

# Executive Committee

Wed 10th March  
2010  
7.00 pm

Committee Room 2  
Town Hall  
Redditch



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- Access to a summary of the rights of the public to attend meetings of the Council and its Committees etc. and to inspect and copy documents.
- In addition, the public now has a right to be present when the Council determines “Key Decisions” unless the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- Unless otherwise stated, all items of business before the Executive Committee are Key Decisions.
- (Copies of Agenda Lists are published in advance of the meetings on the Council’s Website:  
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**If you have any queries on this Agenda or any of the decisions taken or wish to exercise any of the above rights of access to information, please contact**

**Ivor Westmore  
Committee Support Services**

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# Welcome to today's meeting.

## Guidance for the Public

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### **Agenda Papers**

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

### **Chair**

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

### **Running Order**

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

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

### **Decisions**

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

### **Members of the Public**

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

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**Do Not stop to collect personal belongings.**

**Do Not use lifts.**

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

**The emergency Assembly Area is on Walter Stranz Square.**

# Declaration of Interests: Guidance for Councillors

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DO I HAVE A "PERSONAL INTEREST" ?

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

**OR**

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

you have a personal interest.

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

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

IS IT A "PREJUDICIAL INTEREST" ?

In general only if:-

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

**and**

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

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

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



# Executive

10th March 2010

7.00 pm

## Committee

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

### Agenda

#### Membership:

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

<p><b>1. Apologies</b></p>	<p>To receive the apologies of any Member who is unable to attend this meeting.</p>
<p><b>2. Declarations of Interest</b></p>	<p>To invite Councillors to declare any interests they may have in items on the agenda.</p>
<p><b>3. Leader's Announcements</b></p>	<p>1. To give notice of any items for future meetings or for the Forward Plan, including any scheduled for this meeting, but now carried forward or deleted; and</p> <p>2 any other relevant announcements.</p> <p>(Oral report)</p>
<p><b>4. Minutes</b>  (Pages 1 - 16)  Chief Executive</p>	<p>To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 3rd, 17th and 22nd February 2010.</p> <p>(Minutes for 3rd and 17th February attached and for 22nd February to follow)</p>
<p><b>5. Quarterly Performance Monitoring - Quarter 3, October - December 2009</b>  (Pages 17 - 28)  Head of Community Services</p>	<p>To consider a report which provides a view on aspects of the Council's overall performance and an opportunity to view the Council's performance for Quarter 3 of the 2009/10 financial year and to comment on it.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(All Wards)</b></p>

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<p><b>6. Quarterly Budget Monitoring - Quarter 3, September to December 2009</b></p> <p>(Pages 29 - 48)</p> <p>Head of Resources</p>	<p>To consider an overview of the budget, including the achievement of approved savings as at the end of the third quarter 2009/10.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(All Wards)</b></p>
<p><b>7. Quarterly Monitoring of Formal Complaints and Compliments - Quarter 3, September to December 2009</b></p> <p>(Pages 49 - 64)</p> <p>Head of Community Services, Head of Customer and IT Services</p>	<p>To consider a report which provides a view on aspects of the Council's Formal Complaints Procedure, the compliments recorded during the same period and the Ombudsman 'Annual Review 2008/09.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(All Wards)</b></p>
<p><b>8. Quarterly Monitoring of the Benefits Service Improvement Plan - Quarter 3, September to December 2009</b></p> <p>(Pages 65 - 114)</p> <p>Head of Resources</p>	<p>To advise Members of actual performance during Quarter 3 of the Improvement Plan.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(All Wards)</b></p>
<p><b>9. Home Improvement Agency</b></p> <p>(Pages 115 - 164)</p> <p>Head of Community Services</p>	<p>To consider recommissioning of Home Improvement Agency services on a countywide basis.</p> <p>(Appendix 1 to this report is exempt in accordance with s.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access To Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as it contains information relating to a contract being negotiated with a third party.)</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</b></p>

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<p><b>10. Redditch Housing Advice and Homelessness Review and Enhanced Housing Options Strategy and Action Plan</b> (Pages 165 - 170) Head of Housing</p>	<p>To endorse the Redditch Housing Advice and Homelessness Review and agree the Redditch Enhanced Housing Options Strategy and Action Plan for 2010 to 2013.</p> <p>(Report attached – appendices available via the Council’s website and in the Group Rooms)</p> <p><b>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</b></p>
<p><b>11. Prudential Indicators 2010/11 to 2012/13 and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy</b> (Pages 171 - 180) Head of Resources</p>	<p>To agree the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy before the start of the 2010/11 financial year.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</b></p>
<p><b>12. Treasury Management Policy Statement</b> (Pages 181 - 188) Head of Resources</p>	<p>To approve the Council’s updated Treasury Management Policy Statement, including the Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategies for the 2010/11 financial year.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</b></p>
<p><b>13. Voluntary Sector Grant Applications 2010/11</b> (Pages 189 - 198) Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships</p>	<p>To consider recommendations from the Grants Assessment Panel in awarding grants to voluntary sector organisations for projects in 2010/11.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</b></p>
<p><b>14. Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b> Chief Executive</p>	<p>To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3rd February 2010.</p> <p>(Minutes to follow)</p>
<p><b>15. Minutes / Referrals - Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels, Neighbourhood Groups etc.</b> Chief Executive</p>	<p>To receive and consider any outstanding minutes or referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels, Neighbourhood Groups, etc. since the last meeting of the Executive Committee, other than as detailed in the items above.</p>

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<p><b>16. Advisory Panels - update report</b> (Pages 199 - 202) Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider, for monitoring / management purposes, an update on the work of the Executive Committee's Advisory Panels and similar bodies, which report via the Executive Committee.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>
<p><b>17. Action Monitoring</b> (Pages 203 - 206) Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider an update on the actions arising from previous meetings of the Committee.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>
<p><b>18. Exclusion of the Public</b></p>	<p>It may be necessary, in the opinion of the Chief Executive, to consider excluding the public from the meeting in relation to the following items of business on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged. It may be necessary, therefore, to move the following resolution:</p> <p><b>“that, under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs (to be specified) of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.”</b></p>
<p><b>19. Confidential Minutes / Referrals (if any)</b></p>	<p>To consider confidential matters not dealt with earlier in the evening and not separately listed below (if any).</p>





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## Executive Committee

3rd February 2010

### MINUTES

#### Present:

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

#### Officers:

R Bamford, B Barr, M Bough, C Flanagan, H Halls, S Hanley, J Homer, R Kindon and T Kristunas

#### Committee Officers:

D Sunman

#### 229. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 230. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 231. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised that she had accepted the following matter as urgent business:

Item 7 – Initial Estimates 2010/11 and Forecasts for 2011/12 and 2012/13.

#### 232. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - OFFICE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Members considered a report which sought endorsement of an Office Needs Assessment that had been jointly produced by Officers of the Council and GVA Grimley. Officers reported that the study would form part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy Development Plan document.

Members were informed that the Office Needs Assessment had included four key stages as follows:

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Chair

- 1) a Survey of Existing Occupiers;
- 2) an Assessment of Floorspace in Redditch town centre;
- 3) a Property Market Review; and
- 4) the Need for Additional Floorspace.

The key issues arising from these stages were:

- a) the town centre was an attractive location for the Office market with:
  - i) affordable rent levels;
  - ii) flexible accommodation; and
  - iii) location accessible to main transport routes.
- b) since January 2000 to March 2009 there had been a gradual increase of office lettings – the average take up being around 3,800 sq.m per annum, the freehold sales market was more limited;
- c) currently 28% of the total stock was vacant, the highest level in a decade;
- d) achieving the WMRSS target of 45,000 sq.m would be challenging given the limited amount of demand for such a high level of office floorspace in the town centre and peripheral zone;
- e) the town centre and peripheral zone could only accommodate half of this requirement;
- f) a revised office target of 30,000 sq.m over the Plan period was recommended;
- g) the study identified some potential sites which could accommodate around 22,000 sq.m, which would mean identifying an additional 2.3ha outside the town centre / peripheral zone in order to achieve the 30,000 sq.m requirement;
- h) in order to attract a wider office market, which traditionally had not wanted to locate in the Borough, marketing of the town centre would be fundamental to its success;
- i) the Council should focus on regional and sub-regional public sector organisations when identifying potential occupiers of

office accommodation in the town centre;

- j) a wider range of 'office products' would be required, i.e. new, modern office buildings with flexible space capable of accommodating medium to large businesses.
- k) support from Economic Development would be required in order to ensure a holistic approach is used in identifying the types of sectors that should be focused upon in the town centre; and
- l) in order to achieve the challenging office requirement policy would need to set precedence over competing uses, e.g. residential and leisure in the town centre.

The Chair of the Planning Advisory Panel (PAP) reported that the draft report had been presented to the Panel and had been discussed at length. He informed Members that a number of key points, which had arisen in these discussions, had been included in the final report.

**RECOMMENDED that**

**the Office Needs Assessment, as attached at Appendix A to the report, be endorsed as part of the Council's Local Development Framework Evidence Base.**

**233. WATER QUALITY REPORT**

Members received a report which sought approval and adoption of a policy in relation to Water Quality in Redditch Borough Council's owned and managed buildings.

Officers reported that the Council's policy for the management of water quality was as follows:

- 1) to have clear procedures for the design and management of water services;
- 2) to have specific lines of responsibility for the management of water services;
- 3) to identify locations with high risk users of premises;
- 4) to identify , where possible, potential risk areas due to materials, storage methods, poor installation etc. within buildings;

- 5) to check on a regular basis the quality of water within buildings;
- 6) to train staff and contractors to ensure that works carried out on water services comply with legislation and the policy;
- 7) to ensure that any risk of contamination is removed or reduces in an efficient, cost effective manner with the minimum disruption to building users.

Members requested that the Council's insurers be asked to comment on the policy.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **the policy in relation to water quality in Council-owned and managed buildings, as included at Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted; and**
- 2) **the Council's Insurers be sent a copy of the Water Quality Policy for comment.**

**234. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

The Committee received a report that sought approval and adoption of the Private Sector Housing Strategy and Action Plan, which would replace the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2004.

Officers reported that a stock modelling survey of private housing (all non-social) had been completed in April 2009 by Building Research Establishment (BRE). Based on the evidence from the survey significant issues had been identified in the older areas of the Borough and hot spots in part of the former new town areas. The areas of most need had been identified as the older dwellings in Central and adjacent wards of Lodge Park and Abbey.

Members were informed that a survey had been carried out during the summer of 2009 with private tenants, landlords and owner-occupiers to identify which private sector housing services were seen as a priority.

Resident's priorities had been identified as follows:

- 1) assistance to low-income households on property maintenance and helping arrange subsidised loans;
- 2) returning empty properties back to use;

- 3) helping older people and people with disabilities to live independently in their own homes by providing stairlifts, wider doorways etc.; and
- 4) advice on reducing energy use and combating fuel poverty.

Officers reported that the main strategic aims of the strategy were:

- a) improve housing conditions in the private sector; and
- b) give support and advice to private sector tenants and vulnerable households.

**RECOMMENDED that**

**the Private Sector Housing Strategy, as included at Appendix A to the report, be adopted.**

**235. INITIAL ESTIMATES 2010/11 AND FORECASTS FOR 2011/12 AND 2012/13**

Members received a report which presented the estimates at Directorate level that had been prepared in accordance with the Budget Guidelines, which had been approved by Council on 7th December 2009.

The Head of Resources reported that since consideration of the Medium Term Financial Plan for the period 2010/11 to 2012/13 in July 2009 central government had announced an increase in National Insurance contributions to take effect from April 2011 at an estimated cost of £110k. She also reported that there had been a reduction in income from business centres, leisure services, local land charges and planning fees.

Members were informed that the Executive Committee at their meeting on 18th November 2009 had considered a number of revenue and capital bids. Members had approved the bids for 2009/10 and approved, in principle, the bids for the forthcoming three years, subject to the availability of resources. Following the outcome of the Initial Estimates process for 2010/11 the Strategic Management Team had reviewed the General Fund bids. As a result the following amendments had been made:

- 1) the bid for £110,000 for works to Public Building had been removed pending a further report to Members;
- 2) the bid for the repair and maintenance of street lighting had been changed to medium priority and would be reconsidered

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later in the year;

- 3) the bid for Landscape Maintenance had been changed to medium priority pending an investigation into the potential utilisation of Section 106 contributions to support the budget;
- 4) the bid for Direct Action – Enforcement had been removed from the list.
- 5) the capital bid for the Energy Management System had been removed from the list as it had been included in the list of projects for SALIX funding.

The Leader reported that, with the approval of Members, the bid for the repair and maintenance of street lighting at a cost of £6,000 would be included in the Initial Estimates 2010/11.

The Head of Resources reported that the Secretary of State had approved the Council's application for a Capitalisation Direction in respect of the severance costs associated with the Single Management Team. She explained that this would mean that the severance costs could be met from capital receipts as opposed to a direct charge to the General Fund revenue account.

Officers were asked to write, in the first instance, to Worcestershire County Council highlighting the increasing pressure on the Council's budgets for staff pensions.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **the Initial Estimates for 2010/11 be approved;**
- 2) **the Revenue Bids categorised as unavoidable and high detailed in Appendix 14 be approved , as follows:**

<b>2010/11</b>	<b>£279,210</b>
<b>2011/12</b>	<b>£ 98,210</b>
<b>2012/13</b>	<b>£ 97,210</b>

- 3) **The General Fund bids for capital resources categorised as high set out in Appendix 15 be approved, as follows:**

<b>2010/11</b>	<b>£325,000</b>
<b>2011/12</b>	<b>£165,000</b>
<b>2012/13</b>	<b>£845,000;</b>

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together with the associated revenue implications as follows:

2010/11	£ 6,500
2011/12	£54,200
2012/13	£96,400
Future years	£188,800;

- 4) the proposal for how the Further Support for Town Centre Grant is utilised as set out in Appendix 17 be approved;
- 5) the bids as recommended by Overview and Scrutiny Committee be approved as follows:
  - a) 2nd December 2009 Redditch Matters to be published quarterly. Cost of an additional edition £6,000;
- 6) the bid for Church Hill District Centre Redevelopment for £60,000 2010/11 which was approved in principle at Council on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009, be approved;
- 7) that any Direct Action - Enforcement expenditure be funded from balances, pending recovery from the third party, and officers report back to Members on the success of any recovery action;
- 8) that any bids not approved at this stage be brought back to this Committee for reconsideration once the outturn position for 2009/10 is known and
- 9) the bid of £6,000 for the repair and maintenance of street lighting be included in the Initial Estimates 2010/11.

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

In this case the special circumstances were that the information, which was not available at the time of the agenda going to print, was required to be considered at the present meeting in order to meet statutory requirements.)

**236. FORMER COVERED MARKET - INITIAL OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

The Committee were asked to consider the options for the use or redevelopment of the former Covered Market site.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **the site be declared surplus to the Council's requirements;**
- 2) **Property Services, in conjunction with Planning Services, be authorised to work up a development brief to be reported to a future Executive Committee meeting; and**
- 3) **the Property Services Manager be authorised to secure any short term interim uses of the former covered market area that would generate income, subject to planning considerations and in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.**

**237. CORPORATE SICKNESS STATISTICS**

Members received a report that updated them on sickness statistics for the Council for the period July to September 2009. Officers circulated information for the period October to December 2009 at the meeting.

Officers were asked to provide Councillor Hartnett with information regarding the SLA with Worcestershire County Council for the provision of Occupational Health services.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **the statistics be noted; and**
- 2) **the programme outlined in the report to reduce sickness absence be approved.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and closed at 8.50 pm

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Chair





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# EXECUTIVE

## Committee

17th February 2010

### MINUTES

#### Present:

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

#### Also Present:

Councillor J Pearce and Michael Collins (Standards Committee)

#### Officers:

A Rutt, D Riley, S Hanley, R Cooke, K Stokes, H Halls, J Godwin, D Taylor, J Bough and K Cook

#### Committee Officers:

D Sunman

#### 238. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 239. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 240. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised that the following item of business, scheduled on the Forward Plan to be dealt with at this meeting, had been rescheduled to a later meeting of the Committee:

- Information Management Strategy

The Chair also advised that she had accepted the following matter as urgent business:

Item 9 – Leisure Contracts Advisory Panel – Abbey Stadium Redevelopment

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Chair

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### **241. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED that**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27th January 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **242. PLANNING SERVICES - SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO OFFICERS - AMENDMENTS RELATING TO TREE PROTECTION ORDERS**

Members considered a report which sought approval to amend the current scheme of delegation to Officers relating to Tree Preservation Orders in order to provide a more efficient service, with quicker response times, which would improve the natural environment of the Borough.

