

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 8th June, 2026

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Nicola Lloyd (Chair), Councillor Roger Bennett (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joe Baker, Sharon Harvey, Joanna Kane, David Meredith, Rita Rogers and Jane Spilsbury

Officers:

Guy Revans, Rachel Egan, Judith Willis, Neil Batt, Amanda Delahunty and Della McCarthy

Democratic Services Officers:

M Sliwinski

1. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

Councillor Sharon Harvey declared an other disclosable interest in respect of Minute Item No. 6 – Construction of Redditch Innovation Centre – Pre-Decision Scrutiny – due to the fact that she was named in that report as the ward member consulted for that report. She remained present for the debate for that item and to vote thereon.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16th March 2026 were submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that

Chair

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the minutes of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16th March 2026 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. PUBLIC SPEAKING

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

5. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

[With the agreement of the Chair and the Committee, the order of the agenda was changed and this item 14 on the published agenda was considered as item 5 at the meeting – and recorded as Minute No. 5].

RESOLVED that

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

Minute Item No. 6 – Construction of Redditch Innovation Centre – Pre-Decision Scrutiny.

6. CONSTRUCTION OF REDDITCH INNOVATION CENTRE - PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

[With the agreement of the Chair and the Committee, the order of the agenda was changed and this item 15 on the published agenda was considered as item 6 at the meeting – and recorded as Minute No. 6].

The Regeneration Project Manager presented a report on the Construction of Redditch Innovation Centre.

In relation to timescales, it was reported that construction was due to commence in Summer 2026 and that there was an anticipated seventy-week construction period with building works due to be completed by the end of 2027.

Speller-Metcalf had been appointed to work alongside the Design team to complete the stage four designs for the Innovation Centre.

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Members were informed that extensive value engineering had been undertaken.

Following presentation of the report, Members held a detailed discussion regarding the project at its current stage and costings.

A typographical error was noted in respect of the report sign-off, which listed the previous Portfolio Holder rather than the current Portfolio Holder as having sign-off for this report.

In respect of recommendation three of the report, an amendment was proposed to add that the relevant Portfolio Holder would also be consulted in entering into the necessary contracts and legal agreements required to implement the other two recommendations. This amendment was seconded and on being put to the vote agreed by the Committee.

The Committee endorsed recommendations one and two of the report as printed.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Council utilise all available underspend from within the Town Deal programme for construction of the Innovation Centre.**
- 2) The Council accept the £2,425,000 Enterprise Zone funding from Birmingham City Council for the construction of the Innovation Centre and incorporate it into the Council's Capital Programme.**
- 3) Subject to the agreement of recommendations 1 and 2, authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Property Services, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, and in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to enter into the necessary contracts and legal agreements required to implement the recommendations within this report.**

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

7. REDDITCH PARTNERSHIP - ANNUAL REPORT UPDATE

The Redditch and Bromsgrove Partnership Manager introduced the report and in doing so noted that Redditch Partnership was the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the Redditch area and aimed to bring together representatives from a wide variety of agencies across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors to enable partnership working for the benefit of residents locally.

It was explained that the makeup of the Redditch Partnership had changed in recent years for a number of reasons, including changes around health with the introduction of Integrated Care Systems (ICS), which were formalised in 2022. As part of those changes District Collaboratives were formed, including Redditch District Collaborative

The Redditch and Bromsgrove Partnership Manager provided an overview of the structure and work of the Redditch Partnership and Redditch District Collaborative (RDC) in addition to a number of other partnership groups highlighted in the report in which the Council was involved in a co-ordinating or partnership role.

Following the presentation, a Member expressed concerns about the performance of the Redditch Partnership and the RDC. In addition, concerns were raised about the lack of elected member representation on Redditch Partnership or any of the groups mentioned in the report.

A response was provided by Officers that the Worcestershire County Council Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) provided a Member oversight over the work of the partnership groups across the county. Redditch Borough Council was represented at the HWB by a Member chosen at the Annual Council (Councillor Brandon Clayton was the Council's representative for 2026/27). As the same elected member was also invited to join the Redditch Community Wellbeing Group, it ensured there was a connection between the local Redditch Partnership Group and the Worcestershire-wide health board. It was also confirmed that the relevant Portfolio Holders were also represented on the Redditch Partnership last year and this was hoped to continue.

