

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 1st September,
2025

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor Craig Warhurst (Vice-Chair) and Councillors William Boyd, Claire Davies, James Fardoe, Andrew Fry, Sachin Mathur, Rita Rogers and Paul Wren

Also Present:

Councillor Sharon Harvey – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Environmental Services
Councillor Jane Spilsbury – Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Performance, Engagement and Governance
Councillor Juma Begum – Portfolio Holder for Community Spaces and Voluntary Sector
Councillor Bill Hartnett – Portfolio Holder for Housing

Officers:

Guy Revans, Simon Parry, Judith Willis, Toni Ainscough, Mark Cox, Tara Day and Andrew Rainbow

Democratic Services Officers:

M Sliwinski

28. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no apologies for absence.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of party whip.

30. MINUTES

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny meeting of 7th July 2025 were submitted for Members' consideration.

Chair

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7th July 2025 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

31. PUBLIC SPEAKING

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

32. REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING INSPECTION REPORT AND HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services presented a report on the subject of the Inspection Report by the Social Housing Regulator and the Housing Improvement Plan. Members were informed that the Council received a C3 Regulatory Judgment in relation to its social housing, indicating serious failings in delivering housing services, particularly in repairs and maintenance, fire safety, tenant engagement, and data management. It was noted that the regulatory judgment was graded from C1 to C4 with C1 being the highest grade and C4 representing most severe level of non-compliance. 56 per cent of local authorities (with social housing stock) inspected had received C3 gradings.

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) identified key concerns around approximately 3,000 overdue repairs, 3,000 outstanding fire safety actions, limited stock condition surveys, and insufficient tenant involvement mechanisms. The RSH acknowledged the Council's commitment to improvement, and highlighted positive practices in electrical safety, anti-social behaviour management, and the establishment of a Damp and Mould team.

The Council had developed a Housing Improvement Plan with the interim plan approved by the Executive Committee in June 2025. The Plan had been updated following the announcement of the inspection result on 30 July 2025. The Plan contained a set of targeted actions which included the appointment of a Senior Tenant Engagement and Participation Officer, establishment of tenant forums and training programmes, implementation of new systems for repairs and safety compliance, development of a five-year rolling programme for stock condition surveys, and an enhanced governance through a multi-tiered oversight structure.

The Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services highlighted areas of progress that had already been made

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within the housing service. It was noted that many of these improvement actions had been in progress for some time prior to the inspection and the inspection result. The areas of progress included:

1. Publication of annual report to council tenants at the end of July 2025. The annual reports would now be produced every year.
2. Work on initiatives for tenant engagement.
3. A 50 per cent reduction in overdue repairs with this outcome prompted by a root and branch analysis undertaken in June and July 2025.
4. A 94 per cent reduction in outstanding water safety inspections.
5. Mobilisation of a caretaker service for communal areas within communal blocks etc.
6. Recruitment of a Damp and Mould team to deal specifically with tenants experiencing issues in this area.
7. Improvement in complaint handling with Q1 2025-26 recording progress over the same quarter in 2024-25, as the Council responded to a larger proportion of complaints within agreed timescales. (For Stage 1 complaints 93 per cent responded to within timescales, up from 62 per cent at Q1 2024-25, for stage 2 100 per cent within timescales up from 80 per cent at Q1 2024-25).
8. Commencement of a fire door / hazard inspection programme within communal blocks.

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

- Concern among Members that some changes were only prompted or accelerated by the inspection, for example in relation to Council's engagement and communication with tenants. A Member reported that for many Members large amount of casework continued to be from tenants in relation to housing matters. It was further highlighted that this high casework levels tended to occur where officers did not communicate effectively with tenants. this needed to continue to be addressed moving forward. Officers reported that the report proposed the employment of a Senior Tenant Engagement and Participation Officer in addition to development of participation opportunities for Council Housing Tenants to address these issues.