#### **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) authority be delegated to Officers, as summarised at Appendix 1; and**
- 2) the Scheme of Delegation to Officers, as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report, be adopted.**

### **243. PLANNING SERVICES - INCREASE IN CHARGING FOR PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS**

Members considered a report which sought approval to alter the current scale of fees for Permitted Development enquiries and pre-application advice to a common county-wide scale of charges and approach to service provision and to maintain the fees at the same level as other districts within Worcestershire. Officers were asked to circulate Appendix 2 prior to the meeting of Council on 29th March 2010. Officers were asked to circulate Appendix 2 prior to the meeting of Council on 29th March 2010.

#### **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the schedule of charges, detailed at Appendix 1, be adopted and implemented by Planning Services from 1st April 2010; and**
- 2) authority be delegated to Officers to maintain the fees at a standard county-wide level in future.**

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### 244. FILM PROPOSAL

The Committee received a report requesting approval for the Council's participation in a documentary film which would be produced by Fatum Films.

Officers reported that following the success of the Morton Stanley Festival in 2009 an approach had been made to the Council by the owner of Fatum Films who was interested in producing a documentary, which would involve media students from NEW College as part of their work experience.

#### **RESOLVED that**

**participation in a documentary film produced by Fatum Films be approved.**

### 245. IRRECOVERABLE DEBTS

The Committee received a report which sought approval to write off 29 cases of irrecoverable debt amounting to £87,773.62.

Officers reported that all appropriate debt recovery action had been attempted to recover the debts and that no further action could be taken to enforce payments.

Members were asked to note that any debt that had been written off could be retrieved and pursued if it came to the Council's attention that the debtor had the means to pay the debt.

#### **RESOLVED that**

**the debts totalling £87,773.62 (£40,557.07 General Fund; £47,218.55 Housing Revenue Account), detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be written off as irrecoverable.**

(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 it included information relating to individuals; the identity of individuals; and the financial or business affairs of particular persons (including the authority holding that information.)

(There is nothing exempt, however, in this record of the proceedings.)

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**246. LEISURE CONTRACTS ADVISORY PANEL - ABBEY STADIUM REDEVELOPMENT**

Members received the notes of the meeting of the Leisure Contracts Panel on 1st February 2010 and were asked to approve the associated recommendations.

Officers stated that, in their opinion, no Members of Planning Committee had fettered their discretion in any subsequent Planning Committee deliberations through their involvement in the decision-making on the above matter.

Officers were asked to arrange a visit for Councillors to a leisure centre in Coventry, which had been subject to a similar refurbishment to that being suggested at the Abbey Stadium.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **progress to date on the Abbey Stadium redevelopment be noted; and**
- 2) **Stage D design, as indicated in the separate 'artists' impression' Appendices, be formally approved for the purposes of seeking planning permission.**

**247. MINUTES / REFERRALS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE PANELS, NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUPS ETC.**

There were no minutes of referrals under this item.

**248. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT**

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

**249. ACTION MONITORING**

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

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**250. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED that**

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

**Irrecoverable Debts – [as detailed at Minute 245 (Item 8) above]; and**

**Arrow Valley Countryside Centre – Review of Alternative Management Arrangements [as detailed at Minute 251 (Item 14) below];**

**251. ARROW VALLEY COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE - CONSULTANT'S REPORT**

(During the consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to the financial or business affairs of any person including the authority holding that information and contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with a labour relations matter between the authority and employees of the authority.)

**252. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES / REFERRALS (IF ANY)**

There were no confidential minutes of referrals.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and closed at 8.28 pm

.....  
Chair



By virtue of paragraph(s) 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted





## Executive Committee

No Specific Ward Relevance

10th March 2010

### QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 3, PERIOD ENDING DECEMBER 2009

(Report of the Head of Community Services)

#### 1. Summary of Proposals

This report provides a view on aspects of the Council's overall performance. It shows which performance indicators, when compared to the same period last year, are exceeding their target, are not on target and where performance has remained static.

This report provides Members with an opportunity to review the Council's performance for quarter 3 of the 2009/10 financial year and to comment upon it.

#### 2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

the update on key performance indicators for the period ending December 2009 be noted and commented upon.

#### 3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Climate Change / Carbon Management Implications

##### Financial

- 3.1 Poor performance may have an impact on the financial position of the authority.

##### Legal

- 3.2 Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, a set of 198 new National Indicators was introduced to replace the previous Best Value Performance Indicators. These cover all public authorities and are not all applicable to Redditch Borough Council.

##### Policy

- 3.3 The Council's Corporate Plan makes a clear commitment to improve the way in which priority actions are planned and to improve the way in which performance is managed, including setting Service Standards.

Risk

- 3.4 Without adequate performance management the Council cannot review its performance at a corporate or service level adequately.

Climate Change / Carbon Management

- 3.5 There are a total of 4 performance indicators that relate to air quality and climate change within the list of new National Indicators (NI 185, NI 186, NI 188 and NI 194). These are all reported annually.

Report**4. Background**

- 4.1 The National Indicator (NI) set was introduced with effect from the 1st April 2008 and became the only indicators that public authorities will be required to report on to central Government. Figures collected for 2008/09 formed the baseline for future reporting. 28 national indicators are included in the Local Area Agreement for Worcestershire.
- 4.2 A number of former Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) have been retained and are now included in the list of local performance indicators.
- 4.3 The Council uses an electronic data collection (EDC) spread sheet to show our current and historic performance against selected national indicators and local performance indicators.
- 4.4 Quarterly reporting is intended to drive improvement based on organisational need and local priorities.

**5. Key Issues**Basis of Quarterly Reporting

- 5.1 In moving the agenda forward, the Council looked to address the following:
- a) Retaining a tighter focus at a corporate level – with a clearly defined number of indicators reported and monitored.
  - b) Developing capacity for Directorates to strengthen performance management by focusing on service plan commitments.

# Executive Committee

10th March 2010

- c) Continuing to monitor selected National Indicators and retained BVPI's and local indicators at a Member level at least annually.
- d) The development of links to how the Council is performing in its key delivery projects.
- 5.2 Member involvement in monitoring performance for the remainder of the 2009/10 reporting year will involve:

Quarter	Period	Member Group	Purpose of reporting
4	Jan – Mar	May Overview and Scrutiny Committee / Executive Committee	Receive annual outturn statistics Analyse exception report

### The Exception Report

- 5.3 The exception report compares the year to date outturn with the same period last year and highlights those indicators that have either improved or declined in performance when compared to the same period last year and those indicators where performance remains static.
- 5.4 As in quarter 1 and 2, out of all corporate performance indicators reported in quarter 3 a higher proportion have improved compared to the same period last year.
- 5.5 In total 35 indicators have provided data for quarter 3. Of these, 24 indicators have improved in performance, 4 have remained static (but are currently at optimum performance) but there has been some decline in performance for 7 of the indicators.

### 6. Other Implications

- Asset Management - None specific.
- Community Safety - None specific.
- Health - ???
- Human Resources - None specific.
- Social Exclusion - None specific.
- Environment / Sustainability - ???

# Executive

## Committee

10th March 2010

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### 7. Lessons Learnt

It was apparent that comments made by performance indicator owners were only relevant to the current quarter, however the report related to year to date performance. For clarity, performance indicator owners were asked to ensure their comments related to both periods.

### 8. Background Papers

The details to support the information provided within this report are held by Policy Team.

### 9. Consultation

There has been no consultation other than with relevant Borough Council Officers.

### 10. Author of Report

The author of this report is Tracy Beech (Policy Officer), who can be contacted on ext. 3182 (e-mail: [tracy.beech@redditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:tracy.beech@redditchbc.gov.uk)) for more information.

### 11. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Exception Report – Corporate Performance Indicators - Quarter 3, Period Ending December 2009.

**Corporate Performance Exception Report - Quarter 3, Period Ending December 2009**

These pages provide an exception report for all corporate performance indicators for which data was expected and provided in quarter 3 (October - December) 2009/10.

	DCX	E&P	HLCS	Total
Total number of corporate performance indicators providing outturn data for quarter 3	12	15	8	35
Total number of indicators showing improvement compared to the same period last year ▲	9	8	7	24
Total number of indicators showing a decline compared to the same period last year ▼	2	5	0	7
Total number of indicators showing no change compared to the same period last year* ◀▶	1	2	1	4

\* All four indicators showing no change in their performance are currently at optimum performance and as such improvement is not possible

<b><u>Key to Symbols (throughout the report)</u></b>			
Improving performance compared to same quarter last year ▲		No data available for the period	#
Worsening performance compared to same quarter last year ▼		Not applicable for this indicator/period	NA
No change in performance compared to same quarter last year ◀▶		Data is provisional	*

**Performance Management Group**

The Performance Management Group (PMG) has been established to review performance against performance indicators (PI's) across the Council and to escalate concerns regarding underperformance to Senior Management Team (SMT) and Corporate Management Team (CMT). The PMG has recently been updated on the Comprehensive Area Assessment, had feed back following a data quality audit and received an update from Benefits on their performance action plan. The Group also discussed the current recovery plans including NI 16 (serious acquisitive crime rate) and the associated burglary action plan. An update was also provided on the Lean project including savings that had been made as a result.

**Key Findings for Quarter 3**

As in quarter 1 and 2, out of all corporate performance indicators reported in quarter 3 a higher proportion have improved compared to the same period last year. By way of example NI 182 (Satisfaction of business with local authority regulation services) has significantly improved from 46.46% to 73.55% at the same time last year. Likewise NI 181 (Time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events (days)) has also demonstrated a positive direction of travel with a quarter 3 outturn of 13.3 days compared with 15.97 days; a decrease of 2.67 days for the same period last year. However there are also indicators which are highlighted as areas for concern; NI 195(b) one of the 'improved street and environmental cleanliness' indicators shows that the levels of detritus for quarter 3, 2009/10 is 18.75% compared with only 8.58% in 2008/09. This increase has occurred due to training on surveying methods undertaken during 2009 resulting in detritus levels appearing higher. There is a recovery plan in place for this indicator.

**Corporate Performance Exception Report - Quarter 3, Period Ending December 2009**

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 Apr 08 - 31 Dec 08	1 Apr 09 - 31 Dec 09	Direction of Travel	Target 2009/10	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	
<b>Deputy Chief Executive Directorate</b>									
Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	NI 155	10	71	▲	94	NA	NA	10	Consistent with LAA target. 4 x almshouses (Ellen Warrin Trust) ceded by trust to RCH so stock transfer occurred. Not new build.
The number of changes of circumstances which affect customers' Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit entitlement within the year	NI 180	461.27	706.3	▲	550	NA	NA	681.2	Increases due to change in rules excluded from these figures.
Time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events (days)	NI 181	15.97	13.3	▲	13	NA	NA	17.7	Several batch jobs have been run to take account of the rent decrease for Local Authority tenants and we have updated system to take account of changes to Child Benefit and capital in this quarter which has led to improved averages.
Percentage of invoices for commercial goods and services that were paid by the Council within 30 days of receipt or within the agreed payment terms	BV 008	91.52%	94.19%	▲	95.00%	94.05%	90.64%	91.62%	
The amount of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered as a percentage of all HB overpayments	BV 079b(i)	67.02%	77.35%	▲	TBC	#	69.46%	69.46%	Improved recovery performance. However, Quarter 3 will be exceptional because of the Rent reduction for Council Tenants, which meant a large number of Council Tenant overpayments identified with the majority being recovered in full from the Rent Account. There was also an increase in Rent Allowance overpayments identified, possibly due to clearing a backlog, and there was an improved recovery rate through Benefits. <b>(A recovery plan is in place for this indicator)</b>
Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments recovered during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period plus amount of HB overpayments identified during the period	BV 079b(ii)	20.23%	30.13%	▲	TBC	#	26.39%	26.39%	Improved recovery performance as for the reasons under BV79(i). <b>(A recovery plan is in place for this indicator)</b>
The number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population	BV 174	3.77	17.59	▲	contextual measure	18.92	30.21	12.59	A Hate Crime training package has been commissioned for delivery to members of the Joint Hate Incident Partnership in Qtr 4.
Percentage of new Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims where a decision was made within 14 days of receiving all information	HH 016	83.00%	89.00%	▲	85.00%	66.81	81.03%	80.00%	Batch jobs have increased average as changes due to rules change are recorded as one day taken - estimate average excluding these changes to be 84%.
Number of concessionary journeys per year	ET 015	1,219,427	1,293,472	▲	Contextual Measure	1,498,838	1,474,325	1,614,815	Majority of claims for December 2009 not yet received at 19 Jan 10.
<b>Environment and Planning Directorate</b>									
Processing of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	NI 157(a)	92.31%	100.00%	▲	96%	NA	NA	93.75%	Static- Has remained at 100% now for last 5 quarters.
Processing of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	NI 157(b)	91.23%	95.45%	▲	90%	NA	NA	90.41%	2 Applications determined out of time this quarter, still above national average.
Processing of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	NI 157(c)	97.51%	98.51%	▲	95%	NA	NA	97.83%	Only 1 Application determined out of time within the last quarter, above national average.

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**Corporate Performance Exception Report - Quarter 3, Period Ending December 2009**

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 Apr 08 - 31 Dec 08	1 Apr 09 - 31 Dec 09	Direction of Travel	Target 2009/10	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	
Satisfaction of business with local authority regulation services	NI 182	46.46%	73.55%	▲	50%	NA	NA	44.22%	Licensing questionnaires are not included in this quarter and will be shown in the next quarter.
Residual household waste per household (kg)	NI 191	435.84	423.09	▲	575kg	NA	NA	566.74	There continues to be a reduction in the amount of residual waste collected.
Improved street and environmental cleanliness - fly-posting	NI 195(d)	0.17%	0.00%	▲	0%	NA	NA	0.22%	No fly-posting was found in the survey in the second block of surveying for the year.
Improved street and environmental cleanliness – fly tipping (Level 1 - Good, Level 4 - Poor)	NI 196	2	1	▲	2	NA	NA	2	So far the number of enforcement actions compared with numbers of fly-tips has improved since last year, and we have achieved the highest performance level possible for the third quarter.
The number of working days/shifts lost to the local authority due to sickness absence per FTE staff member	BV 012	7.48	6.71	▲	8.00	10.62	8.53	9.60	Increase in sickness absence since previous quarter.
<b>Housing, Leisure and Customer &amp; IT Services Directorate</b>									
Number of households living in temporary accommodation	NI 156	10	4	▲	15	NA	NA	10	2 households in TA are council tenants and placed into TA at request from Police whilst ongoing investigations are completed.
Number of households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the local authority's housing advice service, and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation, per 1,000 population.	BV 213	5.52	6.80	▲	6.50	2.89	4.24	7.62	Due to the economic climate we have seen an increase in homelessness approaches in Redditch but officers are managing to prevent homelessness rather than accepting a homelessness duty. We have seen an improvement in respect of this indicator due to adopting leaner working practices, getting involved in cases earlier, increasing the use of mediation and home visits and making better use of Private Rented Housing stock.
Percentage of urgent repairs completed within Government time limits (Categories A, B and C)	HIP 001	82.05%	93.77%	▲	85%	77%	78.20%	83.72%	11% increase in number of priority B (within 24 hours) and C (within 5 days) jobs done and we achieved a higher % of jobs completed within target against the previous quarter.
Average time taken (days) to complete non-urgent responsive repairs (Categories D&E)	HIP 002	22.32	17.75	▲	25 days	20	32	21.19	8.6 % decrease in number of these jobs completed but 3-day improvement in completion time from previous quarter.
One Stop Shop: Customer satisfaction	WMO 003	95.12%	95.29%	▲	96%	95.46%	95.05%	95.19%	High satisfaction levels are being maintained but we are continuing to investigate ways in which to encourage more feedback from customers.
Enquiries dealt with at first point of contact	WMO 004	92.06%	94.16%	▲	90%	84.57%	88.31%	92.86%	This resolution figure is based on the enquiries which are logged on the CRM.
Number of e-enabled web payments	WMO 010	6,758	10,954	▲	11,942	NA	5,175	8,530	Indicator is as expected following last quarter. Information to be given to staff to ensure that electronic payment methods are promoted.

