0.00	-1,720,110.00
Head Of Planning & Build Contr	935,070.00	657,560.00	700,256.99	0.00	700,256.99	-157,303.01	0.00	-935,070.00
Directorate total	5,680,590.00	5,259,645.60	5,032,137.78	0.00	5,032,137.78	-227,507.82	0.00	-5,680,590.00
Housing Services								
Director Of Hsq And Asset Man.	0.00	110.00	-2,177.11	0.00	-2,177.11	-2,287.11	0.00	0.00
Head Of Asset & Maintenance	352,590.00	348,611.68	422,688.20	0.00	422,688.20	74,076.52	0.00	-352,590.00
Head Of Housing & Community	644,880.00	1,031,318.36	775,758.66	0.00	775,758.66	-255,559.70	0.00	-644,880.00
Directorate total	997,470.00	1,380,040.04	1,196,269.75	0.00	1,196,269.75	-183,770.29	0.00	-897,470.00
Leisure Customer & Bus Sup								
Head Of Cust & It	54,210.00	41,095.00	17,139.97	0.00	17,139.97	-23,955.03	0.00	-54,210.00
Head Of Leisure & Arts	3,241,060.00	3,020,251.63	2,985,926.00	0.00	2,985,926.00	-34,325.63	0.00	-3,241,060.00
Directorate total	3,295,270.00	3,061,346.63	3,003,065.97	0.00	3,003,065.97	-58,280.66	0.00	-3,295,270.00
General Fund total	13,321,850.00	12,382,473.79	12,241,267.90	0.00	12,241,267.90	-141,205.89	0.00	-13,321,850.00

Quarterly Monitoring Service Head Summary

Head of Service	Revised Budget	Profiled YTD Budget	YTD Actuals	Commitments	Actual + Commitments	Variance to date	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance
Chief Executive								
Corporate Management								
Chief Executive	665,600.00	610,559.16	554,554.51	0.00	554,554.51	-86,004.65	0.00	-665,600.00
Head of Service total	665,600.00	610,559.16	554,554.51	0.00	554,554.51	-86,004.65	0.00	-665,600.00
Head Of Financial Revs & Bens								
Benefits	425,710.00	322,223.34	1,018,682.15	0.00	1,018,682.15	696,458.81	0.00	-425,710.00
Council Tax	512,540.00	473,800.00	464,080.51	0.00	464,080.51	-9,719.49	0.00	-512,540.00
Financial Services	-23,200.00	-52,953.33	-48,672.89	0.00	-48,672.89	4,280.44	0.00	23,200.00
Head of Service total	915,050.00	743,070.01	1,434,089.77	0.00	1,434,089.77	691,019.76	0.00	-915,050.00
Head Of Legal, Demo & Prop								
Audit Services	0.00	-110.00	-9,924.31	0.00	-9,924.31	-9,814.31	0.00	0.00
Democratic Services	677,820.00	579,700.00	513,830.03	0.00	513,830.03	-65,869.97	0.00	-677,820.00
Head Of Legal Democ & Property	0.00	0.00	720.68	0.00	720.68	720.68	0.00	0.00
Legal Services	0.00	440.00	1,929.90	0.00	1,929.90	1,489.90	0.00	0.00
Property Management	-461,990.00	-451,962.48	-531,566.95	0.00	-531,566.95	-79,604.47	0.00	461,990.00
Head of Service total	215,830.00	128,067.52	-25,010.65	0.00	-25,010.65	-153,078.17	0.00	-215,830.00
Head Of Strategy & Partnership								
Corporate Strategy	1,552,040.00	1,199,744.83	1,046,160.77	0.00	1,046,160.77	-153,584.06	0.00	-1,552,040.00
Head of Service total	1,552,040.00	1,199,744.83	1,046,160.77	0.00	1,046,160.77	-153,584.06	0.00	-1,552,040.00
Directorate total	3,348,520.00	2,681,441.52	3,009,794.40	0.00	3,009,794.40	328,352.88	0.00	-3,348,520.00

Executive Committee

No Direct Ward Relevance

10 June 2009

Benefits Services – Improvement Plan

(Report of the Head of Financial, Revenues and Benefits Services)

1. Summary of Proposals

To seek Member approval of an Improvement Plan for the Benefits Service that will respond to the recommendations made by the Audit Commission.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that

the Benefit Services Improvement Plan be implemented

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

Financial

- 3.1 Additional resources have been allocated to the service. £40,000 from the 2009/10 revenue bids and an additional £54,757 towards administration costs from the Department of Work and Pensions. These resources reflect the increased workload within the Benefits Service due to the economic downturn and an underlying increase in claims.

Legal

- 3.2 None identified.

Policy

- 3.3 There are no specific policy implications.

Risk

- 3.4 The Audit Commission have advised that they will re-inspect the Benefits Service within 24 months of the original inspection in February 2009. If the proposed improvements are not in place by this time there is a risk that the second report leads to a recommendation that the Department of Work and Pensions are asked to intervene

Sustainability / Environmental

3.5 None identified.

Report

4. Background

In February 2009 the Audit Commission carried out an inspection of the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Service. The Service was assessed against published key lines of enquiry inspection and found to be providing a poor service and with uncertain prospects for improvement. The report identified several weaknesses and made recommendations on how to improve the Service. These recommendations form the basis of the Service Improvement Plan. The report also suggested the Performance Development Team from the Department of Work and Pensions be used to help deliver the required improvements.

5. Key Issues

The key issues identified in the Audit Commission Inspection Report have been detailed in the Improvement Plan as Action Areas. The draft Improvement Plan is attached as Appendix 1.

6. Other Implications

Asset Management - None.

Community Safety - None.

Human Resources - Additional staff resources have been engaged.

Social Exclusion - Failure to address some of the issues raised by the inspection may impact upon social exclusion.

7. Lessons Learnt

These are detailed in the Improvement Plan.

8. Background Papers

Benefits Inspection – Audit Commission Report April 2009.

Executive

Committee

10 June 2009

9. Consultation

This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Borough Council Officers.

10. Author of Report

The author of this report is Teresa Kristunas (Head of Financial, Revenues and Benefits Services), who can be contacted on extension 3295 (e-mail:teresa.kristunas@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Benefits Service - Business Improvement Plan.

Benefits Services Improvement Plan

Ref	Action Area	Improvement	How	Who	When
R1	Improve the management and collection of all Housing Benefit overpayments.	Reduce the level of overpayments outstanding through proactive and structured management.			31/01/2010
R1a	Reviewing the roles and responsibilities for recovery.	Decide where HB debt recovery should take place.	PDT to help facilitate discussions.	D Taylor J Bough PDT	19/05/2009
R1b	Ensure that the resources needed are made available.	Ensure adequate resources are applied to recovery processes.	Depending upon outcome of R1a	D Taylor J Bough	19/06/2009
R1c	Reviewing debts and improving procedures for recovery, monitoring and management.	Review current debts and identify any write -off, update policy and procedures.	Review current debts, update recovery policy, put in place monitoring arrangements.	D Taylor K Herbert S Maddox J Bough	30/12/09
R1d	Review the write off policies and procedure.	Introduce more streamlined and responsive procedure.	Write new procedure and review levels requiring further authorisation.	T Kristunas D Taylor J Bough D Riley	31/08/2009
R1e	Effective prevention work to reduce overpayments arising, particularly LA Error overpayment.	Appropriately maximise the Council's grant income. Link to current improvement plan.	Build on Think Lean NVQ processes – LA errors monitored weekly – additional staff to keep work up to date – ensure effective prioritisation is applied.	D Taylor K Herbert S Maddox S Knight	30/09/09
R1f	Improve information sent to customers so that underlying entitlement can be established.	Letters to customers request additional information to make it clear that by providing it they may be able to reduce overpayment.	Staff awareness and training. Review and re-word letters. Link to R8a	S Maddox C Coleman V Lewis	31/10/2009
R1g	Need for an embedded mechanism to ensure that all debtors already on the sundry debtors system can be identified if they reclaim benefit.	Automate where possible identification of Sundry debts where HB in payment.	Find out from System Administrator and/or IBS what is possible. Look at alternatives.	D Taylor V Lewis J Bough IBS	31/12/2009
R1h	Overall profile of the historic debt is not reported or regularly monitored.	Increase number of reports and monitoring.	Monthly reporting and monitoring of aged debt.	A Vernon S Maddox	30/09/09
R1i	Create a SMART plan to improve overpayment recovery.	Use SMART plans to improve recovery.		D Taylor	31/01/10
R2	Increase income levels of the poorest parts of the community by adopting a Take-Up strategy.	Create Take-Up strategy			30/09/2009
R2a	A description of roles and responsibilities.	Identify key roles to develop strategy.	PDT facilitating brainstorming exercise. Poverty Task Group.	D Taylor PDT	19/05/2009
R2b	Dates of activity and events agreed with partners and other	Annual plan with dates of activities.	Plan activities and dates.	D Taylor PDT PTG	31/07/2009

Benefits Services Improvement Plan

	stakeholders.				
R2c	Better use of local demographic information to help identify potential areas of under-claiming.	Investigate IT solution to aid identification and improve understanding of the needs of people within the community.	Work with developer to map statistical data to local areas.	D Taylor	31/08/2009
R2d	Clear measures of effectiveness.	Define measure to monitor progress.	Links to R5b accuracy rate Measure Take-up rates.	D Taylor	30/06/09
R2e	Better targeting of resources and the maximisation of entitlement of benefit to vulnerable people.	Focus resources.	Link to R8b unsuccessful claims and R2c identify areas in most need to target input.		
R3	Improve the accessibility of the Service.				31/10/2010
R3a	Seek customer and internal and external stakeholders views for consideration in the design of the Service, to ensure it meets their needs.	Seek stakeholder involvement in Service design.	Range of focus groups, landlords, claimants, partners.	D Taylor	31/09/2009 >
R3b	Jointly working with public sector, voluntary and community organisations locally to improve the delivery of service		Poverty task group and other partners.		
R3c	Develop relationship with RSL's		Quarterly meetings to be arranged.	D Taylor	30/06/2009
R3d	Understanding and addressing the needs of disabled persons and vulnerable groups.		See R10f		30/11/2009
R3e	Promote the appointments system and home visits facility.		See R10b	D Taylor L Jones Benefits Officers Communications team	31/08/2009
R4	Ensure challenging service standards and performance targets are in place, that are relevant to customers needs.	Introduce clear Service standards and performance targets.	Service plans show continuous improvement and include service standards – make more available including on website.		Interim 30/09/2009 Full 30/09/2010
R4a	Develop service standards and performance targets through consultation with key stakeholders including customers, partners and Councillors.	Engage with customers and stakeholders to determine targets, or the processes by which success will be measured.	Web, news letter, focus meetings. Range of focus groups, landlords, claimants, partners. Links to R3a.	T Kristunas D Taylor	30/11/09

Benefits Services Improvement Plan

R4b	Promote them to customers and regularly monitor performance against the standards and targets and report results to customers, senior managers and Councillors.	Make sure appropriate performance measures are reported to senior managers to ensure suitable decisions are made about the Service.	Web, news letter, focus meetings Decide what performance data is required and report on monthly basis. OSS and web plus newsletter.		30/11/09
R4c	Ensure that the Service has robust plans to deliver the standards and targets.		See R6b – Action Plans Monitor compliance of Service to corporate Customer Service Standards which are set out in the Customer Charter.	D Taylor K Herbert S Maddox S Knight	19/06/09
R4d	Ensure that the Service has the capacity to deliver them.		Three additional staff.		30/06/09
R4e	Greater clarity for both internal and external customers as to what the Service is aiming to achieve.		New service plan to clarify Service aims.	T Kristunas D Taylor	30/06/09
R4f	Greater transparency of performance will enable Councillors' challenge to be more effective which can help drive further improvement.		Regular performance information plus comparison.	T Kristunas D Taylor	31/12/09
R4g	Relate service costs directly to the outcomes and performance delivered, establishing whether improving value for money is being achieved.		Link to R11 Value for Money 100% subsidy received for LA errors for 2008/09 subject to audit. Link additional staff to improved PI times – take into account increased work load.	T Kristunas	31/03/10
R5	Performance Improvement				31/10/2010
R5a	Improve claim processing performance.		New staff recruited and initial training undertaken. Review best delivery method.	K Herbert	30/06/2009 30/06/2010
R5b	Improve accuracy rate to above average performance.	Improved training and monitoring. Last year accuracy was 99.09%.	New on-line manual. Increase level of checking.	K Herbert S Maddox S Knight	30/09/09
R5c	Improve Appeals performance in meeting its targets. The published target is to make a submission to the Tribunals Service within 28 days.		Analyse reasons for Appeals. Review resources. Leaflet to advise.	S Maddox C Coleman	31/01/2010
R5d	Introduce a clear and cohesive approach to delivering improvement for customers. Create detailed		2010 service and action plans to include Service user feedback. Post –Inspection Improvement		31/10/2010

Benefits Services Improvement Plan

	improvement plans to manage and monitor improvement against key objectives, which have been informed by service users and stakeholders. Set realistic targets and milestones which support the aims of the Service and Council.		plan.		
R6	Service Planning				31/12/09
R6a	Develop specific aims for the Benefits Service.		New service plans sets out service aims	T Kristunas D Taylor	
R6b	Service Plan to be supported by a detailed action plan that identifies key activities, responsibilities and measures of success that can be recognised by customers. These should address problem areas and have specific and measurable targets, linked to staff objectives.		Allocate individual roles from service plan – link to appraisal. Write action plans as to how achieve service plan objectives.	D Taylor K Herbert S Maddox S Knight	19/06/2009
R6c	Involve staff in setting future priorities and objectives for the Service, to shape the immediate future of the Service.	It is intended that these issues will be addressed by the new performance management framework.	Plan for staff involvement in 2010/11 Service Plans.	T Kristunas D Taylor	01/11/2009
R6d	The Service should specifically acknowledge how it will support and contribute to the priorities of the Worcestershire LAA; reducing the proportion of children in poverty, increasing the number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living and successful new claims generated for Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance.		Service plans and action plans should specifically state link and targets where possible. Link to R2 – Take-Up strategy.	T Kristunas D Taylor	31/07/2009
R7	Performance Management				31/03/2010
R7a	The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is not sufficiently involved in overseeing the management of performance. There should be a greater emphasis on		Improvement plan to be monitored by Council. Improved range and frequency of performance information available.		31/12/09

Benefits Services Improvement Plan

	performance analysis against existing policies and obligations rather than future policy development. Increase the role of the Portfolio Holder in performance management and improvement planning.		Links to R7c.		
R7b	Improve Performance management arrangements at service level. Introduce staff performance appraisals and individual or team targets for processing staff. Measure productivity systematically. Embed new performance management.	The new performance management framework will embed a greater degree of accountability, as individuals are given personal appraisals, set measurable targets and have specific training needs identified.	Set individual targets and hold regular appraisals.	D Taylor K Herbert S Maddox S Knight	31/05/2009
R7c	Limited up to date management information is available to senior managers and Councillors to assess variations in performance, or make comparisons.		Decide who wants information and when – decide best way to access and distribute data.	T Kristunas D Taylor	31/12/09
R7d	Introduce regular reporting of current performance to customers against either the corporate Customer Service Standards or the Service targets.	Update figures on website – let OSS and Housing know performance.		D Taylor S Maddox L Jones J Bough	30/09/09
R7e	Ensure future demand and the potential impact of take-up campaigns and external economic circumstances are regularly evaluated to support future planning and resource management. Map demand to identify peaks and troughs to ensure adequate processes are in place to forecast future demand.		Monthly analysis of claim made data. Use external resources to identify local economic factors i.e. county website on unemployment changes. Resilience fund to respond to changes in work load. Identify work getting behind and have plan to improve.	D Taylor K Herbert S Maddox S Knight	31/03/10
R7f	There are not yet robust, formally adopted SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, resourced and time-based) plans in place to give clear structure to the delivery of improvement.		PDT to assist in outline of improvement plan. Improvement plan going to Council – action plans from Service plans.	T Kristunas D Taylor	30/06/09

