



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tue 17 Feb  
2026  
6.30 pm



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

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

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

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**Please note that this is a public meeting. You are able to see this agenda alongside all the documents for this meeting from the Committee Pages of the Council's website.**

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

### **GUIDANCE FOR ELECTED MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC ATTENDING MEETINGS IN PERSON**

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

### **PUBLIC SPEAKING**

The usual process for public speaking at Committee meetings will continue to be followed subject to some adjustments which allow written statements to be read out on behalf of residents and the virtual participation of residents at meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In order to register to speak at the meeting concerning the items on the agenda (under the public speaking item), please contact the officer named above by the deadline of midday on Friday 13 February.

### **Notes:**

**Although this is a public meeting, there are circumstances when Council might have to move into closed session to consider exempt or confidential information. For agenda items that are exempt, the public are excluded.**

# Overview and Scrutiny

Tuesday, 17th February, 2026  
6.30 pm  
Oakenshaw Community Centre

## Agenda

### Membership:

Cllrs:	Matthew Dormer (Chair) Craig Warhurst (Vice-Chair) William Boyd Claire Davies James Fardoe	Andrew Fry Sachin Mathur Rita Rogers Paul Wren
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### 1. Apologies and Named Substitutes

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

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

### 3. Minutes (Pages 7 - 18)

The minutes of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee which took place on 12 January 2026 will be considered at this meeting.

### 4. Public Speaking

To invite members of the public who have registered in advance of the meeting to speak to the Committee.

### 5. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) - Update Report (Pages 19 - 24)

### 6. Quarter 3 Housing Improvement Plan Update - Pre-Scrutiny

This report will follow in supplementary papers after it has been published for the meeting of Executive Committee (due for publication on Friday 13 February 2026).

### 7. Quarter 3 Housing Performance - Pre-Scrutiny

This report will follow in supplementary papers after it has been published for the meeting of Executive Committee (due for publication on Friday 13 February 2026).

### 8. Repairs and Maintenance and Damp and Mould Policies - Pre-Scrutiny

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This report will follow in supplementary papers after it has been published for the meeting of Executive Committee (due for publication on Friday 13 February 2026).

## **9. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2025-26** (Pages 25 - 54)

To consider the draft Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **10. Executive Committee's Work Programme - Selecting Items for Scrutiny** (Pages 55 - 60)

## **11. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme** (Pages 61 - 66)

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

- a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Warhurst
- b) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Warhurst
- c) Post-16 Education Task Group – Chair, Councillor Warhurst

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

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



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Monday, 12th January, 2026

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor Craig Warhurst (Vice-Chair) and Councillors William Boyd, Claire Davies, Rita Rogers and Paul Wren

### Also Present:

Councillor Sharon Harvey – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Environmental Services  
Councillor Bill Hartnett – Portfolio Holder for Housing (on Microsoft Teams)

### Officers:

Guy Revans, Matthew Bough, Ben Clawson-Chan and Matthew Eccles

### Democratic Services Officers:

Sarah Woodfield

## 57. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sachin Mathur. The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Recreation, Councillor Juliet Barker Smith, has also submitted apologies.

## 58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of party whip.

## 59. MINUTES

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025 were submitted for Members' consideration.

### RESOLVED that

Chair

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the minutes of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

**60. PUBLIC SPEAKING**

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

**61. BIODIVERSITY DUTY FIRST CONSIDERATION REPORT - PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Climate Change Manager presented the Council's Biodiversity Duty Report, required under the Environment Act 2021. The report covered activities up to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026 and was due for publication by the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

The Biodiversity Duty Report included ten sections which included policies, objectives and actions, how other strategies were considered, future actions, Biodiversity Net Gain information, Information about the Authority, Top Achievements, How Policies and Actions Have Helped, Awareness and Education, Monitoring and Evaluation and Highlights and Challenges. The report also outlined measures to enhance biodiversity, such as leaving areas of grass uncut, wildflower planting and public engagement in species monitoring.

Members noted that there was a legislative requirement for the next Biodiversity Duty Report to be produced in five years, regardless of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) outcomes. It was further noted that some actions might require capital investment and that funding opportunities and grants would be explored. Biodiversity actions were linked to climate change resilience and carbon sequestration and monitoring would form part of the forthcoming Climate Change Strategy for the Council.

Following the presentation, comments and discussion by Members was as follows:

- It was queried if more specific data would be included in the Council's Climate Change Strategy. In response the Officers explained that following the Biodiversity First Consideration Report publication, efforts would be concentrated on the monitoring of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to demonstrate the location and species of trees planted and work would also be undertaken to improve greater ranges of species

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within the Borough. BNG would also be monitored through Local Plan policies and development management.

- Concerns were raised about the lack of detail in the report, in particular as to citizen science public engagement, in relation to specific details of the species of trees which would be planted, and if the Council should be actively seeking to support the progression of the work. Members were advised that collaborative partnership working would help to improve future data recording. Details of Redditch Borough Council's (RBC) commitments to managing tree health and biodiversity resilience progression would be incorporated in the Council's Tree Management Policy, with it being noted that works would develop over the five-year period. Outcomes of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) would also be a contributing factor affecting future proposals.
- Members queried the use of the word "pesticide" within the report and expressed that view that it might be misleading and suggested changing the wording to "herbicides". Officers agreed to review this and would also respond to the Members to confirm current practices in use by the Council.
- A Member highlighted the success of community-led biodiversity projects and suggested replicating this model across other parks which was agreed would be reviewed for future reporting.
- Members requested feedback on the criteria for achieving Green Flag status and suggested promoting community involvement to improve other parks within the Borough. It was agreed that this would be reviewed by the Parks Team and details would be reported back to the Committee.
- Members sought clarity on the tree replacement strategy following the ash dieback risk. In response the Executive Director explained that a 2:1 replacement ratio would be implemented to replace the trees. However, an update and further details from the Parks Team would also be requested for Members.

The recommendations of the report were endorsed by the Committee as printed.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) The findings of the Biodiversity Duty First Consideration Report be noted.**
- 2) Members agree to publish the full Biodiversity Duty First Consideration Report to the Council's website.**

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## 62. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT FUNDING 2026/27 TO 2028/29 (INCLUDING ROUGH SLEEPER GRANT) AND DOMESTIC ABUSE GRANT - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Strategic Housing Services Manager reported on the allocation of the 2026/27 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Grant funding. The Grant to the Council for 2026/27 was expected to total £736,335 with £35,697 ring-fenced for domestic abuse grant element. It was noted that temporary accommodation costs could no longer be funded from this grant funding and would need to be met from the Council's General Fund. It was also noted that grant funding was ring-fenced for specific prevention activities and the proposed allocations were outlined within the report.

Following the presentation of the report, Members commented and discussed the report as follows:

- Clarity on the support from St Pauls Housing Led/Housing First Support Service was requested. It was advised that this initiative for rough sleepers began during the covid pandemic. The service provided immediate refuge and additional support to assist with rough sleepers remaining off the streets.
- Following a question, Members were advised that the number of rough sleepers in the Borough was currently estimated at eight to ten. Following the response the Chair expressed the view that the grant funding which had been allocated for rough sleepers was substantial and requested clarity on the specific requirements. In response Officers explained that the rough sleeping allowance was only one element of the grant funding made available. Grant funding also included prevention initiatives and support programmes, which required regular monitoring. Other initiatives included support such as guide pathways, crash pads, severe weather support and housing of ex-offenders where necessary.
- The performance of the Council-funded organisation initiatives was discussed further. It was agreed by the Committee that an annual performance report should be recommended which would enable both scrutiny and the executive to review performance in this area. A current performance report for 2025/26 was also requested and agreed to be presented to the June meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Members also requested data on food bank usage to understand the local need. Members were advised to note



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that some food bank organisations were independent and not Council run, however, Officers would gather the necessary data and share with Members of the Board.

- Clarification was requested to explain why the Homelessness Prevention Grant funding detailed within the report increased each year, compared to the Domestic Abuse Grant funding which remained static. Officers advised that generally domestic abuse grant funding would be allocated through the new burdens process, however, the Homelessness Prevention Grant also covered elements of domestic abuse.
- Concerns were raised about the potential duplication of community grants and the need for visibility of all Council funding during grant panel meetings. In response Officers advised that the funding was managed for specific services and the applications submitted to receive Council's grant funding required a detailed cost summary, which were assessed for any available funding. The Portfolio Holder addressed the Committee and explained the benefits of the some of the grant funded services for the Council, expressing the view that bed and breakfast funding requirements had substantially decreased due to the availability of the Homeless Prevention Grant funding.
- The Committee also discussed and requested further clarity on the underspending on grants, as identified in the report recommendation 3. Officers explained that due to the late changes in the funding from Government, there had been some underspending. However, this would be reviewed at the end of the financial year to identify requirements for priority service needs, particularly for the rough sleeper strategy. Additionally any extra resources would be reviewed in terms of utilisation within the year in support of existing or new schemes.
- Questions were raised about risks associated with funding changes for temporary accommodation and how these would be mitigated. Members were advised that there were inherent risks associated with temporary accommodation, particularly with the extra costs for bed and breakfast requirements. However, the funding available to the Council for Housing would be utilised to manage the Council's housing stock in order to reduce the reliance on temporary accommodation.