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**Corporate Performance Exception Report - Quarter 3, Period Ending December 2009**

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments	
		1 Apr 08 - 31 Dec 08	1 Apr 09 - 31 Dec 09	Direction of Travel	Target 2009/10	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09		
<b>Key to Symbols</b>										
Improving performance compared to same period last year	▲	No data available for the period					#			
Worsening performance compared to same period last year	▼	Not applicable for this indicator/period					NA			
No change in performance compared to same period last year	◀▶	Data is provisional					*			



**Corporate Performance Exception Report - Quarter 3, Period Ending December 2009**

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 Apr 08 - 31 Dec 08	1 Apr 09 - 31 Dec 09	Direction of Travel	Target 2009/10	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	
<b>Deputy Chief Executive Directorate</b>									
The percentage of Council Tax collected by the Authority in the year	BV 009	86.61%	85.69%	▼	98.50%	96.67%	96.97%	97.10%	Collection rate remains below target, analysis of quarter 2 outturn suggests this may be reflected nationally. Revised recovery procedures have been adopted to ensure smoother progression of cases through recovery cycle however the effects of this will not be gained this year. Action is being taken on delinquent accounts that are not progressing through recovery stages. <b>(A recovery plan is in place for this indicator)</b>
Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments written off during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period, plus amount of HB overpayments identified during the period	BV 079b(iii)	0.88%	1.32%	▼	TBC	#	0.32%	0.32%	Write-off of overpaid benefit is still currently very low. <b>(A recovery plan is in place for this indicator)</b>
<b>Environment and Planning Directorate</b>									
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	NI 192	31.26%	30.55%	▼	32%	NA	NA	31.43%	The level of waste recycled remains at a constant level for the 3rd quarter and we are expecting to see an increase in the 4th quarter as more materials are recycled from January 2010. <b>(A recovery plan is in place for this indicator)</b>
Improved street and environmental cleanliness - levels of litter	NI 195(a)	3.33%	3.67%	▼	6%	NA	NA	2.94%	This is a good score for the second of the 3 surveys this year, litter levels found to be very low.
Improved street and environmental cleanliness - levels of detritus	NI 195(b)	8.58%	18.75%	▼	10%	NA	NA	7.28%	Following training undertaken in 2009 on surveying methods, higher detritus levels (includes dust, mud, soil, grit, gravel, stones, rotted leaf and vegetable residues, fragments of twigs, glass, plastic and other finely divided materials and uncollected grass cuttings) have been reported due to the assessment and grading criteria that have to be used. This has identified a performance issue and an improvement plan has been developed with achievable timescales to target areas to improve sweeping and associated operations like weed spraying. <b>(A recovery plan is in place for this indicator)</b>
Improved street and environmental cleanliness - graffiti	NI 195(c)	0.33%	1.58%	▼	1%	NA	NA	0.61%	Slightly higher levels than in previous surveys but still very low levels of graffiti found. <b>(A recovery plan is in place for this indicator)</b>
The percentage of local authority employees from minority ethnic communities	BV 017(a)	2.79%	2.78%	▼	Contextual Measure (3.43%)	3.49%	3.15%	2.80%	Increase in staff from ethnic minority communities since previous quarter.

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**Corporate Performance Exception Report - Quarter 3, Period Ending December 2009**

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 Apr 08 - 31 Dec 08	1 Apr 09 - 31 Dec 09	Direction of Travel	Target 2009/10	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	
<b>Housing, Leisure and Customer &amp; IT Services Directorate</b>									
None									

<b>Key to Symbols</b>			
Improving performance compared to same period last year	▲	No data available for the period	#
Worsening performance compared to same period last year	▼	Not applicable for this indicator/period	NA
No change in performance compared to same period last year	◄►	Data is provisional	*

**Corporate Performance Exception Report - Quarter 3, Period Ending December 2009**

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 Apr 08 - 31 Dec 08	1 Apr 09 - 31 Dec 09	Direction of Travel	Target 2009/10	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	
<b>Deputy Chief Executive Directorate</b>									
The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action	BV 175	100%	100%	◀	contextual measure	93.33%	100.00%	100.00%	A Hate Crime training package has been commissioned for delivery to members of the Joint Hate Incident Partnership in Qtr 4.
<b>Environment and Planning Directorate</b>									
Has the local planning authority met the milestones which the current Local Development Scheme sets out?	BV 200(b)	YES	YES	◀	Meet milestones set out in LDS	YES	YES	YES	LDS updated Sept 09.
Percentage of conservation areas in the local authority area with an up-to-date character appraisal	BV 219(b)	100%	100%	◀	Maintain up to date character appraisal	100%	100%	100%	Static.
<b>Housing, Leisure and Customer &amp; IT Services Directorate</b>									
Percentage of repair appointments made that were kept by RBC	HH 018	100.00%	100.00%	◀	99%	98.00%	99.00%	100.00%	We endeavour to keep all of the appointments we make with customers and service will only fail due to unforeseen circumstances eg high levels of sick absence.

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<b>Key to Symbols</b>			
Improving performance compared to same period last year	▲	No data available for the period	#
Worsening performance compared to same period last year	▼	Not applicable for this indicator/period	NA
No change in performance compared to same period last year	◀	Data is provisional	*



## Executive Committee

No Direct Ward Relevance

10th March 2010

### QUARTERLY BUDGET MONITORING: APRIL - DECEMBER QUARTER

(Report of the Head of Resources)

#### 1. Summary of Proposals

The report provides the Executive Committee with an overview of the budget, including the achievement of approved savings as at the end of the second quarter 2009/10.

#### 2. Recommendations

**The Committee is asked RESOLVE that**

**subject to any comments the report be noted.**

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

##### Financial

- 3.1 The financial implications are detailed in the report. The report highlights areas of financial performance which are out of line with the approved budget. Budgets will continue to be monitored during the year and reported to this Committee.

##### Legal

- 3.2 Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 every local authority has a duty to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs.

##### Policy

- 3.3 There are no policy implications.

##### Risk

- 3.4 Without adequate budget monitoring procedures, the Council will not achieve its objectives. The Council needs to monitor its financial performance in order that corrective action may be taken to minimise risks to the organisation.
- 3.5 There is also a risk that the Council will overspend its budget if action is not taken to monitor the delivery of planned savings during the year.

## Sustainability / Environmental

- 3.6 There are no sustainability/environmental/climate change implications.

## Report

### 4. Background

- 4.1 The Council set its base budget for 2009/10 on the 23rd February 2009. Subsequent to this Council, on the 6th April 2009, approved budget savings of £870.1k for 2009/10 to enable the authority to set a balanced budget and to fund a range of bids previously approved on the 9th March 2009. The details of the approved savings are included at Appendix 1. In addition to the approved savings for 2009/10 there is a sum of £200k built into the base budget for vacancy/turnover savings.

- 4.2 A number of the savings approved required an adjustment to the original budget because they reflect savings such as reductions in vacant posts. The value of this type of saving totals £381.4k for which the base budget has been adjusted. However, there are a range of savings totalling £488.7k which require action by officers to deliver the savings. The purpose of this report is advise on the achievement of these savings and provide an turnover forecast for 2009/10.

### 4.3 Revised Budget 2009/10

	<b>£'000</b>
2009/10 Approved base budget	<b>13,179.5</b>
add capital charges	1,357.8
	14,537.3
Approved bids	541.1
	15,078.4
Less approved savings	870.1
	<b>14,208.3</b>

### 5. Key Issues

#### Turnover forecast

- 5.1 Appendices 2 and 3 detail the projected turnover variances as at the end of the second quarter. The budget for 2009/10 includes £350k (£200k built into the base plus £125k addition approved 9th April plus £25k support service savings) for vacancy/turnover savings. The

**Executive****Committee**

10th March 2010

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projected savings detailed at appendices 2 and 3 contribute towards the £350k.

- 5.2 The savings detailed within Appendices 2 and 3 may fluctuate during the year particularly where they relate to vacant posts. Any movement on these savings will be reflected in future monitoring reports.
- 5.3 The projected variances at the end of the third quarter are savings of £841,027.

Monitoring of approved savings (General Fund)

- 5.4 Appendix 4 details the savings achieved at the end of the third quarter against the target of £488.7k plus the £200k already built into the base budget for outturn savings.
- 5.5 At the end of December savings of £816.2 had been identified against the target of £688.7k. This would indicate that the Council is on target to deliver the approved savings although the figure for vacancy/outturn savings may fluctuate during the last quarter of the year. The figure of £816.2 includes savings of £321.6k in respect of the 2009/10 pay award and the re-tendering of some of the Council's energy supplies which have been taken into account in the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 5.6 Any shortfall in savings at the end of the year will need to be met from revenue balances. General Fund balances as at the 1st April 2009 stood at £2.131million of which £255k has been allocated for reinvestment in services.

**6. Other Implications**

Asset Management	-	None identified.
Community Safety	-	None identified.
Health	-	None identified.
Human Resources	-	None identified.
Social Exclusion	-	None identified.
Environment / Sustainability	-	None identified.

# Executive

## Committee

10th March 2010

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### 7. Lessons Learnt

7.1 None.

### 8. Background Papers

8.1 Budget monitoring report.

8.2 Council minutes – 23 February, 9 March and 6 April

### 9. Consultation

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

### 10. Author of Report

The author of this report is Teresa Kristunas (Head of Resources), who can be contacted on extension 3295 (e-mail: [teresa.kristunas@redditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:teresa.kristunas@redditchbc.gov.uk) ) for more information.

### 11. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Budget savings approved 6<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

Appendix 2 – Quarterly Monitoring Directorate Summary April – December 2009.

Appendix 3 - Explanations for projected variances.

Appendix 4 - Budget Savings - position as at end of third quarter 2009/10



**Budget Savings approved 6<sup>th</sup> April 2009**

Description	2009/10 £'000
<b>Budget adjusted to reflect saving/additional income -</b>	
Planning	53.2
Corporate Training	50.0
Building Control	20.7
Head of Asset	25.0
Switchboard	3.0
In-curtilage parking	10.0
Arrow Valley Countryside Centre	24.0
Pay Award	60.0
Property Services	10.3
Licensing Officer	13.3
CLRs Personal Budgets	16.5
<b>INCOME</b>	
Forge Mill	10.0
Private Sector Lifeline to breakeven	28.4
Car parking (Town Hall/Trafford Park)	12.0
Dial- a- Ride	10.0
Arrow Valley Countryside Centre	10.0
<b>Subject to ongoing monitoring -</b>	
Pitcheroak Golf Course	42.7
Shared Services	40.0
Vacancy Management	125.0
REDI	60.0
Printing	52.0
Procurement	70.0
Committee Services	14.0
Benefits Subsidy	40.0
Community Meeting Rooms	45.0
Support Service Costs	25.0
<b>Total savings/additional income</b>	<b>870.1</b>



# Executive Committee

## Appendix 2

10th March 2010

### Quarterly Monitoring Directorate Summary April – December 2009

Directorate	Budget	Profiled YTD Budget	YTD Actuals	Commitments	Actual + Commitments	Variance to date	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance
Chief Executive	3,940,052	3,502,760.19	1,891,964.60	991,820	2,883,784.60	(618,975.59)	3,502,962	(437,090)
Environment & Planning	5,833,400	4,533,155.00	4,563,948.33	39,780	4,603,728.33	70,573.33	5,886,010	52,610
Housing Services	726,340	832,115.79	528,970.02	40,000	568,970.02	(263,145.77)	639,840	(86,500)
Leisure Customer & Business Support	3,245,900	2,550,062.52	2,341,187.35	97,750	2,438,937.35	(111,125.17)	3,299,820	53,920
Corporate	462,558	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	184,291	(278,267)
<b>Total:</b>	<b>14,208,250</b>	<b>11,418,093.50</b>	<b>9,326,070.30</b>	<b>1,169,350</b>	<b>10,495,420.30</b>	<b>(922,673.20)</b>	<b>13,512,923.</b>	<b>(695,327)</b>
Housing Revenue Account	80,550	(11,553,240)	(12,298,554.96)	0.00	(12,298,554.96)	(745,314.96)	0.00	0.00
HRA Repairs	0.00	0.00	(12,298,554.96)	0.00	(12,298,554.96)	(745,314.96)	(145,700)	(145,700)
<b>Total:</b>								<b>(841,027)</b>



# Executive Committee

## Appendix 3

10th March 2010

### **Budget Monitoring Apr – Dec 2009** **Explanations for projected outturn variances**

#### **Acting Deputy Chief Executives Directorate**

<b>Cost Centre</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Variance £</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
0014	Directorate Support	(12,000)	Salary Savings

#### **Head of Financial Revenue and Benefits Services**

<b>Cost Centre</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Variance £</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
0103	Financial Services	(45,910)	Salary savings.
0107	Local Taxation	(30,000)	Salary savings
	Benefits	(116,930)	Additional Admin Subsidy

#### **Head of Legal, Democratic & Property Services**

<b>Cost Centre</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Variance £</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
0431	Investment Properties	(75,000)	Budget assumed leaseholder would give notice in March. Notice not received.
0432	Business Centres	73,300	Increase in the number of vacant units
0435	Community Related Asset Property	(52,000)	Savings on empty property rates of £27k, also £13k received for dilapidations and £11k received for a letting at Matchborough (delay in billing).
0472	Pay and Display Car Parks	6,000	The scheme has been delayed
0110	Members & Committee Services	(10,000)	Overview and Scrutiny budget no longer required
0623	Civic Suite	3,000	Reduction in number of bookings of weddings and Christmas parties (19% loss of income)
0101	Legal Services	6,350	Legal fees from external solicitors not budgeted for.

0626	Register of Electors	11,340	The overspend relates to the purchase of a new computer system, the cost of the new system was more expensive than originally budgeted for.
0111	Electoral Services	1,800	As above
0196	Crossgate Deport	6,000	Additional Security costs following several break ins.

**Head of Strategy & Partnership**

<b>Cost Centre</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Variance £</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
0102	Corporate Strategy	(16,000)	Staff Vacancies during the year
0706	Concessionary Travel	(174,040)	Legal fees not expected to be incurred and reduction in claims from operators.
0135	Housing Policy	(13,000)	Salary Savings
<b>Total</b>	<b>Acting Deputy CEO</b>	<b>(437,090)</b>	

**Environment & Planning Directorate**

**Head of Environment**

<b>Cost Centre</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Variance £</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
0704	Allotments	9,040	Income forecast to be below estimate.

**Head of Human Resource & Communications**

<b>Cost Centre</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Variance £</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
0137	Payroll	30,300	Additional staff required to cover sickness.
0141	Human Resources	(19,200)	Maternity leave
0611	Job Evaluation	16,000	Additional consultancy costs

**Head of Operations**

<b>Cost Centre</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Variance £</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
0437	Market	9,480	Reduction in income



**Head of Planning & Building Control**

<b>Cost Centre</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Variance £</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
0142	Planning Services	(48,010)	Salary savings.
0751	Planning Applications	50,000	Reduction in income
0760	Building Control	5,000	Reduction in income
<b>Total</b>	<b>Environment &amp; Planning</b>	<b>52,610</b>	

**Housing, Leisure and Customer Services Directorate**

**Head of Asset & Maintenance**

<b>Cost Centre</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Variance £</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
0189	Housing capital	(13,000)	Salary savings (HRA)
0703	Care & Repair	(10,000)	Increase in income

**Head of Housing & Community Services**

<b>Cost Centre</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Variance £</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
0483	Lifeline	(3,000)	Contract re-negotiated
0499	CCTV Operating Costs	(10,000)	Contract re-negotiated
0490	Community Warden Service Support	(30,000)	Salary savings (HRA).
0187	Housing Tenancy	(33,000)	Salary savings (HRA)
0185	Data Base & Housing Performance	(9,500)	Salary savings (HRA)
0191	Income & Recovery	22,000	Increased use of debt collection agency.

**Head of Leisure & Arts**

<b>Cost Centre</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Variance £</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
0001	Abbey Stadium	6,200	Reduction in income due to the closure of the sports hall for 3 weeks
0005	Hewell Road Pool	20,940	Closure for toilet refurbishment and essential maintenance work Economic climate resulting in an inability to achieve additional income
0007	Redi Card	12,000	Reduction in income due to a decrease in the number of customers at leisure sites.
0021	Arrow Vale Sports Centre	26,690	Cancellation of cheerleading and gymnastics classes/cancellation of block bookings due to fee increase/closure of ATP pitch due to inclement weather
0025	Kingsley Sports Centre	16,590	Reduction in adult fitness classes and swimming lesson enrolments. Economic climate resulting in an inability to achieve additional income
0010	Stitch Meadow	5,000	Summer events programme, low attendance due weather.
0060	Forge Mill	22,500	Summer events programme, low attendance due weather.