Benefits Services Improvement Plan

R8	Customer Information				30/05/2010
R8a	Information provided is not easy for customers to understand and does not help claimants to provide all of the evidence required, leading to excessive appeals and reconsiderations. Customers are providing evidence after the decision date which is resulting in a change to the decision.		Review letters Consult with service users. Training issue in IBS.	D Taylor K Herbert S Maddox V Baldwin IBS	30/05/10
R8b	Increase understanding of the reasons for the high number of unsuccessful and defective (incomplete) claims.	Further detailed analysis to understand reasons.	IBS report to identify reasons.	D Taylor S Maddox V Lewis	31/12/2009
R9	Customer led Improvement				31/10/2010
R9a	The Service does not systematically measure customer satisfaction on an ongoing basis.		Introduce Customer satisfaction surveys – decide frequency and reporting method.	D Taylor	30/09/2009
R9b	The Service cannot clearly demonstrate that it has delivered significant improvements in outcomes for service users.		Compare processing times to show improvements.	T Kristunas D Taylor	31/05/10
R9c	Introduce a formal mechanism to use customer feedback as part of the service planning used to improve the Service. E.g. fast-tracking in One Stop Shop. The changes should clearly demonstrate what impact they have had.		Already undertaken one survey to find out customer preferences. Link customer responses to service changes – you said you wanted this – we introduced this.	D Taylor S Knight L Jones	31/10/09
R9d	A benefits realisation methodology should be applied to demonstrate Think Lean improvements are proportionate to the resources used and lead to comes for the customer as a direct result.	Increased data available to demonstrate improvements.	Gather data to support Think Lean improvements.	D Taylor K Jones	31/12/2009
R10	Customer Access				
R10a	Improve telephone access. Calls put on hold or not answered at all. Customer service staff struggle to get through quickly. There is no		Increase number of lines available when needed Look at alternative number for OSS.	D Taylor L Jones	28/02/10

Benefits Services Improvement Plan

	systematic monitoring of abandoned calls.		Monitor and respond to abandoned calls.	K Jones	
R10b	The appointments system in the Benefits Service is not operating effectively and it is difficult for users of the One Stop Shop to meet face to face with benefits assessors.		Review arrangements with OSS. New claim process to be delivered mostly by Benefit Officers.	D Taylor L Jones	31/08/2009
R10c	Leaflets and forms are not readily available in the One Stop Shops. Customers have to request them.	Consider making more leaflets available in OSS.	Review leaflet arrangements in OSS – consider alternatives.	D Taylor L Jones	31/08/2009
R10d	Benefits Service has not yet identified its hard to reach groups.	The Corporate Community Forum could be used to establish how well it is reaching these groups and identify ways to improve engagement with them.	Work with partner organisations to identify hard to reach groups.	D Taylor	31/07/10
R10e	The Service has not formally assessed whether all users have fair and equal access to the Service and its policies.	Complete equalities impact assessments as part of a three year rolling programme across the Council.	E-claim form to capture ethnicity.	D Taylor	31/03/2009
R10f	Some vulnerable claimants are receiving a slower service than other claimants.	Undertake further analysis to identify and understand the demographics and performance trends of its case load.	Sample check claims to see why any delay – compare to other claims	D Taylor	30/11/2009
R11	Value for Money				31/03/2010
R11a	Demonstrate improved outcomes that have arisen from actively exploring opportunities to work in partnership to deliver financial efficiencies.	Improved performance against cost of service. Increase recovery of overpaid HB. 100% subsidy for LA errors	Bromsgrove SS Training	T Kristunas D Taylor	31/03/10
R11b	The Benefits Services' net cost per head of population is lower than average and satisfaction is higher than average, but processing times are slow when compared to its statistical nearest neighbours.		Compare costs and satisfaction and performance.	T Kristunas D Taylor	31/01/2010
R11c	Compare costs to other services, calculate unit costs and seek to evaluate cost effectiveness.		Further develop County Group comparison.	D Taylor	30/06/2009
R11d	Create robust proposals for				

Benefits Services Improvement Plan

	delivering efficiency savings. Identify areas for efficiency savings that are cash-able and sustainable.				
R11e	Future investment proposals should demonstrate an awareness of linking improvement in performance value for money.	Link investment to improved performance and value for money.	Additional £40,000 – show what has been achieved – increased caseload but improved performance.	T Kristunas D Taylor	31/12/2009
R12	Training				31/12/2009
R12a	Develop a training plan that gives clear details of the cost of training, what the objective of the training is, or how its effectiveness will be determined. Create a transparent and prioritised system for identifying individuals who need particular training.		New training plan for all Benefits staff to include costs and desired outcomes. Formalise method of identifying individual training needs – link to new performance management framework.	K Herbert S Maddox S Knight	31/12/2009
R13	System and System Reports				30/06/2010
R13a	Improve data assurance in the process for compiling the performance indicators.		Review monitoring procedures and resources allocated. Increased checking of claim data.	D Taylor S Maddox	31/03/2010
R13b	Improve HB/CTB Subsidy Claim processes. Introduce testing of software releases and regular testing of claim accuracy during the year to ensure that subsidy calculation is accurate.		IBS consultancy day on subsidy. Regular testing of claim.	D Taylor I Sprott	06/05/2009 30/09/2009
R13c	IBS and Anite are not being used to best effect.	Have the ability to easily produce management information to monitor productivity and manage workloads.	Liaise with IBS and other IBS sites to learn best practice – build on links with Wyre Forest.	V Lewis D Taylor IBS Anite	30/06/2010

Benefits Services Improvement Plan

R1	Improve the management and collection of all Housing Benefit overpayments.			Finish 31/01/2010
R1a	Review the roles and responsibilities for recovery.	PDT to help facilitate discussions around current arrangements and future options.		19/05/09
R1aa	Analyse options – examine pros and cons.	Decide on preferred future arrangements.		
R1ab	Write report to propose preferred option seeking approval to change if required.			
R1ac	Set date for proposed change and plan for change.	Allow time to make arrangements. Check adequate seating arrangements. Check access to Debtor module		
R1b	Ensure that the resources needed are made available.	Depending upon outcome of R1a determine if adequate resources are available – any other staff to be used.		19/06/2009
R1ba		Is there a need for temporary resources to reduce old overpayments – set target reduction if used.		
R1bb				
R1bc				
R1c	Reviewing debts and improving procedures for recovery, monitoring and management.	PDT to offer guidance on best practice on recovery		
	Review debts	Look at aged debt analysis and reason for overpayment.		
	Look at all methods of recovery	Analyse success of different methods of recovery.		
	Write new procedures	Build upon draft procedure already in development – add to on-line procedure manual.		
	Management	Look at targets and outcomes -		
	Monitoring regime	Report on performance more frequently.		
R1d	Review the write off policies and procedure.	Analyse current problems – decide on how process can be improved.		31/08/2009
R1e	Effective prevention work to reduce overpayments arising, particularly LA Error overpayment.	Build upon existing outline plan		
R1f	Improve information sent to customers so that underlying entitlement can be established.	Letters to customers request additional information to make it clear that by providing it they may be able to reduce overpayment. Staff awareness and training. Review and re-word letters. Link to R8a		31/10/2009
R1g	Need for an embedded mechanism	Determine what current practice is.		31/12/2009

Benefits Services Improvement Plan

	to ensure that all debtors already on the sundry debtors system can be identified if they reclaim benefit.			
R1ga	Alternatives	Determine what other options are already available within IBS.		
R1gb	Check other sites	Determine if other users have similar problem or if they have solution.		
R1gc	Software enhancement	Determine if other developments are possible via IBS and at what cost.		
R1h	Overall profile of the historic debt is not reported or regularly monitored.	New IBS report to report on aged debt in future release – use PTC scheduler to ensure report run regularly – monitor output.		
R1i	Create a SMART plan to improve overpayment recovery.	Use SMART plans to improve recovery.		

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Benefits Services Improvement Plan

R2	Increase income levels of the poorest parts of the community by adopting a Take-Up strategy.			30/09/2009
R2a	A description of roles and responsibilities.	Identify key roles to develop strategy. PDT facilitating brainstorming exercise.		19/05/2009
	Internal	Link to trailblazer initiatives.		
	External	Poverty Task Group.		
R2b	Dates of activity and events agreed with partners and other stakeholders.	Plan activities and dates.		31/07/2009
R2c	Better use of local demographic information to help identify potential areas of under-claiming.	Investigate IT solution to aid identification and improve understanding of the needs of people within the community. Work with developer to map statistical data to local areas.	D Taylor	31/08/2009
R2d	Clear measures of effectiveness.	Links to R5b accuracy rate Measure Take-up rates.		
R2e	Better targeting of resources and the maximisation of entitlement of benefit to vulnerable people.	Link to R8b unsuccessful claims and R2c identify areas in most need to target input.		
R3	Improve the accessibility of the Service.			31/10/2010
R3a	Seek customer and internal and external stakeholders views for consideration in the design of the Service, to ensure it meets their	Seek stakeholder involvement in Service design.	D Taylor	31/09/2009 >

Benefits Services Improvement Plan

	needs.			
R3aa	Identify stakeholders.	Range of focus groups, landlords, claimants, partners.		
R3ab	Consult.	Build upon initial customer survey to support service objectives.		
R3ac	Review.	Include where possible findings in future service plans.		
R3b	Jointly working with public sector, voluntary and community organisations locally to improve the delivery of service	Poverty task group and other partners.		
R3c	The relationships with RSLs are underdeveloped with limited regular liaison.	Develop relationship with RSL's	D Taylor	30/06/2009
	Identify relevant landlords.	Quarterly meetings to be arranged.		
	Formalise relationship.	Encourage landlords to sign up to existing SLA with Redditch Co-Op.		
	Review and report.	Share findings / improvements		
R3d	Understanding and addressing the needs of disabled persons and vulnerable groups.			30/11/2009
		See R10f		
		See R10b		
R3e	Promote the appointments system and home visits facility.	Complete Think Lean new claim revised process where Benefit Officers complete claim form with customers to ensure as much as information as possible is collected in one visit.	D Taylor L Jones Benefits Officers Communications team	31/08/2009
		Advertise and promote new service.		
		Advertise home visit – define who can expect home visit		
R4	Ensure challenging service standards and performance targets are in place, that are relevant to customers needs.	Introduce clear Service standards and performance targets. Service plans show continuous improvement and include service standards – make more available including on website.		Interim 30/09/2009 Full 30/09/2010
R4a	Develop service standards and performance targets through consultation with key stakeholders including customers, partners and Councillors.	Engage with customers and stakeholders to determine targets, or the processes by which success will be measured. Links to R3a.		

Benefits Services Improvement Plan

R4aa	Identify stakeholders	Look at who should be consulted – internal and external.		31/07/09
R4ab	Decide most effective way to consult.	Range of focus groups, landlords, claimants, partners. Web or news letter?		31/07/09
R4ac	Arrangements	Plan for periodic consultation by preferred methods.		31/08/09
R4ad	Consultation process	Ask stakeholders about what levels of performance and standard of service they expect.		30/09/09
R4ae	Findings	Consider findings from consultation.		31/10/09
R4af	Use of information	Service and performance standards informed by consultation.		30/11/09
R4b	Promote and regularly monitor performance against standards and targets. Report results.	Make sure appropriate performance measures are reported to senior managers to ensure suitable decisions are made about the Service.	T Kristunas D Taylor	
R4ba	Promote to agreed time-scales.	Web, news letter, focus meetings		
R4bb	Report to agreed parties.	Decide what performance data is required and report on monthly basis. OSS and web plus newsletter.		
R4c	Ensure that the Service has robust plans to deliver the standards and targets.	See R6b – Action Plans Monitor compliance of Service to corporate Customer Service Standards which are set out in the Customer Charter.	D Taylor	
R4d	Ensure that the Service has the capacity to deliver them.	Three additional staff recruited with temporary agency staff to cover training period.		30/06/09
		Review allocation of resources – are right people in right posts.	D Taylor	30/09/09
		Any other resource issues – training, IT accommodation.		
		Risk assessment – other work which may impact on service.		
R4e	Greater clarity for both internal and external customers as to what the Service is aiming to achieve.	New service plan to clarify Service aims.	T Kristunas D Taylor	30/06/09
R4f	Councillors' challenge to help drive further improvement.	Regular performance information plus comparison. Link to R4bb.	T Kristunas D Taylor	31/12/09
R4e	Relate service costs directly to outcomes and performance.	Link to R11 Value for Money 100% subsidy received for LA errors for 2008/09 subject to audit. Link additional staff to improved PI times – take into account increased work load.	T Kristunas	31/03/10

R5	Performance Improvement			31/10/2010
R5a	Improve claim processing performance.	New staff recruited.	K Herbert S Maddox	30/05/2009
R5aa		Complete initial training programme.	K Herbert P Smith	30/06/10

Benefits Services Improvement Plan

R5ab		Identify further training requirements.	K Herbert S Maddox	31/07/09
R5ac		Look at alternative ways of distributing work.		30/05/10
R5b	Improve accuracy rate to above average performance.	Improved training and monitoring. Last year accuracy was 99.09% New on-line manual. Increase level of checking..	K Herbert S Maddox S Knight	30/09/09
R5c	Improve Appeals performance in meeting its targets. The published target is to make a submission to the Tribunals Service within 28 days.	Analyse reasons for Appeals. Review resources. Leaflet to advise.	S Maddox C Coleman	31/01/2010
R5d	Introduce a clear and cohesive approach to delivering improvement for customers. Create detailed improvement plans to manage and monitor improvement against key objectives, which have been informed by service users and stakeholders. Set realistic targets and milestones which support the aims of the Service and Council.	2010 service and action plans to include Service user feedback. Post –Inspection Improvement plan.	T Kristunas D Taylor	31/10/2010

Executive Committee

All Ward Relevance

10 June 2009

PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE – ADOPTION OF FRAMEWORK AND TOOLKIT

(Report of the Head of Legal, Democratic & Property Services)

1. Summary of Proposals

To consider the adoption of a Partnership Governance Framework and Toolkit and a definition of the partnerships to which the Framework and Toolkit will apply. The report has been modified as a result of comments made by the Audit and Governance Committee on 26 May 2009. The Audit and Governance Committee has requested that Officers undertake a 'mapping' exercise to identify existing partnerships which will be reported to their meeting on 4 August 2009.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that

the draft Partnership Governance Framework and Toolkit at Appendix 1 be adopted.

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the proposed adoption of the Framework. Failure to adopt procedures for the Council's involvement in and governance of partnerships could leave the Council open to unanticipated or unplanned costs.

Legal

- 3.2 Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to do anything which is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of its functions. This could include partnership arrangements with other bodies.

Policy

- 3.3 The Council currently has no adopted Policy in relation to partnerships and the adoption of this Framework would put a policy in place.