During consideration of this item, a recommendation was proposed by Councillor Warhurst. This recommendation was as follows:

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“Officers provide an annual update in respect of the Homelessness Prevention Grant initiatives that receive Council funding”.

On being seconded and put to the vote, this recommendation was carried as an additional recommendation to the Executive. The other recommendations as printed in the report were endorsed by the Committee.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) Temporary Accommodation Services currently met by Homelessness Prevention Grant are now met from the Temporary Accommodation element of the Revenue Support Grant 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29.
- 2) Subject to approval of recommendation 1 above by Council, the initiatives detailed at 4.4 (of the report) be approved to receive the Council’s Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant allocations of funding for 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29, subject to satisfactory performance; and should additional funding be announced at a later date by the Government for subsequent years then this would need to be the subject of a further report.
- 3) Subject to the agreement of recommendations 1 and 2 above, delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to use any unallocated Grants, or Homelessness Prevention Grant mid-year top up, during each year or make further adjustments and uplifts as necessary to ensure full utilisation of the Grants for 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 in support of existing or new schemes.
- 4) Officers provide an annual update in respect of the Homelessness Prevention Grant initiatives that receive Council funding.

## **63. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME - SELECTING ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY**

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

## **RESOLVED that**

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**64. the Executive Committee's Work Programme be noted.  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

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

Members were provided with an update that the items relating to the Auxerre House Refurbishment and Regeneration and the Construction of Redditch Innovation Centre had been moved to the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026 Overview and Scrutiny meeting instead of the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026 meeting, due to Executive dates for these reports having moved.

**RESOLVED that**

**the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.**

**65. 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

Councillor Warhurst reported that the last meeting which took place on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026 had reviewed the standard finance reports including Housing Revenue Account (HRA) rent setting and Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The Group had not made any recommendations to Executive Committee meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and endorsed all the recommendations as printed in the reports.

b) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Warhurst

Councillor Warhurst reported that at the last meeting, which took place on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2025, the Group discussed the ash dieback and tree planting strategies. Members had requested confirmation of planting dates and species.

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

There were no updates provided as the group had completed its work and were awaiting a final meeting to be arranged.

**RESOLVED that**

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**the Task Groups and Working Groups Update Reports be noted.**

## **66. 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 reported that he attended the most recent meeting of WMCA Overview and Scrutiny, which took place this morning (12<sup>th</sup> January 2026), noting that most items were strategic and not directly relevant to RBC.

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

There were no updates provided at this meeting.

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

There were no updates provided at this meeting.

**RESOLVED that**

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

## **67. 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 paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended:**

**Minute Item No. 68 – Rubicon Leisure Priorities and Progress Update.**

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## 68. RUBICON LEISURE PRIORITIES AND PROGRESS UPDATE

The Managing Director of Rubicon Leisure provided a presentation on Rubicon's priorities and recent progress to Members. Key points discussed during the presentation included the five priorities and five themes for 2025/26 which were:

Priorities of: Grow our income and be financially sustainable; Invest in our staff, provide support, tools and opportunity to learn and develop; Inspire more people to improve health and well-being; Improve the quality of our offer, experiences and services; Provide opportunities for our communities.

Themes: Our Finances. Our People, Our Customers, Our Communities, Our Development.

During the presentation these priorities and themes were discussed in further detail. After the presentation, Members discussed the following aspects:

- Members were very encouraged by the progress and improvements to the business and wished to thank all the staff involved who had assisted Rubicon Leisure becoming a commercial success.
- Utilisation of financial support from the Council was discussed. It was noted that there were plans for Rubicon to invest in further commercial aspects, however, the key priority remained to ensure sustainability for the future. Whilst Rubicon continued to identify profitable areas, ensuring financial stability in essential functions such as repairs and maintenance was a priority.
- Members noted that some areas of Rubicon's operations had achieved considerable success recently such as ice cream sales during the summer period and the popularity of outdoor swimming at Arrow Valley Lake.
- Clarity on the Net Promotor Score (NPS) was requested, and it was explained to the Committee that this was a key customer satisfaction metrics system which was updated daily and was an effective way to assess future sustainability of the business.
- Progress in Rubicon's delivery of leisure services was discussed and Members queried the gym memberships rate. In response Members noted that income from gym memberships was good and that Rubicon's gym membership was competitively priced. Rubicon was looking to invest in its

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Health and Wellbeing activities in response to identified growing public interest.

- The Rubicon's health and wellbeing offer was discussed with reference to queries as to how many customers visited from priority health neighbourhood areas within the Borough. In response Members were advised that around eight percent of the population of those neighbourhoods used the Rubicon's health and wellbeing services on offer, including community activities. In terms of affordability, it was explained that Rubicon's food and beverage offer was also competitively priced, as compared to popular chain outlets.
- Data for the use of services outside of the Borough was requested. It was explained that data for the Palace Theatre demonstrated that there were significant sales from customers visiting from outside of the Borough. It was noted that Arrow Valley Lake had been shortlisted as Best Visitor Attraction with recent visitor numbers having tripled in size.
- Areas in which to improve the Rubicon's business were also discussed by the Committee. Key areas included food waste and electrical compliance, environmental policies, HR and Marketing. Incorporating climate change strategies into future plans was also discussed to align with the Council's objectives.
- The use of local farm produce for food and beverage was also discussed. In response it was felt that the company did offer a good range and balance when comparing to the other businesses within the Borough. However, plans corporately to have a wider range of impact for food and beverage would be reviewed in due course.
- Local employment was also discussed with Members being reassured that a good number of staff employed by Rubicon Leisure as well as volunteers resided in the Redditch area.

## **RESOLVED that**

**the Rubicon Leisure Priorities and Progress Presentation be noted.**

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

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The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 8.04 pm

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2026**

17<sup>th</sup> of February

**Local Government Reorganisation – Update Report**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Jane Spilsbury
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation
Report Author: Hannah Corredor	Job Title: as above. Contact email: Hannah.corredor@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/a
Relevant Council Priority	Local Government Reorganisation
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

- 1) the progress to date in submitting an application to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for a two-unitary model titled, 'Transforming Worcestershire', be noted.
- 2) the governance that has been established for Local Government Reorganisation in Worcestershire and the next steps outlined in this paper be noted.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The timetable for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is set out in the table below.

Stage one: Inviting unitary proposals	Received November 2024
Stage two: Submission of formal unitary proposals.	Completed November 2025
➤ Stage three: Statutory consultation (MHCLG)	Expected to launch in February 2026
Stage four: Decision to implement a proposal	Expected before summer recess, July 2026
Stage five: Making secondary legislation – the Structural Changes Order (SCO).	Begins later in 2026 and ends with shadow elections in May 2027.
Stage six: Transition period	From decision to vesting day April 2028.
Stage seven: New unitary authority goes live	April 2028.

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- 2.2 Transforming Worcestershire, a collaboration between Malvern Hills, Wychavon, Worcester City, Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils, successfully submitted their joint proposal to MHCLG ahead of the Government's deadline in November 2025. The Government are now preparing a consultation on the two proposals received from Worcestershire authorities: a one Worcestershire single unitary or a North / South two unitary option. This consultation is focused on reaching public bodies but is open to all residents and businesses. Further information will be provided when received from the Government.
- 2.3 The Councils have been actively communicating and engaging internally and externally with staff and residents. The Council's LGR Routes project aims to make staff feel informed, engaged and supported through LGR. Quarterly evaluation of staff engagement with this project has shown improving results, with staff particularly enjoying the all-staff briefing sessions and Q&A by the Chief Executive.
- 2.4 Externally, the Council's Transforming Worcestershire partnership with Wychavon, Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Bromsgrove Councils has continued. The Council is preparing to launch a refreshed website that collates all the information regarding the proposal in a single site so that anyone participating in the consultation can access key documentation. The website can be viewed once launched at: [www.transformingworcestershire.co.uk](http://www.transformingworcestershire.co.uk) [not yet live].

