



Council

Mon 2 Mar
2026

7.00 pm (or as soon as the Executive
Committee meeting immediately prior
to Council has finished)

Oakenshaw Community Centre,
Castleditch Lane, B98 7YB

If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
Jess Bayley-Hill

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GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

Please note that this is a public meeting and will be live streamed for general access via the Council's YouTube channel.

You are able to see and hear the livestream of the meeting from the Committee Pages of the website, alongside the agenda for the meeting.

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

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

This is a public meeting and Members of the public are welcome to attend to observe the proceedings.

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 and for any such items the live stream will be suspended and that part of the meeting will not be recorded.

Council

Monday, 2nd March, 2026

7.00 pm (or as soon as the
*Executive Committee meeting
immediately prior to Council
has finished*)

Oakenshaw Community Centre

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs:	Joanna Kane (Mayor)	Sid Khan
	David Munro (Deputy Mayor)	Wanda King
	Joe Baker	Alan Mason
	Juliet Barker Smith	Sachin Mathur
	Juma Begum	Gemma Monaco
	William Boyd	Rita Rogers
	Brandon Clayton	Gary Slim
	Claire Davies	Jen Snape
	Matthew Dormer	Jane Spilsbury
	James Fardoe	Monica Stringfellow
	Andrew Fry	Craig Warhurst
	Bill Hartnett	Ian Woodall
	Sharon Harvey	Paul Wren
	Chris Holz	

1. Welcome

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest

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

4. Minutes (Pages 7 - 20)

5. Announcements

To consider Announcements under Procedure Rule 10:

- a) Mayor's Announcements
- b) The Leader's Announcements
- c) Chief Executive's Announcements.

6. Executive Committee

Executive Committee Minutes - From the meeting due to be held on 23rd February 2026

As this meeting of the Executive Committee will be taking place after the agenda for the Council meeting has been published, the minutes will follow in a supplementary pack for Council.

6.1 Pet Cremation (Pages 21 - 34)

6.2 Repairs and Maintenance and Damp and Mould Policies (Pages 35 - 64)

6.3 Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/2027 to 2028/29 including Treasury Management Strategy, Capital Strategy and Investment Strategy

This report will follow in a supplementary pack.

Please note that under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the Council is required to take a named vote when a decision is made on the budget calculation at a budget decision meeting of the Council.

6.3.1 Alternative Budget (If Any)

Note that under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the Council is required to take a named vote when a decision is made on the budget calculation, including in respect of any alternative budgets that are proposed, at a budget decision meeting of the Council.

Recommendations from the Executive Committee meeting due to take place on 2nd March 2026

6.4 Council Tax Resolution 2026/27

The Council Tax Resolutions will follow in a supplementary pack for this Council meeting.

Please note that as Worcestershire County Council may not agree their Council Tax precept at their Council meeting scheduled to take place on 26th February 2026, there is the possibility that part or all of this report will need to

be considered at an extra meeting of Council on 6th March 2026.

Under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, any Councillor who is 2 or more months in arrears with their Council tax payments cannot participate in any item at the Council meeting concerning the budget.

Please note that under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the Council is required to take a named vote when a decision is made on Council tax at a budget decision meeting of the Council.

7. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2025-2026 (Pages 65 - 94)

8. Urgent Business - Record of Decisions (Pages 95 - 96)

There has been one urgent decision taken since the previous Council meeting in respect of the appointment of a contractor to install kitchens in Council House properties, following receipt of notice that the Council's previous supplier had gone into administration.

9. Urgent Business - general (if any)

To consider any additional items exceptionally agreed by the Mayor as Urgent Business in accordance with the powers vested in him by virtue of Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

(This power should be exercised only in cases where there are genuinely special circumstances which require consideration of an item which has not previously been published on the Order of Business for the meeting.)

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MINUTES**Present:**

Councillor Joanna Kane (Mayor), Councillor David Munro (Deputy Mayor), and Councillors Juliet Barker Smith, Juma Begum, Brandon Clayton, Claire Davies, Matthew Dormer, James Fardoe, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Sharon Harvey, Chris Holz, Sid Khan, Wanda King, Sachin Mathur, Rita Rogers, Gary Slim, Jen Snape, Jane Spilsbury, Monica Stringfellow, Ian Woodall and Paul Wren

Officers:

Claire Felton, Debra Goodall, John Leach, Julie Lorraine and Guy Revans

Principal Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley-Hill

62. WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed all those present to the meeting.

63. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Joe Baker, William Boyd, Alan Mason, Gemma Monaco and Craig Warhurst.

64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

During consideration of this item, Councillor Ian Woodall delivered a statement apologising to Council for some comments that he had made at the extraordinary meeting of Council held on 13th January 2026. In doing so, Councillor Woodall also apologised to the gentleman who had been sat in the public gallery to whom some of these comments had been directed. Members were asked to note that Councillor Woodall had already apologised to the Monitoring Officer and he advised Council that he had referred himself to the Council's standards process for further investigation.

Council

Monday, 26th January, 2026

65. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were made at the meeting:

a) The Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor circulated a list of civic engagements that she had attended since the previous meeting of Council (Appendix 1).

During consideration of this item, the Mayor thanked everybody involved in organising the Holocaust Memorial commemorations which had taken place on 24th January 2026. In particular, Ms Lejla Golos, who had spoken about her personal experiences at the event, was thanked for her attendance.

Members were informed that the Mayor's civic service was due to take place at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church on Sunday 1st February 2026. A number of Councillors had already booked to attend this service and Members were urged to contact the Mayor if they had not already done so but wished to attend.

b) The Leader's Announcements

On behalf of the Council, the Leader welcomed Ms Julie Lorraine, who had been appointed the Council's interim Section 151 Officer and Director of Finance to the meeting.

Members were advised that the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Property Services and her team had secured the Council's £2.2 million funding as a member of the former Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP). Council was informed that this funding would be invested in the Redditch innovation centre.

In concluding her remarks, the Leader noted that Saturday 24th January 2026 had marked the fiftieth anniversary of the central library in Redditch.

c) The Chief Executive's Announcements

The Chief Executive confirmed that he had no announcements to make on this occasion.

66. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 9) (TO FOLLOW)

There were no Questions on Notice on this occasion.

67. MOTIONS ON NOTICE (PROCEDURE RULE 11) (TO FOLLOW)

There were no Motions on Notice for consideration at this meeting.

68. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEQuarter 2 Financial Monitoring Report 2025/26

Council considered the Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring Report 2025/26. Members were advised that an overspend was envisaged for 2025/26 as well as for subsequent years, with the primary cause being a relatively low local government financial settlement for District Councils. There was therefore a need to be prudent.

The Council retained reserves above the minimum threshold and officers were working hard to ensure that a balanced budget could be achieved. In the meantime, oversight of departmental budgets had increased and some potential savings had been identified.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Ian Woodall and seconded by Councillor Juma Begum.

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

Consideration was given to a report detailing proposed arrangements for the distribution of homelessness grant funding, including rough sleeper and domestic abuse grant funding, received from the Government for the financial years 2026/27 to 2028/29. Members were asked to note that the report had been scrutinised in detail at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, where the proposals had received support and a request had been made for arrangements to be introduced to monitor use of the funding on an ongoing basis.

Reference was made to the impact that homelessness grant funding had had in recent years and Members were asked to note that this had been used effectively, resulting in a reduction in costs associated with use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation. There were four organisations that received a significant amount of the funding, including Redditch Borough Council, which had allocated some funds to support the employment of particular officer posts.

In discussing the matter, Members commented that homelessness was a complex issue which extended beyond, although included, consideration of rough sleeping. The Council's preferred approach was to attempt to take action that would help to prevent homelessness from occurring.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Bill Hartnett and seconded by Councillor Juma Begum.

Pay Policy 2026 – 2027

Members were advised that there was a statutory requirement for an annual report to be presented to Council in respect of the pay awarded to staff at the authority. There was a need for the authority to be transparent about pay scales as well as to remain competitive in order to attract and retain staff.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Jane Spilsbury and seconded by Councillor Ian Woodall.

Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendations 2026/27

The Independent Remuneration Panel's (IRP) report in respect of proposed allowances payable to Members in the 2026/27 financial year was presented for Council's consideration.

Members were advised that in reaching their conclusions, the IRP had reviewed current allowances and had also considered benchmarking data. Based on the evidence that had been gathered, the IRP was proposing that the basic allowance payable to Councillors should increase to £6,095 in 2026/27 as well as changes to the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) payable to Councillors in particular positions of authority. Council was informed that Members did not have to approve the IRP's recommendations but did need to give due regard to the IRP's proposals.

At the Executive Committee meeting held on 13th January 2026, Members had endorsed the IRP's proposals in respect of travel expenses, subsistence allowances and the carer's allowance. However, the Executive Committee had proposed that SRAs should remain unchanged, which involved SRAs being paid as a multiplier of the basic allowance in 2023/24 of £4,732. The Executive Committee had not made any proposals in respect of the basic allowance and had instead referred this matter for the consideration of Council.

The basic allowance that had been proposed by the IRP was discussed. Members noted that in the IRP's report the suggested basic allowance of £6,095 had been recorded as a 4.62 per cent increase on 2025/26. However, Council was informed that the IRP assumed its previous proposals had been accepted by District Councils and did not take into account, when recording this information, that Redditch Borough Council had not been increasing

allowances in recent years in line with the level proposed by the IRP. When this information was taken into consideration, the basic allowance proposed by the IRP would actually represent an increase of 21.53 per cent in Redditch if it was accepted. The suggestion was made that an increase to the basic allowance on this scale would be difficult for Members to justify.

As an alternative, the proposal was made that the Council's current basic allowance of £5,015.35 per year should increase by 3.4 per cent, in line with inflation, to £5,185.87. This would represent an additional cost to the Council overall of £4,604.04. Members discussed this proposed increase and in doing so noted that if this approach was agreed, the allowances paid to Redditch Borough Councillors would continue to be lower than that paid to other District Councillors in Worcestershire. However, Members agreed to support this proposal, noting that allowances would need to be considered further and standardised when work on Local Government Reorganisation was completed.

During consideration of this item, questions were raised about the allowances paid to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and the reasons why these were not addressed in the IRP's report. Clarification was provided that the IRP was not tasked with reviewing allowances paid to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, which were discretionary payments that the Council chose to make.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Sharon Harvey and seconded by Councillor Jane Spilsbury.