Risk

- 3.4 There is a risk that, by not having procedures in place for the Council's involvement in partnerships the Council could be exposed to unanticipated financial or reputational risks in the event that a partnership fails. The Framework contains detailed provisions in relation to the management of risks arising from partnerships. There is also a risk that, in not considering or reviewing the Council's resources involved in supporting or attending partnership meetings or events, the Council will not be using its resources effectively.

Sustainability / Environmental

- 3.5 There are no sustainability or environmental issues arising from this report.

Report**4. Background**

- 4.1 As part of the Council's assurance framework, there is a need to ensure that the Council applies the principles and values of good governance to its partnerships and that the risks associated with partnerships are identified and managed.
- 4.2 In a national report in October 2005 (Governing partnerships: Bridging the accountability gap), the Audit Commission said that public bodies should:
- a) Know the partnerships they are involved in, and how much money and other resources they invest in them. They should review each partnership to strengthen accountability, manage risks and rationalise working arrangements;
 - b) Establish clear criteria against which partnerships can be evaluated to determine that they help to achieve partners' corporate objectives cost-effectively;
 - c) Take hard decisions to scale down their involvement in partnerships if the costs outweigh the benefits, or if the added risks cannot be managed properly;
 - d) Agree and regularly review protocol and governing documents with all partners;
 - e) Tell service users and the wider public about how key partnerships work, where responsibility and accountability lie and how redress can be obtained through joint complaints procedures.

5. Key Issues

- 5.1 Comprehensive Area Assessment places more emphasis on partnerships and, with greater pressures being placed on local authority resources, partnership working is becoming more significant.
- 5.2 The Council needs to ensure that its assurance framework covers the Council's involvement in partnerships and, in particular, the governance and risk issues associated with partnerships.
- 5.3 The Framework is designed to cover the lifecycle of a partnership, from deciding to become involved with the partnership, reporting on its activities, reviewing its operation and contribution to the Council's objectives and potentially, leaving a partnership.
- 5.4 In addition to the Framework, there is a Toolkit containing various flowcharts and templates to assist Officers in complying with the Framework. This will help to ensure that partnerships are being reviewed on a regular basis and that reporting on the 'service' provided by the partnership is taking place.
- 5.5 The suggestion at this stage is that the Framework should apply to the Council's 'key' partnerships. Defining what a 'key' partnership is has been quite challenging. Officers' suggestion at present is that the Framework should apply to:
- a) Partnerships which are a legal requirement or which are based on statutory guidance;
 - b) Partnerships which co-ordinate, commission or deliver activities at a Borough-wide or local level that substantially contribute towards our Local Area Agreement or Sustainable Community Strategy;
 - c) Any other partnership which the Council deems to be 'key' for the delivery of its objectives.
- 5.6 As a matter of good practice, the Framework principles should also be applied to all other partnerships, collaborative working or networking arrangements, but the level of application of the detail of the Framework should be proportionate to the significance and level of risk presented by those arrangements. For example, an annual report on the activities of an Officer User Group would not be expected at CMT, but feedback from the attending Officer(s) to their Head of Service or Service Manager would be appropriate.

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- 5.7 There is a need to ensure that the Council is receiving reports on the activities of its partnerships. A significant amount of Member and Officer time is taken up with the Council's partnership activity and the Council needs to be satisfied that its involvement in its partnerships is assisting in the delivery of its objectives and represents value for money.

6. Other Implications

- Asset Management - There are none arising directly from this report.
- Community Safety - There are none arising directly from this report.
- Human Resources - The requirements of the Framework can be accommodated within existing staff resources.
- Social Exclusion - There are none arising directly from this report.

7. Lessons Learnt

In the past, the Council has not received reports on the activities of its formal partnerships in a consistent manner and has not had demonstrable arrangements in place for the governance of partnerships, leading to a lower Use of Resources score and identification of a risk to the Council.

8. Background Papers

Audit Commission National report – Governing partnerships: Bridging the accountability gap (October 2005)
 Audit Commission Use of Resources Assessment: Key Lines of Enquiry
 Birmingham City Council: Partnership Governance Framework and Toolkit (February 2008)

9. Consultation

This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Borough Council Officers and, in particular, the Head of Financial, Revenues and Benefits Services and the Head of Strategy & Partnerships.

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10. Author of Report

The author of this report is Sue Mullins (Head of Legal, Democratic & Property Services), who can be contacted on extension 3210 (e-mail: sue.mullins@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Partnership Governance Framework and Toolkit



PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK AND TOOLKIT

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Purpose of this Framework and Toolkit
3. Defining a Partnership
4. Corporate and executive roles and responsibilities
5. Mapping the Council's Partnership activity
6. When should the Council enter into a partnership?
7. Making the business case for and governance of partnerships
8. Reporting of partnership activities and progress
9. Review and evaluation of continuing involvement in partnerships
10. Risk assessment and risk management
11. Leaving partnerships

Appendix 1 – The Partnership Cycle

Appendix 2 – Making the Business Case for Partnerships flowchart

Appendix 2a – Making the Business Case for Partnerships template

Appendix 3 – Partnership Activities and Progress Reporting

Appendix 4 - Reviewing a Partnership flowchart

Appendix 4a - Reviewing a Partnership - Annual Partnership review template)

Appendix 5 – Leaving a Partnership (template)

Appendix 6 – Roles and responsibilities

Appendix 7 – Partnership Database

Appendix 8 - Guidance on managing risks and opportunities in partnerships

Appendix 9 - Insurance Considerations

Appendix 10 – Model Memorandum of Understanding (i.e. governance document for a partnership)

1. Introduction

Redditch Borough Council (RBC) is committed to working with partners and recognises the value of effective partnerships in contributing to the wellbeing of its communities and the delivery of its strategic and operational objectives.

Partnerships can bring flexibility, innovation and many other benefits to address issues that individual organisations could not tackle alone. However, partnership working also presents a number of challenges. Ambiguity and confusion can arise leading to weakened accountability and reduced clarity over expected outcomes.

Any decision to enter into or to continue to participate in a partnership arrangement must be based on a sound understanding of the risks, challenges, opportunities and anticipated benefits involved. There must be consistency of approach to partnerships and a clear demonstration of the 'value for money' or 'added value' that the partnership brings.

This Framework draws distinctions between partnerships and other types of arrangements, such as networking arrangements.

2. Purpose of this Framework and Toolkit

The purpose of this Governance Framework and Toolkit is to bring clarity to the Council's partnership working and to guide partnership work. It will help the Council work with its partners to ensure that all the partnerships with which it is involved have good systems of governance.

The toolkit gives detailed guidance for each stage in the life of a partnership:

- ❖ The partnership cycle – Appendix 1
- ❖ Making the business case for setting up or joining a partnership – Appendices 2 and 2a
- ❖ Reporting on partnership progress – Appendix 3
- ❖ Reviewing a partnership for continuing relevance to the Council's objectives – Appendices 4 and 4a;
- ❖ Leaving partnerships – Appendix 5

The toolkit will ensure that for each partnership:

- The Council is clear about the purpose and expected outcomes of the partnership for the people of the Borough when entering into the partnership;
- The Council's own agreed priorities and objectives are being met;
- There is clarity and shared understanding about the role of each partner and their accountability and responsibility for outcomes;

- Performance of the partnership's activity and outcomes is monitored, reported, reviewed and evaluated to make best use of resources;
- Risks for the Council and the partnership are assessed and agreed;
- Each partnership maintains a relevance to its agreed purpose during its lifespan and an effective exit strategy is in place;
- The partnership is properly empowered and its legal status understood;
- Reviews are undertaken to evaluate success , challenge progress and improve effectiveness.

3. Defining a Partnership

The word 'partnership' is increasingly used in the public, private and voluntary sectors and can mean different things to different people. RBC defines a partnership as **a joint working arrangement where the partners:**

- **Are independent bodies**
- **Agree to cooperate to achieve common goals and outcomes for the community;**
- **Plan and implement a jointly agreed programme**
- **Share accountability, risks and resources;**
- **Create an organisational structure with agreed processes and programmes.**

Some of our partnerships are more significant than others in terms of the outcomes they seek to deliver, their profile/reputation and the resources that are put into them. Remember that the Council is not always the accountable or lead body for its significant partnerships.

The Council participates in some 'significant' partnerships where the partnership:

- **Is a legal requirement or is based on statutory guidance; or**
- **Coordinates, commissions or delivers activities at a Borough-wide or local level that substantially contribute towards our Local Area Agreement or Sustainable Community Strategy outcomes; or**
- **Is otherwise deemed by the Council to be significant for the delivery of the Council's objectives..**

This Framework applies to the Council's 'significant' partnerships although the principles contained in the Framework represent good practice and should be applied to any collaborative or networking function in a proportionate way.

Certain arrangements are excluded under the partnership definition although these are still important for the delivery of the Council's objectives. These are:

- **Procurement arrangements, where the Council buys in services;**

- **Commercial or commissioned partnerships, other than shared services between authorities and information sharing;**
- **Networking between Councillors and/or Officers;**
- **Service level agreements between the Council and other public bodies;**
- **Grant funding agreements between the Council and voluntary or community sector organisations.**

Generally, partnerships have one of the following characteristics:

- **Collaborative** – Where each partner retains responsibility for delivering functions within their own governance arrangements. These are formed mainly to advise, guide and oversee;
- **Host** – Where one partner hosts the partnership arrangements and receives funding, employs staff etc. on behalf of the other partners;
- **Executive** – Where resources and responsibility for functions is pooled (e.g. Commissioning Boards). These will be formed as a legal entity;
- **Joint arrangements** – where arrangements are entered into with other public bodies to tackle specific issues. For example, the Shared Services Board overseeing shared services between the Council and Bromsgrove District Council

The level and type of partnership may change as the partnership evolves or as aspirations or requirements change. It is usually advisable to choose the simplest form of partnership to enable you to achieve what is needed.

4. Corporate and Executive roles and responsibilities

The Leader is the Executive partnership champion. The Acting Deputy Chief Executive is the corporate partnership champion and has responsibility for the Council's strategic approach to its partnership activity.

The Corporate Management Team has responsibility for monitoring the strategic impact of the Council's involvement in partnerships. More detail on the roles and responsibilities of Members and Officers of the Council is set out in Appendix 6

5. Mapping the Council's Partnership activity

As part of the development of this Framework, consultation is being undertaken with Officers to identify the Council's partnerships. This will help to:

- **Identify when the Council is in a partnership (rather than a networking or contractual relationship, for example);**
- **Provide an evidence-base for reviewing partnership arrangements.**

A list of the data which will be collected is set out in Appendix 7

One of the results of reviewing all the Council's partnerships will be a reliable baseline to populate a partnership database, available to Officers, Elected Members, partners and the public. The purpose of this database will be to clearly identify the partnerships in which the Council is participating and ensure that the effectiveness, impact and outcomes of the Council's partnerships on the delivery of the Council's objectives are monitored and reported to the Council.

6. When should the Council enter into a partnership?

Partnership arrangements are appropriate when they have the potential to deliver:

- **Value for money** - when available resources are used economically, efficiently and effectively;
- **Added value** – delivering something that is unlikely to be achieved by another form of working arrangement or by the Council working in isolation;
- **Good governance** – they are consistent, well-managed and 'fit for purpose' and effectively contribute to the delivery of the Council's objectives.
- **Improved services to customers** – delivering services in a better way for the customer than the Council could achieve by working in isolation.

A key feature of all partnerships is that all the parties agree to the need for the partnership in these terms.

7. Making the business case for and governance of partnerships

The Council's participation in all new partnership arrangements must be approved by the Executive or, if required under the Constitution, full Council.

All partnerships – both proposed and existing – need to demonstrate how Council participation will benefit the people of Redditch and the Council. This will be assessed by comparing the objectives and intended outcomes of the partnership with:

- **The Council's objectives** (as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Plan);
- **The Local Area Agreement**

Partnerships also need to demonstrate:

- Value for money
- Added value
- Fitness for purpose

Initially, the business case needs to be approved by the relevant Head of Service(or Director if the Head of Service is the Officer representative). The template can be found in Appendix 2a

Partnership governance and working arrangements will also need to be developed. Appendix 4a is the partnership review template that needs to be followed when developing working arrangements for a new partnership or negotiating arrangements when joining an existing one.

It is important that the financial consequences of entering into a partnership are well understood before any decisions are made and that appropriate financial controls are in place to safeguard public resources in partnership arrangements. The Head of Financial, Revenues and Benefits Services and the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services must advise on any financial and/or legal consequences of entering into or participating in a partnership before any decision to participate is taken.

These processes will lead to the production of a partnership **Memorandum of Understanding**. This is a document that makes clear the:

- Aims and principles of the partnership;
- Roles and accountabilities of each of the bodies represented on the partnership;
- Procedures under which the partnership will operate.

It would clearly be undesirable to stifle partnerships by having overly bureaucratic governance arrangements. The important principle is that the governance arrangements should be proportionate to the nature of the business being undertaken by the partnership, the level of resources committed to the partnership by the Council and the nature and scale of any risks associated with the partnership. A model *Memorandum of Understanding* that demonstrates best practice is set out in Appendix 10. This can be adapted to suit any circumstance but no area of this model should be omitted for the Council's significant partnerships.

The Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services must advise on any Corporate Management Team report or governance arrangements before they are finalised. If development of a new partnership or entry into an existing partnership is approved, the accountable **Director/Head of Service** will nominate Council Officers for the partnership, including an officer representative. The officer representative's role and responsibilities will include:

- Providing a point of contact between the Council and the partnership;
- Annually reviewing the partnership's business case and its governance arrangements and effectiveness, reporting to the Director/Head of Service;
- Reporting on an exception basis to the Director/Head of Service if any significant issues arise between annual reviews.

Executive or full Council will approve nominations for Elected Members and, if considered necessary, officer appointments on partnerships. Appendix 1 gives an overview of this process.

8. Reporting of partnership activities and progress

It is the responsibility of Directors/Heads of Service to provide the Corporate Management Team with a formal annual/ six monthly report on a partnership's activities between the annual reports. In the case of new partnerships, the report to CMT and Portfolio Holder on the partnership's activities should be provided within 6 months of the Council entering the partnership. Issues relating to performance targets should be reported to the relevant Directors/Heads of Service on a regular basis. A template for partnership progress reporting is set out in Appendix 3.

Where the Council contributes financially to a partnership the report should include monitoring of the finances of the partnership.

Where a partnership has sub-working groups only one progress report for that partnership will be required and this will be coordinated by the Officer who sits on the partnership to which the sub groups report.

9. Review and evaluation of partnerships

Review

All existing partnerships need to be reviewed annually for continuing relevance to the Council's priorities. There are two aspects to this:

- Review of the partnership itself – providing assurance that proper systems are in place and that its outcomes and performance are monitored and evaluated.
- The Council must decide whether its requirements are being met and be assured that the partnership is effective in delivering the Council's objectives.

As mentioned above, the business case for continuing a partnership needs to be demonstrated annually. If a business case cannot be demonstrated then a report needs to be submitted to Executive (via the Corporate Management Team) stating this.

If the business case is made, then the review should continue. Appendix 4a contains the review template.. The review will show if the partnership has effective governance and delivery arrangements.

It is the responsibility of Heads of Service to provide the Corporate Management Team with a formal annual/ six monthly report on a partnership's effectiveness and fitness for purpose, or more regularly if issues arise between the annual reports. . In the case of new partnerships, the report to CMT on the partnership's effectiveness and fitness for purpose should be

provided within 6 months of the Council entering the partnership Issues relating to performance targets should be reported to the relevant Directors/Heads of Service.