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- The improvements that had taken place since the Service Review and restructuring of the Housing Property Services including the Capital Team in 2019. It was highlighted that in 2019 the Service was at a point of full failure within no performance measures, lack of data on voids, a lack of gas safety records, lack of oversight in respect of contractors and many other issues. Since the restructure and change of leadership and management, there had been an overhaul in operations with improvements made as set out within the officer presentation.
- The Council's commitment to keep progressing was highlighted with the increased capital investment in its housing stock as shown through the 5-year Housing Capital Programme and the long-term HRA 30-year Capital Investment Programme, agreed in February 2023.
- The decrease in the number of stock condition surveys carried out over the last two years. It was noted that as improvements in other areas of the service were prioritised over the last few years, there had been a drop to the condition surveys. Members were assured that this was being actively addressed. It was noted that stock condition surveys were carried out to 20 per cent of the housing stock in the last five years but this figure would increase to 75 per cent if data for the last six years was taken into account in the inspection report.
- Changes to modern data management systems. Officers explained that the Council had changed to Civica CX housing management system as part of the restructure, which had led to significant improvements in data management with performance data now also reported through PowerBI. Further improvements were being introduced and in respect of contractors inputting data and signing off completed jobs electronically, it was reported that Total Mobile application was in the testing stage. Once fully released this would enable contractors to sign off completed repairs electronically. Currently, however, repairs reports were undertaken on paper which increased likelihood of error in reporting fixed repairs.
- The frequency with which Officers had previously reported on the Council's performance in respect of the Housing Regulator's tenant satisfaction measures. Members were informed that this had been identified as a gap in reporting

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procedures and there would be a quarterly report to Members on Housing Performance and quarterly updates on the Housing Improvement Plan going forward.

- The need for cross-party housing improvement panel / working group to be set up to enable Members to scrutinise progress in carrying out the Housing Improvement Plan initiatives. The Officers responded that it was envisaged that task and finish groups would be set up by Overview and Scrutiny to look at specific housing issues as appropriate.
- The need for a tenant advisory panel which would be a mechanism through which feedback could be provided directly to Portfolio Holder for Housing and senior officers. It was noted that tenant engagement was considered within the proposed governance structure including through tenant representation at the Housing Strategic Oversight Board (appendix 5 to the report).
- Learning from peers post-inspection and in the process of delivering the Housing Improvement Plan. The Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services reported that the Council had had an active engagement with the Regulator with monthly meetings set to continue to promote oversight. In addition, the Council had held meetings with chief officers at Berneslai Homes, a social housing provider company controlled by Barnsley Council, which was the first local authority to have received the highest C1 grading for Housing Regulator's Consumer Standards. Redditch Borough Council Officers were due to travel to Barnsley to observe their arrangements in October 2025.
- The inclusion of the Housing Improvement Plan on the Council's Corporate Risk Register. It was stated that whilst the Plan was not currently included in the risk register, in response to Members' feedback Officers would check as an action how the Plan could be flagged up as a corporate risk.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing addressed the Committee and commented that following the restructure of the service both administrations had made improvements to the service but there remained a lot of work to resolve the problems highlighted within the inspection report. The Portfolio Holder explained that the main weakness in relation to Council's performance lied in the data gaps in areas such as housing stock condition and tenant profile data. It

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was highlighted that the Council had improved its complaints handling among other things. The Council's Social Housing Annual Report provided to tenants also gave an honest and transparent reflection of Council's performance at this point and actions that would be implemented.

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Performance, Engagement and Governance addressed the Committee and noted that one of the main issues highlighted by the Regulator was in the area governance and tenant engagement and to address this there were Governance Proposals within the Housing Improvement Plan to improve tenant representation and the communication between senior leadership and operational level. The Portfolio Holder highlighted that the changes required involved a lot of culture change across the organisation, including at operational level, and it was imperative that qualitative data was considered as well as quantitative to drive sustainable improvement.