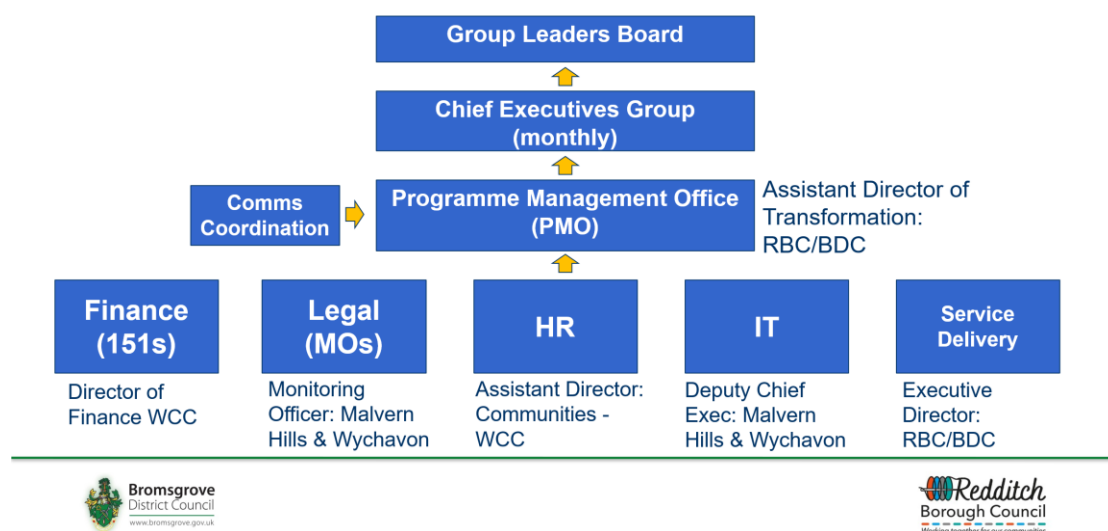
**3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

- 3.1 Following a successful system wide workshop on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January 2026 with Chief Executives, Monitoring Officers, Transformation leads and Section 151 Finance Officers from every authority in Worcestershire, the Councils have established interim governance for preparatory pre-decision activity and decision from January 2026 until receipt of a decision from MHCLG before the summer recess in July 2026. A monthly LGR Programme Board has been established with Chief Executives from the seven authorities as core members. This board will report to members via the cross-county Leaders Board as necessary.
- 3.2 Reporting into the Board and orchestrating and coordinating four key workstreams is a Programme Management Office (PMO). The programme management office is designed to enable collaboration across priorities, set a clear rhythm and pace for activities, and provide the board with assurance reports on progress and strategic items for discussion/decision. The PMO will also work closely with a dedicated communications group, also with representatives from across the

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county. This group will also focus on ensuring both internal and external partners and stakeholders are engaged and informed about progress.

- 3.3 It was agreed that initial activities would focus on housekeeping in Finance, Legal, HR and IT. Primarily, these activities focus on cleansing data, aligning information and developing a baseline for key issues that will be essential to future implementation, regardless of the decision made. A Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for each of the four workstreams was agreed as outlined in the diagram below. Each workstream is required to report back at each meeting of the board for the six months until a decision is taken. The next update is expected at the next LGR Programme board on 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2026.

**System-level: Five key workstreams for Preparations Phase**

- 3.4 Note that senior officers from Redditch and Bromsgrove are SROs for two key areas. Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director for Corporate Services and Transformation will lead the Programme Management Officer. Guy Revans, Executive Director will lead the workstream on Service Delivery. This group will begin to gather information about what services are offered to residents across the Borough and how the Council's models of service delivery vary. Further into the future, Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils will lead on the development of options appraisals.
- 3.5 At Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils, a fortnightly LGR Preparations Board has been established to oversee and direct internal work. This board is chaired by the Chief Executive. Service Managers and Assistant Directors from all key areas are represented, including communications.

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**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 It is expected that there will be significant upfront, unfunded costs incurred as a result of LGR. At present, the Government has made no funds available for the preparation or implementation of phases LGR. The exact cost of managing this transition in a way that manages key risks and ensures the quality of the Council's everyday services to residents go unaffected has not yet been calculated – but costs will be material and will continue to increase as the Council approaches Vesting Day in April 2028. Officers have earmarked provisional reserves for 2026/27 and 2027/28, however the investment required and mid- and long-term benefits of investing adequately have not yet been validated. These costs will include shared costs incurred in partnership with authorities across the county, as well as internal costs for the proper resourcing of implementation and continued high-quality service delivery.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Significant legal implications will continue to arise as LGR progresses. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be updated as and when necessary.

**6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS****Local Government Reorganisation**

- 6.1 LGR is the subject of this report.

**Relevant Council Priority**

- 6.2 The information provided in this report supports the council's organisational priority of sustainability.

**Climate Change Implications**

- 6.3 No specific climate change implications have been identified.

**Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.4 Significant equalities implications will arise from the redesign and redistribution of services across the County. Reports will be presented

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for Members' consideration once planning progresses to a stage where these can be considered.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 Devolution and LGR are listed as a Corporate Risk in the Corporate Risk Register, owned by the Chief Executive Officer and led by the Assistant Director of Corporate Services and Transformation. The inherent risk level is 20 but the residual risk reduces to 12 with mitigations including much of the activity described here including new appointments, governance described above, development of detailed action plans and adequate planning.
- 7.2 A quarterly report on risk is scheduled for the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee's consideration on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2026.

**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

N/a

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<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Jane Spilsbury	05/02/2026
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Hannah Corredor	30/01/2026
Financial Services	Julie Lorraine	02/02/2026
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings	02/02/2026
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Hannah Corredor	30/01/2026
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	N/a	

**Redditch Borough Council**  
**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**Annual Report**  
**2025 – 2026**



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## Chair's Foreword

I am pleased to present the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for the 2025–2026 municipal year.

Overview and Scrutiny is a vital part of the Council's governance. It provides constructive challenge, helps drive improvement, and supports transparency and accountability in decision-making. As the Council's "critical friend", our role is to test the evidence behind proposals, examine performance, and ensure that the Executive is held to account on the outcomes that matter most to Redditch residents.

During 2025–2026, the Committee has considered a wide range of items, including the pre-scrutiny of key Executive Committee reports across housing, finance, community services and wider strategic delivery. Alongside this, we have undertaken "overview" work on issues of direct local importance, including health inequalities in priority neighbourhoods. The Committee has also supported more in-depth scrutiny through Task Groups—concluding the Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Task Group in July 2025 and continuing work on the Post-16 Education Task Group, which is expected to report later in the year.

Scrutiny is most effective when it is collaborative, evidence-led and focused on improvement. I would like to thank Members of the Committee and our scrutiny sub-groups for their commitment and detailed work throughout the year, and to place on record my appreciation to the officers who support scrutiny and to the partners and witnesses who have contributed to our reviews. I also welcome the interest shown by residents who engage with the scrutiny process and take time to follow the work of the Council.

This report summarises the work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny during the year to date, highlights key themes and outcomes, and sets out the remaining work planned for the rest of the municipal year.

Councillor Matt Dormer  
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Redditch Borough Council

This annual report outlines the work undertaken by Redditch Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the 2025 – 2026 municipal year.

## The Role of Overview and Scrutiny

The role of overview and scrutiny is an important one in the Council's governance structure, providing challenge and driving improvement. It is often referred to as the "critical friend" of the Council and can review any issues of concern or interest to local residents.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a number of roles within the Council. These include:

- Holding the Executive Committee to account by scrutinising their decisions, either by:
  - 'calling-in' decisions after they have been made by the Executive Committee, requesting that the original decision is reviewed (only used in exceptional circumstances as there has to be a substantial legal/procedural reason before this procedure can be activated);
  - pre-scrutinising items prior to a decision being made on them by the Executive Committee.
- Acting as a 'critical friend' to the Executive Committee by reviewing Council policies and strategies, making recommendations where appropriate.
- Performance and financial monitoring, to ensure the Council's services are sustainable and delivered to the highest possible standard.
- Commissioning reviews of services/topics that impact on the Council or on the lives of Redditch residents.
- Setting up Task Groups to focus on specific subjects and recommend ways to improve existing practices within the Council and community as a whole.

The Council's scrutiny scoping form, which should be submitted before Overview and Scrutiny considers setting up a Task Group, can be found at Appendix A.

## Membership

The Committee appoints individual Members at the Annual Council meeting to oversee the work of Overview and Scrutiny. Membership in 2025/26 is as follows:



Cllr Matthew Dormer (Chair)



Cllr Craig Warhurst (Vice-Chair)



Cllr William Boyd



Cllr Claire Davies



Cllr James Fardoe



Cllr Andrew Fry



Cllr Sachin Mathur



Cllr Paul Wren



Cllr Rita Rogers

## Activities and Outcomes in 2025-26

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have considered various topics during the year. This includes a mix of 'overview' items – reports which had been specifically commissioned for Overview and Scrutiny and looked at various local issues of interest to Councillors – and 'pre-scrutiny' items, which is the scrutiny of Executive Committee reports. In addition, the Committee will finalise two in-depth investigations during this municipal year, having concluded the Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Task Group in July 2025 and with the final report of the Post-16 Education Task Group due to be submitted in February / March 2026. The Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel has held its annual meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

### Live Streaming / Remote Meetings

Although all meetings of Overview and Scrutiny are held in person, in some circumstances and with prior of agreement by the Chairman of the Committee, officers may attend meetings remotely to present reports. The public can also request a link to attend a meeting via video link. Members of the public can do this by contacting democratic (committee) services – contact information is provided on each agenda document and via the Council's website.