Business Rates – Discretionary Rates Relief Policy 2026/27

The Business Rates – Discretionary Rates Relief Policy 2026/27 was discussed and Members noted that the policy enabled the Council to grant discretionary relief to eligible Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations. The policy also provided the authority with the power to grant relief to businesses based in rural locations. This was considered to be helpful as often only a small number of businesses operated in rural areas and this relief could help to ensure that the businesses remained sustainable.

Members noted that the policy had been scrutinised at a meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group. In considering the matter, the group had concluded that many eligible organisations would not be aware that this relief was available and the suggestion was made that the policy needed to be actively promoted through ongoing communications.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Ian Woodall and seconded by Councillor Sharon Harvey.

Council Tax Base Report 2026/27

Council was advised that a report was presented every year on the subject of the Council Tax Base for the local authority area. This report needed to be approved in order for Council Tax to be resolved for the following financial year.

During consideration of this item, Members noted that Redditch Borough Council was responsible, as a District Council, for collecting Council Tax on behalf of precepting authorities operating in the Borough. Questions were raised about whether one of these precepting authorities, Worcestershire County Council, had clarified their arrangements for setting their Council Tax precept in 2026/27. Clarification was provided that Worcestershire County Council had a Council meeting scheduled to take place on 26th February 2026 when the authority's budget, including Council Tax, was due to be considered. Worcestershire County Council had also announced that it would have a reserve date for an extra Council meeting on 6th March 2026 in case needed for Council Tax and budget setting purposes. Council Officers continued to liaise with Worcestershire County Council regarding their arrangements and any developments would be taken on board when setting Redditch Borough Council's budget and considering Council Tax resolutions.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Ian Woodall and seconded by Councillor David Munro.

Council Tax – Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums 2026/27

Members were informed that the Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums Policy 2026/27 provided the Council with the flexibility to use discretion in respect of Council Tax, on a case-by-case basis, where residents were experiencing personal difficulties.

In respect of empty homes, Members were asked to note that the proposals would help to address Council Tax arrangements for second homeowners. In Redditch, the number of householders in this position were likely to be lower than in some Districts. However, there were other reasons why properties might be empty and the policy would also apply in relation to these homes.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Ian Woodall and seconded by Councillor Bill Hartnett.

Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27

The Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27 was considered by Members. It was noted that the scheme was reported annually,

thereby enabling the Council to provide support to eligible residents. Within the scheme, support was linked to income bands for residents who were of working age. Members were asked to note that there were separate arrangements in place in terms of Council Tax Support available to eligible pensioners.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Ian Woodall and seconded by Councillor Sharon Harvey.

Discretionary Council Tax Reduction Policy 2026/27

Council considered the Discretionary Council Tax Reduction Policy 2026/27 and in doing so noted that this policy would provide the Council with the discretion to act in a compassionate manner and to reduce Council Tax when people were diagnosed with a terminal illness and were no longer able to work. The potential for Councils to provide a discount to Council Tax for residents in this position had been encouraged by the organisation, Marie Curie.

Members discussed the discretionary relief available for people who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and in so doing questioned whether residents would be aware of this support. To address this situation, the suggestion was made that the availability of this discretionary relief should be actively promoted by the Council.

Reference was also made to the Council Tax discounts available through the policy to care leavers living in Redditch. This approach had been in place in the Borough for some time and Members suggested that it had had a positive impact on local care leavers.

During consideration of this item, questions were raised about whether the discounts that had been proposed following promotion by Marie Curie would only benefit residents receiving support from Marie Curie. In response, clarification was provided that the discounts would be available to residents who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and they would not need to be in receipt of support from Marie Curie to be eligible.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Ian Woodall and seconded by Councillor Monica Stringfellow.

Housing Revenue Account Rent Setting 2026/27

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Rent Setting 2026/27 report was presented for Council's consideration.

Members were advised that there had been a lot of investment in Council housing, including the purchase of new properties and the

introduction of a Damp and Mould team. Increases were proposed in the report to the rent paid by tenants and to service charges. The fees, even once increases had been applied, would continue to compare favourably to other service providers in the social housing sector, in terms of affordability for tenants on low incomes.

During consideration of this item, concerns were raised about the impact that an increase in rent and service charges could have on tenants on low incomes. Reference was made to the fact that there were areas of deprivation in the Borough. Concerns were raised that some tenants would struggle to afford the increased fees and this could result in an increase in demand for support from local food banks. However, in response, it was noted that Council tenants were paying some of the lowest rents available locally, although the rent levels also compared favourably at a regional level. In addition, Members were asked to note that Tenancy Officers employed by the Council could help to arrange for advice and support to be provided when tenants reported that they were struggling with their finances.

Questions were also raised about the services that tenants could expect to receive as a result of the increase in rent and service charges. Clarification was provided that the service charges helped to cover maintenance costs associated with buildings in which Council House properties were located. In addition, it would help to pay for new Totalmobile software and it was anticipated that this would have a positive impact on the efficiency of service delivery. There were also ongoing costs for Housing Services, including the need to install kitchens and bathrooms where properties needed to be refurbished.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Bill Hartnett and seconded by Councillor Ian Woodall.

Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/27 to 2028/29 Fees and Charges and Consultation Outcome including Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budget Recommendations

A report was presented on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2026/27 to 2028/29 proposed fees and charges and recommendations from the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Board in respect of budget contributions.

In considering the report, Members were asked to note that the financial settlement from Government for District Councils had been challenging in recent years. An additional sum of funding had been received but this would not offset the higher rate of inflation impacting on costs. In the medium-term, the Council was therefore

currently forecasting a deficit position for 2026/27 and 2027/28. However, it was anticipated that the deficit could be reduced for 2025/26, which would have a positive impact on the starting position for subsequent financial years.

Public consultation had been held in respect of budget proposals over the festive period and there had been a positive response rate. This had included a significant number of residents who had indicated that they would support a 4 per cent increase to fees and charges in order to ensure the continuing delivery of valuable services.

The content of the report was discussed in detail and in doing so Members commented on the projected deficit in the budget of circa £435,000 for 2025/26 and potentially in excess of £1 million in 2026/27. Questions were raised about how the Council would generate funding or savings to address these gaps in the budget. In response, Members were asked to note that the Council had £27 million in earmarked reserves which could potentially provide funds to help address these gaps. In addition, Members were asked to note that the figures for 2025/26 were based on data as at the end of the second quarter of the financial year and it was likely that the position would change by the end of the financial year. In the meantime, there would be a need to remain financially prudent.

Consideration was given to the public consultation exercise that had been undertaken in respect of the proposed budget. Members welcomed the responses that had been received from the public, although expressed disappointment that the number of responses had declined compared to the previous year. In future, hopes were raised that the Council would be able to engage with a more diverse cohort of local residents and the suggestion was made that all Members could assist with this aim, by encouraging residents living in their wards to respond during consultation processes.

Reference was made to Local Government Reorganisation and the potential restraints that would be placed on Council expenditure as Worcestershire progressed towards Vesting Day for the new Unitary Authority(ies). In this context, the suggestion was made that there was a need for careful management of the Council's assets and budget and the local authority would not be able to spend all of the earmarked reserves to achieve a balanced position.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Ian Woodall and seconded by Councillor Jane Spilsbury.

RESOLVED that

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Monday, 26th January, 2026

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- 1) the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 25th November 2025 be approved and all recommendations adopted; and
 - 2) the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 13th January 2026 be approved and all recommendations adopted, subject to the following addition in respect of Minute Item No. 74:
 - a) the basic allowance payable to Members in the 2026/27 financial year be increased to £5,185.87 per year.
69. **CONSTITUTION REVIEW REPORT**

Members considered a report detailing recommendations that had been agreed at a meeting of the Constitutional Review Working Party (CRWP) held on 6th January 2026.

Council was informed that the CRWP had considered a recommendation that had been referred by the Licensing Committee together with proposed changes to the Scheme of Delegations for Regulatory Services that would help to ensure that the delegations were consistent with the content of the taxi handbook. In addition, the CRWP had discussed the potential to introduce a time limit for the consideration of Motions on Notice at Council meetings and had suggested that there should be a limit of one hour, in line with arrangements that were already in place at Bromsgrove District Council, although this time could be extended with the agreement of Council.

In considering the matter, Members were asked to note that in 2024, the Council had agreed to a 12-month trial period in which licensing officers would consider applications to renew licences when a licensed vehicle was older than the threshold set in Licensing policies. This trial had been followed by a public consultation, in respect of preferred arrangements moving forward and a clear majority of respondents had indicated that they would prefer for these applications to be resolved by Licensing Officers rather than at a Licensing Sub-Committee hearing.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Jane Spilsbury and seconded by Councillor David Munro.

RESOLVED that

- 1) authority be delegated to Licensing officers to determine renewal applications for licences to use vehicles as hackney carriages or private hire vehicles where the vehicle does not meet the Council's required criteria in respect of the age of the vehicle;

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- 2) the Officer Scheme of Delegations in respect of Regulatory Services be updated to align the delegations with the content of the Taxi Handbook; and
- 3) the Council Procedure Rules be amended to introduce a time limit of one hour for the consideration of Motions on Notice at Council meetings, which may only be exceeded with the agreement of Council.

70. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

The Mayor advised that one urgent decision had been taken since the previous meeting to appoint Ms Julie Lorraine as the Council's interim Section 151 Officer and Director of Finance.

71. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL (IF ANY)

There was no urgent business for consideration on this occasion.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.20 pm

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Appendix 1 - Mayoral Engagements during November 2025

Date	Event	Venue
Tuesday 4 th	Visited the following charities with the High Sheriff: AHead of Wellbeing, Bound Together CIC, Inspire Support Services, Primrose Hospice, Batchley Support Group Redditch Communities, Where Next Day Service and the Redi Centre	Adelaide Street Winyates Craft Centre Kingfisher Centre Prospect Hill Wellesbourne Close South Street
Wednesday 5 th	Presentation of badge to Mayoral Cadet at 1 st Redditch Scout Group's bonfire night	Hadlow Close, Greenlands
Friday 7 th	Attended the reopening of Kidderminster Town Hall following major refurbishment	Kidderminster Town Hall
Sunday 9 th	Remembrance Sunday	Redditch Town Centre
Sunday 9 th	Veterans' breakfast organised by Redditch Round Table	South Redditch Sports and Social Club
Sunday 9 th	Opened VIP fashion show	Riley Boutique, Kingfisher Centre
Tuesday 11 th	Armistice Day	The Cenotaph, Plymouth Road
Tuesday 11 th	Visited artwork remembering the soldiers who were shot at dawn during the First World War	Redditch Library
Friday 14 th	Attended RoadPeace West Midlands and West Mercia's Act of Remembrance	The Boathouse, Arrow Valley Country Park
Saturday 15 th	Joined Redditch One World Link's fundraising lunch in aid of Friends of Mtwara	Cookhill Baptist Church
Sunday 16 th	Helped Worcestershire Interfaith Forum serve coffee, tea and cakes to hospital staff, patients and visitors to mark Mitzvah Day	Alexandra Hospital
Saturday 22 nd	Attended piano recital by Rebekah Thacker, in aid of the refurbishment of the parish hall at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Redditch	St John Fisher and St Thomas More RC Church, Feckenham
Saturday 29 th	Christmas Lights Switch On	Redditch town centre
Saturday 29 th	Christmas Lights Switch On (attended by the Deputy Mayor)	Astwood Bank

Mayoral Engagements during December 2025

Date	Event	Venue
Thursday 4 th	Attended the blessing of the tree for the Primrose Hospice's Lights of Love campaign	Thomas Brothers, Redditch
Monday 8 th	Attended the Make Christmas Special Toy Appeal's pop-up shop	Kingfisher Centre
Tuesday 9 th	Attended the reception class's Nativity performance	The Vaynor First School, Headless Cross
Wednesday 10 th	Attended Church Hill Big Local's Christmas fayre	Willow Trees Community Centre
Friday 12 th	Opened Renew Elec Training's new premises	Moons Moat
Thursday 18 th	Joined community Christmas lunch organised by Christ Church Community Project	Christ Church, Matchborough
Sunday 21 st	Carols by Candlelight (attended by the Deputy Mayor)	St Stephen's, Redditch

Mayoral Engagements during January 2026

Date	Event	Venue
Saturday 3 rd	Kerala Cultural Association (KCA) Christmas and New Year celebration	Trinity High School
Thursday 15 th	Visited Inspire Support Services with the High Sheriff, who presented Karen Martin with an award in recognition of her service to the community	Winyates Craft Centre
Friday 16 th	Attended Burns Supper hosted by the Redditch Catenian Association	The Tardebigge
Saturday 24 th	Attended commemoration service and indoor event for Holocaust Memorial Day	The Redditch Holocaust Memorial Marker and the Ecumenical Centre
Saturday 24 th	Attended the Mayor of Alcester's Burns Supper in aid of Alcester Day Care	Eric Payne Community Centre, Alcester

Executive Committee

23rd February 2026

Pet Cremation Report

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Sharon Harvey
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Simon Parry, Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services
Report Author Adam Smith	Job Title: Bereavement Services Manager Contact adam.smith@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk email: Contact Tel: 01527 62174 ext 3352
Wards Affected	Abbey Ward (All wards)
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priority	Economy, Regeneration, & Prosperity
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that:-

- 1) the delivery of a pet cremation service at the Abbey Crematorium be approved.

Subject to approval of resolution 1 above, the Executive Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND** that:-

- 2) A budget of £50,000.00 is added to the Capital Programme for 2026/27 within the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the purchase of the Pet Cremator Machine and all ancillary plant equipment associated with the delivery of this service.
- 3) the following fees be charged for the Pet Cremation service:
 - a) small pets £50-£145;
 - b) cats £145 -£175; and
 - c) dogs £175 - £250.

2. BACKGROUND

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Executive Summary

- 2.1** This proposal introduces a dedicated Pet Cremation Service at Abbey Cemetery, Redditch, designed to complement our respected human bereavement services and establish a sustainable new income stream for the council. The service leverages our experienced cremator operators to deliver compassionate, high-quality care for pet owners across Redditch, Bromsgrove, neighbouring areas, and.
- 2.2** Abbey Cemetery's rear yard is the preferred location, enabling discreet integration with existing operations, minimal disruption, efficient oversight, as well as an emphasis on utilising operational space within the current footprint. We will secure APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency) licensing, procure and install the cremator, and operate to APPCC (The Association of Private Pet Cemeteries and Crematoria) code of practice—introducing phased enhancements such as memorial viewing areas. Financial modelling (7 cremations/day capacity) indicates **breakeven by Month 5** and strong income potential thereafter. Key risks—staff unsettlement and public perception—will be mitigated through restructure/upskilling and transparent communications.
- 2.3** It is important to note that this service will be treated totally separate to the current human cremation service both in terms of operational equipment used to carry this service out, but also from a customer service perspective.

2.4 Vision and Mission

Redditch and Bromsgrove Bereavement Services operates with empathy, care and understanding at its core. Our mission is to provide the highest standard of cremation and burial services, offering choice, affordability, and unwavering support to those coping with bereavement. We are committed to serving the community's needs with dignity and professionalism. These principles also guide our expansion into pet cremations, ensuring a seamless and compassionate service for residents who wish to honour their beloved pets with the same respect and care.

These principles underpin the expansion into pet cremations, providing a seamless and compassionate offer for residents.

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- 2.5** Pet cremation and memorialisation is among the fastest-growing areas in the UK with 57% of households (16.2 million) own pets, with the pet population up from 35 million to 38 million (+9%) between 2022 and 2023. Worcestershire recorded 259,900 households in 2021, up 8.4% since 2011; applying the 57% ownership rate suggests roughly 148,000 pet-owning households locally, with further demand likely from adjoining counties. The UK pet funeral market is expected to grow from £110 million in 2024 to £195 million by 2030, driven by owners seeking dignified, personalised services. These trends show strong local and national demand, making a new pet cremation service a timely and viable opportunity.
- 2.6** This new element of bereavement service delivery will create a new revenue stream further improving the cost effectiveness of the overall operation. The effect of this additional income will be to release funds elsewhere within the council for use in other key areas of service delivery.
- 2.7** In 2016 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council launched the first council owned Pet cremation service and have successfully developed an integrated service for their local communities. This has provided the business model for this project providing the evidence and case study necessary to make a success of our new facility.

2.8 Local Market Landscape

Three established pet crematoria operate within a 15–45 minute drive radius of Redditch and the local competition in this market sees the closest pet cremator located within 10 miles of Redditch Crematorium, the 2nd closest at 15 miles, and the 3rd closest over 20 miles away.

This underscores both market maturity and the opportunity for a high-quality public service alternative.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1** A review of how this service will work operationally has been undertaken and should approval be given, we will place it here. Part of the considerations at the crematorium end of the operation are as follows.
- 3.2** We assessed two potential locations within Abbey Cemetery for installation, utilities, accessibility, and aesthetics. The crematorium rear yard is the only viable option for the reasons described below.

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- Discreet siting behind the crematorium, out of sight from human funeral services.
- Minor gate reconfiguration to optimise access and animal transfer.
- Ability to run power; efficient incorporation into current staff workflows.
- Future-proofing for additional filtration systems if regulations change.

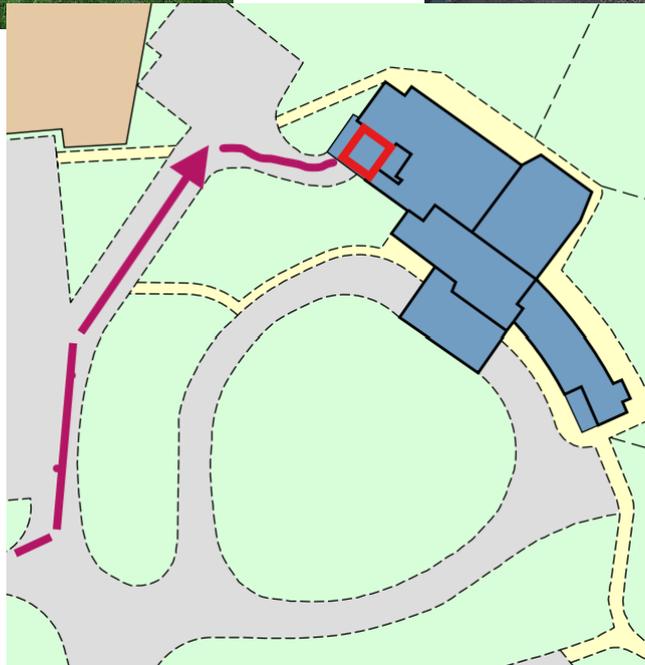


Image: Redditch Crematorium highlighting direction for pet cremation service.

3.3 Regulatory and Governance

- Apply for APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency) licence to operate within government standards.

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- Operate under APPCC (The Association of Private Pet Cemeteries and Crematoria) code of practice and seek listing among recommended pet crematoria.

3.4 Project Plan and Key Milestones

- Confirm site and aesthetics, coordinating with Property Services on enabling works (power, fuel, drainage).
- Stakeholder communications, any public consultation requirement, already reached out to Veterinary practices over last 3 months of 2025, WRS and council contract adjustments.
- Procure cremator (lead time 14–18 weeks); schedule installation and infrastructure works.
- Transfer chilled storage from Redditch and Bromsgrove depots to Abbey Cemetery; align Regulatory Service processes.
- Install cremator, complete supplier handover, and deliver comprehensive staff training; commence operations under APPCC membership.

3.5 Key Milestones**Phase 1 – Core Operations:**

- Establish process with local Regulatory Service to bring roadkill to our facility.
- Inform local veterinary practices of the option to bring deceased animals. Prices will drive budget, and are designed to be competitive.
- Continue proactive public communications via social media and targeted press releases.

Phase 2 – Client Experience Enhancements:

- Create a designated office/memorial area to offer memorials and viewing options.

3.6 Risk Management

- Risk of inaction: missing a significant revenue opportunity and leadership position in integrated bereavement care.

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- Staff unsettlement: mitigated via 1 new post (grade 4 post already in budget, but a grade 5 post required), consultation, and upskilling, including official training.
- Public reaction: mitigate through clear communications (website, social media, stakeholder forums, member committees).

3.7 Financial Case and Procurement

Manufacturers offer a range of cremators—from £23k for units without filtration up to £500k for fully filtered systems with ancillary equipment.

Our preferred option is to go with is the Addfield PET200 for the following reasons;

- It is the most cost-effective front-loaded cremator on the market, it is more labour intensive for staff to use a top loaded machine. With a front-loaded machine, mechanical wheels can be used to respectfully transfer the deceased animal from vehicle to machine or storage without staff having to man handle the carcass.
- This machine is manufactured in the UK and has all spare parts within the UK also.
- Remote maintenance would be set up if the software on the machine was to have an issue.
- Maintenance agreement being offered by supplier incorporates all staff initial training into the purchase and installation cost. Supplier representative would remain on site with staff for the first week of operation.

Note: Any and all procurement regulations will be adhered to throughout any required tender process.

Ramp-up utilisation (Months 1–9): 20–50% per week, with corresponding monthly income and surplus projections (see original table). Breakeven in Month 5 at ~30% weekly utilisation.