The recommendations as set out in the report were endorsed by the Committee.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Regulatory Judgement published by the Regulator for Social Housing on 30th July 2025 is noted, following an inspection of Redditch Borough Council's Housing Service.**
- 2) The Housing Improvement Plan, which includes actions to address areas for improvement, confirmed as part of the inspection process, is approved.**
- 3) Delegation be given to the Assistant Director Environment & Housing Property and Assistant Director Community & Housing, following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder, to revise the Housing Improvement Plan following consultation with the Regulator for Social Housing as part of their Provider Improvement Process or in response to legislative changes.**
- 4) The proposed structure for governance of the Housing Improvement Plan be approved.**
- 5) A supplementary estimate of £60,000 is added to the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2025/26 funded**

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from the Housing Revenue Account Balance Reserves to:

- a. appoint a Senior Tenant Engagement & Participation Officer (£25,000 – part year effect) and:
 - b. establish, train and manage the development of participation opportunities for Council Housing tenants and leaseholders to influence changes in the delivery of Housing services (£35,000).
- 6) £75,000 ongoing expenditure budget is added to the Housing Revenue Account base budget in 2026/27, funded from the Housing Revenue Account to:
- a. continue to employ a Senior Tenant Engagement & Participation Officer (£50,000 – full year effect) and:
 - b. continue to train and manage the development of participation opportunities for Council Housing tenants and leaseholders to influence changes in the delivery of Housing services going forward (£25,000).

33. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS SCHEME 2026/27 TO 2029/30 - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Community Services Manager presented a report on the subject of the Voluntary Sector Grants Scheme 2026/27 to 2029/30. Members were informed that for the previous three-year period, the Council had provided £150,000 in support to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). This included a grant of £50,000 to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and £100,000 in major as well as small grants to a range of VCS organisations and local groups. During this time, decisions on funding had been made by Officers.

In the report, Officers were proposing to change the Council's approach to funding VCS organisations, although it was important to note that funding provision would remain available. Under the report's proposals, it was proposed that the Council should allocate £175,000 per year to support VCS groups. This would include £75,000 for a financial advice service and £100,000 for distribution of higher and lower value grants to VCS groups. The sum for higher and lower level grants would be further split with a pot of £90,000

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allocated to provision of higher value grants (£2,000 to £10,000 in value) and £10,000 pot for smaller value grants (£500 to £2,000 in value).

It was further proposed that a Grants Panel, comprising a membership of elected Members, should be reintroduced to consider applications for higher value grants. Smaller value grants would continue to be determined by Officers.

Members were asked to note that there was funding, derived from scrap metal recovered through the cremation scheme operated by Bereavement Services, which was invested in VCS activities. This was entirely separate to the rest of the VCS funding programme and the level of this funding could not be predicted in advance as it varied year to year. Officers were proposing that authority should be delegated to the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Spaces and the Voluntary Sector, to distribute this funding.

Following the presentation, some Members expressed reservations about reintroducing an elected member Grants Panel and questioned the rationale of how this would improve the scheme. It was commented that for a number of years Officers had had delegated authority to consider VCS grant applications and this was felt by some Members to be a more transparent approach, ensuring efficiency of decision-making and removing possibility of political influence over the process. In response, it was explained that the Member-led Grants Panel would be cross-party and would ensure democratic accountability and public scrutiny of the decisions over allocations.

Consideration was also given to the advantage of a Member-led Grants Panel in that smaller charities, for example those that could not afford to employ professional bid writers, had a more equal chance in this format as Members could ask questions and clarify points on the application submitted with each applicant before the decision to award a grant is made. With an officer assessed grants format, this was more difficult. It was clarified that under the new grants policy there would still be a uniform scoring matrix as under officer delegations and that meetings of the Grants Panel would be overseen by the Grants Manager.

Given the point raised about the advantage of a Member-led grants panel, a Member questioned why there would only be a Panel for higher level grants, where it was more likely that applications would

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mostly be received from larger voluntary sector organisations that could afford to employ bid writers. A Member commented it would be more sensible instead to have an elected Member Grants Panel for lower grants where most organisations applying would be small and where explanations provided in Panel meetings could be of most relevance. It was replied that this was not deemed practical as this would require Panel to convene at numerous meetings due to the volume of applications.

It was reiterated that it was planned the elected member Grants Panel would comprise five Members and it would be a cross-party forum. It was anticipated that Members on the Panel would be required to attend two to three meetings to consider all applications received.