In response to concerns over the performance metrics and monitoring, it was highlighted that the Redditch Partnership was a completely voluntary, non-statutory partnership, it was difficult to set precise targets as the aim of the Partnership was for voluntary

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organisations and public sector bodies within Redditch to come together and form connections and partnerships.

It was explained that several years ago the Redditch District Collaborative (RDC) was in a situation where multitude of groups existed that were not connected to one another with the result that a number of different groups of voluntary sector and public partners worked in isolation. Following a review outlined within the report, the number of groups under the umbrella of Redditch Partnership had reduced. Membership of each group was also reviewed and all groups retained had to set out how they linked to the overall Redditch Partnership structure. It was noted that work continued on establishing which organisations were best represented through the RDC.

It was emphasised that collaboration through RDC enabled the different organisations to network and share ideas on how they were delivering their individual programmes and initiatives and how their organisations could collaborate to improve overall outcomes for residents. It was reiterated that as such there was no governance structure to set quantitative targets for the individual organisations that chose to voluntarily collaborate in the arrangement, and especially voluntary sector organisations.

Officers also explained that the various groups and partnerships listed in the report also enabled various agencies to come together and enable multi-agency work that otherwise would not be possible. An example was cited of one of the primary care network (PCN) that was part of the RDC being able to provide drop-ins practices where patients were able to come for health appointments and also receive support on housing and energy matters at the same time: this was an example of developing a holistic approach to health that took account of how financial and housing problems could be tackled to improve overall health outcomes.

It was clarified that the Redditch Partnership itself held no funds to provide to its individual members or any voluntary organisations, it acted entirely as a Partnership that brought different organisations together. Redditch Borough Council provided funding to some of the organisations involved with the work of the partnerships and groups named in these reports, and where such funding was being provided, the organisations would be subject to conditions applicable under the relevant fund/grant that they were receiving from the Council.

Members expressed concern about the complexity of the current arrangements and the concerns that the work of the different groups under the Redditch Partnership and Redditch District Collaborative umbrella could be detached from residents. Some Members expressed the opinion that information on these arrangements should be simplified as to enable elected members to better understand how to refer residents to appropriate help offered by the individual partners.

Members expressed the opinion that more detail was required in the report on the work and aims of each partnership/group named in the report together with applicable examples of work or outcomes that had been achieved. It was requested that case studies of work of the Redditch Mental Health and Housing Group be circulated to Members.

The diagram of the governance arrangements of the different partnerships and groups forming around the Redditch Partnership was also requested by Members.

A report was requested to be provided on the work and impact of the Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN). It was suggested by some Members that this would be best addressed through a report to Performance Scrutiny Working Group.

RESOLVED that

the annual update report be noted.

[Following consideration of this item, the meeting was adjourned from 7.46pm to 7.52pm].

8. SHARED HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2026-2031 - PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

The Housing Development and Strategy Manager presented a report on the Shared Homelessness Strategy for 2026-2031.

The Committee was informed that Redditch Borough Council had worked in partnership with Bromsgrove District Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Wyre Forest District Council to develop the strategy. It was noted that the Homelessness Act 2002 required all housing authorities to have a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy in place, based on a review of all forms of homelessness within their area. This was

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alongside compliance with the Homelessness Reduction Act, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the Renters Right Act 2025.

Members were advised that a consultation had been undertaken and that the responses received had been considered and incorporated where appropriate.

In relation to measurable outcomes, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was informed that the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had provided the required metrics for the Local Outcomes Framework. The core outcome measures on which local authorities were assessed were outlined as:

- The rate of households with children in temporary accommodation (per 1,000 households)
- The number of families in Bed & Breakfast accommodation for over six weeks
- The percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved
- The number of people sleeping rough on a single night
- The number of people sleeping rough over the month who were long-term rough sleepers

The financial implications of the strategy were outlined and it was explained that the new Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant would provide funding to support delivery. The Committee was advised that a separate report had already been presented to Members detailing spending priorities for the subsequent three years.