# Executive Committee

## Appendix 3

10th March 2010

### Head of Customer Services

	Switchboard	(9,000)	Contract savings
	One Stop Shop	(47,000)	Salary savings
<b>Total Housing Leisure &amp; Customer Services</b>		<b>(32,580)</b>	

### Housing Revenue Account

0901	Insurance	(70,000)	Savings from tendering exercise
0554	Cyclical/Prog Public Buildings	35,000	Increased testing requirements for fire alarm systems (HRA)
	Pay award	(84,000)	Pay award settled at 1%
	Energy	(26,700)	Savings from tendering exercise
<b>Total Housing Revenue Account</b>		<b>(145,700)</b>	

### Corporate Costs

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0901	Insurance	(10,000)	Reduction in insurance
0382	Planning Delivery Grant	(120,000)	Additional grant received
0392	LAGBI Grant	(23,347)	Additional grant received
	Energy	(67,600)	Savings from tendering exercise
	Pay award	(200,280)	Pay award settled at 1% (254,000) / cost of job evaluation 53,720
	Superannuation costs	85,000	Historical costs for previous employees
	Shared Services	35,000	RBC cost of Serco Business Case
	Restructure of Management Team	22,960	Pay in Lieu of notice costs for 2009/10
<b>Total Corporate Costs</b>		<b>(278,267)</b>	

**Executive****Appendix 3**

Committee

10th March 2010

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**Summary -**

<b>Total variances</b>	<b>£</b>
General Fund	599,827
Housing Revenue Account	241,200
Total	841,027



# Executive Committee

# Appendix 4

10th march 2010

## Position as at end of third Quarter (including estimate for 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter)

	Target 2009/10	Estimated Outturn 2009/10	Comments
	£'000	£'000	
Pitcheroak Golf Course	42.7	36.4	Unlikely to achieve by £6,300 due to weather.
Shared Services	40.0		Dependant upon progress with planned projects
Vacancy Management/Outturn savings*	325.0	599.8	Monitoring in place
REDI	60.0	50.0	Expected to achieve £50,000
Printing	52.0		Unlikely to be achieved.
Procurement	70.0	70.0	Achieved
Committee Services	14.0		Not likely to be achieved.
Benefits Subsidy	40.0	40.0	On target to be achieved
Community Meeting Rooms	20.0	20.0	On target to be achieved
Support Service Costs	25.0		Added to vacancy savings
*including £200k already built into base budget			
<b>Total</b>	<b>688.7</b>	<b>816.2</b>	





## Executive Committee

No Specific Ward Relevance

10th March 2010

### QUARTERLY MONITORING OF FORMAL COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS QUARTER 3, OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2009

(Report of the Head of Community Services /Head of Customer & IT Services)

#### 1. Summary of Proposals

This report provides a view on aspects of the Council's Formal Complaints Procedure. It shows the numbers of complaints at each Stage, whether they were responded to on target and what has been learnt/service improvements that have been made.

The report also shows the compliments recorded during the same period and details the Ombudsman Enquiry response times and outcomes.

This report provides Members with an opportunity to review the Council's performance for quarter 3 of the 2009/10 financial year and to comment upon it.

#### 2. Recommendations

**The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that**

**the update on complaints and compliments for the period  
October 2009 – December 2009 be noted and commented upon.**

#### 3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Climate Change / Carbon Management Implications

##### Financial

- 3.1 Poor performance may have an impact on the financial position of the authority.

##### Legal

- 3.2 No particular legal issues arising from this report – any legal issues arising from complaints or compliments are dealt with on a case by case basis.

# Executive Committee

10th March 2010

## Policy

- 3.3 No particular issues arising from this report – any policy issues arising from complaints or compliments are dealt with on a case by case basis.

## Risk

- 3.4 Without analysing the Council's complaints or compliments the Council cannot identify whether there are any patterns to complaints/compliments which need to be addressed and any lessons learnt in order to improve the Council performance and service to the Customer.

## Climate Change / Carbon Management

- 3.5 No particular issues arising from this report – any issues arising from complaints or compliments are dealt with on a case by case basis.

## Report

### 4. Background

- 4.1 The Council's Formal Complaints Procedure has the following stages:

<b>Stage 1</b> Formal Complaint	Relevant Director for that service areas responds. Target for response 10 working days.
<b>Stage 2</b> Complaint Appeal	Chief Executive investigates and responds. Target for response 10 working days.
<b>Stage 3</b> Member Complaint Appeal	Panel of Members consider complaint. Committee Services respond on Panel's behalf. No target set for response time.
<b>Ombudsman</b>	Chief Executive investigates and responds. Target of 28 working days (set by Ombudsman)

- 4.2 Quarterly reporting is intended to drive improvement based on organisational need and local priorities.

# Executive Committee

10th March 2010

## 5. Key Issues

- 5.1 The report sets out the statistical details of Formal Complaints, Complaint Appeals, Member Complaint Appeals and Ombudsman Enquiries.
- 5.2 This will enable a baseline to be set for further reporting and monitoring. Member involvement in monitoring performance for the remainder of the 2009/10 reporting year will involve:

Quarter	Period	Member Group	Purpose of reporting
4	Jan – Mar	May Executive Committee / Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Receive annual outturn statistics and to recommend any improvements to services

- 5.3 It was reported in the 1st quarter monitoring that only 50% of Formal Complaints (Stage 1) and Complaint Appeals (Stage 2) were responded to on time. The response time target is 10 working days. Officers have pursued an improvement in this area and actions have been successful. Response times for the 2nd quarter increased to 74% on target for Stage 1 and 80% for Stage 2 complaints. For the 3rd quarter response times have increased again, to 92% on target for Stage 1 and 86% for Stage 2 complaints.
- 5.4 The Audit Commission monitors the Ombudsman Response times and these are used in Audit Commission reports/reviews including Direction of Travel and Service Reviews.
- 5.5 The Ombudsman Response times had improved from 28 days at the end of the 1st Quarter to 25 days at the end of the 2nd Quarter. They remain at 25 days during the 3rd Quarter.
- 5.6 The Ombudsman Response times have improved greatly over the past two years, following efforts by officers.

Year	Number of Enquiries	RBC average days
06/07	8	39.6 days
07/08	6	26.7 days
08/09	5	14.6 days

# Executive

## Committee

10th March 2010

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### 6. Other Implications

Asset Management	-	None specific.
Community Safety	-	None specific.
Health	-	None specific.
Human Resources	-	None specific.
Social Exclusion	-	None specific.
Environment / Sustainability	-	None specific.

### 7. Lessons Learnt

Appendix 1 and 4 shows the lessons learnt and service improvement.

### 8. Background Papers

The details to support the information provided within this report are held by Chief Executive/Directors/Personal Assistants.

### 9. Consultation

There has been no consultation other than with relevant Borough Council Officers.

### 10. Author of Report

The author of this report is Susan Tasker (Senior Personal Assistant), who can be contacted on ext. 3299 (e-mail: [susan.tasker@redditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:susan.tasker@redditchbc.gov.uk)) for more information.

### 11. Appendices

Appendix 1	-	Monitoring data 3rd Quarter (October-December)
Appendix 2	-	Quarterly Complaints Statistics
Appendix 3	-	Quarterly Compliments Statistics
Appendix 3-		What has been learnt and Service Improvements

**COMPLAINTS MONITORING**  
**October – December 2009-10 (3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter)**

**Appendix 1**

**Formal Complaints (Stage 1)**

	Number of complaints	Target met (response within 10 working days)	Complaint Justified	Complaint Partly Justified	Complaint Not Justified	Still awaiting response from officers (whether justified or not)
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	18	9 (50%)	3	5	10	-
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	23	17 (74%)	2	7	10	4
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	25	23 (92%)	14	7	4	-

**Details of those Justified or Partly Justified:**

Service	Nature of Complaint	Justified/ Partly Justified	Action Taken or explanation	Service Improvement
Benefits	Problems with Benefit/Investigation for benefit fraud. (Some confusion over response to original enquiry and notional earnings decision was not supported by evidence.)	Partly	Discussion with decision makers about notional earnings - difference of opinion regarding rules - this can happen and the appeal process can be used to challenge the decision as in this case	Formal complaints coming in via web seem to bypass usual processes with the risk that they are missed or not monitored.
Benefits	Rude/unhelpful benefits staff since moving out of area. Threat of court action received for Council Tax	Partly	Remind staff of requirement to give name. Look at identifying priority documents and respond within 14 days.	Review priorities attached to document management system. Reminder to staff about identifying priority items. By end of December 2009.

Benefits	Not getting the full sum complainant expected, which he alleged he had been told he would get.	Partly	Complainant was given inaccurate info regarding amount of HB he would receive due to early creation of a 2nd payment not due until 4 Jan 10 showing on payment screens - claim was calculated correctly. However the claim was actioned as soon as the info was received and an additional payment run was made to ensure he would get paid.	Next time we raise a payment file early - remind staff that when checking payments screen to be aware of future payments which will look like they are due immediately.
Repairs & Maintenance	State of property when the tenancy was taken on.	Partly	Remedial works carried out when new tenant moved in and, during decoration, uncovered a false wall and exposed electric cables. It means tenants had to move out. The Voids Team were not physically able to see this problem prior to the tenant stripping the walls, but agree tenant should then not live in property until work done. It was agreed to reimburse the tenants' rent for this period.	No service improvement identified.
Property Services	FOI Request made on 22 September. Should have been responded to by 20 October. Delay in information being provided by Property Services.	Justified	Manager responded to FOI request on 29th Oct. Formal complaint response confirms this.	No service improvement identified.

Property Services	Delays in transfer of land from Shafestbury to Sanctuary Housing	Justified	Manager spoke to complainant and Legal to be passed instructions.	No service improvement identified.
Tenancy	Rubbish left outside address	Justified	The Tenancy Officer had already contacted the tenant about this and was dealing with the situation. The complainant was notified that it was the tenant's responsibility to move the rubbish and would be monitored.	No service improvement identified.
Waste Collection	Problems with waste not being collected	Partly	Monitoring of this address with reference to missed sacks. Although explanation has been given to how many sacks will be collected as per service standard.	M3 computer system to be checked to make sure actions are given to correct Officer. Timescale - immediately.
Planning – Enforcement	Problems regarding storage of container next door	Partly	Enforcement Notice drafted and issued.	Already changed internal process and more liaison between staff and manager over priorities and caseload.
Tenancy	Parking outside complainant's garage	Partly	Tenancy Officer should have made direct contact with the complainant. Due to not having complainant's details, she has been asked to telephone Estate Tenancy Officer, and arrange a meeting time convenient to both parties at a time when parking issues are likely to be occurring.	Reiterate to Officers to keep tenants informed of action being taken.

Capital	Central Heating	Justified	All the work to maintain the central heating has been completed and the electric sockets have all been checked and refixed where required.	The contractor's engineers to explain more clearly to the tenant the full workings of the system where temporary or permanent. All plumbing works must be checked for leaks before the engineer leaves the property. These have both been relayed back to the contractor and have been implemented.
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### **Complaints Appeals (Stage 2)**

	Number	Target Met (response within 10 working days)	Complaints Upheld
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	4	2 (50%)	0
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	10	8 (80%)	0
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	7	6 (86%)	0

### **Member Complaint Appeals (Stage 3)**

	Number
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	1
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	3
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	1



**COMPLAINTS MONITORING****October - December 2009-10 (3rd Quarter)****OMBUDSMAN MONITORING - 2009/10 Response times & Outcomes**

Complaint (service)	Quarter received	Info requested on	Target for response	Letter sent on (by e-mail)	Response time	Average Response time (cumulative)	Outcome
Property Services	1 <sup>st</sup>	22 04 09	16 05 09	09 06 09	48 days	48 days	Local Settlement - £500 compensation & waiver of £121 legal costs
Housing recharges	1 <sup>st</sup>	24 04 09	18 05 09	08 05 09	14 days	31 days	No maladministration
Housing Options	1 <sup>st</sup>	02 06 09	26 06 09	23 06 09	21 days	28 days	Ombudsman's Discretion – No Maladministration. Asked Council to consider : Consideration of a) whether someone fleeing violence should pay rent on two properties and b) need to discuss with households entering temporary accommodation whether there are any particular difficulties in storing belongings.
Housing Repairs	2 <sup>nd</sup>	01 07 09	24 07 09	21 07 09	21 days	26 days	No maladministration
Homelessness	2 <sup>nd</sup>	08 07 09	01 08 09	27 07 09	20 days	25 days	No maladministration
Leisure/Sundry Debts	3 <sup>rd</sup>	26 10 09	19 11 09	20 11 09	26 days	25 days	No maladministration

Year	Number of Enquiries	RBC average days
03/04	-	66.7 days
04/05	-	36.4 days
05/06	-	22.5 days
06/07	8	39.6 days
07/08	6	26.7 days
08/09	5	14.6 days

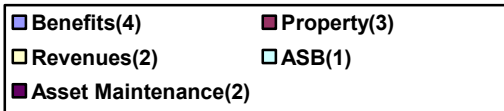
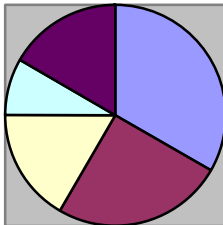


# Redditch Borough Council Quarterly Complaints Statistics

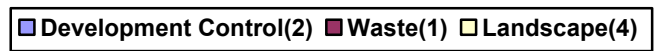
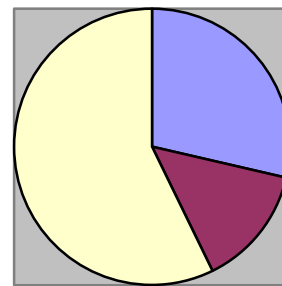
**October - December 2009**

There were a total of 25 complaints in the last quarter

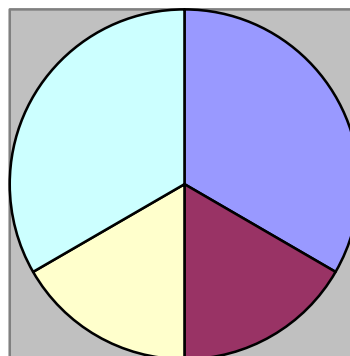
**DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTORATE**



**ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING  
DIRECTORATE**



**HOUSING, LEISURE & CUSTOMER  
SERVICES DIRECTORATE**



**What did you complain about?**

The majority of complaints related to Benefits and Landscape issues.

**What did we do about this?**

We addressed each case individually, and tightened up our procedures. We have reviewed/improved services where possible

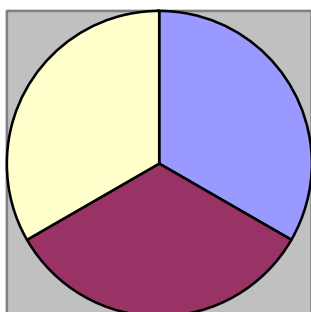


# Redditch Borough Council Quarterly Compliment Statistics

## October - December 2009

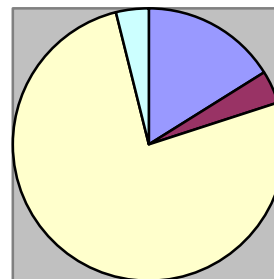
There were a total of 66 compliments in the last quarter

### DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE



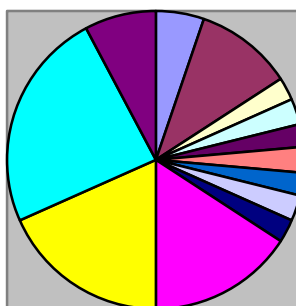
Financial Svs (1) Policy (1) Legal (1)

### ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING DIRECTORATE



Building Control (4) Development Control (1)  
Landscape & Countryside/Cleansing (19) Dial A Ride (1)

### HOUSING, LEISURE & CUSTOMER SERVICES DIRECTORATE



Aids & Adaptions (2) Capital (4) Care & Repair (1)  
Housing Options (1) Income (1) IT (1)  
OSS (1) Leisure (1) Performance (1)  
Wardens (6) Repairs (7) Sure Start (9)  
Tenancy (3)

### What did you compliment?

The majority of compliments related to Landscape & Countryside/Cleansing, Wardens, Surestart and Repairs



# Redditch Borough Council Quarterly Complaints Statistics

**October-December 2009**

## What we Learnt and Service Improvement

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action Taken/Improvement</b>
Maintenance – cleaning charges in flats. Rubbish left on landing for five weeks.	Tenancy Officer inspecting communal area to ensure no items left on landing. Monthly inspections to be undertaken.
Benefits and Council Tax – resident moving outside of Redditch	Staff reminded to give their name to customers. Look to identifying priority documents and respond within 14 days Review priorities attached to document management system. Reminder to staff about priority items.
Housing Options – concern about housing application and bidding for properties	Additional training to be given to Housing Options Officers.
Landscape – dangerous trees	Trees inspected and deemed safe. Proposed work included in woodland management programme
Planning Enforcement	Enforcement Notice drafted. Internal processes changed to ensure more liaison over priorities and caseloads.