Partnerships are responsible for their governance arrangements. But the Council also has a duty to ensure that adequate procedures and processes exist regarding the stewardship of public funds.

Evaluation

The aim of this is to identify the impact of partnerships and whether they are achieving what they were set up to do. The report that Heads of Service produce as part of the review process must analyse if a partnership is achieving its short, medium and long-term goals, and if it is not, what options exist.

After the individual annual reviews have been considered by the Corporate Management Team, the Acting Deputy Chief Executive and the Head of Strategy and Partnerships will produce a joint annual report for the Corporate Management Team and Executive on the overall impact of the Council's involvement in partnerships, with recommendations on any actions required.

10. Risk assessment and risk management

As part of the business case evaluation, a full risk assessment must be carried out in accordance with the Council's risk management framework. Guidance on managing risks and opportunities in partnerships is set out in Appendix 8

Risk management does not stop once an initial business case has been made. Good risk management is key to delivering successful outcomes. Stakeholders in the partnership should achieve a common understanding of:

- The potential adverse conditions or opportunities associated with achieving partnership objectives and their relative seriousness or where opportunities exist;
- How adverse conditions can be managed or the opportunities exploited.

The partnership Memorandum of Understanding should mention the matter of shared risk assessment and risk management mechanisms. Other partnership documents need to identify in detail what systems are in place to monitor, review and evaluate risk and who is responsible for ensuring this is done.

The partnership governing body should ensure that effective risk assessment is undertaken in all key decision-making processes and the partnership implements risk management plans to reduce identified risks, set clear deadline and allocate responsible individuals for particular tasks.

As well as risk management plans there need to be business continuity plans covering what actions will be taken if risks are realised.

It is important to note that as part of risk management, insurance is one way of transferring the level of risks. Appendix 9 details a number of areas where insurance decisions may need to be taken by the partnership. This is particularly important where Officers are undertaking partnership working across boundaries. It is important to check that appropriate insurance cover is in place.

11. Leaving partnerships

At some point, partnership arrangements or the Council's involvement in a partnership, will come to an end. This could be for several reasons:

- The partnership achieves all that it set out to do;
- The objectives of the Council, the Sustainable Community Strategy or Local Area Agreement change;
- On review, the partnership is not delivering the outputs and outcomes it was set up to do and a new approach needs to be explored;
- The partnership is replaced with another partnership or working arrangement;
- External funding sources/resources cease;
- On review, an adverse level of risk of continuing the partnership is identified;
- The legal framework upon which the partnership was founded, changes.

Executive (or full Council if it has Constitutional implications) has the authority to determine if the Council's involvement in a partnership should cease. This does not necessarily mean that the partnership itself will cease.

All Memoranda of Understanding should identify how individual organisations can leave a partnership and relevant exit strategies and considerations.

Within 3 months of the decision to leave a partnership, the officer representative will complete the template in Appendix 5 and submit it to the Corporate Management Team identifying any learning points or best practice as necessary.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

THE PARTNERSHIP CYCLE

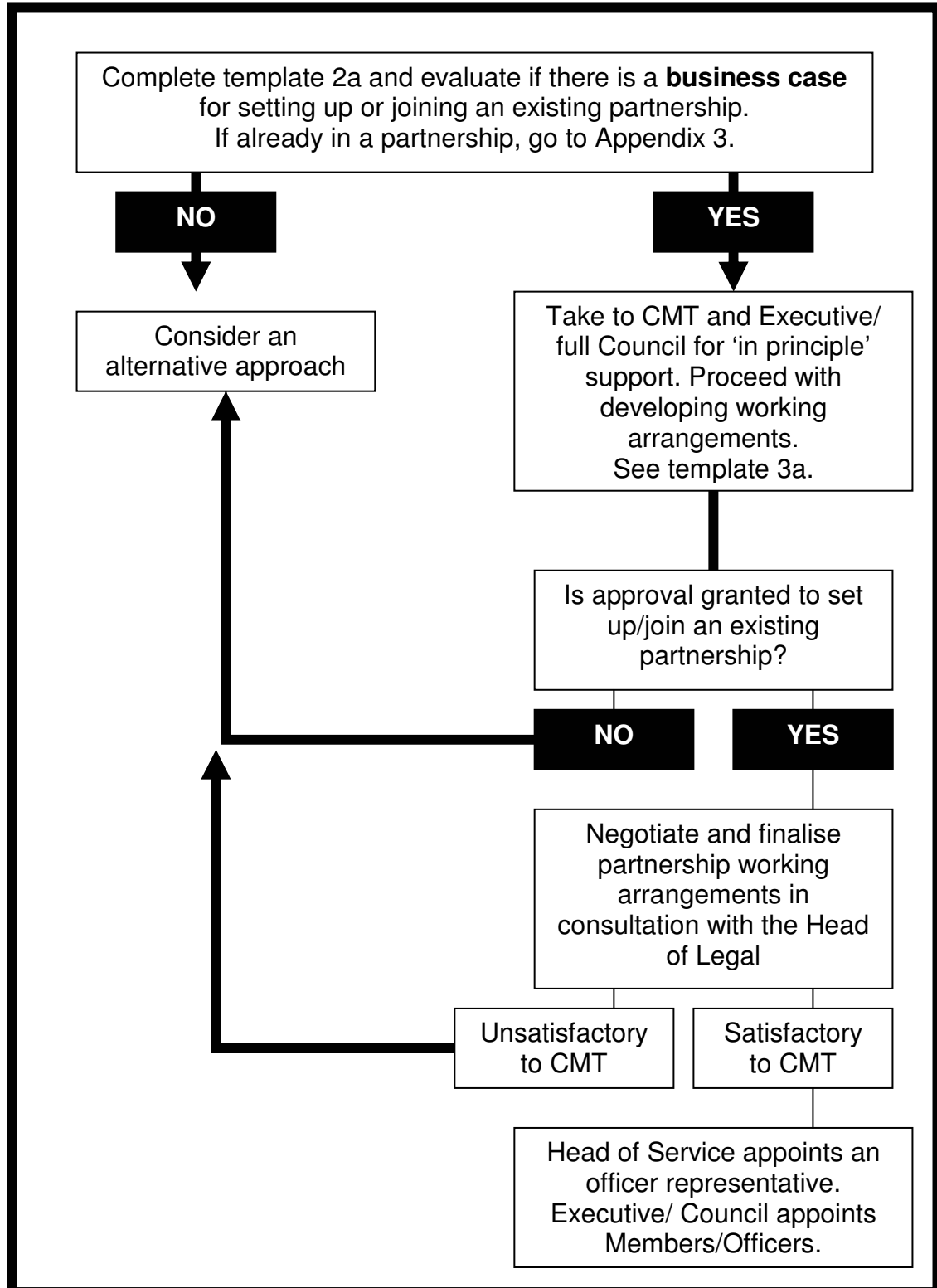
The diagram gives an overview of the Council's approach to partnership governance and delivery through the life cycle of a partnership: forming, performing and ending.

<p>STAGE 1 Making the business case</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for the partnership • Other options considered • Benefits of the partnership • Risks and opportunities • Costs and timescales 	<p>Appendix 5</p>
		<p>Appendix 4a</p>
<p>STAGE 2 Partnership framework and delivery</p>	<p>Develop/review/report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorandum of Understanding • Operational checklist, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Code of Conduct • Objectives and outcomes • Document management (audit trail) • Partnership finance /resources • Staff/ member development • Partnership communication • Equality and diversity 	
<p>STAGE 3 Partnership monitoring, review and evaluation</p>	<p>How effective is the partnership?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor • Review • Evaluate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it value for money? • Has it 'added value'? • Is it fit for purpose? 	
<p>STAGE 4 Partnership framework and delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit feedback • Sharing best practice • Establish frameworks for sustained delivery, where appropriate 	

APPENDIX 2

MAKING THE BUSINESS CASE FOR PARTNERSHIPS

This flowchart guides the Head of Service through the business case stage of developing a new partnership or joining an existing one.



APPENDIX 2a**BUSINESS CASE – Information required**

Nature of the business case	
This is concerned with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up a partnership • Joining an existing partnership • Reviewing an existing partnership 	
1. Name of the partnership 2. Is the partnership statutory?	Yes/No
] Evidence 1. 2.	

Reasons for the partnership
1. What are the key aims and objectives of the partnership? 2. How do these fit with the strategic outcomes of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan • Sustainable Community Strategy • Local Area Agreement 3. How do these fit with the Council's operational outcomes? 4. To whom is the partnership accountable? 5. What is the role of the Council? 6. Which organisations make up the partnership? 7. Are there any key players not in the partnership that should be?
] Evidence 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

Other options considered
1. What other working arrangements have you considered? 2. Why were these rejected? 3. Is a partnership approach the most effective way to deliver the Council's strategic or operational outcomes?

]
Evidence 1. 2. 3.

Benefits of the partnership
1. How is the partnership offering value for money ? 2. Give specific examples of how the partnership is delivering added value . 3. Attach the SMART outcomes and targets of the partnership.
]
Evidence 1. 2. 3.

Risks and opportunities
1. Attach the complete risk assessment of the partnership. 2. Attach the completed equality impact assessment for the partnership. 3. Is there the potential for reputation damage to the Council if it leaves the partnership or doesn't join up? If yes, what is the risk and how can it be managed? 4. If the Council leaves the partnership or doesn't join, will any funding be lost to the Council? If yes, please give details.
]
Evidence 1. 2. 3. 4.

Costs and timescales
1. What resources is the Council providing in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance? • Staff? • Accommodation? • IT? • Administration? • Training? • Insurance? • Recruitment? • Payroll?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & Safety? • Advice? • Other? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. When is funding for the partnership due to end? 3. What is its intended lifespan? 4. What is the exit strategy?
<p>]</p> <p>Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4.

Authorisation	
Business case must be authorised by Director/ Head of Service	
Name	
Date	
Job Title	
Contact telephone number	
Contact e-mail address	

APPENDIX 3**REPORTING ON PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS**

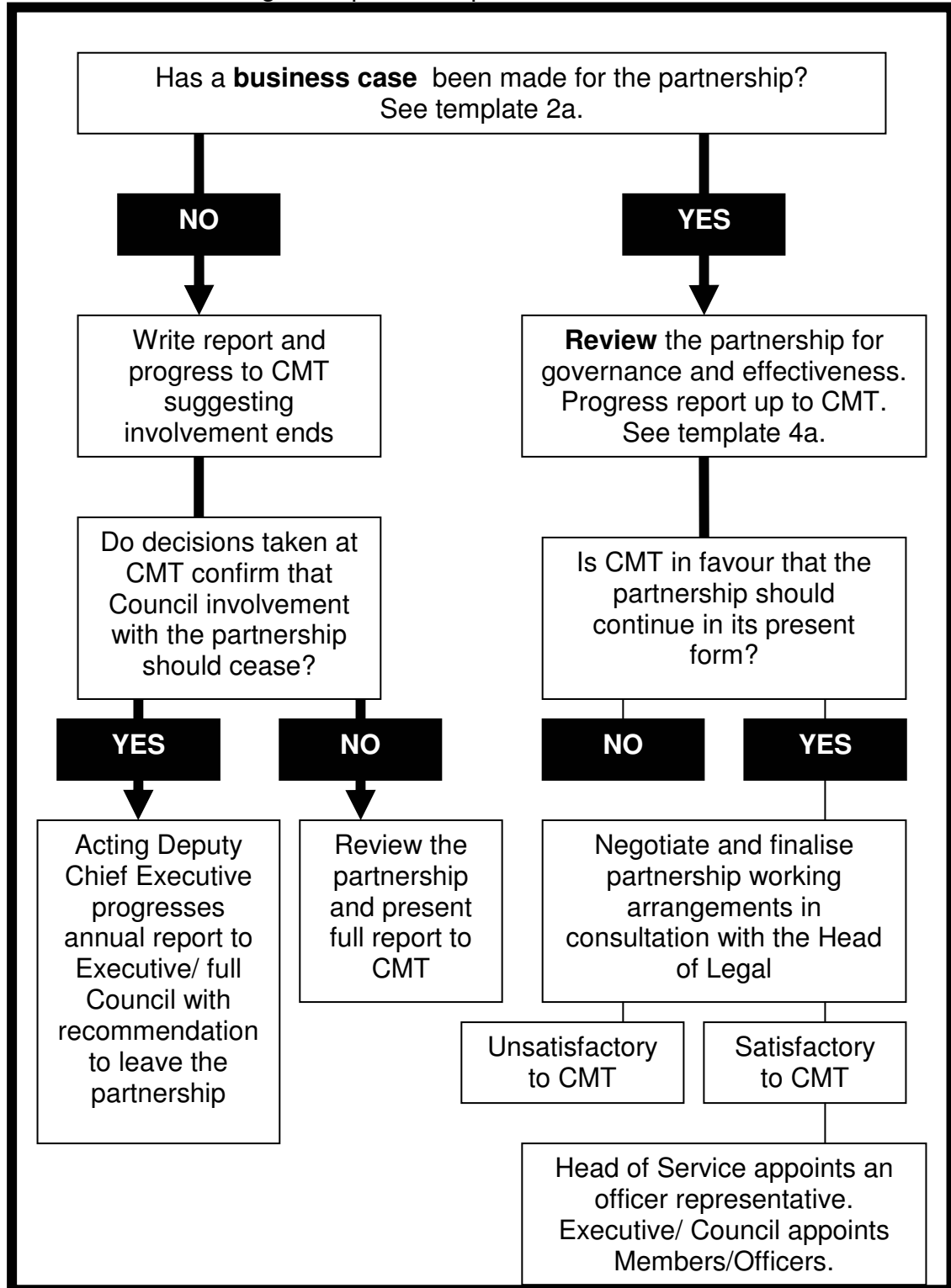
Name of Partnership	
Name of Officer completing the report	
Key achievements of partnership from X to X [date]	
What role has RBC had in the above achievements?	
Please detail any financial or other contributions made by the Council	
How do the key achievements of the partnership assist the Council to deliver one or more of its corporate objectives? Please provide details	
What is the partnership's work plan for the next 6 months? How will this contribute towards achievement of the Council's objectives? Please provide details	
Any other comments?	

Completed form to be returned to the Head of Strategy & Partnerships

APPENDIX 4

REVIEWING A PARTNERSHIP

This flow chart guides the Head of Service and partnership link officer through the annual review stage of a partnership.



APPENDIX 4a

ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP REVIEW – Information required to monitor, review and evaluate partnerships

Partnership review template

Whether you are setting up a partnership, joining or reviewing an existing one, the issues that need to be considered for partnership effectiveness will be the same.

This guidance is to be used by:

- the Head of Service as a checklist when setting up or reviewing the appropriateness of joining an existing partnership
- the officer representative carrying out a partnership review

This guidance should also be made available to the partnership officer responsible for monitoring a partnership's governance, performance and effectiveness.

Completing the template should provide assurance that appropriate standards are being met.

Name of partnership: _____

Head of service: _____

Officer representative: _____

Governance and finance		
Formal status		
1. Is there clarity on the legal status of the partnership?		
2. Is there an agreed Memorandum of Understanding or constitution, which sets out a clear purpose and clarity of expectation of the partnership members?		
Assessment	[insert self-assessment]	1. NO – action required, 2. YES – but could be improved, 3. YES- working effectively
Evidence		
1.		
2.		
Actions needed		

Composition		
1. Is the partnership realistically sized and resourced?		
2. Does it contain the right mix of skills and knowledge to get the work done?		
Assessment	[insert self-assessment]	1. NO – action required, 2. YES – but could be improved, 3. YES- working effectively
Evidence		
1.		
2.		