It was clarified that the VCS Grants Policy required and would require each applicant to disclose other sources of grant funding that they received, including from public bodies. The Council encouraged funding applications from existing and/or ongoing or started projects, rather than only proposed/planned projects. Officers highlighted that the VCS Grants Scheme had seen increased numbers of organisations applying and it was noted that the scheme had historically been over-subscribed. A Member questioned why the scheme needed changing given that demand was increasing and was already successful in attracting both small and large voluntary sector organisations.

The recommendations as stated in the report were endorsed by the Committee.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **The funding for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Grants Scheme be agreed for a further three-year period with a total grant pot of £175k per annum;**
- 2) **Subject to approval of recommendation 1 above, the VCS Grants Scheme be delivered in accordance with Option 2 which entails:**
 - a) **Including up to £75k in the total grant funding to be available for a Financial Advice Grant**
 - b) **A Grants Panel, comprising elected Members, to be established to consider and make recommendations to the Executive Committee in relation to higher grants (valued at £2k up to £10k)**

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- c) Delegated authority being granted to the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services, following consultation with the Officer Grants panel, to consider and agree decisions on lower grants (valued at £500 up to £2k);
 - 3) Subject to agreement of proposal 2 above, five Members be appointed to serve on the Grants Panel, with appointments to be made in accordance with nominations received from the political group leaders;
 - 4) the Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Policy be approved;
 - 5) Subject to approval of proposal 2b above, agreement of the proposed terms of reference for the Grants Panel be approved;
 - 6) Distributions are passported to bereavement charities following an application process and are funded by receipts from the Recycling of Metal Recovered from Cremation Scheme; these are managed separately from the Voluntary and Community Grants Scheme; and
 - 7) Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Spaces and the Voluntary Sector, to passport the distribution of receipts from the Recycling of Metal Recovered from Cremation Scheme.
34. **ADOPTION OF FIXED PENALTY CHARGE FOR BREACH OF COMMUNITY PROTECTION NOTICE - PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Technical Services Manager (WRS) and the Principal Officer (Planning and Environmental Crime Enforcement – WRS) presented a report on the subject of the adoption of Fixed Penalty Charge Notices (FPNs) for breaches of Community Protection Notices (CPNs).

Members were informed that WRS had assumed responsibility for planning and environmental enforcement in 2024. There were certain enforcement powers that could be deployed by the Council where non-compliance was identified.

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There was a process that needed to be followed in respect of enforcement. Where anti-social behaviour (ASB) was identified, Officers would seek to impose a Community Protection Warning (CPW), which gave notice that an individual or organisation needed to address their behaviour. There was a high bar that needed to be met in order to issue a CPW. Should evidence emerge that a CPW was being breached, then a CPN could be issued. Where a CPN was breached, an FPN could be issued.

It was stated that FPNs would provide an additional tool that could be used to address poor behaviour where breaches of CPNs occurred. In some cases, it would be more appropriate to issue an FPN than to take court action. Equally, there would be no obligation to issue FPN if this was not identified as a correct course of action.

Some Members expressed frustration that they had not seen enough enforcement work undertaken in Redditch and were unsure how anti-social behaviour breaches would be enforced given the lack of capacity within WRS at the moment. It was responded that currently there were three officers dealing with enviro-crime across Redditch and Bromsgrove. It was highlighted that the WRS had issued two CPNs in Bromsgrove District and this measure was thought to be an important additional tool to officers.

Some Members questioned in what way the adoption of a fixed penalty for breaches of a CPN would lead to offenders changing their behaviour. It was explained that a CPN was served where there were reasonable grounds to believe the offender's conduct was having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality. Section 52 of Part 4 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provided that might issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) as an alternative to prosecution for breach of a CPN. In cases of lower end offences this enabled a tool to be in place that allowed a reprimand to be given to offenders without going to prosecution. In addition, it could prompt a person served with a CPN to engage with enforcement officers before the matter was escalated to the courts.

It was commented that evidence needed to be seen of how this measure could lead to behavioural changes in communities going forward and the extent to which enforcement action was being taken. In this regard it was proposed that Crime and Disorder should consider a report on the Community Protection Notice (CPN), and the effectiveness of the fixed penalty notice and the wider WRS anti-social behaviour (ASB) enforcement regime on the

levels of ASB within Redditch. This proposal was seconded and on being put to the vote resolved.