Meetings of Overview and Scrutiny continue to be live streamed where a significant local interest has been identified in the items on the meeting's agenda. The last meeting of Overview and Scrutiny which had been livestreamed took place on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

Meetings of scrutiny Task Groups and Working Groups continue to be held remotely; these meetings are private and not accessible to the public, except when specific witnesses are invited. Task Group reports are made public via final reports following conclusion of an investigation.

### Recommendations submitted to the Executive Committee

Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitors the impact of all recommendations it makes to the Executive Committee. A summary of reports considered by Overview and Scrutiny and its sub-groups to date in 2025/26 is given in the "[Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Meetings](#)" section.

Recommendations from Budget Scrutiny and Performance Scrutiny (details of these sub-groups given in the sections below) are also submitted to the Executive Committee via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This municipal year so far, all the recommendations considered in Executive reports have been endorsed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Also, there have been no additional recommendations submitted by Overview and Scrutiny to date this year.

Pre-Scrutiny of Executive Reports by Overview and Scrutiny Committee

To date in 2025/26, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has scrutinised the following Executive Committee reports:

- Shareholders' Committee Annual Report (9<sup>th</sup> June)
- Housing Regulator Tenant Satisfaction Measures (9<sup>th</sup> June)
- Housing Regulator Self-Assessment Complaint Handling Code (9<sup>th</sup> June)
- Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (DMIC) – Appointment of Contractor for Stage 4 Designs (7<sup>th</sup> July)
- Redditch Council Housing Growth Programme (7<sup>th</sup> July)
- Acquisition of Properties (7<sup>th</sup> July)
- Regulator of Social Housing Inspection Report and Housing Improvement Plan (1<sup>st</sup> September)
- Voluntary Sector Grants Scheme 2026/27 to 2029/30 (1<sup>st</sup> September)
- Adoption of Fixed Penalty Charge for breach of Community Protection Notice (1<sup>st</sup> September)
- Quarter 1 Housing Consumer Standards Report (1<sup>st</sup> September)
- Housing Ombudsman Findings Report 1 Ref 202417927 (1<sup>st</sup> September)
- Housing Ombudsman Findings Report 2 Ref 202331009 (1<sup>st</sup> September)
- Disposal of Housing Revenue Account Assets – Eight garages at Ashorne Close, Matchborough, Redditch (1<sup>st</sup> September)
- Disposal of Housing Revenue Account Assets – 53 Parsons Road, Southcrest, Redditch. 53 Crabbs Cross Lane, Crabbs Cross, Redditch (1<sup>st</sup> September)
- Bereavement Services – Burial Strategy (24<sup>th</sup> November)
- Quarter 2 Housing Improvement Plan Update (24<sup>th</sup> November)
- Quarter 2 Housing Performance (24<sup>th</sup> November)
- Biodiversity Duty First Consideration Report (12<sup>th</sup> January 2026)
- Homelessness Prevention Grant Funding 2026/27 to 2028/29 (including Rough Sleeper Grant) and Domestic Abuse Grant (12<sup>th</sup> January 2026)

Portfolio Holders for the relevant reports are invited to each meeting of the Committee in order to answer questions and to feed back to the Executive Committee on the comments raised by Overview and Scrutiny. In addition, any recommendations made by Overview and Scrutiny are also relayed directly to Executive Portfolio Holder concerned in this way, if applicable.

Overview items considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee

In addition to pre-scrutiny of the Executive Committee Work Programme items, the following 'overview' items have been considered at meetings of Overview and Scrutiny to date in 2025/26:

- Health Inequalities in Redditch – Public Health Presentation (9<sup>th</sup> June)
- Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Task Group – Final Report (7<sup>th</sup> July)
- Rubicon Leisure Priorities and Progress Update – Managing Director Invitation (12<sup>th</sup> January 2026)

### Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

Membership: Councillors Craig Warhurst (Chair), Joe Baker, Andy Fry, Joanna Kane, and Rita Rogers

Local authorities are required to have a committee designated with responsibility for reviewing and scrutinising the work of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. In Redditch this role is undertaken by the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel, which is a permanent sub-committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Panel is responsible for holding the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) to account for its work in Redditch.

This year the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel met on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025. At the meeting, Members received an update in respect of the work of the Partnership in the Borough for the period December 2024 to October 2025. This included an update on community safety programmes and schemes delivered by NWCSP.

West Mercia Police provided a report focusing on the overview of crime in Redditch Borough, and outlining crime data, anti-social behaviour interventions, recent successes by the Police in tackling crime, and the Police work within Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) area – in Redditch Town Centre.

Following a referral made at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> September (Minute No. 34), the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel also considered a report on the serving of Community Protection Notices (CPNs) by Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) in relation to planning and environmental (e.g. fly tipping, littering, duty of care waste offences, dog fouling) offences. The WRS enforcement regime, and in particular the effectiveness of CPNs and the fixed penalty notices of £100 for failure to comply with a CPN, were discussed in detail at the meeting.

### Working Groups

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has two permanent scrutiny working groups (sub-groups), the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, and the Performance Scrutiny Working Group.

#### Budget Scrutiny Working Group

Membership: Councillors Craig Warhurst (Chair), Matthew Dormer, Chris Holz, Andrew Fry, Sachin Mathur

The Budget Scrutiny Working Group has held 5 meetings so far in 2025-26 with 3 more meetings scheduled to take place over February and March 2026. To date, the Group has pre-scrutinised the following finance and budget-related Executive reports:

- Financial Outturn Report and Q4 Performance Monitoring Report 2024-25 (3<sup>rd</sup> July)
- Treasury Management Outturn Report 2024/25 (3<sup>rd</sup> July)
- Q1 2025-26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report (28<sup>th</sup> August)
- Medium Term Financial Plan Scene Setting Report 2026/27 (28<sup>th</sup> August)
- Medium Term Financial Plan Budget Update and Consultation Report 2026/27 to 2028/29 – Business Rates Pool (3<sup>rd</sup> November)
- Q2 Finance Monitoring Report (including Financial Saving and Half Yearly Treasury Management Report) (20<sup>th</sup> November)
- Q2 2025/26 Performance Monitoring 2024/25 (20<sup>th</sup> November)
- Medium Term Financial Plan – Tranche 1 Budget including Fees and Charges (prior to consultation) (21<sup>st</sup> November)
- Council Tax Base Report 2026/27 (8<sup>th</sup> January 2026)
- Council Tax – Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums 2026/27 (8<sup>th</sup> January)
- Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27 (8<sup>th</sup> January)
- Discretionary Council Tax Reduction Policy 2026/27 (8<sup>th</sup> January)
- Business Rates - Discretionary Rates Relief Policy 2026/27 (8<sup>th</sup> January)
- Housing Revenue Account Rent Setting 2026/27 (8<sup>th</sup> January)
- Medium Term Financial Plan 2026-27 to 2028-29 Fees and Charges and consultation outcome including Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budget Recommendations (8<sup>th</sup> January)

The outcomes of discussions at Budget Scrutiny are relayed to Overview and Scrutiny Members through updates provided by the Chair of Budget Scrutiny at each meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

#### Performance Scrutiny Working Group

Membership: Councillors Craig Warhurst (Chair), William Boyd, Matthew Dormer, Chris Holz, Rita Rogers

The Performance Scrutiny Working Group (a sub-group of Overview and Scrutiny looking at performance across council service areas) has held a single meeting to date in the municipal year 2025/26, looking at Tree Maintenance across the Borough. A further meeting is to be arranged later in the year. The Performance Working Group considers ‘overview’ topics chosen by Members of the Group to date and does not consider specific Executive Committee reports.

The outcomes of discussions at Performance Scrutiny are relayed to Overview and Scrutiny Members through updates provided by the Chair of Performance Scrutiny at each meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### Task Groups Established by Overview and Scrutiny

Task Groups are established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to conduct an in-depth review of any service, policy or issue that affects the Borough. During the 2025-26 municipal year, one Task Group review has been finalised and one is due to be finalised by spring 2026.

#### Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Task Group

Membership: Councillors Matthew Dormer (Chair), William Boyd, Brandon Clayton, and Gary Slim

This Task Group submitted its final report in July 2025. Several conclusions have been drawn by Members of this Task Group:

- The Council provided a competitive and reasonably priced bulky waste collection service, which needed to be further promoted to raise awareness of the service within the community.
- Education and promotion of information relating to responsible disposal of waste should drive reductions in fly tipping in residential areas (of items such as white goods, black bags etc.). The Council should continue to provide residents with detailed information, through various media, on what can and cannot be recycled and information on how to dispose of bulky items.
- Building community pride in local areas would help to reduce fly tipping rates over time.

The Task Group made a single recommendation, namely *that Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) provide a bi-annual update report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which reviews fly tipping data and enforcement work undertaken in the Borough*. This recommendation was agreed at the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

#### Post-16 Education Task Group

Membership: Councillors Craig Warhurst (Chair), William Boyd, Matthew Dormer, Sachin Mathur, Paul Wren

This Task Group was launched in October 2024, with the aim of reviewing the range of post-16 education provision in Redditch, focusing on the position regarding vocational courses and apprenticeships for 16+ students in the Borough.