3.8 Marketing and Launch Timeline

- January - March: Agree on which cremator to be ordered through procurement process, pre-installation communications via website, appropriate communications made to Vets and any other potential stakeholders regarding this new service, B&RC channels, and social media; councillor site visit; direct mail to database; publish new price list.

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- March/April 2026: Launch with announcements via social media, website, B&RBC communications, and local papers; inform councillors, vets, animal charities, and suppliers; staff ready to offer the new service.
- 3-month intervals (June/September/December): Follow-up promotion via social media and R&B Communications.
- Capacity and Revenue Assumptions:
Benchmark capacity: 7 pets/day × 5 days = 35/week ⇒
£7,000/week at 100% utilisation.

3.9 Planning Considerations

A relevant Heritage Statement has been created and the crematorium is not listed or on the Redditch Local Heritage List but would be considered a non-designated heritage asset due to its architectural interest and its position in the townscape. It is described in the Worcestershire Pevsner as, 'Crematorium, Bordesley Lane. An excellent example, on an elevated site, by Richard Twentyman (Twentyman, Percy and Partners), 1971 -3; planned as early as 1955. Brick, copper roofs. Curving memorial corridor, its E wall fully glazed, leading to the chapel, also with its own flat-roofed porte cochere. Reverential interior, with angled timber-slatted roof, curving white roughcast side walls, and glazed E wall behind the catafalque (with view across the Arrow Valley). -Small detached office in matching style.'

Adjacent to the site is the scheduled monument at Bordesley Abbey, see the link below to the description. The crematorium is within the setting of the scheduled monument, however the pet cremator will be to the west of the site, so would not impact on the setting of the scheduled monument.

An official Operating Statement will be confirmed based on this report being passed through to the next phase. However, an operating model of how this service will work is detailed in the next paragraph.

3.10 Operating Model

As stated earlier in this report, we are looking at applying charges of the following: small pets £50-£145, cats £145 -£175, dogs £175 - £250. This enables the service to have some flexibility regards breeds.

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3.11 Administration

- Bookings will be made via phone call or email to the office, which will be input into Abavus and confirmation of booking sent out to company/vets practice who are handling the animal and family.
- Relevant information taken will be; name, contact information of pet owner (if not WRS contract, e.g. roadkill). Name of animal, animal type and any breed details needed in line with APHA licence and APPCC.
- Day of cremation, usual cremation monitoring details will apply; temperatures, emissions monitoring, times charged in/raked out. All records kept in line with regulatory service requirements.
- Booking times will be organised to ensure no clashes are created between animal and human cremation slots. In the early phases of this process, an early morning drop off time will be allocated, as well as an end of operational day time. As the business and numbers grow, timeslots will be managed accordingly as the average turnaround time between death and cremation for animals is shorter, we will be able to allocate time slots that have not been utilised for human services. For context the average time for human cremations between death and funeral service is roughly two weeks but often goes up to 3 weeks in busier periods.

3.12 Transfer of animals/ storage/ cremation operation.

- Deceased animal will be expected to be delivered to rear of crematorium building to the west of the site at the back yard gates at agreed time of booking, in a suitable vehicle, in a covered material that is of natural fibres.
- Signage will be in place in order to manage the logistics at key points of the cemetery, Pet Cremation will be directed to the left of the crematorium building whilst human funeral services will be directed straight on to the large entrance at the south face of the building.
- The deceased pet will be placed on to a suitable set of mechanical wheels that the team will use to bring animal from the vehicle to either the cremator if it is up to temperature or placed onto suitable racking. The deceased pet will not be visible to the public or visitors/contractors who may be in the vicinity of the working area. Suitable ID tag will be placed onto the animal from the moment it is received by the team.

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- After cremation is complete, the remains will be cremulated and poured into a suitable biodegradable urn and stored appropriately. ID card that was originally placed on deceased will have been tagged onto the machine during the cremation, then placed with the ashes/urn afterwards maintaining a dignified process for the animals loved ones to have peace of mind in our processes.

3.13 Staffing

- In order to ensure all elements of Bereavement Services are covered 100% a business case will be submitted in the coming weeks for a new post which will incorporate both human and pet cremations as well as other elements of the service. Therefore, a rota can be created where staff cover pet cremations on a weekly basis as well as other elements. A grade 4 post has already been budgeted for from past staffing structure proposal, a grade 5 post will be an appropriate level for this requirement, therefore a further on cost of roughly 5K per year to current staff structure.
- Shift patterns will be created to coincide with booking slots, **potentially an 8 – 4 early shift and a 10-6 later shift to be confirmed.**

3.14 Equipment requirements

- Pet Cremator
- Mechanical wheels for transfer of carcass.
- Storage racking, up to 10 spaces.
- PPE
- Fridge.
- Cremulator

3.15 Further Considerations

- Soft rebranding to integrate pet services into Bereavement Services (e.g., logo/crest/staff uniform).
- Online shop (integrated or standalone) for memorials and guidance, building on comparable practice (e.g., Worcester City Council).

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- On-site card payments via Stripe handheld devices to enhance user friendliness for families, suppliers, and veterinary practices.
- Abavus integration: All records on new council system. This will help develop a customer database for when memorial packages are available.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**4.1 Capital**

- Pet cremator £35,000.00
- Mechanical wheels £3,000.00
- Storage racking £2,000.00
- Cremulator £10,000.00

4.2 Savings to consider

- Current roadkill disposal contract would be reversed and provide an estimate of £5,000.00 in savings for RBC.
- The facility would also take animal carcasses generated by WRS uprising a further in service saving of circa £10,000 per annum

4.3 Table below details estimated payback period.

	Month one	Month two	Month three	Month four	Month five	Month six	Month seven	Month eight	Month nine
Usage	20% / week	20% / week	30% / week	30% / week	30% / week	40% / week	40% / week	40% / week	50% / week
Expenditure £15 per pet (£)	420	420	630	630	630	840	840	840	1050
Income (£) per month	5,600	5,600	8,400	8,400	8,400	11,200	11,200	11,200	14,000
Surplus	5,180	5,180	7,770	7,770	7,770	10,360	10,360	10,360	12,950

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It should be noted that the Council is not statutorily obliged to provide residents with a pet cremation service.

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

- 6.1 New revenue stream to help support council income targets irrespective of whether through LGR there are 1 Unitary council or 2 .

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 Economy, Regeneration, & Prosperity. This will be a new service for local people and will generate funds to reinvest in local services

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 The introduction of a pet cremation service will increase on-site energy use and emissions from the gas-powered cremator, but this is partially offset by reduced transport emissions as local residents, vets, and WRS will no longer need to travel to facilities 10–20 miles away. The cremator is UK-manufactured, lowering supply-chain emissions, and is compatible with future filtration or efficiency upgrades should council net-zero commitments require them. Use of biodegradable urns, efficient integration with existing utilities, and the opportunity to adopt renewable electricity and energy-efficient operational practices provide further mitigation and support alignment with the Council's climate objectives.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 N/A

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Risk of inaction: missing a significant revenue opportunity and leadership position in integrated bereavement care.
- 7.2 Staff unsettlement: mitigated via 1 new post (grade 4 post already in budget, but a grade 5 post required), consultation, and upskilling, including official training.
- 7.3 Public reaction: mitigate through clear communications (website, social media, stakeholder forums, member committees).

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

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N/A

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Sharon Harvey	13 th Jan 2026
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Simon Parry	13 th Jan 2026
Financial Services	Maqsood Ahmed	14 th Jan 2026
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings – Principal Solicitor - Governance	14/01/26
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles	15 th Jan 2025

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Repairs and Maintenance and Damp and Mould Policies

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Bill Hartnett
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Simon Parry – Assistant Director for Environmental and Housing Property Services
Report Author	Job Title: Andrew Rainbow Contact email: andrew.rainbow@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 07925095646
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	Community and Housing
Key Decision - No	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND** that:-

- 1 The Repairs and Maintenance Policy which forms part of the Councils Housing Asset Management Strategy, be approved.**
- 2 The Damp and Mould Policy, which forms part of the Councils Housing Asset Management Strategy, be approved.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Repairs and Maintenance Policy sets out the overall approach that Redditch Borough Council will take in relation to repairs and maintenance of properties in the Councils housing stock.
- 2.2 The principles of this policy apply to all Council house tenants regardless of tenancy type. However, the full provisions of this policy only apply to customers living in social, affordable and market rented homes with secure tenancies.
- 2.3 This policy has been reviewed and updated in light of new Government guidance, the latest legislation and best practice.
 - Awaab's Law: Guidance for social landlords and timeframes for repairs in the social rented sector.

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- The Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025
 - Regulator for Social Housing
(Further information can be viewed on the Gov.UK website)
- 2.4 RBC is committed to delivering a range of maintenance services that are shaped around the legitimate expectations of customers and to ensuring homes and communal facilities are safe and well maintained.
- 2.5 The death of Awaab Ishack on 21st December 2020 due to a severe respiratory condition as a result of prolonged exposure to mould in the family home, prompted a campaign for the introduction of “Awaab’s Law”.
- 2.6 Following the subsequent coroner’s report and public outcry the Government announced plans to make major changes to the law on damp and mould. “Awaab’s Law”, was introduced through the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 which received the royal assent in July 2023. The new legislation regarding tenants affected by damp and mould requires landlords to investigate and repair reported health hazards within specified timeframes
- 2.7 In January 2025, in response to these proposed changes from the Government, RBC agreed to introduce a specialist Damp and Mould team, who are based in Housing Property Services. Since the decision was taken to introduce this team, staff have been recruited and are working for the council.
- 2.8 The next step in the process will be for the Council to formally adopt and approve a Damp and Mould Policy. As this forms part of the Housing Asset Management Strategy this needs to be reported through to Council.
- 2.9 The report addresses points relating to the Councils ageing housing stock, financial constraints and workforce and how to deliver services efficiently.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES**Repairs and Maintenance Policy**

- 3.1 Housing Property Services are moving towards a modern approach to providing services to customers. With the implementation of new

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software and new processes, the Council will ensure that there is an approach to service delivery that focuses on the needs of residents.

- 3.2 The Council will be able to offer a greater level of transparency and communication with customers as well as with colleagues across RBC.
- 3.3 Housing Property Services are aiming to incorporate a new job category "Planned Maintenance with a time scale of 60 days. This is work that falls outside of the authorities fast reactive service approach.
- 3.4 Compliance and data management will be as important as providing the service to meet legal and contractual obligations.
- 3.5 Members are being asked to approve the revised Repairs and Maintenance Policy.