RECOMMENDED that

the Council adopt a Fixed Penalty Notice Charge of £100 for failure to comply with a Community Protection Notice.

RESOLVED that

the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel receive a report on the Community Protection Notice (CPN), which assesses the effectiveness of introducing the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) enforcement regime, including the fixed penalty notice referenced in the above resolution, on reducing Anti-Social Behaviour.

35. QUARTER 1 HOUSING CONSUMER STANDARDS REPORT - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services presented the Housing Consumer Standards Report for the first quarter of the 2025/26 financial year. The report detailed the Council's performance in relation to 10 of the Regulator of Social Housing tenant satisfaction measures. It was reported that Council had achieved targets regarding Building Safety measures covering compliance, however, there remained urgent remedial works, for example in relation to outstanding high-risk fire remedial actions.

The available data indicated that the Council's performance across the 10 landlord measures in Housing was improving, when compared to the same quarter in the 2024/25 financial year. In addition, information available from the Power BI system that the Council was now using was enabling Officers to more accurately identify and assess issues when they occurred. It was highlighted in relation to direct tenant data that in Q1 2025/26, the Service received 23 complaints and 54 complements.

Following the presentation of the report, a Member queried the reason for a drop in performance in lift safety checks, from 100 per cent in Q1 2024/25 to 87 per cent in Q1 2025/26. The Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services explained that in Quarter 1 of 2025/26, the Council's insurer experienced difficulties accessing one of the lifts for inspection. This had now been remedied and the inspection undertaken, however, as it was

not completed in the required timescales which had resulted in the reported figure.

It was queried whether joint gas and electric inspections were still being undertaken. It was responded that this had been discontinued for practical reasons as electrical tests were done every five years and gas tests every twelve months and combining these in a single visit created scheduling challenges. It was noted that analysis was being done why some properties did not reach the target in relation to the various safety checks but difficulties in gaining access to the properties had been highlighted as an issue in some cases.

RESOLVED that

the Council's 2025/26 performance against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (Landlord) is noted.

36. HOUSING OMBUDSMAN FINDINGS REPORT 1 REF 202417927 - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services presented the Housing Ombudsman's Findings Report in respect of case 202417927. This related to a complaint that had been submitted to the Housing Ombudsman by a local resident.

The Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services apologised on behalf of the Housing department to the residents affected and the Committee for the maladministration found in the two Ombudsman cases presented before the Committee this evening.

The purpose of the report was to learn lessons from the Housing Ombudsman's findings when investigating this complaint. This had concluded that there had been maladministration at the Council in respect of the following areas:

- The resident's reports of damp and mould in the property.
- The installation and maintenance of aids and adaptations.
- The resident's reports of structural problems with the balcony wall.
- The resident's reports of a leak to the communal entrance.

The Housing Ombudsman had identified issues with poor record keeping at the Council as well as in respect of how staff worked with people who had vulnerabilities. Staff required training in order to provide appropriate support to residents with different

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vulnerabilities. Issues had also been identified with complaint handling at the Council, with an emphasis having been placed on the need for staff to have empathy when working with residents. Officers were working through the Housing Ombudsman's findings with a view to identifying the most appropriate action to be taken to prevent similar issues from occurring in the future.

Following the presentation, a Member commented that when any concerns with tenant's property or vulnerabilities were identified, it should be the responsibility and due diligence of every employee who comes into contact with that tenant to escalate any concerns urgently with the Housing department. There needed to be a similar principle to safeguarding, that it is everyone's responsibility, to be adopted by all employees/contractors coming in contact with a tenant. A Member commented that the detail described within the Housing Ombudsman Findings Report appeared to indicate that there were cultural issues amongst staff in the Housing department that needed to be addressed.

Some Members suggested it might be helpful for the Council to have a case worker, or multiple case workers, who could be someone 'entrenched' within the system and be a central point of contact in relation to a tenant. This would enable problems, such as special support needs, repairs or damp and mould, to be raised with management at an early stage.