Maintenance of trees and vegetation	<p>Officer inspected site and natural sprint accounted for excess water.</p> <p>Worcestershire CC have put a gulley in to deal with surface water.</p> <p>Seven Poplar trees on site will be reduced to ground level and then allowed to reshoot.</p> <p>Part of site to be strimmed/flailed to allow it to be mown within the existing grass cutting schedule.</p>
Central Heating	<p>The contractor's engineers to explain more clearly to tenants the full workings of the system where temporary or permanent.</p> <p>All plumbing works must be checked for leaks before the engineer leaves the property.</p>
Benefits – payment dates	Staff training given.



## Executive Committee

No Specific Ward Relevance

10th March 2010

### BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT PLAN – QUARTERLY MONITORING OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2009

(Report of the Head of Resources )

#### 1. Summary of Proposals

To advise members on the performance of the Benefits Service during the third quarter and to provide an update on progress against the Benefits Service Improvement Plan

#### 2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

subject to any comments, the report be noted,

#### 3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Climate Change / Carbon Management Implications

##### Financial

3.1 There are no specific financial implications

##### Legal

3.2 There are no specific legal implications.

##### Policy

3.3 There are no specific policy implications

##### Risk

3.4 Without adequate performance monitoring arrangements there is a risk that the planned/required improvements in the Benefits Service will not be achieved. In addition without an effective recovery procedures for overallowed Housing Benefit the Council will forego the ability to pursue debt recovery procedures with a consequential loss of income to the Council.

##### Climate Change / Carbon Management

# Executive Committee

10th March 2010

- 3.5 There are no specific sustainability / environmental / climate change implications.

## Report

### 4. Background

- 4.1 The Benefits Service Improvement Plan was developed in response to the Audit Commission Inspection in February 2009.

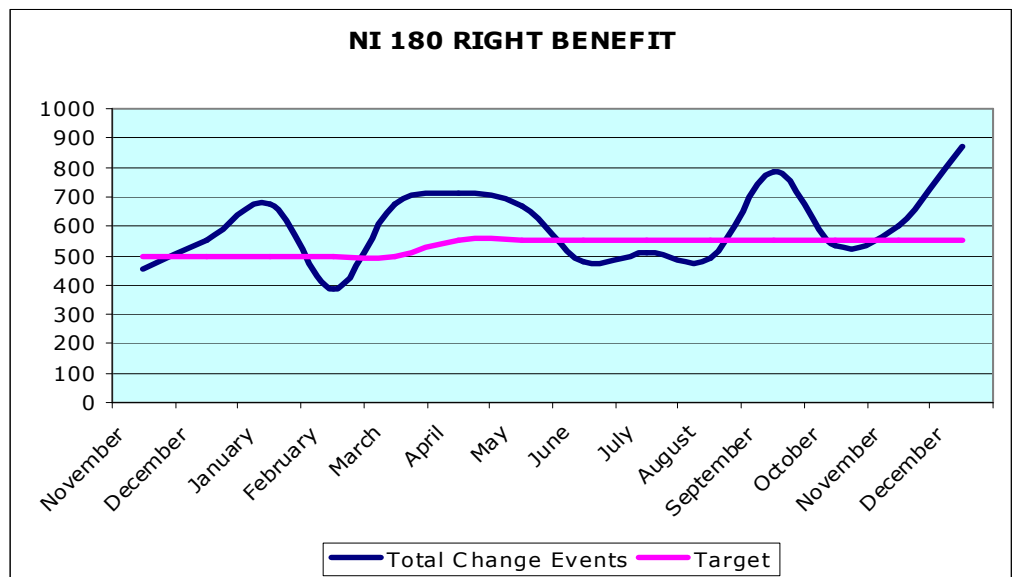
- 4.2. Work is progressing towards the aims of the improvement plan. The Performance Development Team (PDT) from the Department for Work and Pensions has been working with the Benefits Service to help implement the recommendations from the Audit Commission inspection. In particular they are looking at helping to improve overpayment recovery, devise a Take Up Strategy, improve access to the service and performance management.

### 5. Key Issues

#### Claims Performance

- 5.1. There are two national Indicators for the Benefits Service.

NI 180 Right Benefit – this measures the number of change events identified and actioned – a target of identifying 550 changes each month has been set and the service remains on track to meet this target.

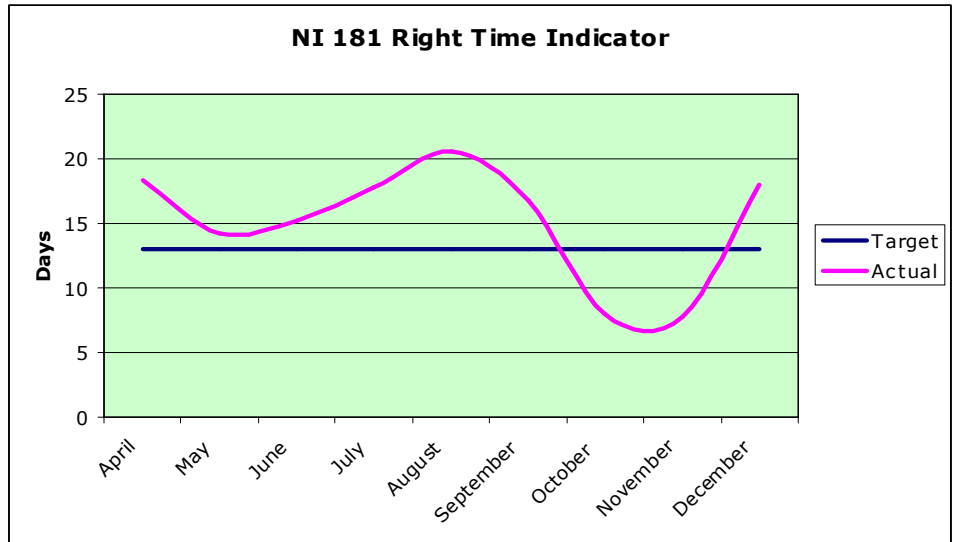


- 5.2 NI 181 – this is a measure of the average number of days taken to process new claims and changes in circumstances. An average of 13

**Executive  
Committee**

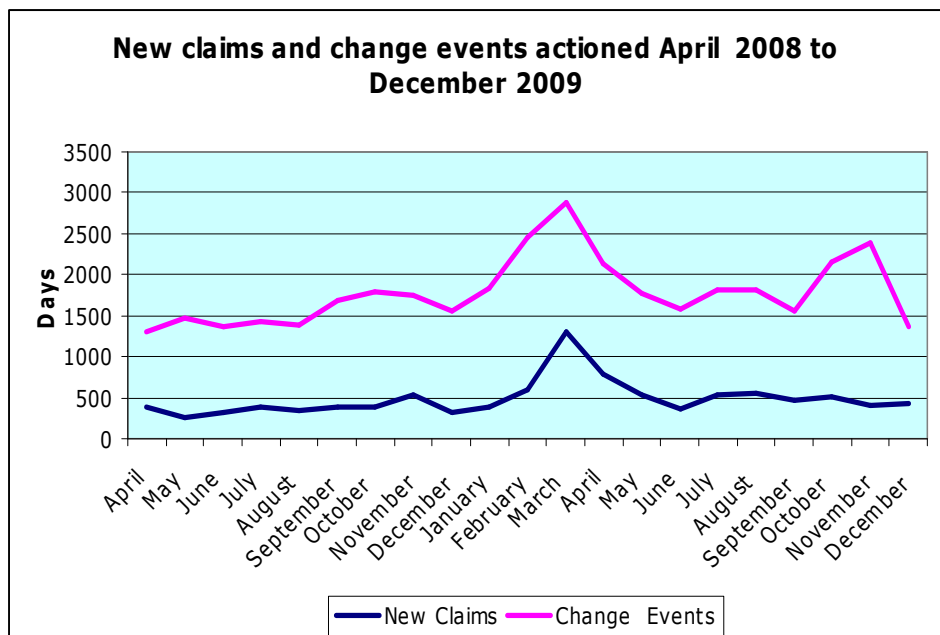
10th March 2010

days was set as a target and the year to date figure is 13 days. The third quarter figure of 9 days was helped by two bulk up rates to the system – one for the Council Tenant rent deduction and one for changes to how Child Benefit and Capital for pensioners are treated.



**5.3 Case-load and Claims received**

The number of claims received remained steady through the quarter with 1017 new claim forms being received compared with 1093 in the previous quarter. The caseload has remained steady at around 7800. There has however been an increase in the number of change events dealt with. A total of 5913 change events were worked on in the quarter compared to 5081 in the same quarter last year. The 5913 does not include the batch work mentioned previously – with these included the quarterly total would be 12236.



# Executive Committee

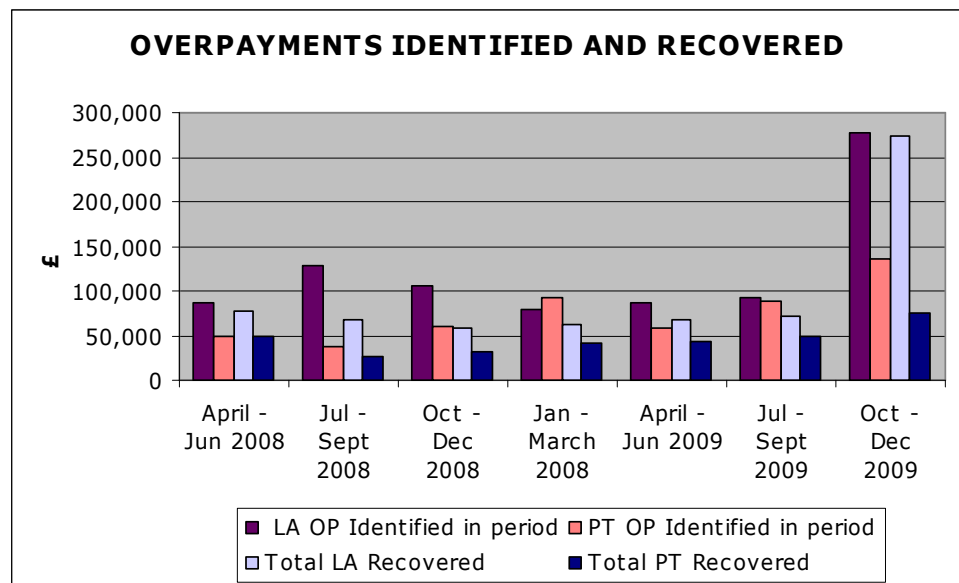
10th March 2010

## 5.4. Local Indicators

The Benefits Services also monitors a range of other performance data including the percentage of claims decided within 14 days. The current year target is to decide 85% of claims within 14 days. Between October and December 2009 89% of new claims and change events were dealt with within 14 days of being able to make a decision

## 5.5 Overpayment recovery

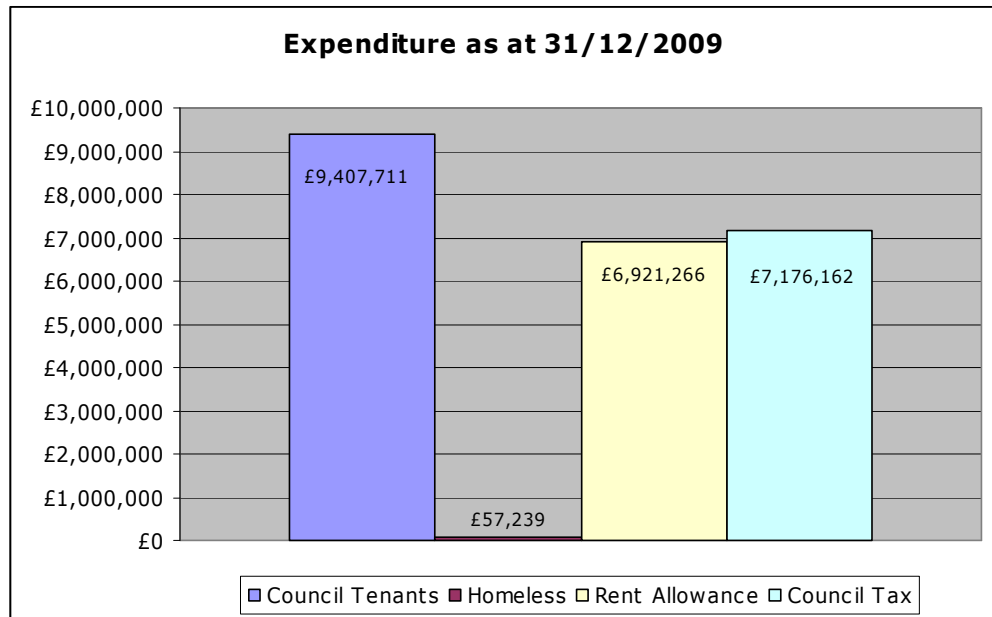
Outstanding overpayments at the beginning of the quarter increased to £1,182,766 up from £1,166,218 at the beginning of the previous quarter and both the value of overpayments identified and the amount of overpayments recovered increased.



- 5.6 Local Authority Error overpayments continued to remain below the financial threshold and remain on target to receive 100% subsidy again. Only £62,817 or 0.28% of qualifying expenditure has been treated as Local Authority error in the first three quarters of the year out of £23,562,378 expenditure. Local Authorities receive a grant to cover all overpayments attributed to Local Authority delay or error as long as the total does not exceed 0.48% of qualifying expenditure (qualifying expenditure in this case being expenditure which qualifies for 100% subsidy).

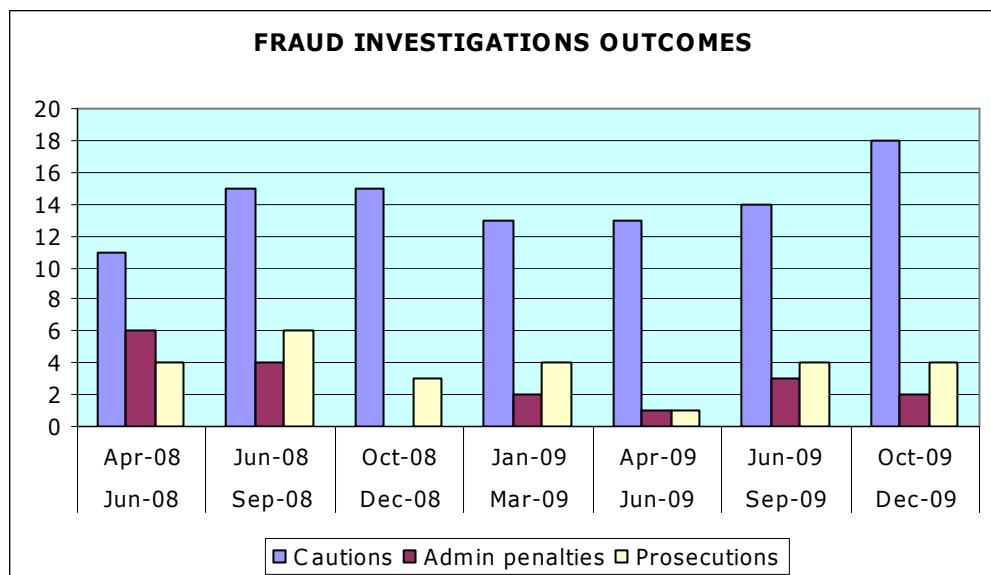
# Executive Committee

10th March 2010



## 5.7. Counter Fraud work

In the quarter 263 cases where fraud was suspected were referred to the Investigations team, and 18 Cautions and 2 Administration penalties were issued. 4 cases were successfully prosecuted and a further 5 cases were identified as being suitable for prosecution.