Actions needed

Auditing and scrutiny arrangements		
1. Are internal auditing arrangements for the partnership clear? 2. And are there agreed rights of audit access for each constituent member? 3. Does the partnership have any external review or monitoring mechanisms?		
Assessment	[insert self-assessment]	1. NO – action required, 2. YES – but could be improved, 3. YES- working effectively
Evidence 1. 2. 3.		
Actions needed		

Finances and resources		
1. Where does accountability lie for managing the spending of funds? 2. Are financial monitoring arrangements robust, clear and understood? 3. Have procedures for managing and monitoring pooled budgets and resources been developed? 4. Is there clarity over ownership and responsibilities?		
Assessment	[insert self-assessment]	1. NO – action required, 2. YES – but could be improved, 3. YES- working effectively
Evidence 1. 2. 3. 4.		
Actions needed		

Risk assessment & management		
1. Are systems in place to assess and manage partnership risk? 2. Are business continuity plans in place?		
Assessment	[insert self-assessment]	1. NO – action required, 2. YES – but could be improved, 3. YES- working effectively
Evidence 1. 2.		
Actions needed		

Conduct and behaviour		
1. Is there an agreed Code of Conduct for partners that is signed by all members and enforced by the Chair?		
Assessment	[insert self-assessment]	1. NO – action required,

		2. YES – but could be improved, 3. YES- working effectively
Evidence 1.		
Actions needed		

Staffing		
1. Are roles and responsibilities and expected behaviours clear and agreed? 2. Are there opportunities for training partnership staff and members, including: a. appraisal and approval procedures? b. equality and diversity? c. Code of Conduct?		
Assessment	[insert self-assessment]	1. NO – action required, 2. YES – but could be improved, 3. YES- working effectively
Evidence 1. 2a. 2b. 2c.		
Actions needed		

Equality and diversity		
1. Has the partnership carried out an <u>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</u> on the way that it functions, on its policies and on what it delivers? 2. If no, an action plan needs to be drawn up to do so within the next 6 months		
Assessment	[insert self-assessment]	1. NO – action required, 2. YES – but could be improved, 3. YES- working effectively
Evidence 1.		
Actions needed		

Communication		
1. Is the partnership communicating well with its partner agencies, stakeholders and communities?		
Assessment	[insert self-assessment]	1. NO – action required, 2. YES – but could be improved, 3. YES- working effectively
Evidence 1.		
Actions needed		

Performance and Delivery		
Accountability		
1. Does the partnership have an officer accountable for monitoring its performance?		

Assessment	[insert self-assessment]	1. NO – action required, 2. YES – but could be improved, 3. YES- working effectively
Evidence 1.		
Actions needed		

Outcome-focused planning and performance management		
1. Does the partnership have a credible evidence-base to inform its objectives, outcome-focused planning and SMART targets? 2. Are there action plans in place to deliver these? 3. Do partners share information so that they can effectively: a. monitor performance, and b. appraise options? 4. And are sufficient joint mechanisms in place for effective monitoring and appraisal? 5. Are findings and recommendations owned and acted upon? 6. Are arrangements in place to tackle issues of non-performance?		
Assessment	[insert self-assessment]	1. NO – action required, 2. YES – but could be improved, 3. YES- working effectively
Evidence 1. 2. 3a. 3b. 4a. 4b. 5. 6.		
Actions needed		

GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS USED

Completed by: _____

Date: _____

Job title: _____

Organisation: _____

Tel No.: _____

Email: _____

APPENDIX 5

LEAVING A PARTNERSHIP

The link officer needs to complete this form within three months of the council's decision to end its working arrangement with a partnership. It should be submitted to the Head of Strategy & Partnerships.

ISSUE	COMMENTS
1. Name of partnership	
2. When was the formal decision taken to end the Council's working arrangement?	
3. From what date will / did active involvement end?	
4. Why was involvement ended?	
5. If failure to deliver was identified, was this a result of system failures?	
5a. If yes, what were they?	
6. Will the partnership continue without Council involvement?	
7. Is the council looking to develop other working arrangements to succeed the partnership?	
7a. If yes, what are they?	
8. State up to 3 things that the partnership achieved	
9. State up to 3 examples of best practice exhibited by the partnership	
10. State up to 3 things that the partnership could have done better	

Completed by: _____

Date: _____

Job title: _____

Tel. No. _____

Email: _____

APPENDIX 6

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

OFFICER REPRESENTATIVE

The role of the officer representative is to:

- Provide a point of contact between the Council and the partnership
- Assist the partnership work with the Council
- Support the Council's representative(s) on the partnership
- Alert relevant officers to arising issues (e.g. Internal Audit on matters of risk)
- Undertake an annual review of the partnership's governance and performance effectiveness and submit a report to the relevant Director/Head of Service
- Report on an exception basis to their Director/Head of Service if any issues arise between annual reports

HEAD OF SERVICE

The role of the Head of Service is to:

- evaluate the business case for proposed and existing partnerships
- evaluate the annual partnership review and any exception reports and report to the Corporate Management Team
- action any points arising from decisions taken at Executive Committee/Corporate Management Team
- co-ordinate with the officer representative to troubleshoot any problems that arising in day-to-day operation of the partnership

HEAD OF STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIPS

The role of the Head of Strategy & Partnerships is to:

- develop the partnership review programme
- produce an annual report summarising partnership governance and effectiveness, the outcome of reviews and identify any actions as necessary
- ensure that the Council's partnership governance framework and toolkit is maintained and sustained, in conjunction with the Head of Legal, Democratic & Property Services
- ensure that the database of partnership activity is maintained and sustained

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

The role of the Corporate Management Team is to:

- ensure that the partnership review programme is carried out and to timescales
- challenge if partnerships are adding value/offering value for money
- make the Head of Strategy & Partnerships aware of partnership training needs
- Circulate learning and best practice on partnership working around the organisation
- Provide a mechanism for the Council to coordinate and discharge its duties under this partnership governance framework
- Receive the annual summary report on the overall impact of the Council's involvement in partnerships and agree any actions which do not require an elected Member decision
- Ensure that partnerships are properly supported and that resources are provided to allow partnerships to succeed
- Monitor the overall performance and effectiveness of partnerships and advise Executive Committee on any further action required

EXECUTIVE

The role of the Executive is to:

- Agree Council involvement in new partnership working arrangements
- Receive reports from the Head of Strategy & Partnerships on the effectiveness of the Council's involvement in partnerships
- Agree future direction and/or any actions arising from evaluation of partnerships
- Assess the Council's continued involvement in partnerships

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to:

- Consider any evaluation report summarising Council involvement in partnerships, analyse and challenge outcomes, impact and direction
- Support the Corporate Management Team to identify and circulate learning and best practice from partnership working
- Evaluate if partnerships 'act together' and make differences to people's lives.

MEMBER ROLE ON PARTNERSHIPS

The role of the Member is to:

- Carry out the duties and obligations set out in the governing documents for the partnership and in the Council's Code of Conduct
- If the Member's role is unclear, to establish at the outset whether s/he is acting as a delegate/ representative of the Council to promote its interests, or if s/he has an independent role to fulfill on behalf of the partnership.

- If the role is an independent role, s/he will have to uphold the partnership's interests, even when these may be in conflict with the policies and best interests of the Council whilst s/he is serving on the Committee or partnership but not whilst serving as a Member of the Council.
- If the partnership is seeking charitable status it will need to establish itself as a trust or incorporate to become a company limited by guarantee. Any Member becoming a Trustee or a Director will need to consider his/her duties as set out in the Monitoring Officer Briefing Note 2007:02 on Membership of Outside Bodies.

APPENDIX 7

PARTNERSHIP DATABASE

The Directorates and Corporate Management Team have overall responsibility for ensuring that the information in the database is accurate and maintained. The Acting Deputy Chief Executive has responsibility for ensuring that the resources exist to sustain it.

The following data is held on each partnership.

- Name and type of partnership, including any legal status (i.e. statutory or non-statutory)
- Partnership's areas of work (geographical, theme and client groups)
- Membership of the partnership
- Elected Member contribution to the partnership
- Organisation(s) that the partnership is accountable to.
- Head of Service accountable for the partnership.
- Name of the partnership officer representative and contact details.
- Start date and proposed end date of the partnership.
- How the partnership contributes to the Corporate Plan objectives.
- How the partnership contributes to the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement outcomes.
- Funding sources available to the partnership.
- Council resources available to the partnership including:
 - Finance
 - Staff
 - Accommodation
 - IT
 - Administration
 - Training
 - Insurance
 - Recruitment
 - Payroll
 - Health & Safety
 - Advice
 - Other

APPENDIX 8

Guidance on managing risks and opportunities in partnerships

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Section 1 – Selecting Approach

1.1 Deciding to go into Partnership

Although partnership working is increasingly common, it does not necessarily follow that a partnership is the answer to any problem. Careful consideration should be given to what is hoped to be achieved before setting up a new partnership and whether there are other, simpler ways of realising these objectives.

1.2 Why work in Partnerships?

In recent years there has been a growing awareness of the importance of focusing on the users' experience of public services. This frequently means that agencies must work together both to deliver packages of services that are tailored to individual users needs and to plan co-ordinated service strategies that enable such packages to be delivered in practice.

Councils are increasingly concerned with complex problems such as community safety or economic regeneration, which cross traditional boundaries, presenting challenges which agencies cannot tackle unless they work together.

Many partnerships are set up to enable agencies to bid for resources which are not available to single organisations.

The Government is increasingly giving local agencies statutory duties to work together, community safety; early years' education and health improvement are three areas where partnership approaches are obligatory. The scale of statutory partnership working is set to expand.

Because partnership working can be both difficult and expensive, it is essential that organisations consider other options as well as a partnership. Depending on the circumstances a different approach could be either more efficient, more effective or both.

Other options include:

- consultative arrangements, where a single agency retains responsibility for decisions and actions;
- networks of personal or professional relationships which do not have to involve organisational commitment;
- contractual relationships, such as those established under the Private Finance Initiative, which produce different benefits for the different partners

Appendix A provides a checklist of questions to ask before setting up a partnership, along with factors which indicate that a partnership is not the best approach.

1.3 Areas to consider when deciding on Partnership Arrangements

- **Alignment of objectives:**

- Is there sufficient buy-in to the Council's objectives?
- Have strategic objectives been communicated sufficiently well in order to identify common interests?

- **Aligning authority with responsibility:**

- Are those responsible for managing the risks empowered to do so?

- **Incentives:**

- Are there incentives for partners to manage risks effectively (or e.g. are the consequences of failure felt primarily by the Council)?
- Is the risk / reward balance right for each partner?

- **Resilience of the Partnership:**

- How resilient to unexpected events is the supply chain?

- **Approach:**

- Has the right approach been chosen (e.g. the risks of taking a partnering approach rather than an 'arms length' approach potentially include lack of clarity; getting too close to one partner at the expense of others; risks of improper relationships developing; higher cost with less value for money)?
- Is the partnering approach understood by those operating it?
- Have any tensions been resolved between the need to agree clear contractual arrangements and retaining flexibility for partnership working?

- **Monitoring:**

- Is there prompt, relevant, high-quality performance information?
- Is this clearly embedded into robust performance management arrangement?

1.4 The Council's Perspective – 'Outside Looking In'

At this stage it is necessary to clarify the risks that the Council faces by being involved with the partnership in terms of:

- Financial
- Reputational
- Resource conflicts
- Reliance on partnership to deliver your objectives

This should be undertaken as part of a strategic risk exercise.

Section 2 – Background

2.1 The Partnership Perspective – 'On the inside of the Partnership'

It is now time to clarify the risks the partnership faces in delivering the objectives and outcomes i.e.

- Lack of buy in from all partners
- Confused governance arrangements
- Seen as Council led
- Unable to blend cultures

2.2 Identifying and Managing the Partnership Risks and Opportunities

Redditch Borough Council (RBC) is committed to working with partners in many different areas, and has developed a framework for working in partnership.

This guide therefore aims to support that framework and be used in conjunction with the established RBC risk and opportunity management policies and procedures.

Local government partnerships often attract extensive external funding which needs to be effectively managed to deliver the outcomes expected. Local Area Agreements are an example of this. It is therefore vital that partnership risks and opportunities are identified and managed by the relevant partners.

All partners will be able to share their views and opinions on the risks facing the partnership, prioritise their risks and set a tolerance level. They can then decide who is best placed to manage the risks.

Identifying and managing the partnership risks will:

- Identify barriers to the partnership's success
- Create a common understanding among the partners of the issues the partnership faces and agreement on the priority of these

- Act as a team and knowledge building exercise
- Check whether the partnerships objectives are realistic
- Allow issues to be reported back to the partner organisations in a useful and structured way

2.3 Partnership Risk & Opportunity Management Protocol

When working together, all organisations need to establish a common framework and language that they will use when assessing the risks facing the partnership. A protocol states what these will be and will form part of the overall governance arrangements and result in:

- Agreement on risk approach so that all risks and opportunities can be identified, prioritised and managed
- Effective reporting and monitoring of risks and opportunities to all partners
- Increased understanding and awareness of risk and opportunity management and its uses

2.4 Partnership Risk & Opportunity Management Training

Providing training and improving skills in partnership risk and opportunity management will:

- Increase awareness of risks and opportunities within partnership working and how they can be identified and managed
- Provide evidence for CAA (or other inspection regimes) that the staff and Members have adequate awareness training and understanding on partnership risk issues
- Help develop understanding, so that scrutiny and assurance roles can be taken on effectively
- Provide staff with a way to raise concerns about some partnerships that they are involved in
- Improve the management of partnerships and encourage the continual review of partnership risk in future

Section 3 – A Risk & Opportunity Management Approach for Partnerships

3.1 Risk and Opportunity Identification and Assessment

- Identifying and understanding the risks and opportunities facing the partnership is crucial if informed decisions are to be made.
- Is there a common understanding of the objectives of the partnership?

- Is there a common understanding of the risks and opportunities and how they can be managed?
- Are there standards for assessing risks – giving a common view of severity, so mitigating action can be prioritised?
- Ensure partners share their assessment of risks, identify risks to the partnership achieving its objectives and record in a **joint risk register** providing the opportunity to come to agreed judgements, allocate responsibility for action and trigger monitoring information. This will help to ensure complete understanding for both parties about risks to implementation and ongoing service delivery, enabling a joint approach to managing risks.
- Clarity of who is responsible for, and manages which risks is also essential.

3.2 Allocation of Risk Ownership

- Risk allocation and risk transfer is about deciding who is best placed to manage a specific risk. A risk is described as 'transferred' when the partnership decides not to manage that particular risk itself. The main advantage of transferring risk is that it can provide incentives for suppliers to deliver cost-effective services.
- Is there clarity about who is carrying which risks, and what the requirements are for providing information?
(These should be incorporated in partnership agreements / contracts)
- **Appendix B** provides a risk allocation checklist taken from the '*OGC's Risk Allocation in Long Term Contracts*', which contains a structured set of questions to ask in determining who is best placed to manage risks.