It was suggested that this could involve recruiting family liaison case workers. In addition, the potential to work in partnership with other organisations to recruit these case workers as multi-agency staff was also highlighted for consideration. It was commented that the Council's Neighbourhood and Tenancy Officers were also well placed to spot concerns with a tenant's property at an early stage, however, the team's capacity remained limited.

Members commented that residents should be the Council's focus, as the authority's customers but unfortunately in this case, the customer had been failed. To address cultural issues, Members commented that there needed to be greater engagement with and empowerment of Council tenants.

It was highlighted that in cases where access to the property was difficult or where tenants were refusing access, there was a need to involve tenancy officers at an early stage and for more junior officers to be proactive in raising and addressing concerns.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The findings, orders and recommendation from the Housing Ombudsman be noted.
- 2) Compliance with those matters by the Council and the wider learning points be noted.

37. HOUSING OMBUDSMAN FINDINGS REPORT 2 REF 202331009 - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services presented the Housing Ombudsman's Findings Report in respect of case 202331009. As with the previous item, Members were informed that this report related to a complaint that had been received from a local resident.

In the report, the Housing Ombudsman had highlighted two key areas in which maladministration by the Council had been identified in relation to this case:

- Maladministration in the Council's response to reports from the resident of damp and mould.
- Maladministration in the Council's complaint handling.

In considering the report, Members were asked to note that the Council had already agreed to introduce a specialist Damp and Mould team. There had been successful recruitment to all of the posts in this team and new staff would commence employment with the authority over the coming weeks and months.

Officers explained that complaint handling in quarter 4 2024/25 was below par and the improvements seen in quarter 1 2025/26 needed to be embedded. It was noted that a programme of training was being rolled out in the Housing department to prioritise training of staff, including courses for relevant staff to be trained in relation to dealing with queries from vulnerable customers. The Regulator for Social Housing would be introducing a training qualification standard which would require all staff to gain the right qualifications for specific requirements.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The findings, orders and recommendation from the Housing Ombudsman be noted.

2) Compliance with those matters by the Council and the wider learning points be noted.

38. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME - SELECTING ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY

It was requested that the following items from the Executive Work Programme be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme as pre-scrutiny items:

- Bereavement Services – Burial Strategy (due for 24 November 2025 Overview and Scrutiny meeting)
- Biodiversity First Consideration Report (due for 12 January 2026 Overview and Scrutiny meeting)
- Climate Change Strategy 2026 to 2031 (due for 12 January 2026 Overview and Scrutiny meeting)

It was requested that all the finance-related reports referenced within the Executive Work Programme be added for the consideration of Budget Scrutiny Working Group.

RESOLVED that

the items detailed above be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

39. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

It was confirmed that the Overview and Scrutiny work programme would be updated with items selected for pre-scrutiny under the previous agenda item – the Executive Committee's Work Programme.

RESOLVED that

the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be updated as per the items selected under the previous agenda item.

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

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

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

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Councillor Warhurst reported that the last meeting took place on Thursday 28 August and the Working Group had not made any recommendations concerning any of the finance reports considered (that are due to be considered by Executive Committee on 2 September).

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

It was confirmed that the only meeting of this group to have been arranged to date for this municipal year remained scheduled to take place on 2 October 2025.

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

It was noted that further meetings of this Task Group are being arranged for Autumn 2025.

RESOLVED that

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

41. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS

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

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

Councillor Boyd had submitted his apologies from the latest meeting which took place in the morning (1st September).

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

Councillor Fardoe reported that at the last meeting an update relating to Midlands Rail Hub (region's rail improvement scheme) was provided including that two trains per hour would continue with up to three services per hour at peak times on the cross-city line (Redditch-Lichfield line through Birmingham).

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c) Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) – Council Representative, Councillor Fry

Councillor Fry reported that the first meeting of this body in this municipal year took place on 30th July 2025 at Pershore (hosted by Wychavon District Council). The main item on the agenda was routine immunisation in relation to which it was noted that there was concern around increase in measles cases in the UK, with concern around higher risk of importation of measles from abroad during the summer holidays. In relation to vaccinations uptake, there was a slow but gradual decline in the pre-school vaccination uptake over the last ten years, although this trend was less pronounced in Worcestershire than England as a whole.