Damp and Mould Policy

- 3.6 There are a variety of applications that can be employed and to different property types when tackling damp and mould. This includes a mix of applications such as mechanical, electrical and non-mechanical. No single element will fix the problem. The Damp and Mould team must assess the building to understand the root cause before they can address the problem.
- 3.5 Social housing providers are now expected to meet very strict deadlines for processing and responding to complaints about damp and mould. The time limits are set out in the main report on page 6 as a flow chart and has been taken from Government guidelines.
- 3.6 To formalise the Council's approach to managing damp and mould a Damp and Mould Policy has been developed (Appendix 2). Members are asked to approve this policy to ensure that the Council continues to comply with best practice in meeting the needs of customers.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Not applicable within this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council is subject to a range of statutory and regulatory duties relating to the repair and upkeep of its housing stock.
- 5.2 The Regulator of Social Housing provides for consumer standards which require social landlords to have an accurate, up to date and evidenced understanding of the condition of their homes. The

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Regulator's tenant satisfaction measures are a core set of performance measures against which all social housing providers must publish their performance. The Council's has been updating the Executive Committee on its performance in this regard separately.

- 5.3 Under Awaab's Law landlords must act within specific timeframes, provide tenants with information, offer alternative accommodation if needed and are subject to stiffer penalties for non-compliance than in the past.

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

- 6.1 There are no specific implications in relation to local government reorganisation.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 Community and Housing
- Ensure the Council's housing stock is clean and safe to live in.
 - Finding somewhere to live.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 No specific climate change implications have been identified.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 Awaiting feedback from the relevant team.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Without an up-to-date policy, the Council will not be compliant with the authority's operational duties and those expected by the Regulator of Social Housing. The policy will make the Council more transparent and provide for a more consistent approach to service delivery.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 - Repairs and Maintenance Policy.
Appendix 2 – Damp and Mould Policy

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Bill Hartnett	Dec 2025
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Simon Parry	Dec 2025
Financial Services	Kunmi Joseph	N/A
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings	Jan 14 2026
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Becky Green	
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Not Applicable	N/A

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REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

Created By	Andrew Rainbow			
Date Approved				
Date Published				
Maintained By	Andrew Rainbow			
Review Date	August 2025			
Version Number	Modified By	Modifications Made	Date Modified	Status
VI	SP		Feb 2023	

1. Scope of Policy

- 1.1 This policy sets out the overall approach that Redditch Borough Council will take in relation to the repair and maintenance of properties.
- 1.2 The principles of this policy apply to all residents regardless of tenancy type. However, the full provisions of this policy only apply to customers living in social, affordable and market rented homes with secure tenancies.
- 1.3 The full provisions of this policy do not apply to:
new homes that are within the initial defect's liability period of up to a year after handover (customers should refer to their welcome pack for details); or
Leasehold properties see link [Leaseholders Handbook RBC](#) section 5 pages 11 & 12.
- 1.4 RBC is committed to delivering a range of maintenance services that are shaped around the legitimate expectations of residents and to ensuring homes and communal facilities are safe and well maintained.

2. Policy Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 We aim to provide all our residents with a safe, warm and secure home that is well maintained.
- 2.2 We understand how important this service is to our residents, and we are striving to make improvements to achieve the following aims and objectives:

Managing Repairs Services

- Resident-Focused Approach: Ensure residents are treated with empathy and respect throughout the repair process.
- Compliance and Data Management: Maintain properties to meet all legal and contractual obligations, supported by accurate and up-to-date asset and repairs data.
- Transparency and Communication: Share performance information with resident groups, confirm appointments, and keep residents informed if repairs require multiple visits.
- Efficiency and Coordination: Work collaboratively with contractors to minimise disruption, monitor performance, and strive for first-time fixes.
- Continuous Improvement: Actively listen to resident feedback and improve services accordingly.
- Clear Responsibilities: Make repair responsibilities and escalation routes transparent to residents.

Quality

- Strong Governance: Apply rigorous contract, risk, cost, and performance management across all repair's services.

- Performance Monitoring: Use inspections, resident surveys, and photographic evidence to track and improve quality.
- Efficiency and Standards: Aim for first-time fixes, provide updates for complex repairs, and recall contractors if work is substandard.
- Appointments and Data: Ensure all repairs are pre-arranged, set clear rules for missed appointments, and analyse data to identify trends and improve service.
- Record Keeping and Innovation: Maintain detailed visit records, share relevant information with contractors, and embed innovation in service improvements.
- Regulatory Learning: Actively learn from feedback from the Housing Ombudsman, Social Housing Regulator, and other authorities.

3. Policy Outline

3.1 Classification of Repairs and Maintenance Activities

Repairs are classified based on their urgency and the level of risk they pose to the property and its occupants. Issues that present an immediate danger to health, safety, or security are treated as emergencies and addressed promptly, while less critical problems are scheduled according to their impact on comfort and functionality. This approach ensures that the most serious hazards are resolved quickly, protecting both residents and the integrity of the home.

3.2 The Table below sets out the various Priority Codes, their timescales, definitions and examples of such repairs.

<u>Job Category</u>	<u>Priority Code</u>	<u>Timescale</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Example</u>
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Emergency *	1	24 Hours - Will be made safe, then follow up if needed	Issues which pose an immediate health, safety or security risk.	Major Disaster or fire, Severe storm damage. Uncontrollable water leak within property
Urgent	2	5 Working Days	Issues which pose a health risk, but not an immediate risk.	Partial loss of electric power No hot water Blocked sink Unblock second toilet in the property.
Routine	3	up to 20 Working Days	Work that poses no threat to occupants and/or may require substantial repairs.	Repair dripping tap Renewal of bath, hand basin Remove Graffiti
Planned Maintenance Repair	4	up to 60 Working Days	These are works that cannot wait for the investment works programme and will be packaged together and dealt with on a programmed repairs basis.	Major plastering works to walls and ceilings. Large fencing areas. Certain works in relation to Awaab's Law.

Damp and Mould

We understand that damp and mould are significant concerns for many of our tenants and leaseholders, and we recognise the health risks they can cause. Although damp, condensation, and mould can be complex issues to manage, we are committed to addressing each case promptly and effectively, taking a proactive and thorough approach to resolving these problems whilst following necessary requirements.

Please see our Damp and Mould Policy for details

4. Repairing Responsibilities

4.1 The Council is responsible for most repairs and maintenance within the council owned housing stock and the upkeep of communal areas (Appendix 1). However, Residents are responsible for some repairs Under the Tenancy Agreement and this Policy.

4.2 Residents must report repairs promptly and allow access to their property for inspections and any necessary work. Repairs, maintenance, and replacement of certain items within the home are outlined in the Tenancy Agreement and the Tenant's Handy Hints guide, available on the Council's website.

For full list of Residents repair responsibilities see Appendix 3.

5. Planned repairs

5.1 These are substantial or grouped works that require a lead-in period and may involve resident consultation. They typically include tasks needing two or more tradespeople for more than two days on a single element, such as bathroom or kitchen replacements scheduled before their planned renewal date. Examples include:

- Boundary fencing works
- Full roof replacement.
- Complete replacement of windows or doors.
- Bathroom or kitchen upgrades where the scheduled renewal date is in the future, but the asset is beyond economical repair

For a full list of planned maintenance works see appendix 2.

6. Out of hours service

6.1 Redditch Borough Council provides an out-of-hours repair service exclusively for emergency issues occurring outside normal working hours (8:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday), including weekends and Bank Holidays.

6.2 All qualifying emergency reports will be attended within **2 hours**. The out-of-hours call handler will dispatch a trade operative to make the property safe or, where possible, complete the repair immediately.

6.3 If follow-up work is required, the Business Support Team will contact the customer on the next working day to arrange a suitable appointment, based on the urgency of the outstanding repair.

7. Responsive Repairs Service

7.1 Reporting Repairs

7.1.1 To ensure the service is accessible for all residents, RBC will maintain a range of ways for repairs to be reported. These include:

- by phone
- online
- via any employee or representative

7.1.2 Residents are responsible for reporting repairs to RBC and must allow access to their home for any work, inspections or surveys to be carried out by the RBC or any of its contractors or representatives.

7.1.3 All requests for repairs reported by residents will be assessed against the RBC's repairing obligations, as outlined in the [RBC Housing Repairs Handy Hints Booklet Aug 23 WEB](#). Redditch Borough Council may charge for undertaking repairs where damage has been caused by the customer, members of their household or visitors to the property.

7.2 No Access

7.2.1 We and our contractors will make three separate attempts to gain access, using a range of communication methods including phone calls, emails, and text messages. If these attempts are unsuccessful, a written appointment letter will be issued.

7.2.2 If access is still not granted, the case will be referred to the Tenancy Team to carry out a tenancy audit. This audit will confirm whether any barriers exist, such as a protected characteristic requiring reasonable adjustments. The Tenancy Team may

involve a Senior Trade operative during the audit to discuss access or arrange the works at that time.

7.2.3 If the audit does not resolve the issue, one of the following actions will be taken:

Suspected Abandonment: If the property appears abandoned, the Tenancy Team will initiate the abandonment process to recover possession.

7.2.4 Tenancy Support Required: If the resident needs assistance to manage their tenancy (e.g., hoarding or property condition issues preventing access), they will be referred for tenancy sustainment support.

7.2.5 Legal Enforcement: The case will be escalated to the Prevention Enforcement Group to consider applying for an access injunction through the courts to complete the necessary works.

7.3 Home Improvements

7.3.1 A secure tenant has a legal right to make alterations and improvements to their home if they obtain written permission before they carry out any works and seek all relevant permissions including Planning and Building Regulations approval etc.

7.3.2 We will not unreasonably withhold consent when a request to carry out improvements/alterations is made. If consent is provided, the resident will become responsible for any subsequent repairs, maintenance or replacement of the improvement/alteration. At the end of the tenancy, a resident may claim compensation for certain eligible improvements carried out provided they have the relevant consent.

7.4 Leaseholder Obligations

7.4.1 We will not carry out repairs for leaseholders where the terms of the lease state that a repair is their responsibility. Leaseholders' repair responsibilities are set out in detail within the individual lease agreement. The same recharge approach will apply to leaseholders as for tenants. We will not carry out repairs to homes we manage for third parties unless expressly identified in formal agreements.

We will consult with leaseholders in accordance with the Leaseholders handbook.

For more details please consult the [leaseholder handbook](#).

8. Equality and Diversity

8.1 We are committed to fairness and equality for all regardless of their colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or belief, family circumstances or offending history, as referred to in our relevant policies. Our aim is to ensure that our policies and procedures do not create an unfair disadvantage for anyone, either directly or indirectly.