In considering the context of Local Government Reorganisation, Members were reassured that the strategy had been developed to be adaptable for incorporation into either one or two unitary authorities, pending the development of a new single strategy based on a fresh homelessness review as required by the Homelessness Code of Guidance.

Members made further comments in relation to these areas:

- New duties on the Council as a result of Renters' Rights Act 2025 – It was reported that additional £60,000 in funding had been awarded through Government funding to the Council's Private Sector Housing Team. This was used to employ additional staff in that team to help with ensuring the Council

could meet additional workload and duties arising from Renters' Rights Act 2025.

- Domestic Abuse Victims– It was explained that often in cases of domestic abuse, a victim would be relocated to a confidential refuge accommodation via the Council's sanctuary scheme as it was necessary to escape from the perpetrator. Members observed that in such cases it remained the victim and their children who suffered more disruption by having to move out of their house. It was noted that often this was a necessary step to avoid the perpetrators finding out the location of the victim.
- Officers reported that under the Social Housing Bill (which currently passed the second reading in the House of Lords) social landlords and courts would be able to evict perpetrators of domestic abuse from social housing, without the victim having to leave first. It was noted that currently, landlords could only evict a domestic abuse perpetrator after the victim has already left the home, and in joint tenancies, the only option for the victim was to end the tenancy entirely.
- Care leavers and social housing – Officers explained that the Council worked to strengthen partnership working with the County Council's Children's Services and the Care Leavers Team, which was to prevent homelessness legislation from being used as a pathway to house care leavers following the end of a Looked After Child Placement. Instead, the Council and the County Council worked to ensure more support is provided to care leavers in their transition to adulthood and independent living.
- Housing with respect to veterans, refugees and 'sofa surfers' – It was noted in respect of former armed forces personnel that the Council had a favourable housing allocation policy. It was reiterated that a social housing application had to be submitted before the Council could consider a person's circumstances for social housing. With respect to 'sofa surfers' (i.e. people who stayed informally with friends or family but who had no fixed address), the Council would not normally be able to identify unless a person in such situation presented as homeless to the Council. It was noted in respect of refugees the numbers of refugees who presented as homeless in the County were low.
- Temporary Accommodation properties with disability adaptations – Officers reported that there had been an increase in the numbers of people being discharged from hospital directly to temporary accommodation, who required properties with disability adaptations. Officers were investigating provision of adaptations such as walk-in

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showers and ramps in more temporary accommodation and council housing units to cater to the growing demand.

The Committee endorsed the approval of the Strategy.

RECOMMENDED that

the Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 be approved.

9. Q4 2025-26 HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE - PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

The Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services presented the Quarter 4 Update and 2026/27 Housing Improvement Plan (HIP) report.

The Committee was reminded that, following an inspection in July 2025, the Regulator of Social Housing had identified that Redditch Borough Council required significant improvements in several areas, including repairs, maintenance, fire safety, tenant engagement and stock condition surveys.

The report demonstrated the progress made since that inspection judgement, with eighteen actions having now been completed. It was noted that work had also been undertaken in collaboration with the Regulator across the consumer standards, with relevant actions having now been completed.

The revised HIP aimed to improve gap analysis and ensure that the Council moved towards embedding compliance with the Consumer Standards.

The main issues highlighted for Members' consideration within HIP included the delay experienced in receiving a formal proposal for the independent review the Council's delivery programme for fire safety and the introduction of a tenant portal which was intended to support residents by providing access to self-service options.

It was also noted that the Housing Annual Report for 2025/26 would be shared with tenants and leaseholders by the end of July. As part of this, opportunity would be taken to seek interest from tenants for participation in an array of tenant scrutiny and engagement opportunities.

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The Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services acknowledged that the formatting of the Housing Improvement Plan had been difficult to read due to the small font size and advised that this would be improved in future reports.

Members discussed the report. Comments were made about the Regulator of Social Housing judgment with the opinion expressed by some Members that the Council had responded well following the inspection results published in July 2025, with progress having been made across many of the areas highlighted by the Regulator as needing significant improvement. Members also commented that internal governance arrangements and regular meetings with the Regulator of Social Housing had also helped the Council to progress improvements required.