3.3 Monitoring Risks and Opportunities

- Good quality monitoring of information should include the scale of risks and opportunities and how they are managed. A clear view of the key issues and risks to be monitored will help to avoid the situation where large volumes of information are provided by partners.
- Establish and agree procedures for monitoring risks. It is important to have clear agreement on what information will be provided and by whom. Issues to consider include whether you have rights to access partners' information, which can be invoked if there are signs of failure in contracts.

3.4 Reviewing Risks and Opportunities

- Circumstances and priorities can and do change, and therefore risks and their circumstances need to be regularly reviewed. Aim to have joint risk and opportunity review meetings, as an integral part of performance management arrangements.

3.5 Managing Risks and Opportunities

- The management of risks and opportunities needs to be fully integrated into day-to-day management. The scale of monitoring and intervention should be increased when there are signs that significant risks materialise. Arrangements are needed to trigger this action promptly.
- Trigger points for action should be set out in whatever agreements are made with partners.
- The management of the risks and opportunities the Council faces by being involved with the partnership must be included in performance management arrangements.

3.6 Reviewing Your Approach

- Review agreements with partners to ensure that the inherent risks have been assessed and addressed. If it is clear that the partners' objectives are not fully aligned, despite best efforts, then more intensive risk management might be necessary to manage potential difficulties, and contingency arrangements or other safeguards should be developed.
- Seek assurance that partners risk and opportunity management / corporate governance arrangements are adequate. The existence of a Statement of Internal Control can help, but gaining this assurance will generally require a dialogue about what is required. This may then become part of a partnership agreement.
- **Appendix C** provides a checklist of questions for consideration when reviewing agreements with partners.

3.7 Risk and Opportunity Communication

- Communication is of fundamental importance in the regulation of risks. It allows people to participate in, or be effectively represented in, decisions about managing risks, and it plays a vital part in putting decisions into practice.
- Engagement and dialogue with those interested in and affected by risk and opportunity issues is vital. It should be an integral part of

every process for the management of risks and opportunities. The aims of risk and opportunity communication should be:

- To enable the effective participation and / or representation of all interested parties in making decisions about how to manage risks and opportunities.
- To support the most effective possible implementation of risk and opportunity management decisions.
- Sharing risk assessments will help to avoid different perspectives.
- Ensure that an open dialogue is maintained, this will help create a shared understanding.
- Has risk terminology / language been agreed?

3.8 Contingency Plans

- It must be recognised that any risk could suddenly be realised, and become a critical issue, even those assessed as having low likelihoods. Assessments could be wrong, circumstances might change before there is time to respond to external events. Consideration must be given in advance of what action will be taken if a risk develops.
- Contingency plans should be created for all risks that have been assessed as having a potentially high impact, irrespective of the potential likelihood.
- Business continuity plans to help keep the partnership running during times of change or disruption should be prepared.
- Create clear plans about what action should be taken if risks are realised e.g. if the service fails.
- Agree with stakeholders and test to verify that they would work.

Questions to ask before setting up a Partnership

- Is the problem that the prospective partners want to solve one that needs a partnership approach?
- Do the partners have a clear and shared vision of the benefits that the partnership is intended to achieve?
- Is this vision realistic in light of:
 - The resources and opportunities likely to be open to the proposed partnership?
 - The issues that partnership working is particularly suited to address?
- Will the anticipated benefits outweigh the likely costs (direct and indirect) of a partnership?
- How will the costs and benefits be measured?
- Could the benefits be achieved in a simpler or more cost effective way?
- Are the partners all willing to devote the necessary time and effort to make the partnership succeed?
- Do the partners all know what role they will play, what resources they will contribute and how they will account for the success of the project?
- Are the partners willing to consider changing their other activities to fit in with the partnership's objectives where this is appropriate?

Factors indicating that a partnership approach is not the best approach

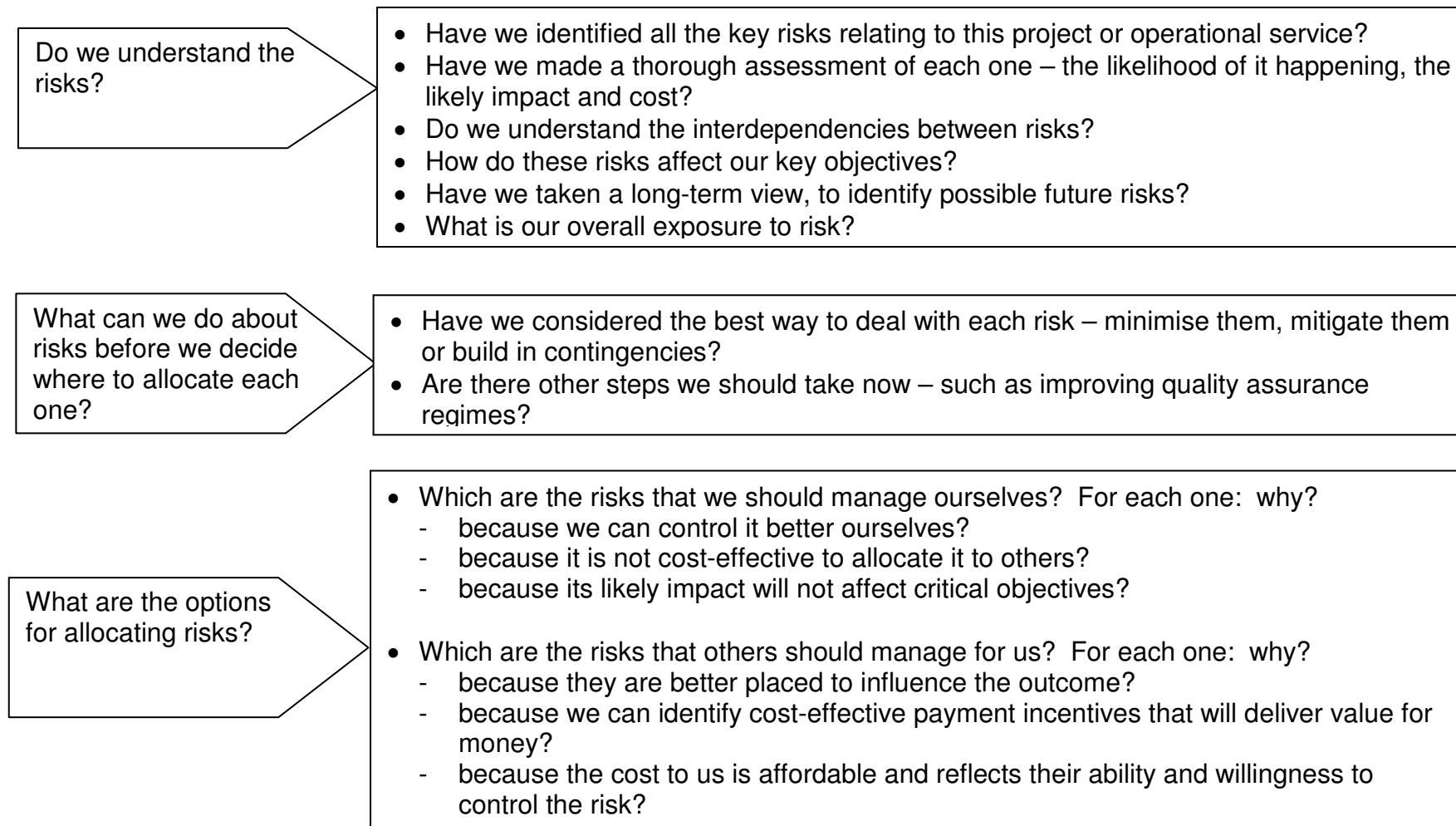
- The answer to one or more of the questions above is 'no';
- The topic proposed is primarily the responsibility of one agency, with others having only a marginal interest or role;
- Agencies have no shared objective in relation to this topic;
- Agencies main aim is to achieve cost savings;
- Agencies have a history of poor relationships and have not made a commitment to change this;

- Agencies want to shunt costs or blame for problems on to one another – that is, there is a hidden negative agenda.

2.3 Risk Allocation Checklist

(Source: OGCs Risk Allocation in Long Term Contracts)

Key questions to ask at each stage



Negotiating risk transfer with suppliers

- Can we obtain the optimum risk transfer, or balance between the benefits of transferring a risk and the cost of compensating the supplier for taking it on?
- Do we need to obtain variant bids to decide the optimum offer?
- Have we negotiated with each supplier to achieve the optimum balance of risk, costs and benefits?
- Are our decisions on risk allocation based on realistic assessment of the way in which risks will be managed?
- Does the entire supply chain have a shared understanding of the risks and the consequences if they materialise?
- Have we validated our risk plans by obtaining proposals and indicative prices from suppliers, assessing each risk and its price, taking into account:
 - The nature of the requirement – high or low risk?
 - The expected length of the contract – long or short term in which to recover the development costs?
 - The likelihood of predicted service volumes being exceeded, with the opportunities for increased revenue?

Have we allocated risks to the right parties in the supply chain?

- Can we be sure that we have not transferred the wrong risks, leading to poor value for money and unacceptable exposure to risk?
- Have we made sure that we only transferred risks that are commercial in nature, where the supplier can influence the outcome?
- Where risks have been transferred, is the supplier genuinely able to manage them?

Can we avoid taking transferred risk back?

- Is there a danger that we could 'take back' transferred risks – that is, to get too involved in the supplier's business and the solutions they provide, preventing them from managing the risks they have agreed to take on?
- Are we certain that we have not taken risk back, by:
 - attempting to define a technical solution?
 - attempting to define how a service should be provided?
- Have we preserved our supplier's freedom to propose alternatives?
- Will our supplier have the freedom to choose how to handle and minimise it?

Appendix C**Managing Risk and Opportunity Checklist****Are the risks and opportunities associated with working with other organisations assessed and managed?**

1. Are all those organisations, which are likely to have some influence over the success of a programme or service to the public identified?
2. Is consideration being given to the need for a consistent and common approach to managing risks and opportunities which cut across organisational boundaries, for example, cross-divisional projects?
3. Do organisations understand and have confidence in the risk and opportunity management arrangements of all those involved in the joint working or partnership or who could influence the success of the programme?
4. Is there reliable and regular information to monitor the risk and opportunity management performance of all those organisations involved in a joined up programme and partnerships?
5. Are there adequate contingency arrangements to minimise the adverse effects on public service delivery of one or more party failing to deliver?
(Source: MOD checklist for Customer- Supplier agreements)

APPENDIX 9

Insurance considerations

The following list highlights a number of areas where insurance decisions may need to be taken by a partnership.

It is important to note that as part of risk management, insurance is one way of transferring risks. As insurance premiums rise and organisations increasingly self-fund risks, there is greater emphasis on risk management.

Name of partnership: _____

Issue	Insurance considerations	Evaluation/comments
Employment of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do officers involved in the partnership have appropriate cover for employer's liability by their host organisations for their work in the partnership? 	
Use of physical assets – buildings, equipment, vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which party owns the assets and are they appropriately safeguarded in terms of security, control over use, etc? Are the assets insured for identified risks, for example, fire, theft, vandalism, accidental damage, etc? 	
Responsibility for finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the partnership manage finances and are they protected by sound systems of internal control and policies covering fidelity? 	
Capital works and intellectual property rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are appropriate arrangements in place for being clear on the same and managing risks regarding such works? 	
Officers/elected members indemnity and public liability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do Council Officers/ Elected Members have appropriate insurance cover or indemnities for their partnership work, including public liability? 	

Completed by: _____

Date: _____

Job title: _____

Tel. No. _____

APPENDIX 10

A MODEL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

A Memorandum of Understanding must address the following headings since this model combines all the attributes of best practice.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PARTNERSHIP

List the aims and objectives of the partnership here.

Good practice would be a separate paragraph with a short explanatory sentence for each aim and objective.

PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

The following list should be included under this sub-heading.

Good practice would be an explanatory sentence following each bullet point. The list is not exhaustive.

The members agree to work actively to achieve the aims of the partnership, on the basis of:

- Visible commitment and 'ownership' by the various member organisations and individual representatives;
- mutual trust and respect;
- openness and transparency;
- effective communication and accountability;
- shared ownership of resources, where appropriate;
- combined expertise;
- creative and innovative solutions to problems;
- identification and sharing of best practice, based on mutual learning;
- removal of barriers to equality of access and opportunity;
- clear purpose, clarity of expectations and agreed targets for action;
- effective decision - making;
- shared mechanisms for risk management, monitoring, evaluation, reviewing and reporting on performance, progress and success;
- allowing each constituent member unobstructed access to the audit records of the partnership, on request.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

List the Terms of Reference (the purpose of the partnership) here. Good practice would be a separate paragraph with a short explanatory sentence for each Terms of Reference.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

List the roles and responsibilities of each of the constituent members of the partnership here. It may be appropriate to talk more generally about what the voluntary and community sector, the business sector and the public sector

members each bring to the partnership as groups, and the areas of the partnership activity that they will be responsible for delivering.

MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF OFFICE (INCLUDING ANY SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS/OFFICERS)

List information like:

- the number of representatives from organisations in the public, private and the voluntary and community sectors, which are actively involved in the area (equal representation is not a requirement) and why they were chosen;
- a list of the constituent members and the number of representatives they have on the partnership;
- who chairs and vice-chairs the partnership;
- how often the membership is reviewed and any time limits that an individual representative can serve on the partnership;
- how the membership of the partnership reflects the characteristics and aspirations of the area/people it has been set up to serve.

EQUALITIES AND INCLUSION

A statement on how the partnership will operate and actively value the benefits of diversity and ensure fair treatment and equality of opportunity.

This includes representation and participation on the partnership.

A statement on how and when the partnership will carry out Equalities Impact Assessments on its functions, policies and services. The Equality Impact Assessment should be carried out within six months.

ACCOUNTABILITY

A statement about how and to whom the partnership is accountable and what that accountability includes.

A statement on the constituent members' accountability to each other including any expectations of behaviour.

MEETINGS

A short statement/sentence on:

- the minimum number of meetings in a period;
- posting of meetings - including if open or closed;
- convening of extraordinary meetings;
- responsibility for the setting of meetings, agendas, working papers, minutes, etc;
- venues - why and how they are chosen;
- acceptability of meeting times;
- representation and quorum;
- expectation of behaviour in meetings;
- replacements at meetings and any protocols to be followed;
- Declarations of Interest and protocols on withdrawal from meetings.

This list is not exhaustive.

DISREPUTE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

A statement on behaviour that could reasonably be expected to bring a partnership into disrepute. A short list could include:

Members of the partnership:

- must not use their position improperly, confer on, or secure for themselves or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage;
- must ensure that activities are not undertaken for political purposes;
- must not unduly influence any person in the paid employment of any of the partner agencies.

A statement on the systems and procedures that exist to resolve issues of conflict within the partnership.

SECRETARIAL/ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

A short statement on which constituent member(s) will provide the secretarial/administrative function.

TERMINATION OF PARTNERSHIP INVOLVEMENT

A short statement on written notification to the Chair and secretariat of the intention to leave the partnership. Also state any notice period required or any exceptions.

REVIEW AND ALTERATION TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

A short statement on how often the Memorandum of Understanding shall be reviewed and protocols for changing/amending it.



Executive Committee

No specific Ward Relevance

10 June 2009

CCTV – AUDIO AND HELP POINT SCHEME REVIEW

(Report of the Head of Housing and Community Services)

1. Summary of Proposals

A 12 months review of the 6 Audio Points and 1 Help Point scheme connected to the Councils' CCTV and to provide evidence of its effectiveness since its introduction in to the Town Centre area in May 2008.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that

1) the outcome of the review of the Interactive CCTV and the evidence of its effectiveness provided be noted; and

2) the scheme continues with a further review in 12 months time

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

Financial

3.1 The 12 months warranty for the Interactive CCTV will end in May 2009. The maintenance contract for the council's entire CCTV scheme which will incorporate the Interactive CCTV system is now in place. There are no financial increases to the contract.

a) The new maintenance contract will cover repair and maintenance of the Interactive Scheme after the 12 month warranty has finished.