The Task Group has also decided to focus on how colleges, training providers and businesses in Redditch can work to ensure that post-16 courses can deliver better employability opportunities for people of Redditch and what skill sets can be developed through vocational courses to match the skills of students to the needs of employers in the Redditch area.

The Group has met four times to date, holding discussions with stakeholders including the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce, the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, Worcestershire County Council, Heart of Worcestershire College, the West Midlands Combined Authority, as well as apprenticeship providers in the region, including Midland Group Training Services.

The Group is expected to hold a further summary meeting and submit its final report by the end of this municipal year.

### External Scrutiny Bodies

The Council's representatives on external scrutiny bodies have continued to provide regular updates at meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the work undertaken by these regional bodies.

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

During the year Councillor Boyd has provided verbal updates on the meetings of this WMCA committee, in particular reporting any issues that were of relevance to Redditch.

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

During the year Councillor Fardoe has provided updates on the meetings of the WMCA's Transport Overview and Scrutiny, reporting on any issues of relevance to Redditch identified at those meetings.

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

The Committee has received regular updates from Councillor Fry about the work of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), highlighting health matters being discussed at that forum, such as the pharmaceutical needs assessment.

## Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Meetings

The section below provides a summary of the main items considered at each meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2025-26 to date. Further information on the agendas and minutes from these meetings can be found using the link below:

[Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meetings - 2025-2026](#)

### **9<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

#### Health Inequalities in Redditch – Public Health Presentation

A presentation on Health Inequality and Priority Health Neighbourhoods in Redditch was provided by representatives from Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Public Health department, Citizens Advice Bromsgrove and Redditch and Bromsgrove District Collaborative.

The Public Health team, WCC, reported that based on the analysis of the number of all emergency hospital admissions, emergency cardiovascular admissions, and emergency respiratory admissions across Worcestershire, 14 priority neighbourhoods with the highest levels of unmet health needs were identified. Redditch had the most priority neighbourhoods of all district areas in Worcestershire with 8 priority neighbourhoods.

It was noted that Redditch area as a whole was an outlier in Worcestershire in statistical analysis identifying incidence of non-elective emergency hospital admissions. This pointed to issues with wider determinants of health in Redditch. It was underlined that data on non-elective hospital admissions was taken over four continuous years, which meant that the LSOAs identified maintained consistently high (close or above 3 SD above the mean) level of non-elective hospital admissions over that period.

The work to addressing health inequalities and wider determinants of health issues at a local level in Redditch was outlined during consideration of this report, which included examples of public health initiatives that were already being supported in Redditch were covered. It was noted that progress had already been made, in terms of engaging affected communities, and developing initiatives to address the health inequality issues in Redditch. In the long-term, poor health outcomes required dealing with a complex set of problems that could best be addressed by directly involving people and communities affected by those health issues.

The Committee asked that Public Health, Worcestershire County Council, provide a further communication to update on Health Inequality reduction work within Priority Neighbourhoods in Redditch in 6 to 12 months.

Shareholders' Committee Annual Report – Pre-Scrutiny

The Shareholders Committee Annual Report 2024-25 was presented to the Committee. It was noted that arrangements for the operation of the Shareholders Committee changed in May 2024 with the Shareholders Committee being required to produce an annual update to Council on the performance of Rubicon Leisure Limited. This was the first time that an annual report was produced on behalf of the Shareholders Committee.

Members were reminded that the role of the Shareholders Committee was distinct from that of the Rubicon Board. The Board, comprising Executive and Non-Executive Directors, was responsible for running the business and the proper delivery of services. There were officers at the Council responsible for managing the client side of the business, and who monitored the service contract. The Shareholders Committee had no role over operational matters but was responsible for holding the Board to account for a number of reserved matters, detailed in the articles of the company.

Some Members expressed disappointment with the change to the status of Shareholders Committee since 2024-25, in that Shareholders Committee had now become a sub-committee of the Executive Committee with non-Executive Councillors not involved as voting members in its meetings. It was noted that in line with the terms of reference of the Shareholders Committee, the leader of the opposition political group at the Council would continue to be invited to attend meetings of the Shareholders Committee to participate in the debate, although as he was not a Member of the Committee he would not have the power to vote at these meetings.

Housing Regulator Tenant Satisfaction Measures – Pre-Scrutiny

The Committee was informed that the Housing Regulator had introduced 22 tenant satisfaction measures in 2023. These measures were designed to help regulate the performance of housing providers, including Redditch Borough Council. The Council had monitored the authority's performance in accordance with these measures in 2023/24 and 2024/25 and the data for both years had been included in the report. It was noted that when compared to the results from 2023/24 there had generally been an increase in tenant satisfaction levels although the Council still performed below the median level across other Social Housing Providers.

In considering the Tenant Perception Survey results for the two years, it was noted that there was year on year improvement in most areas. However, some measures remained at a low and stagnating level, for example in relation to satisfaction with the Council's complaint handling. It was noted that major improvements could be seen in repairs and maintenance which might be attributed to the Repairs and Maintenance team having recruited a number of new team members and having invested in modernising technical equipment during this period.

Officers were in the process of developing an improvement plan and this was at an interim stage by the date of the meeting. A response from the Housing Regulator to the latest inspection of the Council was due to be announced publicly in July 2025 and a report would subsequently be produced on the outcome of the inspection process to be available in September 2025.

The recommendations of the report were endorsed by the Committee.

#### Housing Regulator Self-Assessment Complaint Handling Code – Pre-Scrutiny

Members were informed that there was a requirement for the Council, as a social housing provider, to adopt the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code. There was a further requirement for the Council to undertake a self-assessment in line with the code. Following the latest self-assessment, Officers had identified that there was a need to provide greater clarity with regard to Stage 2 complaints, particularly with regard to the types of complaints which would not be accepted as complaints at this stage. The report provided an opportunity to update the Code and Members were being invited to consider this change.

Officers reported that in 2024-25 the Council received 124 complaints which was a rate of 22.37 complaints per 1,000 social housing properties. This compared to the median rate across social housing properties of 42.5. Officers needed to fully understand and audit the reasons behind the Council's relatively low complaints rate, whether it was because of improvements to the service, because tenants were unsure how they could make a complain, or due to a combination of these factors.

It was noted that in the first quarter of 2024-25 the Council's performance in complaint response times had deteriorated. Performance had been improving since then and to drive further improvement in complaints handling a dedicated complaints investigator had been introduced within Housing Property Services.

The recommendations of the report were endorsed by the Committee.

### **7<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

#### Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (DMIC) – Appointment of Contractor for Stage 4 Designs - Pre-Scrutiny

A report on the appointment of contractor for stage 4 designs of the Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (DMIC) was presented.

It was reported that the project remained on track for the construction to start in January 2026. The stage 4 design work was due to be contracted via a JCT Pre-

Construction Services Agreement and following input from costs consultants it had been estimated that the costs of bringing a contractor on board for Stage 4 designs would cost between £250,000 and £300,000. However, as the exact costs remained unknown prior to sourcing updated quotations this report requested delegated authority to agree a contract value of up to £400,000, to provide sufficient headroom and contingency.

It was noted that the cost of the DMIC had increased from £8 million in the original Town Investment Plan to almost £12 million in the revised Town Deal budget. It was responded that an allocation of extra funding to the DMIC project had been signed off by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). It was assessed by officers that the extra investment into DMIC would provide significant added value for the end users, including an increase in lettable space at DMIC from 7,000 square feet to 17,000 square feet. Following testing of the business model for DMIC, there was an estimated operating surplus of £60,000 to £70,000 per annum after costs. This estimate was based on 90 per cent occupancy rate.

Recommendations of the report were endorsed by the Committee.

#### Redditch Council Housing Growth Programme – Pre-Scrutiny

The Committee considered a report on the Redditch Council Housing Growth Programme. It was recapped that the Executive Committee agreed to the Council Housing Growth Programme in January 2017. The Council received funding for this programme through a process of one-for-one receipts from Government when council houses were being sold. There was a requirement that the receipts be spent within five years or else the funds had to be returned to Central Government with interest.

The present report identified a number of options, set out as part of the proposed recommendation, to increase the Council's housing stock to meet the housing growth target of achieving 230 additional units by 2030. The Council Housing Growth Programme had already delivered 107 units, with a plan in place for delivery of further 56 units. This meant the Council needed to secure and plan for an additional 67 units to achieve the target by 2030.

Under the current terms of the Council Housing Growth Programme, there was a capital budget of £3 million per year to spend on developing or purchasing new Council houses. Once this figure was spent, additional funding could not be accessed without agreement from the Executive Committee. Officers were asking for greater flexibility in the Council Housing Growth Programme to enable expenditure over this level where needed and this would help the Council to respond to opportunities on the open market as they arose in a timely manner.