With respect to the delivery programme for fire safety, it was explained that the major area of the Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) programme and major area of backlog in fire remedial actions, related to the replacement of fire doors. It was clarified that properties in the affected blocks already had fire doors installed but many of these had become non-compliant in the last three years following the publication of the latest fire door regulations and therefore needed to be replaced to comply with the new regulations.

In relation to the ongoing fire safety checks it was noted that this would be reported in full detail under Housing Performance report but it was clarified that an external company undertook fire safety checks in Council tenanted properties and they had experienced staffing resource issue at Q4 resulting in the drop in performance from 100 per cent at Q3 2025/26 to 88 per cent at Q4 2025/26.

Report recommendations were endorsed by the Committee although it was requested by the Chair that any revisions to the Housing Improvement Plan for 2026/27, as recommended in the report for delegated authority to officers, be reported back to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and that the quarterly Housing Performance reports continue to be scrutinised by Overview and Scrutiny.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Housing Improvement Plan Quarter 4 2025/26 Update, which includes actions to address areas for improvement, confirmed as part of the Regulator of Social Housing inspection process, be noted.**

- 2) The 2026/27 Housing Improvement Plan, which includes actions to address areas for improvement identified across the Consumer Standards be approved.
- 3) Delegation be given to the Assistant Director Environment & Housing Property and Assistant Director Community and Housing, following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder, to revise the 2026/27 Housing Improvement Plan, in response to requirements raised by the Regulator for Social Housing, as part of their Provider Improvement Process, and in response to legislative changes.

10. Q4 2025-26 HOUSING PERFORMANCE INCORPORATING TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES RESULTS - PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

The Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services presented a report on Quarter Four 2025/2026 Housing Performance incorporating Tenant Satisfaction Measures Results.

The Committee was informed that the Regulator of Social Housing had established the 'Tenant Satisfaction Measures' (TSM) which placed a responsibility on all social housing landlords in England to return performance information so that each provider could be assessed for how well they were providing good quality homes and services.

It was reported that performance during Quarter Four had been positive although there were a number of a number of key areas remained below target. This included the repairs completed within target timescales for non-emergency and emergency repairs (measures RP02.1 and RP02.2) where performance had been improving but remained below the required target at 77.6 and 93.1 per cent for non-emergency and emergency repairs respectively. Members were advised that proposals were in place to address this.

Other key areas where performance remained below target included the Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standards (measure RP01) and fire safety checks (measure BS02). In relation to anti-social behaviour, it was reported that there had been an increase in hate-related crime; however, this was attributed to improved reporting as such incidents had historically not been recorded under a separate category.

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Members were advised that a separate annual housing complaints report was also being reported to the Executive Committee.

In relation to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, it was noted that the Tenant Perception Survey showed year-on-year improvements with increased tenant satisfaction recorded across the twelve measures. There was a 35 per cent increase in the response rate to the 2025/26 Tenant Perception Survey compared with the previous year.

A Member raised a query regarding gas safety checks, noting that the report referred to 134 tenanted properties where the gas supply had been capped. Officers explained that this figure included a combination of void properties, properties where tenants had refused access for gas safety inspections and properties where tenants had chosen not to have a gas supply. It was highlighted that the Council's Tenancy Team undertook visits to tenanted properties with capped gas supply to understand the reasons for the tenant having a capped gas supply, and take actions if possible to resolve the situation.

In relation to the measures, a question was asked in relation to the action which the Council could take in cases where tenants had damaged the property. It was responded that this area would be addressed through a new recharging policy which would detail how tenants could be charged for any damage. This policy would be presented for Members' consideration.

Members discussed the Total Mobile system implementation. It was noted that the project suffered from issues with initial consultant assigned to work with the Council that were now being resolved. It was explained that the Total Mobile system would automate the scheduling of repair and maintenance jobs and enable an electronic audit trail of job completion. The rollout of the system was now expected in July 2026.

The report recommendations were endorsed by the Committee as printed.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Council's Quarter 4 2025/26 Housing Performance in respect of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (Landlord) are noted.**

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2) The results of the Tenant Participation Surveys covering 2025/26 are noted.

11. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme was considered, as well as the items and topics suggested by Members at the Overview and Scrutiny Training and Work Programme Event on 2nd June 2026. The document detailing Members' suggested additions to the Overview and Scrutiny work programme, as made at the Work Programme Event, were tabled at the meeting.

The Committee agreed to add the items as set out in the document referred above to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. These items are:

- Introduction of Food Waste Collections
- Town Centre Strategy
- Community Investment Fund
- Housing – Housing Strategy Review
- Community Cohesion and Engagement Strategy
- Parking (parking violations and enforcement)
- Play Strategy (incl. progress within specific wards)
- Mental Health in the Community (including investigation of potential issues such as lack of mental health crisis support)
- Homelessness Strategy – considered at tonight's meeting but to include any future updates
- Post-16 Education including NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, Training)– and following up from the Task Group review that was being undertaken.
- Parks – including specific updates on Arrow Valley Lake and Morton Stanley Park.
- Review of Community / Neighbourhood Warden enforcement powers
- Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN) – information report including on impact of the network

The dates for consideration and the type of scrutiny format for each of these topics would be determined by Members of Overview and Scrutiny and relevant Working Groups in due course.

RESOLVED that

the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be updated as per the pre-amble above.

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12. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME - SELECTING ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY

Overview and Scrutiny requested that of the items considered for addition under the previous item, for which there would be Executive reports, be added for pre-decision scrutiny at meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This included the addition of:

- Introduction of Food Waste Collections
- Town Centre Strategy
- Community Investment Fund

to the 27th of July 2026 Overview and Scrutiny meeting agenda.

This is in addition to adding the Executive reports pertaining to updates on the Housing Improvement Plan and Housing Performance as discussed under the relevant agenda items at this meeting.

RESOLVED that

items from the Executive Committee Work Programme be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme as per the pre-amble above.

13. BUDGET SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP - APPOINTMENTS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered appointing Members to the Budget Scrutiny Working Group. Nominations were proposed and seconded for Councillors Sharon Harvey, Joanna Kane, Nicola Lloyd, Nic Pioli, and Rita Rogers.

On the nominations being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that

Councillors Sharon Harvey, Joanna Kane, Nicola Lloyd, Nic Pioli, and Rita Rogers be appointed to the Budget Scrutiny Working Group.

14. PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP - APPOINTMENTS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered appointing Members to the Performance Scrutiny Working Group. Nominations

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were proposed and seconded for Councillors Sharon Harvey, Joanna Kane, Nicola Lloyd, Nic Pioli, and Rita Rogers.

On the nominations being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that

Councillors Sharon Harvey, Joanna Kane, Nicola Lloyd, Nic Pioli, and Rita Rogers be appointed to the Performance Scrutiny Working Group.

15. POST-16 EDUCATION TASK GROUP

Members considered whether the Post-16 Education Task Group should continue in the new municipal year and, if so, to appoint Councillors to sit on the Task Group.

It was highlighted by the Member proposing this Task Group review in 2024, Councillor Jane Spilsbury, that the proposal for the review had as its primary aim, to look at the training and course provision of the local further education college. It was confirmed that the Task Group had discussed the further education college post-16 course and training provision at one of its previous meetings.

It was commented that the Heart of Worcestershire (HoW) College in Redditch had responded well in this respect and had recently expanded its post-16 offer within Redditch as well as enhanced its special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision in Redditch. Members further discussed that the Task Group would aim to look at how to reduce the number of young people in the Borough who were 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET).

During the discussion it was agreed that the Task Group should continue with new Councillors and brought to a conclusion in a timely manner. Further, nominations were proposed and seconded for Councillors Sharon Harvey, Nicola Lloyd, Rita Rogers, and Jane Spilsbury to be appointed to the Post-16 Education Task Group. On being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Post-16 Education Task Group continue in the 2026/27 municipal year.**

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- 2) Councillors Sharon Harvey, Nicola Lloyd, Rita Rogers, and Jane Spilsbury be appointed to the Post-16 Education Task Group.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 9.00 pm