Councillor Fry noted in relation to the governance of the HOSC Committee that the Committee comprised representatives from the Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and the six district councils in Worcestershire. The WCC had yet to appoint its two representatives to the Committee and there remained two elected member vacancies on the HOSC Committee as a result. Councillor Fry expressed hope that these positions could be appointed to by WCC in the near future to ensure full membership.

RESOLVED that

the External Scrutiny Bodies updates be noted.

42. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that

under S.100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended:

Minute Item 43 – Disposal of Housing Revenue Account Assets – Four garages at Ashorne Close, Matchborough, Redditch – Pre-Scrutiny

Minute Item 44 – Disposal of Housing Revenue Account Assets – 53 Parsons Road, Southcrest, Redditch. 53 Crabbs Cross Lane, Crabbs Cross, Redditch – Pre-Scrutiny.

43. DISPOSAL OF HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT ASSETS - FOUR GARAGES AT ASHORNE CLOSE, MATCHBOROUGH, REDDITCH - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Housing Property Services Manager presented the report and advised the Committee of a typographical error in the title of the report in that this report concerned the proposal to dispose of eight garages at Ashorne Close and not four as stated in the title of the report.

The eight garages were built in the 1970s and were concrete beam garage. These garages had been deemed uneconomic to repair and it was proposed that they be demolished on the grounds of structural safety. It was clarified that in respect of Ashorne Close, it was proposed that ten car parking spaces be created that would be free of charge and accessible on a first-come, first-served basis.

A Member asked whether secure bike parking could be installed as part of this proposal and it was responded that this would be considered for similar schemes in the future. In response to a further question, it was stated that this land was not appropriate for housing as the area was too small.

A question was also asked regarding the potential to install Zest electric vehicle charging points at the site. Officers responded that electric charging points take up more space than ordinary parking so might not be suitable for this particular site, however, as part of the Council's contract with Zest there was an opportunity to review EV charging locations and the potential sites would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

The recommendations as stated in the report were endorsed by the Committee.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The 8 garages located at Ashorne Close, Matchborough (as shown on the plan at Appendix 1) be declared surplus to requirements and demolished on the grounds of structural safety.**
- 2) Subject to planning permission the garages be replaced with 10 parking spaces as shown on the plan at Appendix 2.**

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

44. DISPOSAL OF HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT ASSETS - 53 PARSONS ROAD, SOUTHCREST, REDDITCH. 53 CRABBS CROSS LANE, CRABBS CROSS, REDDITCH - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Housing Property Services Manager presented a report concerning the disposal of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) assets at 53 Parsons Road, Southcrest, Redditch and 53 Crabbs Cross Lane, Crabbs Cross, Redditch.

Overview and Scrutiny was informed that both properties were in a dilapidated condition. The potential for the Council to upgrade these properties had been reviewed but the conclusion had been reached that the cost of bringing these properties to a habitable state would not be financially viable for the Council. Therefore, it was considered preferable to dispose of both properties and the Council could use the capital receipts to invest in new properties as part of the Housing Growth Programme.

During the debate, Members discussed the specific conditions and planning features of the two properties and it was concluded that these properties would not be viable to bring back to use by the Council.

The recommendations as stated in the report were endorsed by the Committee.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) 53 Parsons Road, Southcrest, Redditch be declared surplus to Council requirements.**
- 2) Authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer and to the Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services to dispose of the site at market value.**
- 3) Any HRA capital receipt received from the sale of No. 53 Parsons Road, Southcrest be allocated to the HRA Capital Programmes.**

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- 4) 53 Crabbs Cross Lane, Crabbs Cross, be declared surplus to Council requirements.
- 5) Authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer and to the Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services to dispose of the site at market value.
- 6) Any HRA capital receipt received from the sale of 53 Crabbs Cross Lane, Crabbs Cross be allocated to the HRA Capital Programmes.

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

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 9.12 pm