It was being proposed that all properties delivered through the Council Housing Growth Programme be let at social rent levels, subject to viability in respect of the repayment of any capital funding on the given property being repaid within a set period of 30, 40 or 50 years. If this proved not to be viable, then the rent level of 65 per cent of market rent would be applied, and if that was also unviable, then affordable rent level of 80 per cent of market rent would be applied.

It was explained that officers anticipated that housing and construction costs would continue to increase. This was in addition to Government targets for house building. Current viability assessments undertaken by the Council showed that the pay back period for council housing, under the programme, at social rent was circa 25 years. This was below the 30 years mark and would enable the Council to provide these social housing at social rent levels if building was undertaken at present time. It was also highlighted that with this Council Housing Growth Programme the costs could be kept down as the Council was building on its own land.

Recommendations of the report were endorsed by the Committee.

#### Acquisition of Properties – Pre-Scrutiny

It was explained that the Council had been approached by a developer regarding 12 shared ownership properties that the developer had been unable to sell. The authority had concluded that these properties could be offered as social housing. The cost of this acquisition could be funded through one for one capital receipts. The Council had had the properties valued and would take this information on board in the process. There was a need for the sale to be completed by October 2025, so the timescales for completion were tight.

Members questioned why the developer had experienced difficulties with selling these properties as shared ownership units and why other Registered Providers operating locally had not expressed interest. Officers explained that this was part of a national issue for smaller developments. This development had a low number of units which was not considered attractive for many larger developers. Some Registered Providers would also only consider the purchase of properties in particular locations. However, the Council was keen to ensure that there continued to be a balanced housing market in the Borough and this proposed investment was deemed appropriate in helping to support this ambition.

Members queried whether this purchase would set a precedent in terms of council purchasing properties directly from developers. It was responded that similar purchases had been undertaken by the Council in the past also with similar aim to support social housing.

The recommendations contained in the report, to agree to acquire the twelve affordable housing units from a developer and to let them at a social rent commensurate with the Council's Housing Capital Growth programme, were endorsed.

#### Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Task Group – Final Report

The Chair of the Task Group introduced the report and commented in terms of the overall findings that the Council's bulky collection service was important given that a high proportion of fly tips in Redditch consisted of household waste such as black bags or other household items such as white goods, electrical appliances and green garden waste. It was noted that most of such fly tipping occurred within residential areas and it was this that the Council needed to focus on.

The Task Group felt that the Council provided a competitive and reasonably priced bulky collection service, which was found to be significantly cheaper than that offered by many other authorities as well as private providers, and further promotion of the service was necessary to increase awareness of this offer among Redditch residents.

It was explained that the Task Group's report detailed a change to arrangements in fly tipping enforcement across the Borough. This responsibility was transferred from the Council to Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) as of 1 June 2024. It was felt that monitoring the effect of this change was important and to this end, the Task Group's recommendation was for officers from WRS to provide a twice-yearly update to Overview and Scrutiny on fly tipping enforcement work. The Task Group's recommendation was agreed by the Committee.

### **1<sup>st</sup> September 2025**

#### Regulator of Social Housing Inspection Report and Housing Improvement Plan – Pre-Scrutiny

The Committee received a report on the inspection of the Council's social housing by the Social Housing Regulator and the Council's 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 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.

It was reiterated that significant improvement had been made since the Service Review and restructuring of the Housing Property Services including the Capital Team in 2019. 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 in detail in the reports.

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.

Members felt there was a 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. It was envisaged that this would take the form of task and finish groups, which would be set up by Overview and Scrutiny to look at specific housing issues when appropriate.

The recommendations as set out in the report, to note the Regulatory Judgment, to approve the Housing Improvement Plan, and to fund the initiatives from Housing Revenue Account as set out in the report recommendations, were endorsed by the Committee.

#### Voluntary Sector Grants Scheme 2026/27 to 2029/30 – Pre-Scrutiny

The report detailed proposals to change the Council's approach to funding Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations. Under the report's proposals, the Council would 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 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 group 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.

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-assessment 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.

It was clarified that the VCS Grants Policy required 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.

The recommendations of the report were endorsed by the Committee.

#### Adoption of Fixed Penalty Charge for breach of Community Protection Notice – Pre-Scrutiny

A report was presented concerning the proposal to adopt Fixed Penalty Charge Notices (FPNs) for breaches of Community Protection Notices (CPNs).

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 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 it needed to be evidenced how this measure could lead to behavioural changes in communities going forward and the extent to which enforcement actions were actively being taken where necessary. In this regard it was proposed that Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel should consider a report on the Community Protection Notice (CPN), assessing the effectiveness of the fixed penalty notice and associated measures on reducing anti-social behaviour (ASB).

The report recommendation was endorsed for the Council to adopt a Fixed Penalty Notice Charge of £100 for failure to comply with a Community Protection Notice. In addition, the Committee resolved that the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel receive a report on the Community Protection Notices (CPNs), that assesses the effectiveness of introducing the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) enforcement regime, and the fixed penalty notice referenced in the above resolution, on reducing Anti-Social Behaviour.

#### Quarter 1 Housing Consumer Standards Report – Pre-Scrutiny

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.

The report recommendation was endorsed by the Committee.

#### Housing Ombudsman Findings Report 1 Ref 202417927 – Pre-Scrutiny

This report related to a complaint that had been submitted to the Housing Ombudsman by a local resident. Apologies were provided by Officers 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 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 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, Members commented that when any concerns with a 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 address issues when meeting the tenant in any capacity. 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.

The findings, orders and recommendation of the Housing Ombudsman in this case as well as Council's compliance with those matters was noted by the Committee.

#### Housing Ombudsman Findings Report 2 Ref 202331009 – Pre-Scrutiny

This report related to a second complaint that had been submitted to the Housing Ombudsman by another local housing tenant.

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: the Council's response to reports from the resident of damp and mould, and the Council's complaint handling.

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. It was 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 findings, orders and recommendation of the Housing Ombudsman in this case as well as Council's compliance with those matters was noted by the Committee.

Disposal of Housing Revenue Account Assets – Eight garages at Ashorne Close, Matchborough, Redditch – Pre-Scrutiny

The report concerned the proposed disposal by the Council of eight garages at Ashorne Close.

The eight garages were built in the 1970s and were made of concrete beam. 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.

Members enquired into secure bike parking 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.

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

This report concerned the proposal to dispose of the Council's 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.

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

## **24<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

### Bereavement Services – Burial Strategy – Pre-Scrutiny

It was explained that the Burial Strategy was a crucial document for the Council to ensure a long-term, respectful, and inclusive management of burial spaces whilst meeting legal, cultural, and environmental needs. Without prior planning, Redditch faced a risk of running out of burial space and the Burial Strategy was designed to be a positive step in the effective management of burial space and future development of cemeteries within the Borough.

Redditch Borough Council operated and managed three cemeteries, Plymouth Road, Edgioake Lane and Abbey Cemetery and St Stephen's, St Luke's and Feckenham closed church yards. Plymouth Road cemetery was closed to new burials, Edgioake Lane Cemetery had approximately five years of burial provision available at current usage but was under review to free up further space for 5+ years of burial provision.

Abbey Cemetery had been the main burial area in Redditch Borough and as of early 2024 had approximately 8 months left of burial space. Through the later part of 2024 a vigorous exercise of reviewing burial space within the cemetery led to the securing of a further 10 years of space at this site.

In recent years, the Council undertook work to assess the suitability of several different sites across the Borough as per previous reports. In total twenty-six sites were originally reviewed, the various sites including land at the rear of Morrisons, Foxlydiate Woods, additional extension to the existing Edgioake lane site, Ipsley Church Lane, Greenland's playing fields, Coldfield Drive, Oakenshaw Park, and Woodrow Park.

It was noted that following the change of administration in May 2024, works at Ipsley Church Lane site were put on hold. In early 2025 a new site review was undertaken in respect of Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD (Proposed Site 2B). To date this site had passed the Environment Agency (EA) requirements to secure a standard permit.

Natural burial ground provision. The Environmental Services Manager responded that this could not be accommodated at the Abbey Cemetery but would be considered as part of the provision at a new burial site. It was noted in terms of burial practices that there was a relatively static number of burials each year in Redditch Borough. Nationally, the proportion was around 15 per cent burials and 85 per cent cremations.

In relation to the twenty-six potential sites originally reviewed by the Council it was noted that ground water, geology and associated testing was carried out at all these sites. In respect of the Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD (Proposed Site 2B), as it was near the lake, borehole and deep ground water testing had been carried out over winter/spring time to determine the suitability of the site and this confirmed that the site had passed the Environment Agency (EA) requirements to secure a standard permit.

The recommendation, that the Council approve the Burial Strategy, was endorsed by the Committee.

#### Quarter 2 Housing Improvement Plan Update – Pre-Scrutiny

A Q2 update on the Housing Improvement Plan was provided. A summary of progress against each of the Consumer Standards was presented within the report.