## 5.8 Appeals

A target of sending a written response to all appeal requests within 20 working days has been set and currently 83% of appeals have had this target met.

# Executive Committee

10th March 2010

## **6 Improvement plan**

- 6.1 Work is progressing towards the aims of the improvement plan. The Performance Development Team (PDT) from the Department of Work and Pensions has been working with the Benefits Service to help implement the recommendations from the Audit Commission inspection. In particular they have helped by looking at the overpayment recovery processes, assisted with the creation of a Take Up strategy, and worked with Officers to improve access to the service and performance management.
- 6.2 The overpayment recovery process has been mapped and a new Overpayments Officer will shortly be appointed.
- 6.3 A draft Take-Up strategy has been prepared to help local people maximise their income. Consultation is taking place with stakeholders such as the Job Centre Plus, Age Concern and Citizens Advice Bureau. Various activities and events are scheduled to promote take-up.
- 6.4 Service users have been asked their views on aspects of service provision and the service is working closer with voluntary and community organisations.
- 6.5 Service standards set, monitored and reported to customers – available from web site and from Customer Service Centre.
- 6.6 Detailed training plan developed to show objective of training and how effectiveness measured.
- 6.7 The latest position regarding the Benefits Improvement Plan has been included at Appendix 1.

## **7. Other Implications**

Asset Management	-	None identified
Community Safety	-	None identified
Health	-	None identified
Human Resources	-	None identified
Social Exclusion	-	None identified
Environment / Sustainability	-	???

# Executive

## Committee

10th March 2010

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8. **Lessons Learnt**

The Performance Development Team are as useful source of learning for the Benefits Service

9. **Background Papers**

Audit Commission inspection report.

10. **Consultation**

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

11. **Author of Report**

The author of this report is Teresa Kristunas (Head of Resources), who can be contacted on extension 3295 (e-mail: [teresa.kristunas@redditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:teresa.kristunas@redditchbc.gov.uk)) for more information.

12. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Position Statement – Benefits Service Improvement Plan as at January 2010  
Appendix 2 - Redditch take up strategy





**Appendix 1**

<p><b>Key Objective WM8:</b> To produce and deliver on an Improvement Plan for the Benefits Service that delivers a Benefits Service that is responsive to customer needs</p>																								
<p><b>Monthly Progress Update</b></p> <p><b>Owner :</b> Head of Finance, Revenues &amp; Benefits <b>Date:</b> January 2010</p>																								
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Programmed dates</td> <td>On target</td> <td>One month behind</td> <td>Over one month behind</td> <td>Reprogrammed/extended</td> <td>Suspended</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #cccccc;"></td> <td style="background-color: #008000;"></td> <td style="background-color: #ffa500;"></td> <td style="background-color: #ff0000;"></td> <td style="background-color: #cccccc;"></td> <td style="background-color: #0000ff;"></td> </tr> </table>													Programmed dates	On target	One month behind	Over one month behind	Reprogrammed/extended	Suspended						
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<b>25.1 (R1)</b>	<b>Improve the management and collection of all Housing Benefit overpayments.</b> Approval to combine recovery of overpaid HB in the HB section with the creation of a new post dedicated to this role. Ongoing Performance Development Team support to develop procedures. Target date January 2010 for transfer of debts from Income Recovery.																							
R1a	Reviewing the roles and responsibilities for recovery.	David Taylor/ Jane Bough													COMPLETED									
R1b	Ensure that the resources needed are made available.	David Taylor/ Jane Bough													Interviews for overpayment post to be held on 11/12 Feb.									
R1c	Reviewing debts and improving procedures for recovery, monitoring and management.	David Taylor/ Jane Bough													Three month extension requested to complete improved procedures. Completed as far as possible without a post in place.									

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R1d	Review the write off policies and procedure.	David Riley													Ongoing process expanded from revenues only review to encompass all services. Draft policy being prepared February 2010.
R1e	Effective prevention work to reduce overpayments arising, particularly LA Error overpayment.	David Taylor													COMPLETED Weekly measures in place to monitor with monthly reporting.
R1f	Improve information sent to customers so that underlying entitlement can be established.	Sandra Maddox													COMPLETED Customer letter updated, reminder to staff made, new overpayment post to check that all debtors have had underlying entitlement applied
R1g	Need for an embedded mechanism to ensure that all debtors already on the sundry debtors system can be identified if they reclaim benefit.	Vicki Lewis David Taylor													Partially Complete - Report already written to identify invoices where HB reclaimed. Will become embedded when the debts are transferred.



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R2b	Dates of activity and events agreed with partners and other stakeholders.	David Taylor/Teresa Kristunas													COMPLETED Strategy includes target dates for activities and events.
R2c	Better use of local demographic information to help identify potential areas of under-claiming.	David Taylor/Teresa Kristunas													COMPLETED
R2d	Clear measures of effectiveness.	David Taylor													COMPLETED Included in strategy.
R2e	Better targeting of resources and the maximisation of entitlement of benefit to vulnerable people.	David Taylor													COMPLETED Income Maximisation Posts now in place. Using data maps to target certain areas for take-up work.
<b>25.3 (R3)</b>	<b>Improve the accessibility of the Service.</b> Benefits appointments system and visits to be promoted in Redditch Matters and posters. Registered Social landlords advised of appointments system and home visits. Area to be identified in One Stop Shop for Benefit promotion.														

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R3a	Seek customer and internal and external stakeholders' views for consideration in the design of the Service, to ensure it meets their needs.	David Taylor													COMPLETED Income Maximisation Group and RSL views sought. Customer survey commenced for 2 months – results to follow Feb 2010. Staff and other internal stakeholders to be involved in service design.

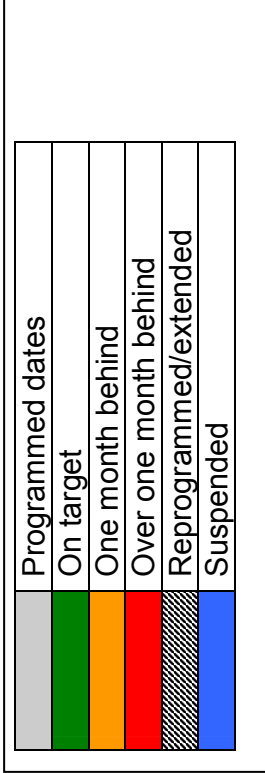
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R3b	Jointly working with public sector, voluntary and community organisations locally to improve the delivery of service	David Taylor													COMPLETED Closer working with Age Concern agreed – Income Maximisation posts to work from Age Concern offices part of the week to help complete DLA and AA forms. Accommodation problems prevent this from happening currently with CAB but other closer working to be investigated – i.e. e-mail referrals for debt advice.
R3c	Develop relationship with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) including verification.	David Taylor													Quarterly meetings being held with RSL's.  SLA with Redditch Co-Op Housing at draft stage.

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R3d	Understanding and addressing the needs of disabled persons and vulnerable groups.	David Taylor				Green	Green		Orange	Red	Red/Black	Green/Black			Work commenced Jan 2010 – new Income Maximisation posts to identify any problems. Take-up strategy has specific action to support this.
R3e	Promote the appointments system and home visits facility.	David Taylor/ Lynn Jones				Orange	Red								COMPLETED Information about appointments and home visits included in adverts and already raised with RSL and private landlord groups.
<b>25.4 (R4)</b>	<b>Ensure challenging service standards and performance targets are in place, that are relevant to customers needs.</b> Service Plan in place. Action plans for the delivery of service standards delayed. Consultation with stakeholders started and customers to be involved via survey and/or participation group ready for inclusion in next years plans.														
R4a	Develop service standards and performance targets through consultation with key stakeholders including customers, partners and Councillors.	David Taylor/Teresa Kristunas				Green	Green			Orange	Red/Black	Green/Black			Ongoing consultation taking place which will be incorporated in new service plans.





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R4f	Greater transparency of performance will enable Councilors' challenge to be more effective which can help drive further improvement.	David Taylor/Teresa Kristunas													COMPLETED Benefit performance data more available.
R4g	Relate service costs directly to the outcomes and performance delivered, establishing whether improving value for money is being achieved.	Teresa Kristunas													Work underway to identify service costs.

**25.5 (R5) Performance Improvement .**

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R5a	Improve claim processing performance.	Kerry Herbert													Average processing time improved to 14 days in January 2010. NVQ identified alternative method of working which may improve performance.
R5b	Improve accuracy rate to above average performance.	Kerry Herbert													Needs to be reconsidered - new target date set for end of February 2010. No recent national performance figures available and need to be able to release Benefit Officer from processing to carry out accuracy checking.
R5c	Improve Appeals performance in meeting its targets. The published target is to make a submission to the Tribunals Service within 28 days.	Sandra Maddox													Still not meeting 28 day target. Extension requested



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R6b	Service Plan to be supported by a detailed action plan that identifies key activities, responsibilities and measures of success that can be recognised by customers. These should address problem areas and have specific and measurable targets, linked to staff objectives.	David Taylor													Action plans delayed – however performance appraisals have been undertaken linking to service priorities and recent work has been undertaken to promote payment of HB into bank account. Detailed action plans to be linked to next year's service plan.
R6c	Involve staff in setting future priorities and objectives for the Service, to shape the immediate future of the Service.	David Taylor/Teresa Kristunas													COMPLETED Staff have been involved in setting new priorities and objectives for 2010/11.

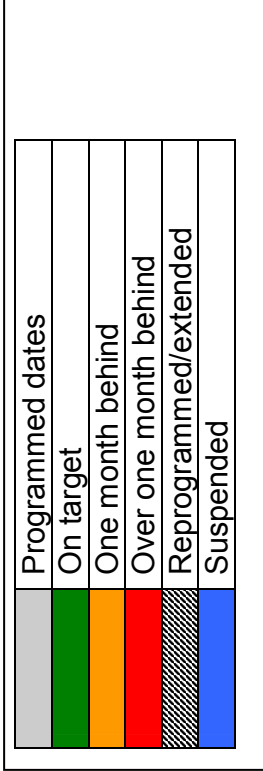
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R6d	The Service should specifically acknowledge how it will support and contribute to the priorities of the Worcestershire LAA; reducing the proportion of children in poverty, increasing the number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living and successful new claims generated for Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance.	David Taylor/Teresa Kristunas				Orange	Orange	Orange	Red	Hatched	Hatched	Hatched	Hatched	Hatched	New Service plan (due in April 2010 will directly link to these themes.  Staff have been consulted and draft Service Plan 2010-11 in process.  Income Maximisation Officer posts to help with new claims for AA and DLA and Child Tax Credit.  Take up strategy completed.

**25.7 (R7)** **Performance Management** Data in support of performance targets for individual members of staff still being compiled – Performance Development Team (PDT) supporting.





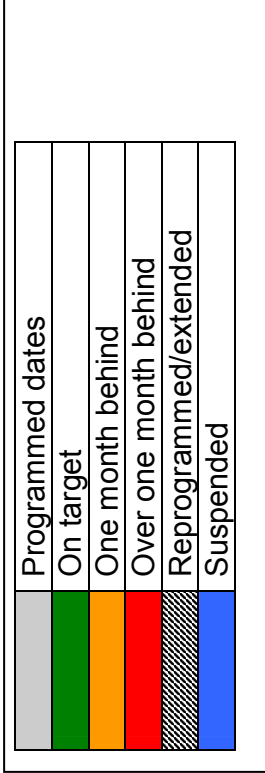
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R7f	There are not yet robust, formally adopted SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, resourced and time-based) plans in place to give clear structure to the delivery of improvement.	Teresa Kristunas													COMPLETED
<b>25.8 (R8)</b>	<b>Customer Information</b> On target – not due till later in the year.														
R8a	Information provided is not easy for customers to understand and does not help claimants to provide all of the evidence required, leading to excessive appeals and reconsiderations. Customers are providing evidence after the decision date which is resulting in a change to the decision.	David Taylor													Work underway, including telephoning customers to explain queries and advising to provide information within 7 days of claim receipt. This will reduce the number of decision changes. <b>Not due until May 2010</b>
R8b	Increase understanding of the reasons for the high number of unsuccessful and defective (incomplete) claims	David Taylor													COMPLETED Analysis of defective claims complete. New method (above) being trialled to reduce number of defective claims.



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Ref.	Action	Lead	Customer led Improvement On target – not due till later in the year.												Comment / Corrective Action			
			April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar				
25.9 (R9)	<b>Customer led Improvement</b> On target – not due till later in the year.																	
R9a	The Service does not systematically measure customer satisfaction on an ongoing basis.	David Taylor																COMPLETED Customer satisfaction survey completed.
R9b	The Service cannot clearly demonstrate that it has delivered significant improvements in outcomes for service users.	David Taylor/Teresa Kristunas																Not due until May 2010
R9c	Introduce a formal mechanism to use customer feedback as part of the service planning used to improve the Service. E.g. fast-tracking in One Stop Shop. The changes should clearly demonstrate what impact they have had.	David Taylor/Lynn Jones																COMPLETED Survey completed as per R9a. Survey analysis complete.  Periodic surveys to be undertaken to inform service plans.

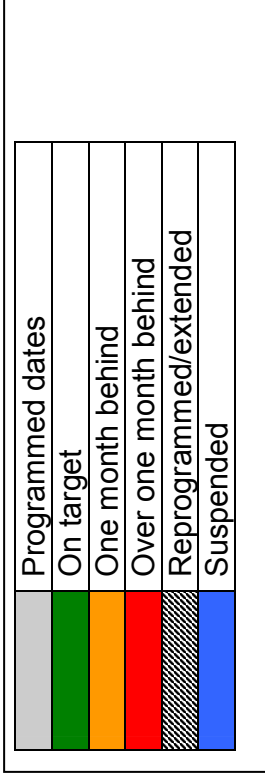
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R9d	A benefits realisation methodology should be applied to demonstrate Think Lean improvements are proportionate to the resources used and lead to outcomes for the customer as a direct result.	David Taylor/ Karen Jones													COMPLETED NVQ completed for lean techniques to evidence gathering – will record outcomes for customers. New proformas created to record outcomes and processes.
<b>25.10 (R10)</b>	<b>Customer Access</b> Benefits appointments system and visits to be promoted in Redditch Matters and posters. Registered Social landlords advised of appointments system and home visits. Area to be identified in One Stop Shop for Benefit promotion.														
R10a	Improve telephone access. Calls put on hold or not answered at all. Customer service staff unable to contact Benefits quickly to ask for detailed advice. There is no systematic monitoring of abandoned calls.	David Taylor/ Lynn Jones													Monthly monitoring of telephones data commenced – more detailed reports to be investigated.

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R10b	The appointments system in the Benefits Service is not operating effectively and it is difficult for users of the One Stop Shop to meet face to face with benefits assessors.	David Taylor/ Lynn Jones					Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Grey		Appointments promoted. SLA to be revised to set out when Benefit staff should meet with Customer Service staff. Outline discussed with Lynn Jones 03/02/10.
R10c	Leaflets and forms are not readily available in the One Stop Shops. Customers have to request them.	David Taylor/ Lynn Jones					Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Grey		COMPLETE Area in OSS for Benefits to have posters and leaflets identified – OSS area to be refreshed in Feb 2010 Joint information board discussed with housing options.
R10d	Benefits Service has not yet identified its hard to reach groups. Not due till July 2010.	David Taylor					Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Grey		Not due until July 2010

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R10e	The Service has not formally assessed whether all users have fair and equal access to the Service and its policies.	David Taylor													Linked to completion of Equalities Impact Assessment. New e-claim form (due March 2010) has ethnicity and disability monitoring reports included.
R10f	Some vulnerable claimants are receiving a slower service than other claimants.	David Taylor													Original target date of Nov 2009 missed – Income Maximisation posts to identify any problems.
<b>25.11 (R11)</b>	<b>Value for Money</b> Work ongoing. Some comparators obtained continuing to source others.														
R11a	Demonstrate improved outcomes that have arisen from actively exploring opportunities to work in partnership to deliver financial efficiencies	David Taylor/Teresa Kristunas													Shared Service agenda Shared training with Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest.