An Equality Impact Assessment will be required in respect of this policy and which identified no negative impacts on any person/group with a protected characteristic as a result of this policy.

9. Complaints

9.1 Residents and service users can complain in person, over the telephone, in writing, by email and digitally.

9.2 To complain by telephone then resident, service users and their representatives should telephone 01527 64252 during office hours and state to the customer service team if they are unhappy with a situation that they wish to have rectified or wish to make a complaint about the service that they have or have not received.

9.3 To complain by email, residents, service users, or their representatives should address their complaint to housingreviewsandcomplaints@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

9.4 To complain in writing correspondence should be sent to:

Housing reviews and Complaints
Town Hall
Walter Stranz Square
Redditch
B98 8AH

9.5 To complain digitally residents and service users and their representatives can access the our website by pasting the following URL into their browser:

<https://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/residents/my-home/housing-complaint-or-enquiry/i-am-a-council-tenant/>

10. Monitoring and Review

10.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years or on the introduction of new legislation or best practice guidance, whichever is the sooner.

10.2 Redditch Borough Council will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and propose changes where necessary to enhance service delivery and improve the customer experience. Performance data and customer satisfaction results will be reviewed through quarterly performance reports, tenant engagement opportunities, Portfolio Holder meetings, and Senior Management Teams to identify areas requiring improvement or further review.

11. Associated Documents

List of documents - associated policies, procedures and publications:

Aids and Adaptations Policy
Asbestos Management Policy
Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy
Electrical Safety Policy
Fire Safety Management Policy
Gas and Fuel Burning Appliance Safety Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Rechargeable Repairs Policy
Water Systems (Legionella) Management Policy
Asset Management Strategy
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
Our Customer Commitments
A Guide to Undertaking Your Own Home Improvements
Lettable Standard
Rechargeable Repairs Guide
Allocations Policy
Tenancy Management Policy
Damp and Mould Policy

Appendix 1 – RBC repair responsibilities.

Repair of Structure and Exterior

To keep the structure and exterior of the premises in good repair including:

- The roof/s.

- Drains (excluding drains maintained by mains provider), gutters and external pipes.
- Outside walls, outside doors, windowsills, window catches, sash cords (glass) and window frames, including any necessary external painting or decoration.
- Internal walls, skirting boards, doors and door frames, door jambs, thresholds, floors, ceilings and kitchen units and work surfaces (but not painting and decoration).
- Internal plaster work (not filling of minor cracks prior to decorations).
- Chimneys and chimney stacks and flues *(leasehold shared chimney stacks will fall under section 20 and the section 20 process followed).
- Boundary walls, fences, steps and ramps.
- Footpaths from the drive/public footpath to the front door and from the front door to the backdoor.
- Car parking areas (where provided by RBC).
- Garages and outbuildings (where provided by RBC).
- Stair and passenger lifts.

Repair of Installations

To keep in good repair and proper working order any installations provided or adopted by RBC for space heating, water heating and sanitation and for the supply of water, gas and electricity, including:

- Water pipes and tanks, gas pipes and electrical wiring.
- Electrical sockets and light fittings (but not plugs or non RBC appliances).
- Basins, sinks, baths, toilets, flushing systems and waste pipes.
- Water heaters, boilers, fireplaces, fitted fires and radiators (where provided by RBC).
- Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors (where provided by RBC).

Repair of Communal Areas

To take reasonable care to keep the following in reasonable repair and fit for use by the customer and other occupiers and visitors to the premises.

- Communal entrances, halls and passageways.
- Stairways and passenger lifts.
- Rubbish chutes.
- Lighting.
- Any other communal parts.

Decoration of Exterior and Communal Areas

To maintain the exterior of the property and any internal communal areas in a reasonable state of decoration.

Appendix 2– Repair timescales

Component replacement and works not classed as repairs
RBC will complete these works within the timeframes listed below. These are works outside the scope of a repair and as such are not subject to responsive repair KPI's

Alterations to kitchen and bathrooms where authorised (not Aids & Adaptations work)
Replacement security doors and replacement windows
Replacing out of date smoke alarms
Extra electrical sockets or light fittings where authorised
Legionella works- (Timeframe according to risk identified)
Fire risk assessment works, including fire doors. (Carried out by an external contractor) (Timeframe according to risk identified)

Gas fires will be inspected as part of the LGSR, however no repairs will be carried out if found faulty and will be condemned until repairs are carried out by the tenant and a compliance certificate issued or removed altogether. Electric fires are tenants' responsibility, and no repairs will be carried out if faulty.

Adjustments to categories and timescales will be made to support vulnerable customers who have no available support to assist them.

To keep in good repair and proper working order any installations provided or adopted by RBC for space heating, water heating and sanitation and for the supply of water, gas and electricity, including:

Water pipes and tanks, gas pipes and electrical wiring
Electrical sockets and light fittings (but not plugs or non RBC appliances)
Basins, sinks, baths, toilets, flushing systems and waste pipes
Water heaters, boilers, fireplaces, fitted fires and radiators (where provided by RBC)
Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors (where provided by RBC)

Appendix 3 – Tenant repair responsibilities.

General

Residents are responsible for keeping the interior of their home in a good condition and to decorate all internal parts as often as is necessary to keep them in good

decorative order. Residents are also expected to take reasonable precautions to prevent damage once a repair fault has been identified.

To repair, renew or replace as necessary any parts of the structure, installations, fixtures or fittings inside or outside the building that are damaged by the customers, a member of the household or someone the customer has allowed into the property, including children. Criminal damage or vandalism should be reported to the Police and a police crime number obtained.

Not to make any changes to the structure of the property, its fixtures and fittings, boundary fence or wall or anything connected to the provision of services to the property without written permission from RBC.

RBC are not responsible for any sheds that have not been provided by RBC within the curtilage of the property and as such they are tenant responsibility in all cases.

To maintain any approved changes to the structure of the property, its fixtures and fittings, boundary fence or wall or anything connected to the provision of services to the property.

To take reasonable steps to avoid moisture build up (condensation) within the property and causing damage.

To pay in full any rechargeable repair cost due to misuse or damage to the structure or fittings of the property.

Internal Decoration and Other Matters

To keep the interior of the premises in good and tenantable repair and in clean and good decorative condition, and to decorate all internal parts of the premises as frequently as is necessary to keep them in reasonable decorative order.

Minor Repairs

- Residents are responsible for carrying out minor repairs such as the following:
- Replacing plugs and chains to baths, basins and sinks
- Replacing keys that are lost or when resident have been locked out
- Testing and maintaining battery smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, including battery replacement
- Repair and maintenance of secondary heating, including electric or gas fires, open fires and wood burners.
- Sweeping chimneys as often as necessary to prevent fires and to ensure efficient operation

- Replacing fuses, light bulbs, fluorescent tubes and their starters for standard fittings.
- Cleaning baths, wc pans and washbasins
- Replacing toilet seats
- First attempt to clear blockages in sinks, hand basins, water pipes, toilets or gullies
- Repairing minor plaster cracks or holes to walls and / or ceilings
- Taking steps to prevent water in pipes and tanks from freezing
- Repairing gas/electric cookers and all white goods not provided by RBC
- Garden Maintenance including trees
- Replacing washing lines and posts or restringing including rotary dryers (except in communal areas).
- Maintaining garden paths and patio/hard standings outside of the defined repairs in appendix 2.1
- Maintaining driveways not installed by RBC
- Repairing any fences installed by customers
- TV aerials (except communal aerials) and any damage to property or neighbouring property caused by their installation.
- TV/BT/Multimedia points and extensions within the home
- Ensure the property is appropriately heated and ventilated-and report non-functional extractor fans
- Cleaning off mould and condensation
- Altering doors for carpets.
- Alterations to install additional appliances, fittings or fixers (after seeking prior permission from RBC)
- Residents own Gas and electric cookers and hobs must be installed by an approved qualified contractor and evidence of certification provided to RBC.
- Re-glazing of external windows and doors where the customer has caused the damage.
- Removal of pests in the home (rats, fleas, wasps, etc.)
- Minor repairs to internal door handles, catches.
- The provision of window restrictors
- Replacement window lock keys

Appendix 4 – Rechargeable repairs guide.

Residents can be charged for repairs under the following circumstances:

- If the resident asks RBC to carry out extra work that is their responsibility
- If the resident replaces any fixtures or fittings, or does any repairs or improvements without first obtaining RBC's written permission

- If RBC has to repair anything that the customer, members of their family, visitors or pets have damaged (including blocked toilets or waste pipes caused by neglect or misuse)
- If the resident misuses the emergency call-out system
- Re-lighting boilers where this is caused by an act or omission of the resident
- Any repairs that are the resident's responsibility
- Any damage to a chimney where there is a solid fuel appliance and is a caused by burning incorrect fuel or failure to maintain appliance if their own has been fitted.

In certain circumstances residents may qualify for a waiver where vulnerability can be demonstrated, this will be decided on a case-by-case situation.

RBC will consider the replacement of locks where this is required to protect the resident from domestic violence or burglary. RBC will also carry out the work at no cost to the resident where this is required through no fault of the customer.

When a resident does not carry out repairs that are their responsibility and failure to do so causes a risk to the resident, neighbours or the property, RBC may carry out the repair and recharge the cost to the resident.

Where a resident is deemed to be vulnerable by way of disability, immobility through old age or for any other reason, RBC may carry out works that would normally be the responsibility of the resident to complete without recharging. Each case will be considered on its merits, the decision will be at RBC'S discretion based on known information and individual circumstances.

RBC expects that the resident takes reasonable care to avoid damage to the property, as an example: leaving the front or rear door open and the wind blows it shut and the glass in the door shatters this would be classed as a recharge.



Damp and Mould Policy

Created By	Andrew Rainbow			
Date Approved				
Date Published				
Maintained By	Andrew Rainbow			
Review Date	August 2027			
Version Number	Modified By	Modifications Made	Date Modified	Status
V1	AWR		August 2025	

Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out our approach to dealing with damp and mould in council homes and communal spaces that we maintain. It covers the services we provided to tenants who rent their home under a tenancy agreement.

For leaseholders, we will meet the responsibilities as set out in terms of the lease.

The key principles of the policy are:

- Zero tolerance approach to the occurrence and resolution of damp and mould
- No blame Culture – ‘It’s not a lifestyle issue’
- Everyone’s Responsibility – All staff have a duty to address
- Being Pro-active – Acting to fully remedy, via investment works
- Providing easy access to services – For reporting issues and making a complaint

Through listening to our tenant’s, building safety has been identified as their number one priority. This is further emphasised by the Regulator for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman as an area of critical importance.