It was reported that for measure NC3 to establish a procedure to keep tenants informed of progress of their Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) cases, staff training was being provided and processes had been reviewed to ensure cases were managed as per process with a final visit when a case was being closed.

With regard to Consumer Standard SQ5 – Implement Total Mobile for Repairs and Maintenance – it was reported that in Q1 2025/26 the Council had lost the project manager assisting the team in the configuration and development prior to implementation of the Total Mobile (TM) system. Nevertheless, the system was now at the final testing stage.

On the overdue repairs and maintenance jobs, it was reported that since the Regulatory Judgment, the number of overdue jobs had reduced from circa 3,000 to 1,052 at the end of Q2 2025/26, with 521 jobs currently in progress and a further 91 reported at no access to property.

For Electrical Inspection Condition Reports (EICR), work was progressing with contractors who were issued with properties where no certificate was currently held either at all or within the 5-year reporting cycle. There was greater co-ordination reported between Housing Tenancy Officers and the Electrical and Gas Teams in place to visit and seek to gain entry to hard-to-reach properties currently outstanding in terms of electrical and other inspections.

In terms of tenant engagement work, delays had been experienced but draft proposals for the range of formal and informal opportunities were being prepared. This would detail how tenants could interact with and influence Housing Services. It was highlighted that to provide meaningful engagement for tenants required work to

understand their specific needs and, for those on tenants' panel, how they could participate fully in tenant governance arrangements. Senior Tenant Engagement Officer would be recruited into post in early 2026 to help progress this area of work.

A question was raised about the programme for the completion of all outstanding fire safety remedial actions. It was explained by officers that the target was to clear all outstanding fire remedial actions within two years.

The Housing Improvement Plan Quarter 2 2025/26 update was noted by the Committee.

#### Quarter 2 Housing Performance – Pre-Scrutiny

The Housing Consumer Standards Report for Q2 2025/26 was presented. The report detailed the Council's performance in relation to 10 of the Regulator of Social Housing tenant satisfaction measures.

In respect of the 'Homes that Do Not Meet the Decent Homes Standards' measure, it was reported that, following a review of the asset management database the Council had identified an issue with software that had resulted in previous reporting being inaccurate. This had led to a revised figure for Q2 2025/26 which was a sharp increase in the number of properties that did not meet the Decent Homes Standards for this period. The percentage figure increased from 4.15 per cent up to 11.90 per cent. The Housing Regulator had been alerted to this error in previous reporting and Officers were working to identify properties affected and works that needed to be carried out in those properties. During Q2 2025/26 the Council had been working with the software provider to get the assurance that future reporting would be accurate.

For stock condition surveys, it was reported that these commenced in August 2025 with a target to complete 1,340 surveys in 2025/26. In Quarter 2, 121 surveys had been completed with additional resources allocated to target 100 surveys per week over the remainder of the fiscal year.

The Council's performance in non-emergency and emergency repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale showed improvement over the previous quarter whilst for building safety measures it was reported that fire safety checks were rated red due to consultant capacity issues with a shortage of fire risk assessors. This capacity issue had now been addressed.

In terms of work carried out to reduce fire risk within apartment blocks, it was highlighted that the caretaking team now operated a full service in communal areas of regular cleaning that included full checks for fire risks.

Another red rated measure was in respect of lift safety checks. It was explained that there was a drop in performance as the Council's insurer experienced difficulties accessing one of the lifts for inspection. This had now been remedied across the blocks as key safes were in place for inspectors to access lift shafts.

It was highlighted in relation to direct tenant data that in Q2 2025/26, the Service experienced a drop in performance in relation to complaints handling, but that Senior Complaints Officer had now been recruited which would improve capacity within the complaints team. It was reported that 113 compliments were received by the Housing Service at Q2.

With respect to repairs it was stated that the Service undertook around 10,000 repairs annually and there were now monthly reports submitted from complaints officer to classify each complaint and implement appropriate remedial action(s).

The annual tenant satisfaction survey would be released in mid-January 2026 and Members were asked to help raise awareness of this survey among the tenants.

The Quarter 2 Housing Performance for 2025/26 in respect of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (Landlord) was noted by the Committee.

## **12<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

### Biodiversity Duty First Consideration Report – Pre-Scrutiny

The Council's Biodiversity Duty Report, as required under the Environment Act 2021, was presented to the Committee. The report included ten sections which included policies, objectives and actions, how other strategies were considered, future actions, Biodiversity Net Gain information, Information about the Authority, Top Achievements, How Policies and Actions Have Helped, Awareness and Education, Monitoring and Evaluation and Highlights and Challenges. The report also outlined measures to enhance biodiversity, such as leaving areas of grass uncut, wildflower planting and public engagement in species monitoring.

It was explained that following the Biodiversity First Consideration Report publication, by 26 March 2026, efforts would be concentrated on the monitoring of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to demonstrate the location and species of trees planted and would also work to improve greater ranges of species within the Borough. BNG would also be monitored through Local Plan policies and development management.

Members raised concerns about the lack of detail in the report with regards to citizen science public engagement, specific details of the species of trees which would be planted and if the Council should be actively seeking to support the progression of the



work. Members were advised that collaborative partnership working would help to improve future data recordings. Details of Redditch Borough Council's (RBC) commitments to managing tree health and biodiversity resilience progression would be incorporated in the Council's Tree Management Policy, with Members noting that works would develop over a five-year period. Incorporating the outcomes of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) would also be a contributing factor to future proposals.

The recommendations of the report were endorsed by the Committee.

Homelessness Prevention Grant Funding 2026/27 to 2028/29 (including Rough Sleeper Grant) and Domestic Abuse Grant – Pre-Scrutiny

The Strategic Housing Services Manager reported on the allocation of the 2026/27 grant funding, totalling £736,335 with £35,697 ring-fenced for domestic abuse activities. It was noted that temporary accommodation costs could no longer be funded from this grant funding and would need to be met from the Council's General Fund. It was also noted that grant funding was ring-fenced for prevention activities and the proposed allocations were outlined within the report.

The performance of the Council's funded initiatives was discussed by Members in detail. It was agreed by the Board that an annual performance report should be produced that would be presented to Overview and Scrutiny and Executive Committees. A current performance report for 2025/26 was also requested to come before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its June meeting.

Members also requested data on food bank usage to understand the local need. Members were advised that some food bank organisations were independent and not Council run, however, Officers would gather the necessary data and share with Members of the Committee.

It was clarified that the Homelessness Prevention Grant funding detailed within the report increased each year, compared to the Domestic Abuse Grant funding which remained static. Officers advised that the grant funding would be allocated through the new burdens process, however, the Homelessness Prevention Grant also covered areas for domestic abuse.

Concerns were raised about the potential duplication of community grants and the need for visibility of all Council funding during grant panel meetings. In response Officers advised that the funding was managed for specific services and submitted applications for grant funding required a detailed cost summary, which were assessed for any available funding. It was also commented that bed and breakfast funding requirements had substantially decreased due to the availability of the Homeless Prevention Grant funding.

The Committee also discussed and requested further clarity on the underspending on grants, as identified in the report recommendations. Officers explained that due to the late changes in the funding from Government, there had been some underspending. However, this would be reviewed at the end of the financial year to identify requirements for priority service needs, particularly for the rough sleeper strategy as well as review of the need for extra resources for the department.

The recommendations as set out in the report were endorsed by the Committee. An additional recommendation to the Executive Committee was agreed by the Committee in respect of Officers providing an annual update in respect of the Homelessness Prevention Grant initiatives that receive Council funding.

#### Rubicon Leisure Priorities and Progress Presentation

This item was considered by the Committee in exempt session. Following a request by Overview and Scrutiny Committee, this presentation covered Rubicon Leisure's business plan and priorities and recent progress in its delivery of leisure services

(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)).

### **Remaining Meetings in 2025/26**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is due to hold a further two meetings in 2025-26 on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2025, date of submission of this annual report, and the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2026. At these meetings, the Committee is due to consider the remaining items on its work programme. However, please note that additional items may still be added to the work programme after publication of this annual report.

#### 17<sup>th</sup> February

- Local Government Reorganisation Update Report
- Quarter 3 Housing Improvement Plan Update – Pre-Scrutiny
- Quarter 3 Housing Performance – Pre-Scrutiny
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy – Pre-Scrutiny
- Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2025-26

#### 16<sup>th</sup> March

- Redditch Partnership Annual Update
- Climate Change Strategy 2026 to 2031 – Pre-Scrutiny

- Auxerre House Refurbishment and Regeneration – Pre-Scrutiny
- Construction of Redditch Innovation Centre – Pre-Scrutiny (Previously called: Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (DMIC))
- Leisure Concession Policy Review – Pre-Scrutiny
- Introduction of Enforcement of littering from Vehicles – Pre-Scrutiny
- Revision of Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy – Pre-Scrutiny
- Update on Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy – Pre-Scrutiny
- Shared Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2031 – Pre-Scrutiny
- Post-16 Education Task Group Final Report (TBC)

#### 9<sup>th</sup> June (new municipal year)

- Homelessness Prevention Grant Initiatives for 2025/26 (Annual Report)

## Conclusion

This year the Committee has continued to scrutinise issues of high relevance to the Borough, for example health inequalities in priority neighbourhoods of Redditch. In addition, the Committee has pre-scrutinised a number of Executive reports of interest and where necessary made comments for consideration by the Executive Committee. In addition, Overview and Scrutiny has finalised a task group investigation into Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste and is close to finalising the post-16 education in Redditch Task Group, which is expected to conclude by the end of this municipal year. There are two permanent working groups of Overview and Scrutiny looking at the Council's budget and finance issues (Budget Scrutiny) and issues relating to Council's performance in carrying out its functions (Performance Scrutiny).