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R11b	The Benefits Services' net cost per head of population is lower than average and satisfaction is higher than average, but processing times are slow when compared to its statistical nearest neighbours.	David Taylor/Teresa Kristunas													DWP still not published performance data to enable bench marking. Further comparative analysis to be undertaken.
R11c	Compare costs to other services, calculate unit costs and seek to evaluate cost effectiveness.	David Taylor													Ongoing – delays getting detailed costs together and persuading other authorities to share data – extension requested until after next County group meeting.
R11d	Create robust proposals for delivering efficiency savings. Identify areas for efficiency savings that are cash-able and sustainable.	David Taylor													Shared service. E-claim form and BACS take-up.
R11e	Future investment proposals should demonstrate an awareness of linking improvement in performance to value for money	David Taylor/Teresa Kristunas													COMPLETE Evaluating performance improvements that may be possible before purchasing additional software

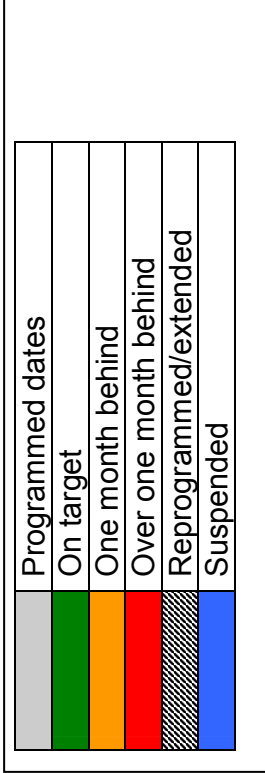
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			April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar			
<b>25.12 (R12)</b>	<b>Training</b> Work ongoing, due later in year.																
R12a	Develop a training plan that gives clear details of the cost of training, what the objective of the training is, or how its effectiveness will be determined. Create a transparent and prioritised system for identifying individuals who need particular training.	Kerry Herbert / Sandra Maddox/ Shona Knight															COMPLETE Overarching training plan has been drafted. On target for April 2010.
<b>25.13 (R13)</b>	<b>System and System Reports</b> Local Authority error on target – only partial improvement on other areas due to capacity. Due later in year.																
R13a	Improve data assurance in the process for compiling the performance indicators.	David Taylor /Sandra Maddox															Review of roles within team to help check data – capacity issue – intended to move processing officer into Controls team to support this area.

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R13b	Improve HB/CTB Subsidy Claim processes. Introduce testing of software releases and regular testing of claim accuracy during the year to ensure that subsidy calculation is accurate.	David Taylor /Ian Sprott	April	
			May	
			June	
			July	
			Aug	
			Sep	
			Oct	
			Nov	
			Dec	
			Jan	
			Feb	
			Mar	
				LA error on target and tested – only limited improvement elsewhere. Previous year audit qualified and additional testing may be required by DWP – Capacity issue to be looked at as part of review of how teams organised within the service. Look at options to provide more dedicated resource – pay IBS to carry out checks, work with another authority or use existing staff.

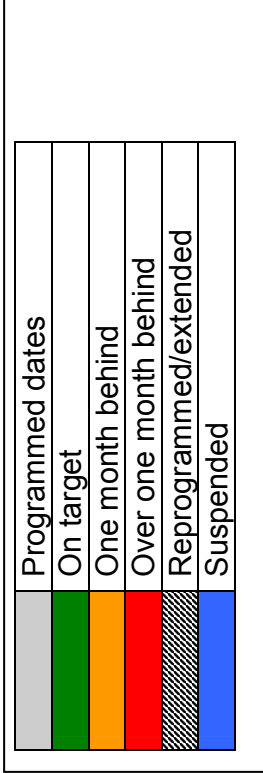
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R13c	IBS and Anite are not being used to best effect.	David Taylor /Vicki Lewis	June	Not due until 2010 but any areas identified for quick wins implemented – NVQ project to improve Anite letter requesting further information – standardised paragraphs to save time and ask for consistent information. Investigating input of forms directly into processing software to avoid typing in names and addresses etc.
			July	
			Aug	
			Sep	
			Oct	
			Nov	
			Dec	
			Jan	
			Feb	
			Mar	
			April	
			May	





Appendix 2



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**HOUSING BENEFIT  
&  
COUNCIL TAX  
BENEFIT  
TAKE-UP  
STRATEGY  
2010/2011**

## Introduction

This strategy aims to maximise the income of local citizens by increasing the take-up of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit and supports corporate, County and national priorities.

Redditch Benefits Service provides help with housing costs to nearly eight thousand local households on low incomes. Redditch is an area where deprivation and unemployment levels are above the county average.

There is also a statutory requirement to promote Benefits take-up covered by Sections 123(3)(a) and 123(4)(a) of The Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992: -

*“Every authority awarding HB/CTB shall take such steps as appear to them appropriate for the purpose of securing that persons who may be entitled to benefit from the authority become aware that they may be entitled to it.”*

## This strategy will work towards the following priorities:

### Worcestershire Local Area Agreement 2008 – 2011

The County wide LAA has identified the following priority areas;

**LI3** Successful new claims generated for Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance, as a percentage of the population of pensionable age.

**NI 116** Proportion of children in poverty.

**NI152** Working Age people on out of work benefits.

**NI142** Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living.

**NI146** Adults with learning difficulties in employment.

**NI187** Tackling fuel poverty – percentage of people receiving income based benefits living in houses with a low efficiency rating.

### Redditch Borough Council Corporate Priorities

#### Enterprising Community

The Benefits section strives to deliver a service that provides value for money. It seeks to improve health and economic well-being of citizens by helping to combat poverty by undertaking “take-up” campaigns; by ensuring that the correct benefit is paid and by offering advice. Benefits are a valuable source of income to vulnerable people.

#### Safe

The Benefits Service seeks to make a difference to local people by assisting to reduce poverty, helping people with their housing costs, enabling them to secure safe and decent homes.

### **What stops people claiming?**

There are a range of reasons that prevent people from claiming their full entitlement to state benefits. These include:

- **Lack of knowledge of the Housing/Council Tax Benefit schemes.**

This can result in people not realising they can claim and misunderstanding how the scheme operates, for example, not realising they may be entitled to Housing/Council Tax benefit while they are working.

- **The complexity of the claim process**

The length of the application form and the amount of evidence required can put people off as can assumptions about delays in getting the claim started.

- **Negative view of claiming Benefits**

Some people are embarrassed to claim as they perceive that others would have a negative view of who do claim.

- **Having to provide private information**

Certain people are worried about providing private data particularly bank details as they are concerned about how the data will be stored and what it will be used for.

- **Lack of support or personal contact during the claim process**

Some people need help to make the claim and left on their own will not be able to.

This can be due to:

- language barriers
- physical or mental inability

- **Inadequate promotion and publicity**

Does everyone know these benefits exist and what they can claim?

## Key Objectives

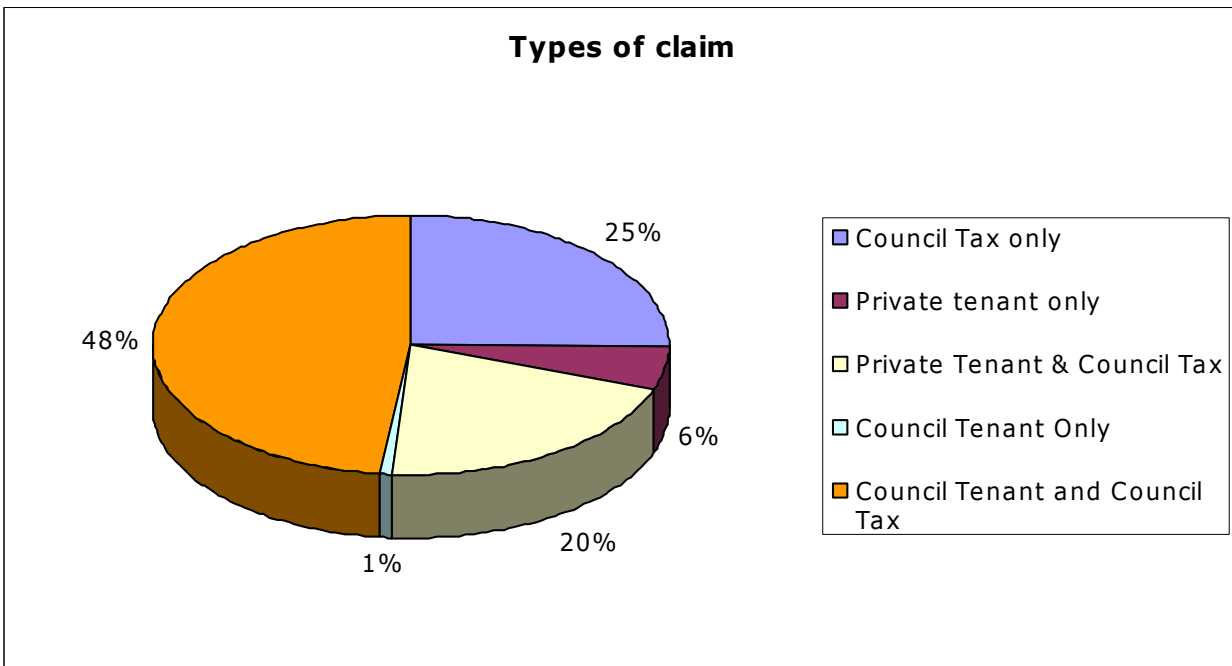
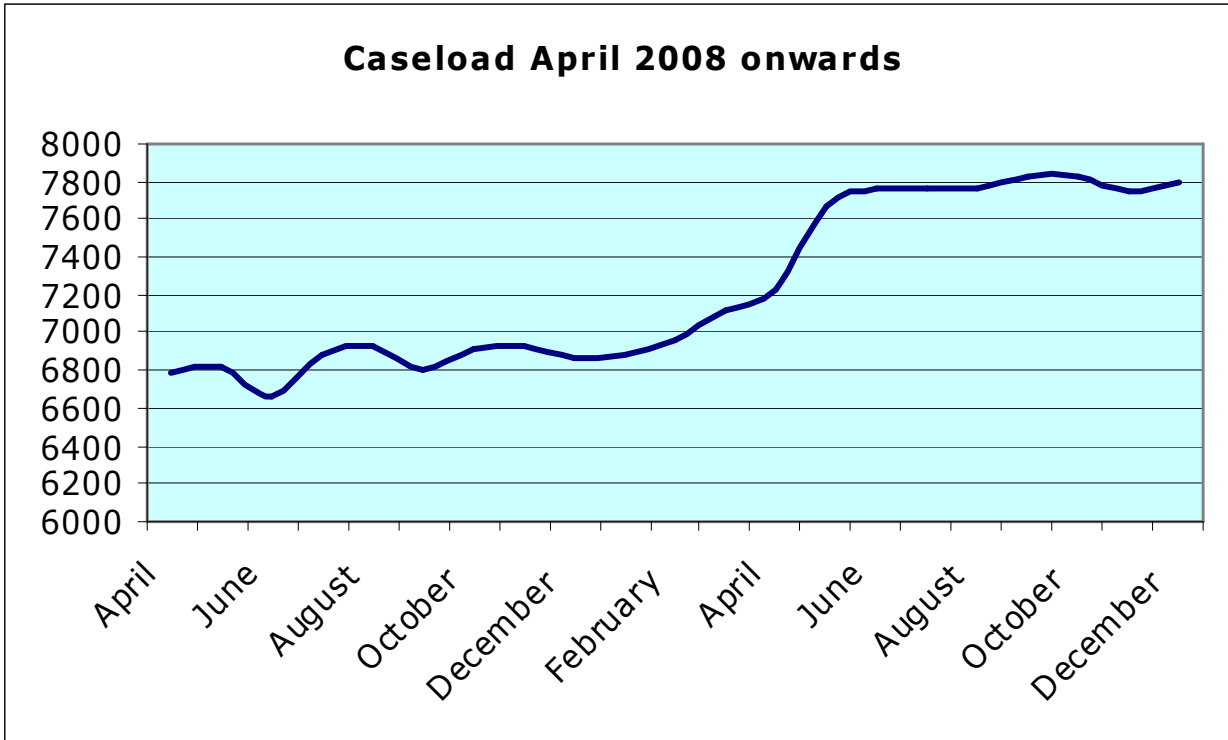
In order to maximise take-up of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, the Benefit Service will:

1. Gather data to understand the borough and its communities which will help to identify areas of low take-up of benefits and ensure that these issues are addressed by targeted awareness campaigns and promotions.
2. Evaluate and monitor customer needs in all communities of the district to identify reasons for any low take-up of benefits and address these issues.
3. Ensure that all staff have the skills and expertise to give customers accurate advice and assistance in relation to claiming benefits.
4. Work closely with service partners/stakeholders and Government Agencies, to ensure that the Governments and corporate priorities for Benefit Take up are achieved.
5. Effectively promote Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit throughout the borough.
6. Ensure that our partners and stakeholders are able to provide accurate advice and guidance on Housing and Council Tax Benefit issues and promote take up.
7. Identify vulnerable and hard to reach customers in order to provide assistance in claiming benefit.
8. Actively promote Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit as an 'in-work' benefit.
9. Actively promote Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit to pensioners.
10. Monitor results of take-up campaigns in order to identify successful and unsuccessful activity.
11. Seek feedback from customers regarding their experience of making a claim for benefit in order to ensure that the process meets their needs.
12. Promote general take up of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit by running publicity campaigns and setting up surgeries in a variety of locations throughout the district.

**Benefits Caseload**

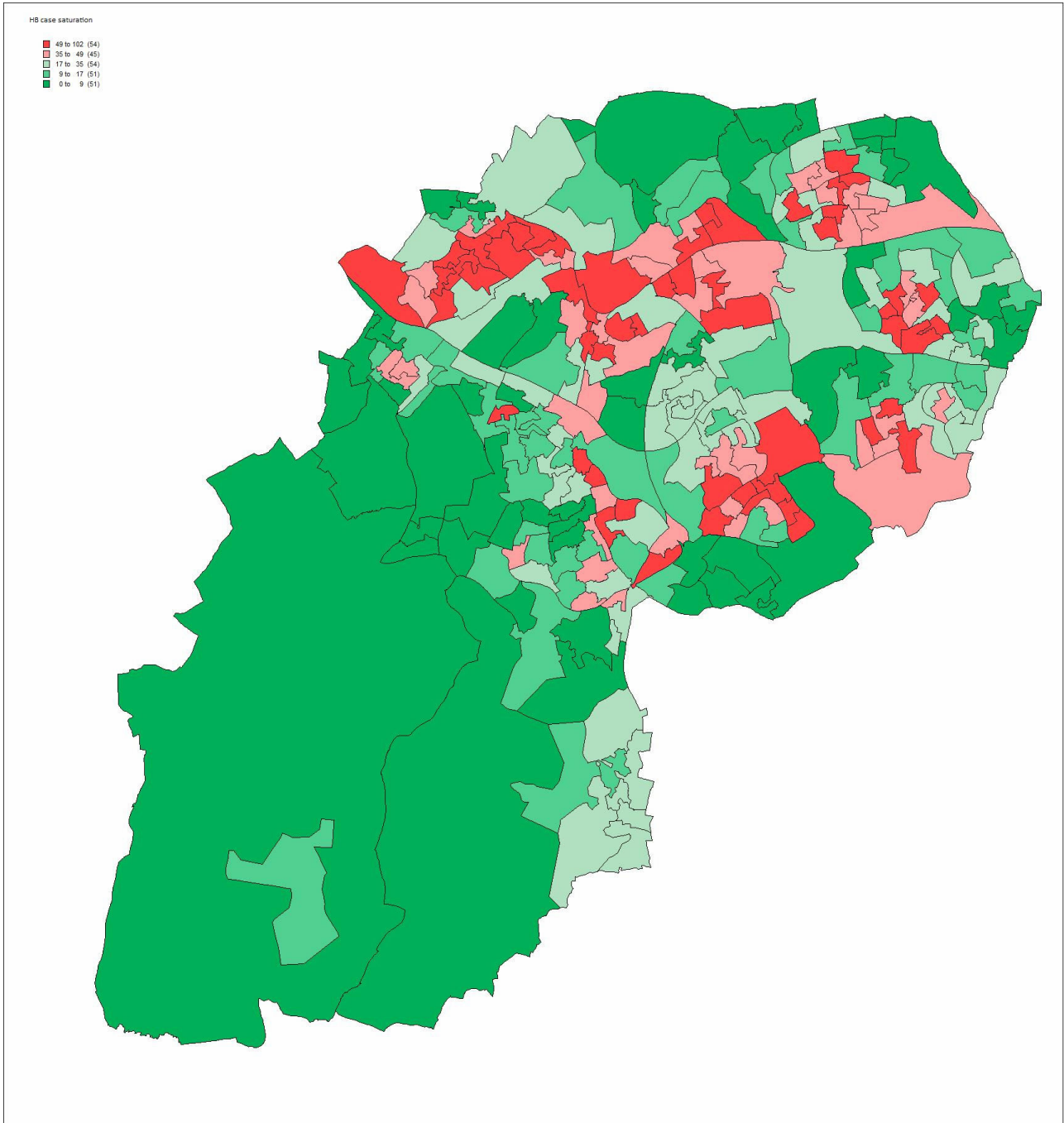
In December 2009 the total benefits caseload (claimants) was 7801 following a rapid increase in the first half of 2009 due to the changed economic climate.