Health and Safety of our tenants is a key priority for Redditch Borough Council, this is defined in our Strategic Plan and addressed in this policy, through a series of both reactive and proactive approaches.

Under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), damp and mould cases are categorised as Category 1 (CAT1) hazard, which is the highest, most serious form of hazard classification.

Damp and mould issues in homes can have a serious impact on the health and well-being of the occupants and cause damage to property. We aim to do everything we can to make sure our tenants stay safe, healthy, and well in their homes.

This policy sets out our approach to dealing with damp and mould in council homes and communal areas, both reactive and pro-active. It covers the services we provided to tenants and acknowledge that different properties, often of different ages, require different approaches by Redditch Borough Council.

Statutory Obligations

Redditch Borough Council has a statutory obligation Under Section 11 (1) (a) of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (LTA). The act states that the:

"Structure and exterior of the dwelling-house" as well as "the supply of water, gas and electricity" and "heating and heating water" need to be kept in working order.

As part of our duty of care to tenants, we must repair the defect to the structure\exterior of the property which is resulting in damp.

The key responsibilities a landlord has when there are damp issues is to make sure a correct diagnosis is obtained and to carry out the treatment. damp is a mandatory repair under the HHSRS. This also stresses that landlords must ensure mould doesn't affect a tenant's physical and mental health.

Mould is a fungus which is known to cause breathing difficulties. Tenants who suffer from asthma or rhinitis conditions, or are taking any cancer treatment, may suffer serious health problems if exposed to it.

Other key legal and regulatory references are set out below:

- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (Section 11)
- Housing Act 2004
- Decent Homes Standard 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Home Standard, Regulator of Social Housing 2015
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Pre-Action Protocol for Housing Conditions Claims (England) 2021

Definition of Damp, Mould and Causation

Damp

Dampness is an excess of moisture that can't escape from a structure, which may go on to cause significant damage to the building such as collapsed ceilings and rotten timber elements.

Mould

Is a type of fungus. It spreads through spores, which are invisible to the naked eye but are in the air around us all the time and can quickly grow on surfaces where dampness persists, or water has formed into a visible covering.

There are four main causes of dampness in homes in England. It is important to understand the difference between them because they each need different solutions:

Water leaks from defective supply and waste pipework (especially in bathrooms and kitchens) can affect both external and internal walls and ceilings. The affected area looks and feels damp to the touch and stays damp regardless of the prevailing weather conditions. It is the result of a problem or fault with the home, which requires repair.

Rising damp is caused by water rising from the ground into the home. Water gets through or around a defective damp proof course (DPC) or passes through the masonry that was built without a DPC. Rising damp will only affect basements and ground floor rooms it will be present all year round but can be more noticeable in winter. It is extremely uncommon but is generally the result of a problem or fault with the home, which requires repair.

Penetrating damp appears because of a defect in the structure of the home, such as damaged brickwork, missing roof tiles, loose flashing, or leaking rainwater goods. These defects allow water to pass from the outside to the floors, walls, or ceilings. Penetrating damp is far more noticeable following a period of rainfall and will normally appear as a well-defined 'damp-patch' which looks and feels damp to the touch. It is the result of a problem or fault with the home, which requires a repair.

Condensation is the most prevalent type of dampness and is caused by moisture in the air (water vapour) inside the dwelling encountering a colder surface, such as a window or wall. The drop in temperature causes liquid water to form on the surface and then soak in. It is usually found in kitchens, bathrooms, the corners of rooms, on north facing walls and on or near windows – all places that either tend to have a lot of moisture in the air, or to be cold generally, "Known as cold spots". It is also found in areas of low air circulation such as behind wardrobes and beds, especially when they are pushed up against external walls.

Defining Damp and Mould and its Causes: 'We will identify the root causes of any damp and mould' circulation such as behind wardrobes and beds, especially when they are pushed up against external walls.

All homes in England can be affected by condensation because the climate is often cool and wet. Normal household activities also constantly release moisture into the air. Good practice in the home minimises and alleviates condensation, and in many cases will prevent it causing dampness and persistent mould. However, on occasion the root cause can be a problem that requires a repair or an improvement to the home. In others, a different solution may be needed (for example, in cases of severe overcrowding).

Our Commitment

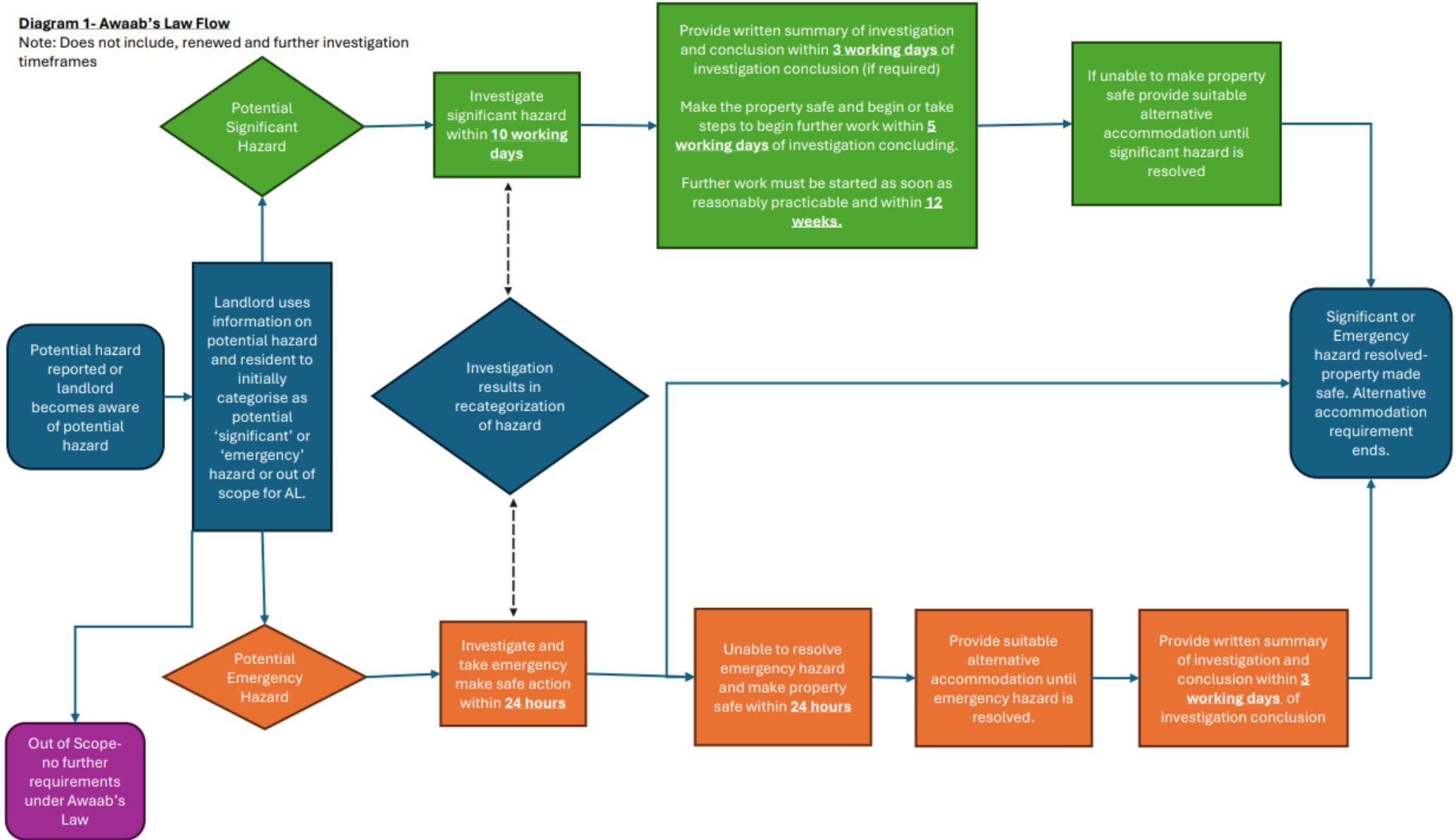
In line with our organisational culture and values we will do everything we can to make sure we:

- Provide dry, warm, healthy, and safe homes for our tenants which are free from any hazards
- Comply with legislative, regulatory, and contractual (including tenancy and lease) obligations
- Ensure the fabric of our homes is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp
- Treat tenants reporting damp and mould with empathy and respect
- Take responsibility for diagnosing and resolving damp and mould in a timely and effective way
- Support tenants in resolving damp and mould in a way that is appropriate to the problem
- Communicate with our tenants clearly and regularly regarding any actions we plan to take and any actions our tenants are advised to take
- Ensure staff are trained to enable them to spot potential causes of damp, mould, and condensation so they can advise tenants, diagnose problems, and provide solutions
- When applying this policy, make reasonable adjustments for people who have a disability and will take into account the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Our

Diagram 1- Awaab's Law Flow

Note: Does not include, renewed and further investigation timeframes



Pro-Active approach

- We will take action to identify homes that may be at risk of developing problems with damp and mould - We will use data (stock condition, EPC to help us understand the potential in relation to damp and mould and where appropriate use technology to monitor and reduce the risk and occurrence.
- We will use the investment programme and asset management strategy to ensure we take steps to remove the root causes of damp and mould growth - We will mitigate any increased risks of damp and mould by investing in 'fabric first' principles, by improving thermal efficiency, when decarbonising the council's homes and making sure that adequate ventilation and heating systems are installed and maintained.
- When a property becomes vacant, and prior to re-letting, we will identify and remedy any issues which may cause damp through our 'voids standard' works. A Building Surveyor will carry out a survey to ensure standards are maintained.
- We will provide information on our website, and through other communication channels such as social media and newsletters to raise awareness about the causes of damp and mould. This will include details about how everyday activities in the home can generate condensation and what tenants can do to help prevent damp through, for instance, ventilation, controlling the build-up of moisture and adequate heating. Where there is mould growth, we will provide advice on how this will be treated - We actively encourage tenants to report repair requests and log complaints where required.
- All front-line staff and contractors will have the skills and knowledge to identify signs of damp and mould and discuss with tenants how to manage the problem - Staff are trained to look out for signs whenever they visit a tenant's home and clear guidance is given on how to signpost and refer.
- All council homes will receive a physical inspection every 12 months proactively targeting damp and mould. This will be achieved via Stock Condition Surveys, EPC Surveys, Voids, Heating Checks, Capped Off Properties Checks and Fire Door Inspections.
- We will utilise customer data from 100% post surveys to all tenants that have reported a repair, raised a complaint or disrepair claim in relation to damp, mould and condensation over the past 12 months on a periodic basis.
- We will continue to work with our Tenants Panel (TBC) ensuring we listen and always see things from a tenant's perspective to help enhance our service offer.
- Technology will be utilised to monitor temperature and humidity in problematic council homes Reactive approach.