**The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee expresses his thanks to all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, recognising in particular the valuable contribution made by Members through Task Group investigations and on the Budget and Performance Scrutiny Working Groups.**

For any background information on the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committee in Redditch, please visit <https://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/council/the-council.aspx>

Democratic Services, Redditch Borough Council, Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH  
Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3095 email: [democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

## Appendix A – Task Group Proposal Scoping Document

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

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

Proposer's name and designation		Date of referral	
Proposed topic title			
Link to local priorities including the strategic purposes			
Background to the issue			
Key Objectives  Please keep to SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)			
How long do you think is needed to complete this exercise? (Where possible please estimate the number of weeks, months and meetings required)			

Please return this form to: Democratic Services, Redditch Borough Council, Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH

Email: [democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

\* item has been selected for pre-scrutiny by main O&S Committee  
\*\* item has been selected for pre-scrutiny by Budget Scrutiny

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME

**1 March 2026 to 30 June 2026**

(Published as at 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026)



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

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

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

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

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Councillor 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 Ian Woodall - Portfolio Holder for Finance  
Councillor Monica Stringfellow - Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Safeguarding Responsibilities  
Councillor Juma Begum - Portfolio Holder for Community Spaces and Voluntary Sector  
Councillor Juliet Barker Smith - Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Recreation  
Councillor Bill Hartnett - Portfolio Holder for Housing  
Councillor Jen Snape – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2025-2026 <b>Key:</b> No	Council 2 Mar 2026		Report of Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Mateusz Sliwinski, Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3095
* Climate Change Strategy 2026 to 2031 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 17 Mar 2026 Council 29 Jun 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Matthew Eccles, Climate Change Manager Tel: 01527 881259
* Construction of Redditch Innovation Centre <b>Key:</b> Yes	Executive 17 Mar 2026	This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session	Report of the Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services	Neil Batt, Regeneration Project Delivery Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3119
Empty Homes Strategy <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 17 Mar 2026 Council 29 Jun 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Maria Bailey, Senior Housing Strategy Officer Tel: (01527) 881327

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Grants to Voluntary Bodies Awarding of Grants <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 17 Mar 2026	This report may contain exempt information that may need to be considered in exempt session.	Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Tara Day, Support Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3162
Inclusive Play Policy Statement <b>Key:</b> Yes	Executive 17 Mar 2026		Report of the Assistant Director of Planning and Leisure Services	Ishrat Karimi-Fini, Parks and Events Service Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1204
* Introduction of Enforcement of Littering from Vehicles <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 17 Mar 2026 Council 29 Jun 2026	This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session	Report of the Director of Worcestershire Regulatory Services	Toni Ainscough, Principal Officer (Environmental Enforcement) Tel: 01562 738035
Permission to Revoke the First Homes Policy <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 17 Mar 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Amanda Delahunty, Acting Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1269

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
** Quarter 3 2025/26 Finance Monitoring Report (including Financial Savings) <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 17 Mar 2026 Council 29 Jun 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070
** Quarter 3 2025/26 Performance Monitoring Report <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 17 Mar 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	Rebecca Green, Policy Manager Tel: 01527 881616
Redditch Council Plan Update Report <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 17 Mar 2026 Council 29 Jun 2026		Report of the Assistant Director - Corporate Services and Transformation	Rebecca Green, Policy Manager Tel: 01527 881616
Renters Right Act 2025 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 17 Mar 2026 Council 29 Jun 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Matthew Bough, Acting Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager, Katie Sharp-Fisher Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3120,
* Revision of Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 17 Mar 2026 Council 29 Jun 2026		Report of the Director of Worcestershire Regulatory Services	Toni Ainscough, Principal Officer (Environmental Enforcement) Tel: 01562 738035



Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
* Shared Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2031 <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 17 Mar 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Amanda Delahunty, Acting Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1269
* Housing Decant Policy <b>Key:</b> Yes	Executive 9 Jun 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Jonathan Elger Neighbourhood & Tenancy Manager Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3272
* Leisure Concession Policy Review <b>Key:</b> No	Executive 9 Jun 2026	This report may contain exempt information that might be to be considered in exempt session.	Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services, Assistant Director of Planning and Leisure Services	Chris Wells, Contracts & Utilities Officer Tel: 01527 64252 ext 2559

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**Overview & Scrutiny**

Committee

17<sup>th</sup> February 2026**WORK PROGRAMME 2025-26**

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

**Overview & Scrutiny**

Committee

17<sup>th</sup> February 2026

MEETING DATE	ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED	RELEVANT LEAD
17 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	Quarter 3 Housing Improvement Plan Update – Pre-Scrutiny	Simon Parry, Assistant Director Environmental and Housing Property Services
17 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	Quarter 3 Housing Performance – Pre-Scrutiny	Simon Parry, Assistant Director Environmental and Housing Property Services
17 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	Repairs and Maintenance and Damp and Mould Policies – Pre-Scrutiny	Andrew Rainbow, Housing Property Services Manager
17 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2025-26	Councillor Matthew Dormer, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
17 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	Local Government Re-Organisation (LGR) update	Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation
16 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Shared Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2031 – Pre-Scrutiny	Amanda Delahunty, Acting Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager
16 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Redditch Partnership Annual Report	Della McCarthy, Bromsgrove and Redditch Partnership Manager
16 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Climate Change Strategy 2026 to 2031 – Pre-Scrutiny	Matthew Eccles, Climate Change Manager
16 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Construction of Redditch Innovation Centre – Pre-Scrutiny (Previously called: Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (DMIC)) <i>(Note: This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session).</i>	Neil Batt, Regeneration Project Delivery Manager

**Overview & Scrutiny**

Committee

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<b>16<sup>th</sup> March 2026</b>	TBC - Update on Environmental Crime Enforcement (incl. fly tipping enforcement)	Toni Ainscouth, Principal Officer (Environmental Enforcement) WRS
<b>16<sup>th</sup> March 2026</b>	TBC - Revision of Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy – Pre-Scrutiny	Toni Ainscouth, Principal Officer (Environmental Enforcement) WRS
<b>16<sup>th</sup> March 2026</b>	TBC - Introduction of Enforcement of littering from vehicles – Pre-Scrutiny	Toni Ainscouth, Principal Officer (Environmental Enforcement) WRS
<b>8<sup>th</sup> June 2026</b>	Housing Decant Policy – Pre-Scrutiny	Jonathan Elger, Neighbourhood and Tenancy Manager
<b>8<sup>th</sup> June 2026</b>	Leisure Concession Policy Review – Pre-Scrutiny	Chris Wells, Contracts and Utilities Officer
<b>8<sup>th</sup> June 2026</b>	Homelessness Prevention Grant Initiatives from 2025/26 (Annual Report) (Recommendation by Councillor Warhurst at 12/1/2026 meeting)	

# Overview & Scrutiny

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## ITEMS WITH MEETING DATE TO BE CONFIRMED

MEETING DATE	ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED	RELEVANT LEAD
TBC	Parking Enforcement – Management of Contract (Executive report to be scrutinised when it becomes available)	Simon Parry, Assistant Director Environmental and Housing Property Services
TBC	Report on Homelessness, Food Bank use and associated metrics	Judith Willis, Assistant Director Community and Housing Services
TBC	Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) update on fly tipping enforcement and data in Redditch – currently due to be considered as part of envirocrime update reports in March 2026	Simon Wilkes, Director of Worcestershire Regulatory Services
TBC	Auxerre House Refurbishment – to be considered when the Executive report becomes available	Andrew Rainbow, Housing Property Services Manager

## Working Groups:

- Budget Scrutiny Working Group**

MEETING DATE	ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED
20/02/2026	Medium Term Financial Plan Budget Report 2026/27 to 2028/29 including Treasury Management Strategy, Capital Strategy and investment Strategy
12/03/2026	Q3 2025/26 Performance Monitoring Report  Q3 2025/26 Finance Monitoring Report (including Financial Savings)

- Performance Scrutiny Working Group**

A meeting covering an update on Council's Tree Maintenance took place on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2025. Further meeting dates remain to be confirmed.

# Overview & Scrutiny

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## Task Groups

- **Post-16 Education Task Group**

This task group is due to hold a further meeting and be finalised by mid-February 2026.

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