Legal

3.2 Section 163 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 gives the Council the Power to provide CCTV systems. The Power includes the use of the systems for the prevention of crime.

Policy

3.3 The Redditch Community Safety Partnership and the Council have approved a three year Community Safety Strategy "Keeping Redditch Safe". The mission statement is:

“We aim to improve the quality of life for all of our communities, creating a safer environment, reduction crime and disorder and addressing the causes and fear of crime.”

Risk

- 3.4 There are no known risks for this scheme. However, the benefit is the ongoing reduction in crime and disorder.

Report

4. Background

- 4.1 The Audio and Help points were introduced to the existing CCTV in May 2008.
- 4.2 The Audio and Help points are responded by and monitored by the existing Response Centre Operators.
- 4.3 There are 6 Audio points and 1 Help point at various locations throughout the Town Centre.
- 4.4 The scheme concentrates on the Town Centre area with a heavy footfall of people going between the two Night Clubs and Taxi rank. This also covers the footfall from the bars along Alcester Street to the Night Clubs. It was noted by the current CCTV scheme that this is the area where most disorder is recorded.

5. Key Issues

- 5.1 The Audio Points allow interaction with the public using the PA system.
- a) Officers are able to challenge immediately the behaviour of individuals and groups before action is taken to include the Police.
 - b) The interaction with residents in the Town Centre area by asking residents to pick up their litter aims to improve the cleanliness of the Town Centre to help attract visitors from other Towns.
 - c) Residents can feel safer by knowing the Help Points are available reducing fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.
 - d) A total of 88 incidents were recorded through the address system a breakdown of these is in Appendix 1.

Executive**Committee**

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- e) The case studies included in Appendix 2 demonstrate the effectiveness of the scheme.

6. Other Implications

- Asset Management - None
- Community Safety - The Audio and Help Points help in dispersing disorder in the Town Centre and assisting the general public.
- Human Resources - None
- Social Exclusion - None.

7. Lessons Learnt

- 7.1 Provide ongoing training of the use in this system for all members of staff in the response centre and providing cue cards for consistency.
- 7.2 Providing log sheets for staff to record all times the system is used and for what purpose.

8. Background Papers

No background papers were specifically referred to in the preparation of this report.

9. Consultation

Relevant Redditch Borough Council staff have been consulted and case studies provided in the preparation of this report.

10. Author of Report

The author of this report is Ruth Griffin (Response Centre Manager), who can be contacted on extension 3559 (E-mail: ruth.griffin@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Statistic for Audio Points.

Appendix 2 – Case studies.

Statistic for Audio Points

Incident	Complied	Not complied	Total incidents
Public Order Offence	8	5	13
Anti Social Behaviour	4	2	6
Fighting	13	0	13
Rubbish	20	3	23
Disorder	16	1	17
Moved on	4		4
Police involvement	12		12
Public Address	3		3

Public Order Offence – 62% of incidents (all male) decided against urinating. The 38% that did not were finished what they were doing and moved on.

ASB - 66.5% of incidents were stopped at first contact. 33.5% ran off when heard they were being monitored.

Fighting - This has been the biggest success with 100% of incidents being defused before they turned into major incidents.

Rubbish - 87% of incidents were complied with. Incidents ranged from litter to bottles and glasses thrown away in a safe manner.

Disorder - 94% of incidents were complied with. Many of the incidents were flowers being ripped up, market stalls pushed over and fences being attacked.

Moved on - 100% of incidents were complied with. This was different groups being asked to move on.

Police involvement - Police would already have been at the incident or in the vicinity. They would hear the address and investigate.

Public address - This has been used by the request of the Police, usually on Teeny Bopper night at Fuse to make sure all the young people know the train or buses would be leaving shortly to make sure they got home safely.

CASE STUDIES

1.1 Case Study 1

On 19th June 2008 at 18.40 the operator observed 2 children playing with a large aerosol can by the fountain, Church Green West. They were attempting to puncture the can with a sharp object. The use of the P.A. horn on Camera 12 was to advise that the can could explode and requested they put the aerosol in the bin. They carried out this instruction and left the area. The operator believed the use of the system in this case prevented serious injury or even a possible fatality.

1.2 Case Study 2

On 20th June 2008 at 19.53 the operator monitored a group of male youths who had got into the Town Hall bin store at the bottom of the car park. They began throwing old toys – which had been discarded by the nursery – all over the grass by the underpass. The operator used the P.A. horn on Camera 3 to inform the youths they were being monitored and requested they put the items back in the bin store, to which they complied. The youths were thanked they waved to the camera and moved on.

Without the P.A. horn, the operator would have to contact the Police via Hindlip HQ to request Police attendance (if there were any Police resources available). It is likely the youths would have left the area by the time the Police arrived. The Response Centre would have then had to contact a cleansing operative to clear up the mess. The use of the P.A. horn on this occasion saved time, the appearance of the Town Centre; and Police and Council resources / money.

1.3 Case Study 3

The Operator noticed two males were walking down Unicorn Hill who looked like they were having a very animated conversation. The Operator monitored the situation and saw male 1 get in to a taxi. Male 2 tries to stop the taxi and tries to punch male 1 twice. Male 2 was given a warning over the PA system which then alerted the Police to the incident. This quick action from the Operator using the Audio system gave the Police the advantage which averted a more serious assault that could have ended in a visit to the Hospital tying up valuable Police and health resources.

SHARED SERVICES BOARD**28th MAY 2009 at 7.00pm****THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BROMSGROVE****PRESENT:**

Councillors Roger Hollingworth (Chairman) and Mike Webb (Bromsgrove District Council)

Councillors Carole Gandy and Colin MacMillan (Redditch Borough Council)

Observer: Councillor Geoff Denaro (Bromsgrove District Council)

Officers in Attendance: Kevin Dicks, Sue Hanley and Karen Firth.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bill Hartnett and Jean Luck.

Concerns were expressed at the lack of full cross-party attendance at the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 30 March 2009 were confirmed as a correct record.

There were no matters arising.

2. PROGRESS REPORT

Member received a progress report on the overall Shared Services project, quick wins, medium term wins, production of the full business case, the Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier Programme and other areas of joint working. Mr Dicks highlighted key points and responded to Members' comments and questions as indicated below.

Quick Wins – Elections

In response to a Member query on the risks associated with the IT transfer at RBC and the possibility of an early Parliamentary Election, Mr Dicks advised that officers had done a detailed risk assessment and agreed that the best time for the IT transfer was immediately following the European and County Council Elections in June. In response to a Member query, Mr Dicks explained how associated IT costs referred to in the report would be apportioned equally between both Councils. Members commented that only costs associated with shared services should be attributed to the shared service and that costs each authority would have incurred anyway should be excluded.

Quick Wins – Community Safety

Mr Dicks updated Members on the current position with regard to the recruitment process.

Quick Wins – Equalities and Diversity

Attention was drawn to the progress made in this area.

Quick Wins – Member Development

Mr Dicks referred to the progress with regard to descriptions for Members' roles.

Medium Term Wins - ICT

The draft business case was reported to be on target and would be brought to the next meeting of the Board. This would need to address the question of who would be lead authority.

Medium Term Wins – CCTV/Lifeline

Initial feedback had been received from the consultant and indicated that either Council site could accommodate all the necessary equipment within their control rooms. Shift patterns were an area of concern and HR were involved in the ongoing review.

Medium Term Wins – Economic Development

Mr Dicks indicated that this was a major area of concern. Although he felt a North Worcestershire Strategy was the right approach, there was a lack of progress to date and little time left for a detailed business case to be produced by 30 June.

It was AGREED

that Mr Dicks maintain pressure for the delivery of a business case for a North Worcestershire Strategy but also pursue the possibility of a business case for a joint Redditch/Bromsgrove approach.

Business Case

Mr Dicks advised that initially he would just do a quality review of the draft business case and would share this with Directors. He would feedback to Serco who would then issue a revised draft business case which would be shared with the respective Corporate Management Teams. Attention was drawn to the timeline for the briefing of the political leadership, other Members, staff and the formal decision-making process. No officers would be present at the Member briefings provided by Serco.

WORCESTERSHIRE ENHANCED TWO TIER PROGRAMME (WETT)

Mr Dicks drew attention to the general support for the development of a business case for Regulatory Services (i.e. Licensing, Environmental Health & Trading Standards). In response to a lack of general consensus on what areas should be the next priorities and driven by local need, Bromsgrove and Redditch had pushed for Internal Audit and Property Services as the next two priorities. Mr Dicks advised that there were issues about the quality of Internal Audit provided to other councils by Worcester City which would need to be addressed as part of the future business case.

With regard to Regulatory Services, Members were informed that it was the WETT Programme Board's view that this should be hosted by a district not the County and it had queried whether Redditch or Bromsgrove would be interested. Mr Dicks indicated that he was happy to consider this but this would need to be done in the context of the outcome of the Serco business case and capacity requirements. Members of the Board shared the view that WETT developments should not compromise the joint Redditch/Bromsgrove agenda.

Mr Dicks also commented that he wished Youth and Community to be escalated up the WETT agenda with a view to service responsibility at district level.

Other Areas

Procurement – Mr Dicks provided a verbal update on the savings achieved due to the re-negotiation of the insurance contract (estimated at £56k for BDC and £70k for RBC).

Payroll – Reference was made to the recent problems with the payroll runs, the reasons for this and the lessons to be learned. An internal audit was currently underway.

Financial Implications

A more detailed report of the savings achieved during 2008/09 would be submitted to the next meeting of the Board.

HR Implications

Subject to the outcome of the final Serco business case, it was intended that a project plan for the harmonisation of terms and conditions would be submitted to the next meeting of the Board. In response to a Member query, Mr Dicks advised that both HR teams were working very closely together to achieve this. For the medium term wins it was agreed that the same process be adopted as was undertaken for the quick wins i.e., that the lead authority's terms and conditions would apply.

Risk Management

Mr Dicks advised that there was no change.

Worcestershire Hub

In response to a Member query, Mr Dicks clarified that the new site (Perryfields) for the Hub call centre was in Worcester. Mr Dicks also emphasised the need to ensure that Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils had input into shaping the way forward for the Hub and it was noted that Councillor Mike Webb would be attending the next project meeting.

Having considered the report and the verbal updates

It was AGREED that the progress to date be noted.

3. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Monday 29th June 2009.

The Meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.



**Overview
and
Scrutiny
Committee**

Thursday, 30 April 2009

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Phil Mould (Chair), Councillor David Smith (Vice-Chair) and Councillors K Banks, M Chalk, R King, W Norton, D Thomas and D Hunt

Non-Member:

Councillor Hunt (Substitute)

Also Present:

Councillors M Braley, A Clayton, J Cookson, W King, C MacMillan, J Pearce, B Quinney and M Collins

Officers:

A Baldwin, S Mullins, J Smith, J Smith and J Staniland

Committee Services Officer:

J Bayley and H Saunders

209. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Brunner, Hartnett and Taylor.

210. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or of any party whip.

211. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday 8 April be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

.....
Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 30 April 2009

212. ACTIONS LIST

Officers reported, in relation to item 4 on the Committee's Actions List, that IT Services would attempt to purchase the website domain name for the National Angling Museum on behalf of the Council. Members agreed that Officers should, if possible, purchase the four available options for this domain name:

www.nationalanglingmuseum.com;

www.nationalanglingmuseum.co.uk;

www.nationalanglingmuseum.org; and

www.nationalanglingmuseum.org.uk. Officers explained that the collective cost of purchasing these domain names would be £80.00.

RESOLVED that

1. **the four available options for a National Angling Museum website domain name be purchased by Officers; and**
2. **the Actions List be noted.**

213. CALL-IN AND PRE-SCRUTINY

There were no call-ins or suggestions for pre-scrutiny.

214. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

There were no draft scoping documents for pre-scrutiny.

215. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

The Committee received reports in relation to current reviews.

- a) Council Flat Communal Cleaning – Chair, Councillor P Mould

Councillor Mould explained that the Council Flat Communal Cleaning Task and Finish Group had hosted a consultation event to which leaseholder tenants had been invited. This consultation event had been poorly attended. However, those people who had attended the event had been broadly in favour of the Group's draft proposals.

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Councillor Mould informed Members that the Group would be meeting again in May. He explained that it was likely that the Group would be recommending that the terms of the cleaning contract be extended to ensure that all Council residential properties received a cleansing service in communal areas.

b) Dial-A-Ride – Chair, Councillor R King

Councillor King informed the Committee that, as agreed at the previous meeting of the Committee, he had met with relevant Officers to discuss the terms of reference for the review. As a consequence of this meeting the objectives had been altered to extend the scope of the exercise. He informed Members that every effort had been taken to ensure that this exercise would not duplicate the review of the Dial-A-Ride service that was being undertaken by Officers. The scrutiny review would focus on the Council's long-term vision for the service from 2010/11 whilst the Officer review would focus on more immediate considerations for 2009/10.

Members were informed that the other Members of the Group would be Councillors Chance, A Clayton and Norton. The review was scheduled to be completed within six months.

c) Housing Mutual Exchange – Chair, Councillor Smith

Councillor Smith reported that the Group had convened for a second meeting on Wednesday 29 April. They had concluded that the Council's Housing Mutual Exchange procedures were satisfactory and that there was therefore no need for the Task and Finish review to continue.

The Group had approved one recommendation for the consideration of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Chair explained that the Group had felt that the procedures that were followed by Officers during a mutual exchange needed to be more explicitly stated in the Council's Housing Mutual Exchange Policy and Procedure documentation. Members were informed that there were no financial implications attached to this recommendation as the recommendation referred to current practice by Officers.

d) National Angling Museum – Chair, Councillor P Mould

Councillor Mould informed Members that the other Members who had been appointed to the Group were Councillors Enderby, Hopkins, Hunt and Norton. He explained that

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Councillor Quinney had expressed an interest in the review and would be attending meetings of the Group.

RECOMMENDED that

subject to suitable rewording by Officers the following details should be incorporated into the Council's Housing Mutual Exchange Policy and Procedure:

“The Repair and Maintenance Officers should be employed to make the initial checks on each property to establish that no unauthorised alterations have been made to the properties and whether any rechargeable works need to be undertaken.

Any defects should be photographed and the details placed on file together with written reports concerning both properties.

Electrical tests for both properties should be arranged by Repairs and Maintenance.

The Tenancy Officer who is responsible for the mutual exchange together with the tenants involved should be advised in writing of any works required to be undertaken by them or the Council.

Normal Housing Mutual Exchange and Home Swap procedures should commence after the actions listed above have been completed satisfactorily. (i.e. the Tenancy Officer responsible for the exchange should visit both properties with both tenants).”

RESOLVED that

- 1) the revised terms of reference for the Dial-A-Ride review be approved; and**
- 2) the Task and Finish Group update reports be noted.**

216. EMERGENCY PLANNING

The Emergency Planning Officer from Worcestershire County Council delivered a presentation for the consideration of all Members.