Reactive approach

- Tenants will be supported and encouraged to report any problems to us as soon as possible after noticing any potential damp or mould issue. When we receive a report, a trained member of the team will attend the property **within 7 days to** determine the cause and seek to resolve the immediate issue, by removing any visible mould. In some cases, they may need to further diagnose the problem to determine the root cause. Sometimes finding out what's causing damp and mould isn't always straightforward and could be due to a combination of factors, that we will then address. Any repairs that are required to be carried out will be dealt with in accordance with our Repairs and Maintenance Policy.
- Where damp is a result of condensation, we will work with tenants to take appropriate measures to prevent the damp and mould occurring. This might include advice about how to control moisture levels or increase ventilation or heating, so that moisture levels are controlled within acceptable limits.
- When a particularly severe or recurring damp or mould issue is identified we will undertake a comprehensive risk assessment which may result in a range of actions to support the tenant depending on their circumstances, including providing and funding dehumidifiers through our compensation policy, the installation of positive pressure, mechanical or passive ventilation systems, dry lining walls or applying mould resistant coverings, as appropriate, on a case-by-case basis.
- We will keep tenants informed of any property inspections, diagnosis of issues and the timetabling of work. This includes explaining why work might be needed and what work will be required. If any changes to the programme of works are needed, we will keep the tenant informed. Where work is not required, tenants will be informed, and we will explain the reason why no further work is needed
- For more complex cases, and especially where more intrusive building work is required and/or there is a serious health risk to the tenant or a member of their household, we may require them to move out of their home either on a temporary or permanent basis. We will consider the individual circumstances of the tenant. We will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out at the property to ensure it is suitable for the tenant in line with our Decant Policy.

Access to Property

- Our tenancy (and leasehold) agreements require tenants to allow us (including appointed contractors) access to their home to carry out works. If we are unable to

gain access and the integrity of the property, its fabric and/or the safety of the tenant or those in the vicinity of the property is compromised, we will take appropriate action. For example, this may include but is not limited to obtaining an injunction for access.

Compensation.

- In line with our Compensation Policy, we will pay compensation as a result of our failure to deliver the service we have committed to. This includes where distress and inconvenience has been caused. Also, where furniture or belongings have been damaged, damages will be resolved through insurance claims. Each case will be considered on its own merits, considering the individual circumstances of the tenant and their household.

Supporting our tenants.

- We will give tenants advice on how to prevent damp and what they can do to remove mould. However, we recognise that not every tenant will be in a position to do this. We will provide appropriate support in such cases in relation to the specific circumstances and the individual tenant's needs.
- We know that some tenants cannot afford to heat their homes adequately due to their income levels. We will work with tenants to ensure that they are receiving the income to which they are entitled.
- Where homes are overcrowded humidity will tend to be higher, and this increases the likelihood of condensation. We will work with the tenant and explore solutions which may include the tenant moving to a more suitable home if this is available and appropriate.

Staff Training.

- We will ensure that all front-line staff (whether in house or our contractors) will have the required skills to recognise damp and the potential for mould, and that our Repairs and Maintenance Supervisors, applied trades and Capital Surveyors have specialist training and equipment to accurately diagnose causation and ensure appropriate remedial works are completed efficiently and effectively.

Responding to complaints and learning lessons.

- We aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible without tenants needing to resort to disrepair claims and legal action. Where legal action is taken, we will follow

the Pre-Action Protocol for Housing Conditions Claims so that we may resolve the dispute outside of court to help ensure issues are resolved quicker for tenants

- We will learn lessons from damp and mould cases, update our technical approach and how we communicate with tenants, in order to continually improve

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 27th 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 10th 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 (9th June)
- Housing Regulator Tenant Satisfaction Measures (9th June)
- Housing Regulator Self-Assessment Complaint Handling Code (9th June)
- Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (DMIC) – Appointment of Contractor for Stage 4 Designs (7th July)
- Redditch Council Housing Growth Programme (7th July)
- Acquisition of Properties (7th July)
- Regulator of Social Housing Inspection Report and Housing Improvement Plan (1st September)
- Voluntary Sector Grants Scheme 2026/27 to 2029/30 (1st September)
- Adoption of Fixed Penalty Charge for breach of Community Protection Notice (1st September)
- Quarter 1 Housing Consumer Standards Report (1st September)
- Housing Ombudsman Findings Report 1 Ref 202417927 (1st September)
- Housing Ombudsman Findings Report 2 Ref 202331009 (1st September)
- Disposal of Housing Revenue Account Assets – Eight garages at Ashorne Close, Matchborough, Redditch (1st September)
- Disposal of Housing Revenue Account Assets – 53 Parsons Road, Southcrest, Redditch. 53 Crabbs Cross Lane, Crabbs Cross, Redditch (1st September)
- Bereavement Services – Burial Strategy (24th November)
- Quarter 2 Housing Improvement Plan Update (24th November)
- Quarter 2 Housing Performance (24th November)
- Biodiversity Duty First Consideration Report (12th January 2026)
- Homelessness Prevention Grant Funding 2026/27 to 2028/29 (including Rough Sleeper Grant) and Domestic Abuse Grant (12th 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 (9th June)
- Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Task Group – Final Report (7th July)
- Rubicon Leisure Priorities and Progress Update – Managing Director Invitation (12th 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 27th 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 1st 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 (3rd July)
- Treasury Management Outturn Report 2024/25 (3rd July)
- Q1 2025-26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report (28th August)
- Medium Term Financial Plan Scene Setting Report 2026/27 (28th August)
- Medium Term Financial Plan Budget Update and Consultation Report 2026/27 to 2028/29 – Business Rates Pool (3rd November)
- Q2 Finance Monitoring Report (including Financial Saving and Half Yearly Treasury Management Report) (20th November)
- Q2 2025/26 Performance Monitoring 2024/25 (20th November)
- Medium Term Financial Plan – Tranche 1 Budget including Fees and Charges (prior to consultation) (21st November)
- Council Tax Base Report 2026/27 (8th January 2026)
- Council Tax – Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums 2026/27 (8th January)
- Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27 (8th January)
- Discretionary Council Tax Reduction Policy 2026/27 (8th January)
- Business Rates - Discretionary Rates Relief Policy 2026/27 (8th January)
- Housing Revenue Account Rent Setting 2026/27 (8th January)
- Medium Term Financial Plan 2026-27 to 2028-29 Fees and Charges and consultation outcome including Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budget Recommendations (8th 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 7th 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](#)

9th 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.

7th 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 recalled 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.

1st 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.

24th 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.

12th 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 17th of February 2025, date of submission of this annual report, and the 16th 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/removed from the work programme after publication of this annual report.

17th 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

16th March

- Climate Change Strategy 2026 to 2031 – Pre-Scrutiny

- Construction of Redditch Innovation Centre – Pre-Scrutiny (Previously called: Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (DMIC))
- Introduction of Enforcement of Littering from Vehicles – Pre-Scrutiny
- Revision of Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy – Pre-Scrutiny
- Shared Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2031 – Pre-Scrutiny
- Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) – Update on Environmental Crime Enforcement

9th June (new municipal year)

- Homelessness Prevention Grant Initiatives for 2025/26 (Annual Report)
- Redditch Partnership Annual Update
- Leisure Concession Policy Review – Pre-Scrutiny
- Housing Decant Policy – Pre-Scrutiny

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

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

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER URGENCY PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: New kitchen supplier contract

BRIEF STATEMENT OF SUBJECT MATTER:

In January 2026, the Council's kitchen supplier for Council homes entered administration. Although the company is still able to fulfil existing orders, it is no longer able to take on or deliver any new orders.

As a social housing provider, Redditch Borough Council has statutory responsibilities under the Decent Homes Standard to ensure that all properties are maintained to a suitable standard. This includes providing modern facilities and services and, more broadly, the Council also has an ongoing responsibility to properly maintain its housing stock, including ensuring that kitchen facilities are fit for purpose.

Given these obligations, and the number of void properties currently requiring new kitchens, as a matter of urgency, the Council must secure a new supplier to continue the installation of kitchens within Council homes.

This urgent decision seeks approval from Members to appoint a replacement supplier through an existing procurement framework, in order to minimise disruption to service delivery and ensure the Council can continue to meet its statutory responsibilities.

DECISION:

RESOLVED that

Wren Contract Kitchens Limited company be appointed to install kitchens in the Council's social housing stock from 7th February 2026 onwards.

(Executive decision)

GROUNDINGS FOR URGENCY:

The current kitchen supplier will cease delivering services on **6 February 2026**. After this date, without the appointment of a new supplier, the Council will be unable to arrange kitchen installations where required. Any delay in securing a replacement supplier will significantly impact the Council's ability to complete void properties in a timely manner, resulting in avoidable rental income loss.

In addition, the Council currently has two contractors delivering a programme of planned kitchen installations as part of the HRA Capital Programme. Without a new supplier in place, this programme is at risk of being paused or ceasing entirely, directly affecting the Council's ability to deliver planned improvements and meet its responsibilities under the Decent Homes Standard.

To minimise disruption, avoid financial loss, and ensure continuity of essential services for tenants, this decision must be taken urgently so that kitchen installation work can continue without interruption.

DECISION APPROVED BY:

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

(if financial implications)

.....
(Signature) (John Leach - CX)
(Or Deputy CEO in his absence)

.....
(Signature) (Julie Lorraine)

MONITORING OFFICER

.....
(Signature) (Claire Felton)
(Or Deputy MO in her absence)

Date: 4th February 2026

PROPOSED ACTION SUPPORTED *(amend as appropriate)*

..... (Signature) (Signature) (Signature) (Signature) (Signature)
<i>(Block Capitals)</i>	<i>(Block Capitals)</i>	<i>(Block Capitals)</i>	<i>(Block Capitals)</i>	<i>(Block Capitals)</i>
MAYOR *	PF HOLDER	LEADER	LDR of the CONSERVATIVE Group	CHAIR O&S Committee
Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:

Notes:

* In addition to the Executive decision above regarding the matter under consideration, the Mayor is signing to agree both that the Executive decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency. This is to ensure that the call-in procedures as set out in Part 8 of the Constitution shall not apply where an Executive decision being taken is urgent.