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The Committee was informed that the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 provided the legislative framework for emergency planning in England and Wales. This legislation had been introduced following the fuel dispute in 2000, the flooding of 2000 and the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 comprised of two substantive parts. The first part related to roles and responsibilities for local providers, including local authorities. The second part was focused on emergency planning powers and the legislative measures that might be required from central government in such emergencies.

The Emergency Planning Officer explained that there were two categories of status for bodies that were involved in responding to emergencies. Category One responders were organisations at the core of an emergency response which included: local authorities; emergency services; the Health Protection Agency; the Environment Agency; and the local Primary Care Trust (PCT). Category Two responders were bodies that might be required to take some action in response to the emergency though they would not necessarily be involved in planning the response. Category Two responders included bodies such as utilities companies.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 placed a number of statutory duties on Category One responders. Organisations within this category were required to: assess local risks; develop a local risk register; and agree emergency plans. As part of this process local authorities were obliged to ensure business continuity. This included business continuity in the delivery of statutory Council services.

The Committee discussed local arrangements for responding to emergencies. They noted that the Local Resilience Forum which applied to Redditch involved Category One responders based in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire. Members expressed concerns that operating in such a wide geographic area could create barriers to efficient emergency planning. Officers explained that Local Resilience Forum areas were organised in accordance with the areas covered by local police forces. West Mercia Police, which operated in Redditch, were based in each of these three Counties and therefore the geographical spread for this Local Resilience Forum could not be altered.

The Committee also noted that the Worcestershire Joint Scrutiny into Flooding Task and Finish Group had concluded that problems with communications had negatively impacted on responses to the floods in July 2007. Worcestershire County Council had worked to

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address these problems by purchasing a new generator which could be used by the Emergency Response Centre in the event of a power failure during an emergency. The Council had also entered into discussions with West Mercia Police concerning the possible use of police radio coverage in the event of an emergency.

Members discussed the differences between Gold, Silver and Bronze organisations during an emergency. Officers explained that Gold responders were organisations which were involved at the strategic level in co-ordinating responses to an emergency. Silver responders were organisations which were involved in planning responses at the tactical level. Finally, Bronze responders were organisations that provided front line responses to emergencies.

Officers confirmed that they were in the process of updating the Council's Emergency Plan. The contents of this document would be reported for the consideration of the Executive Committee in due course as this was the Committee which had been designated with responsibility for co-ordinating the Council's emergency planning measures.

Members discussed emergency planning arrangements and noted that a number of emergency services and utilities companies organised annual emergency planning exercises. They suggested that it might be useful to implement a similar measure at Redditch Borough Council and that this should be considered in further detail by the Executive Committee.

The Emergency Planning Officer informed Members that following the floods in 2007 Worcestershire County Council had established a number of temporary 'hubs' in areas that had been particularly badly affected. These had been attended by representatives of the police service, local insurance companies and other relevant organisations who had provided relevant advice where required to members of the public.

Members concluded by noting that a number of key lessons had been learned following the floods in 2007. These had been identified by both the Worcestershire Joint Scrutiny into Flooding Task and Finish Group and in the Pitt Review into the floods. Members expressed their hopes that many of these lessons would inform an improvement in the performance of Category One responders to future emergencies.

The Chair thanked the Emergency Planning Officer for attending the meeting.

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RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

217. COUNCILLOR CALLS FOR ACTION (CCFA)

Officers explained that following recent legislation a new Councillor Calls for Action (CCfA) process had been introduced. This process had come into force on 1 April 2009. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 had introduced a new power which covered the referral of CCfAs to Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Members were informed that CCfAs would provide local Councillors with an opportunity to resolve issues at the local neighbourhood and ward levels. As part of this process Councillors would need to work closely with Council Officers, residents and representatives of partner organisations to address particular issues. Any Councillor, including Members who were not involved in the scrutiny process, could pursue a CCfA.

Officers clarified that CCfAs would not generally encompass individual complaints which had not been resolved through existing complaints processes. These complaints would continue to be referred to the Local Government Ombudsman for further consideration. There would also be other exclusions from the process, including calls for action that were considered 'vexatious'.

The CCfA was designed to act as a 'long stop' where other attempts to resolve a situation had failed. It was envisaged that a CCfA would only be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in cases where all other possible action had been exhausted. Members were informed that in some cases it would not be possible to achieve a satisfactory solution to the issue though the CCfA might be resolved.

Officers explained that the Council had the discretion to specify how CCfAs would work in the area and to set its own procedure. The Committee agreed that Members should consider and make recommendations about the appropriate procedural arrangements for CCfAs at Redditch Borough Council. To facilitate this process Members requested that further information about the CCfA processes adopted at other local authorities be made available for the further consideration of the Committee.

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Members were informed that both Birmingham City Council and Worcestershire County Council had introduced CCfA forms as part of their scrutiny processes. These forms would be completed by a Councillor and submitted for the consideration of their Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The contents of the forms were designed to inform scrutiny Members about whether all alternative forms of action had been exhausted before the matter was referred for the consideration of the Committee. Officers suggested that it might be useful to introduce a similar form for Redditch Borough Council to ensure that an interim measure could be put in place to respond to CCfAs until a final process had been approved by Members.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers provide details about Councillor Calls for Action processes adopted at other local authorities at a following meeting of the Committee;**
- 2) Officers produce a form for Councillor Calls for Action in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee; and**
- 3) subject to the comments above the report be noted.**

218. REDDITCH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Portfolio Holder for the Local Environment, Planning and Transport, Councillor MacMillan, introduced the item. He explained that the Council's Economic Development Strategy was in a draft format. During the course of developing the strategy it had become clear that the Council would need to work closely with partner organisations to ensure that economic development of the Borough was achieved effectively.

Councillor MacMillan cautioned that the Council also had to be realistic about what could be achieved in terms of encouraging economic development within the Borough. The Council had limited access to resources and was operating in a difficult economic climate. Under these circumstances the Economic Development Strategy had been designed to focus on the Council's potential to facilitate long-term developments.

Officers explained that the draft Economic Development Strategy had been divided into four separate sections. Each section had been subdivided into priorities. The Strategy provided a justification

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for each of these priorities. The Strategy also contained an action plan outlining how the Council intended to achieve those priorities.

Members were informed that the purpose of the Economic Development Strategy was to encourage diversification in the local economy. The Economic Advisory Panel had considered various options including potential developments in the green collar industry, which would involve the delivery of environmentally friendly services and products. The Panel was also reviewing options for raising the wages available to people working in Redditch.

Councillor MacMillan explained that there had been two meetings between representatives of Redditch Borough Council and the Regional Development Agency Advantage West Midlands. Unfortunately, many of the actions proposed by Redditch for implementation within the Borough were already being addressed at other locations situated within the Midlands. However, these meetings had raised the profile of Redditch and Officers had obtained relevant contact details for personnel working at the Regional Development Agency who might be able to help the Council to develop some of the long-term plans detailed within the Strategy.

Members also discussed the business units that were located in the Greenlands Business Centre; the Hemming Road Business Centre and in the Rubicon Centre. They noted that the Council had originally intended to make these units available to businesses that had just been set up, though they questioned whether this intention continued to shape current practice. Officers explained that the Economic Advisory Panel was scheduled to undertake a review of the business centres. As part of this review the Panel would assess whether the business units were being utilised to their full potential. Members requested further details about the return on the number of businesses utilising these units and a copy of the report on the subject of the business units which had been considered at a recent meeting of the Economic Advisory Panel.

Members discussed the proportion of dwellings in each Council Tax band that were situated in Redditch, as detailed on page 81 of the draft Economic Development Strategy. They noted that there were fewer Band F, G and H properties in Redditch than in other parts of Worcestershire. This had implications for the level of revenue that the Council could expect to receive from Council Tax. Under these circumstances, Members suggested that there might be a need to ensure that a proportion of the new homes that would need to be built in the Borough over forthcoming years were Band F, G and H

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properties. However, Members noted that a balance needed to be achieved to ensure that more affordable homes and good quality accommodation in the rental market could be made available to people.

The Committee also referred specifically to the section of the strategy which focused on people (pages 27-32 of the draft report). Members commented favourably on the inclusion of references to young people in the document and noted that many of the points that had been highlighted within the report had also been identified by Councillors when undertaking the Jobs, Employment and Economy scrutiny review in 2005. Officers explained that they had consulted with representatives of the Redditch Student Council to identify young people's views about their career prospects within Redditch. Their responses had helped to inform the draft strategy.

The work experience opportunities that were available to young people living in Redditch were discussed by Members. They noted that placements needed to be made available which were suitable to the needs of each young person. Members suggested that this situation could be improved if the Council worked with other local authorities to develop a pool of work experience opportunities for young people.

The Committee commented that they had a number of concerns about the town which needed to be addressed. They expressed the view that the town needed to attract more highly skilled workers into Redditch. Members suggested that this could be achieved through further development of locations such as Ravensbank Business Park.

There were also a number of concerns about the number of redundancies that had been announced in recent months and the impact that this would have on local people and the local economy. Officers suggested that these more immediate concerns would be difficult for the Council to address. However, there were local organisations which could help people who had been made redundant, including Jobcentre Plus. There were also agencies that could work with people who were already employed to help them to further develop their skills.

Members praised the Planning Assistant and other Officers who had been working on economic development issues at the Council and thanked them for their excellent work.

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RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers provide further information about the return on the number of businesses utilising the business units at the Greenlands Business Centre; Hemming Road Business Centre and the Rubicon Centre;**
- 2) Officers circulate copies of the report on the subject of the business centres that was considered at a recent meeting of the Economic Advisory Panel;**
- 3) Officers circulate information about the actions which the Council is proposing to take to tackle both perceived and real problems with career opportunities for young people in Redditch;**
- 4) Officers consider the Committee's suggestion that the Council work with other local authorities to develop a pool of work experience opportunities for young people; and**
- 5) subject to the comments above the report be noted.**

219. REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

220. WORK PROGRAMME

Officers informed Members that a request had been made to present information about the Worcestershire Land Drainage Partnership before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 June. The Committee were being invited to pre-scrutinise the contents of a draft report into this subject before consideration of the item by the Executive Committee.

Members noted that numerous items were scheduled for consideration at the meeting of the Committee on 17 June. They agreed that the brainstorming session for proposing questions that could be addressed to the Worcestershire Primary Care Trust (PCT) regarding public transport access to the Alexandra Hospital should be rescheduled for consideration at a meeting of the Committee on 27 May.

The Committee also discussed the proposed discussion of the budget strategy and budget deficit which were due to be considered

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at the 17 June meeting. Copies of the documentation that had been provided when the budget strategy had been considered at a meeting of full Council on 6 April could be made available for this item. Members requested that these details be circulated for the consideration of Members of the Committee prior to the meeting on 17 June. Members would request further details about the budget strategy and deficit based on analysis of the contents of this documentation.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers circulate copies of reports on the subject of the budget strategy and budget deficit that were considered at a meeting of full Council on 6 April;**
- 2) the Work Programme be noted.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.50 pm



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No direct Ward relevance

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ADVISORY PANELS, WORKING GROUPS, ETC - UPDATE REPORT

(Report of Chief Executive)

1. Purpose of Report

To provide, for monitoring / management purposes, an update on the work of the Executive Committee's Advisory Panels, and similar bodies which report via the Executive Committee. At a meeting of the Committee in early 2009 it was agreed that Portfolio Holders review the present arrangements for their respective Advisory Panels and Working Parties and come to a conclusion as to whether they were still serving a purpose. The matter was to be discussed more generally at the next meeting of the Constitutional Review Working Party.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that
subject to Members' comments, the report be noted.

3. Updates

A. ADVISORY PANELS

	<u>Meeting :</u>	<u>Lead Members / Officers :</u> (Executive Members shown <u>underlined</u>)	<u>Position :</u> (Oral updates to be provided at the meeting by Lead Members or Officers, if no written update is available.)
1.	Climate Change Advisory Panel (formerly Environment Advisory Panel)	Chair <u>Cllr MacMillan</u> / Guy Revans.	Next meeting – 23 June 2009.
2.	Community Safety Advisory Panel	Chair <u>Cllr Brunner</u> / Vice-Chair Cllr Banks Angie Heighway	No meetings planned at present.

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3.	Economic Advisory Panel	Chair <u>Cllr MacMillan</u> John Staniland / Georgina Harris	Last meeting - 7 April 2009.
4.	Housing Advisory Panel	Chair <u>Cllr B Clayton</u> / Vice-Chair Cllr Pearce Jackie Smith	Next meeting – 12 May 2009.
5.	Leisure Contracts Advisory Panel	Chair <u>Cllr Anderson</u> / Vice-Chair Cllr MacMillan Ken Watkins / Kevin Cook	Last meeting – 20 January 2009. No requirement for meeting at present.
6.	Customer Services Advisory Panel	Chair <u>Cllr Braley</u> Jackie Smith / Jane Smith	Last meeting – 17 March 2009
7.	Planning Advisory Panel	Chair <u>Cllr MacMillan</u> / Vice-Chair Cllr Chalk John Staniland / Ruth Bamford	Next meetings 5 May, 11 May and 28 May 2009.

B. OTHER MEETINGS

8.	Constitutional Review Working Party	Chair Cllr MacMillan / Vice Chair <u>Cllr Braley</u> Steve Skinner	Next meeting – to be arranged.
9.	Grants Panel	Chair Cllr Mould / Vice Chair <u>Cllr Braley</u> Angie Heighway	Last meeting – 27 January 2009. New date to be identified.

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10.	Independent Remuneration Panel	Independent Members / Chair Mr Andrew Powell	Next meeting – 11 June 2009. Currently working up proposals for 2010 Allowances Scheme.
11.	Member Development Steering Group	Chair <u>Cllr MacMillan</u> / Vice-Chair Cllr Brunner Steve Skinner / Trish Buckley	Next meeting – to be arranged.
12.	Procurement Steering Group	Chair <u>Cllr MacMillan</u> / Vice-Chair Cllr Hall Sue Hanley	Next meeting – to be arranged.

4. Author of Report

The author of this report is Ivor Westmore (Member and Committee Support Services Manager), who can be contacted on extension 3269
(e-mail: ivor.westmore@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

5. Appendices

None.



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No direct Ward relevance

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ACTION MONITORING

(Report of the Chief Executive)

Portfolio Holder(s) / Responsible Officer	Action requested	Status
13 January 2009		
	Third Sector Task and Finish Group	
Cllr Gandy A Heighway	1) Discussions to be held with other local authorities in the north of the County in respect of the provision of a joint-funded post to support the grants process.	Discussions to be arranged.
Cllr Gandy / Executive Committee	2) The Executive to consider the further work to be undertaken (detailed in recommendation 5) and come back with suggestions for further work in due course.	Awaiting further consideration by relevant Members.
22 April 2009		
Cllr Braley/ T Kristunas / E Storer	Staff Vacancy and Sickness Absence Reporting Members noted the recent lack of reporting of staff vacancies and sickness absence figures.	Staff Vacancy report taken to meeting on 20 May: Sickness Absence report scheduled for 1 July meeting.
Cllr MacMillan/ Ruth Bamford	Action Monitoring – Economic Advisory Panel Economic Development Strategy - Visits to Redditch businesses being arranged.	

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20 May 2009		
Cllr Braley / T Kristunas	Redditch Borough Council Establishment Officers to provide information on employment of Agency staff to Councillor Hartnett	
<u>Note:</u>	<i>No further debate should be held on the above matters, or substantive decisions taken, without further report OR unless urgency requirements are met.</i>	Report period: 13/01/09 to 20/05/09