The charts below give details of how our case-load is made-up and the distribution of claims in the borough.



### Density and Distribution of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claims July 2009

**RED = Highest number of claims – Darker Red = higher number of claims.**  
**GREEN = Fewest number of claims – Darker Green = lowest number of claims**



## Monitoring and review

In order to monitor and review the effectiveness of this strategy we will measure the success of publicity drives and take-up campaigns by:

- consulting with our customers to find out how they found out about Housing Benefit and Council Benefit; and how they would like to access the Benefits service
- identifying any increase in the case-load that can be linked to take-up activity.
- obtaining a breakdown of the benefits case-load on a monthly basis in order to identify any changes regarding take-up

The strategy will be reviewed and updated based on the results of monitoring carried out and will be subject to a full review on an annual basis.

## Communication Plan

The Benefits Service will work with a range of stakeholders to increase awareness and take-up of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit and will keep identified stakeholders aware of progress against this plan.

Audience (stakeholder)	How often (when)	Purpose (key message)	Format	By whom	Other
<b>Level 1</b>					
One Stop Shop	Every 2 months	Provide overview of project objectives/progress and invite input which would contribute to the effectiveness of the take up strategy.	Verbal report at meeting + SLA	Benefits Services Manager	Feedback provided at Wednesday staff meetings
Age Concern	Every 2 months	Provide overview of project objectives/progress and invite input which would contribute to the effectiveness of the take up strategy	Verbal report at meeting	Benefits Services Manager	
Bromsgrove And Redditch Network	Every 2 months	Provide overview of project objectives/progress and invite input which would contribute to the effectiveness of the take up strategy	Verbal report at meeting	Benefits Services Manager	
Redditch Citizens Advice Bureau	Every 2 months	Provide overview of project objectives/progress and invite input which would contribute to the effectiveness of the take up strategy	Verbal report at meeting	Benefits Services Manager	
Housing	Every 2	Provide overview of project objectives/progress and	Verbal	Benefits	

<b>Audience (stakeholder)</b>	<b>How often (when)</b>	<b>Purpose (key message)</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>Other</b>
Options	months	invite input which would contribute to the effectiveness of the take up strategy	report at meeting	Services Manager	
Chief Executive	Quarterly	To provide update of progress against take up strategy	Written /oral - as appropriate	Benefits Services Manager	
Sure Start	Quarterly	Provide overview of project objectives/progress and invite input which would contribute to the effectiveness of the take up strategy	Verbal report at meeting	Benefits Services Manager	
County Council Health and Social Care (includes Mental Health and Joint Team)	Quarterly	Provide overview of project objectives/progress and invite input which would contribute to the effectiveness of the take up strategy	Written /oral - as appropriate	Benefit Services Manager	
RSLs (including YMCA)	Quarterly	Provide overview of project objectives/progress and invite input which would contribute to the effectiveness of the take up strategy	Verbal report at meeting	Benefits Services Manager	Meeting minutes copied to staff
Family Centre	Quarterly	Provide overview of project objectives/progress and invite input which would contribute to the effectiveness of the take up strategy	Written report	Income Maximisation Officers	
DIAL	Quarterly	Provide overview of project objectives/progress and invite input which would contribute to the effectiveness of the take up strategy	Written report	Income Maximisation Officers	
Shelter Wardens	Quarterly	Provide overview of project objectives/progress and invite input which would contribute to the effectiveness of the take up strategy	Written report	Income Maximisation Officers	
Care & Repair	Quarterly	Provide overview of project objectives/progress and invite input which would contribute to the effectiveness of the take up strategy	Written report	Income Maximisation Officers	
		Provide overview of			



<b>Audience (stakeholder)</b>	<b>How often (when)</b>	<b>Purpose (key message)</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Council Tax</b>	<b>Informal</b>	<b>project objectives/progress and invite input which would contribute to the effectiveness of the take up strategy</b>	<b>Verbal report at meeting</b>	<b>Benefits Services Manager</b>	
<b>Level 2</b>					
<b>Pension Service</b>	<b>Quarterly</b>	<b>Provide overview of project objectives/progress and invite input which would contribute to the effectiveness of the take up strategy</b> <b>Provide support to the maximising income initiative</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Benefits Services Manager</b>	
<b>JCP</b>	<b>Quarterly</b>	<b>To provide support to take up strategy and support the maximising income initiative</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Benefits Services Manager</b>	
<b>Private Landlords</b>	<b>Tri-annual</b>	<b>Provide overview of project objectives/progress and invite input which would contribute to the effectiveness of the take up strategy</b>	<b>Verbal report at meeting</b> <b>Newsletter</b>	<b>Benefits Services Manager</b> <b>Management Team</b>	
<b>Local employers</b>	<b>Bi-annual</b>	<b>To provide support to take up strategy and support the maximising income initiative</b>	<b>Written report</b>	<b>Income Maximisation Officers</b>	
<b>Level 3</b>					
<b>Credit Union</b>	<b>Every 2 months</b>	<b>Provide overview of project objectives and obtain full contribution to the effectiveness of the take up strategy</b>	<b>Verbal report at meeting</b>	<b>Benefits Services Manager</b>	

**Appendix 1 – Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Take-Up Action Plan**

**1. Gather data to understand the borough and its communities which will help to identify areas of low take-up of benefits and ensure that these issues are addressed by targeted awareness campaigns and promotions.**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Linked activity</b>
1.1	Obtain detailed information about the district and it's communities, compare it to our caseload and evaluate areas of low take-up	Benefits Services Manager	
1.2	Obtain detailed information about the breakdown of our benefits caseload.	Benefits Services Manager	
1.3	Include questions regarding the claim process and customers knowledge of HB/CTB in relevant customer surveys	Project Officer	

**2. Evaluate and monitor customer needs in all communities and identify reasons for any low take-up of benefits and address these issues**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Linked activity</b>
2.1	Monitor take-up rates of different communities within the borough.	Benefits Services Manager	
2.2	Analyse any reasons for low take-up.	Benefits Services Manager	
2.3	Resolve any issues identified preventing take-up.	Benefits Services Manager	

**3. Ensure that staff have the skills and expertise to give customers accurate advice and assistance in relation to claiming benefits.**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Linked activity</b>
3.1	Continue to provide all staff with comprehensive benefit training	Assistant Benefits Manager (Processing)	

<b>3.2</b>	Ensure that appropriate staff in other Council services have benefits awareness training in order to identify potential customers	Assistant Benefits Manager (Processing)	
<b>3.3</b>	Ensure that staff receive annual refresher training on how entitlement is calculated	Assistant Benefits Manager (Processing)	
<b>3.4</b>	Ensure that clear training targets are set for Customer Service staff	Assistant Benefits Manager (Processing)	SLA with Customer Services

**4. Work closely with service partners/stakeholders and Government Agencies, to ensure that Governments and corporate priorities for Benefit Take up are achieved.**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Linked activity</b>
<b>4.1</b>	Work closely with the DWP to promote greater awareness and access of the benefit process	Benefits Services Manager	Income Maximisation Group
<b>4.2</b>	Continue to promote Housing and Council Tax Benefit take-up by maintaining regular liaison links with landlords and partner organisations	Benefits Services Manager	

**5. Effectively promote Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Linked activity</b>
<b>5.1</b>	Ensure that our website is informative, up to date, well signposted and customer friendly	Benefits Improvement Project Officer	
<b>5.2</b>	Ensure that we provide clear signposting for customers who require assistance to complete a claim form	Income Maximisation Officers	
<b>5.2</b>	Create and display take-up posters at key points throughout the borough	Income Maximisation Officers	
<b>5.3</b>	Review current leaflets and identify shortfalls in literature available to our customers	Income Maximisation Officers	
<b>5.4</b>	Ensure that publicity material is checked and approved by marketing	Income Maximisation Officers	

<b>5.5</b>	Ensure that publicity material and leaflets are checked on a regular basis to ensure they are current and readily available	Income Maximisation Officers	
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**6. Ensure that our partners and stakeholders are able to provide accurate advice and guidance on Housing and Council Tax Benefit issues and promote take up.**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Linked activity</b>
<b>6.1</b>	Maintain regular contact with service users and groups in order to highlight potential weaknesses in processes in order that these can be improved	Income Maximisation Officers	

**7. Identify our vulnerable/hard to reach customers in order to provide assistance in claiming benefit**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Linked activity</b>
<b>7.1</b>	Work with other organisations to identify areas and groups of customers not taking up entitlement to Housing and Council Tax benefit and ensure that this is addressed through joint working, targeted campaigns and promotions of the availability of benefits	Income Maximisation Officers	
<b>7.2</b>	Introduce regular liaison with Social Services	Income Maximisation Officers	
<b>7.3</b>	Identify the various community/voluntary/charitable groups operating within the district in order to establish links with them and introduce joint working to improve take-up	Income Maximisation Officers	
<b>7.4</b>	Contact the Carers Allowance unit and the Local Disability Benefits Centre in order to establish links with them and introduce joint working to improve take-up	Income Maximisation Officers	
<b>7.5</b>	Contact the RNIB and RNID in order to establish links with them and investigate joint working to improve take-up	Income Maximisation Officers	

**8. Actively promote Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit as an 'in-work' benefit**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Linked activity</b>
<b>8.1</b>	Create take-up posters promoting HB/CTB as a potential benefit for workers	Income Maximisation Officers	
<b>8.2</b>	Create posters publicising Extended Payments	Income Maximisation Officers	

<b>8.3</b>	Establish links with the councils link worker in order to understand their role and look at the possibility of joint initiatives	Income Officers	Maximisation	
<b>8.4</b>	Liaise with JCP local officers to look at the possibility of joint initiatives	Income Officers	Maximisation	
<b>8.5</b>	Provide HB/CTB awareness training to local JCP staff	Income Officers	Maximisation	

### 9. Actively promote Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit to pensioners

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Linked activity</b>
<b>9.1</b>	Create posters specifically targeting this group of customers and display them in relevant areas such as; Drs Surgeries, Hospitals, Royal British Legion etc.	Income Officers	Maximisation
<b>9.2</b>	Establish links with Age Concern to look at joint take-up initiatives	Income Officers	Maximisation
<b>9.3</b>	Promote take-up via newsletters		
<b>9.4</b>	Continue to promote take-up of CTB at annual billing		

### 10. Monitor results of take-up campaigns in order to identify successful and unsuccessful activity.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Linked activity</b>
<b>10.1</b>	Evaluate effectively all take-up work undertaken to ensure that resources are used effectively	Income Officers	Maximisation

### 11. Seek feedback from customers regarding their experience of making a claim for benefit in order to ensure that the process is a straightforward as possible.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Linked activity</b>
<b>11.1</b>	Ensure that the customer survey includes questions relating to knowledge of the HB/CTB scheme and ease of claiming		
<b>11.2</b>	Carry out surveys on the HB/CTB application form to obtain feedback on ease of completion		
<b>11.3</b>	Include questions regarding the claim process and customers knowledge of HB/CTB		

	in relevant customer surveys		
<b>11.4</b>	Re-visit the claim form survey to include questions relating to knowledge of the HB/CTB scheme and ease of claiming		
<b>11.5</b>	Maintain regular contact with service users and groups in order to highlight potential weaknesses in processes in order that these can be improved		

**12. Promote general take up of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit by running publicity campaigns and setting up surgeries in a variety of locations throughout the district.**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Linked activity</b>
<b>12.1</b>	Approach major supermarkets operating in the area to explore the possibility of running HB/CTB promotion events	Income Maximisation Officers	
<b>12.2</b>	Identify areas throughout the borough where take up posters could be displayed	Income Maximisation Officers	
<b>12.3</b>	Explore the opportunity to provide advice surgeries in other locations such as libraries and community centres.	Income Maximisation Officers	

## BENEFIT TAKE UP 2009-10

### CAMPAIGNS AND PROJECTS

Month	Target	Activity	Action taken
July 2009	Demographic breakdown of claims	To identify areas of poverty within the borough and provide a demographic analysis	Establish through la areas of deprivation or poverty. Map borough against indices of multiple deprivation as well as detailed breakdown of case-load by ward and output area.
On request	New unemployed	Ongoing site visits with Job Centre to factories	
Minimum of 4 a year	Promotion	Attend events	55+ event attended, Help in Hard Times, Churchill Community Event, YMCA older persons group.
Quarterly	Landlords	Ongoing involvement with landlords.	Ongoing attendance at private housing meetings, three meetings per year plus newsletter.  Quarterly meetings with RSL – performance feedback, update.  Ongoing liaison with Housing Options regarding fast track of claims and vulnerability policy.
November 2009	Pensioners increase in disregard to capital	Amend live claims to reflect change. Promote to potential new claimants.	

November 2009	Child benefit Full disregard	Amend live claims to reflect change. Promote to potential new claimants.	
November 2009	General	To promote use of on-line entitlement calculator.	Press release and adverts.
November 2009	Maximise income	Appoint Income Maximisation Officer posts	1.5 FTE Officers appointed to this role – develop links with CAB and Age Concern and set plans for future activities and priorities.
December 2009	Maximising entitlement to benefit	Look to widen the definition of “authorised office” to include housing, welfare agencies etc...	Enter into discussions with Redditch Co-Operative Housing Association to become designated office
December 2009	Raise awareness through web site	Refresh website so that information on benefits is clearly shown and monitor use	All leaflets and information to be checked for accuracy and updated  Investigate numbers accessing Benefits area of web site – set baseline and then monitor. Compare to neighbouring authorities for figures to compare.
January 2010	Low paid workers	Raise awareness of the scheme in low paid workers	Target supermarkets and other large shops – posters and leaflets.
February 2010	Distribution of leaflets	Raise awareness of HB and CTB scheme by distributing leaflets and posters in priority stakeholder areas.	
April 2010	All Council tenants	Promote benefit take up within all council tenancies	New year rents form sent out as usual



May 2010	Council Tax Summonses	Issue a take up leaflet with tax summonses)	Potential referral to Income Maximisation posts.
June 2010	Take up amongst Disability Groups	To raise awareness amongst disability groups of HB & CTB availability	Liaise with BARN  Use detailed mapping results to identify disabled claims and check for any barriers that lead to delays in processing claims.
June 2010	Take up amongst tenancy support groups	To raise awareness amongst welfare agencies providing tenancy support	Housing, CAB
June 2010	Raise awareness through carer's groups	To raise awareness of the HB/CTB scheme through carer groups	Benefits to attend carers event and promote benefits, hand out application forms and leaflets etc.



## **Executive Committee**

No Specific Ward Relevance

10th March 2010

### **RE-COMMISSIONING OF HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY SERVICES INTO A COUNTYWIDE AGENCY.**

(Report of the Head of Community Services)

#### **1. Summary of Proposals**

The report informs Members of proposals to re-commission the current Care & Repair agency services (also known as Home Improvement Agency (HIA) services) in partnership with Worcestershire County Council, Supporting People, the Worcestershire PCT and the six District Councils. The report seeks Member approval for the re-commissioning process based upon the current level of funding provided by this Council, continuing to be contributed into a new single Countywide Home Improvement Agency.

The report also introduces and recommends the Council's participation in the roll out to Worcestershire authorities of the Kickstart scheme that currently operates in the West Midlands offering an alternative form of assistance to help home owners improve and renovate their dwellings through subsidised loan facilities.

#### **2. Recommendations**

**The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that**

- 1) the Council agrees the commencement of the new Countywide Home Improvement Agency from April 2010 provided by Festival Housing Group;**
- 2) the Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services finalise and enter into the necessary legal arrangements to implement the transfer and commencement of the new service; and**

**to RESOLVE that**

- 3) the new HIA be supported through the use of revenue and capital base budget contributions that are committed to the current service arrangements with the North Worcestershire Care & Repair Agency.**

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### 3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Climate Change / Carbon Management Implications

#### Financial

- 3.1 Confidential Appendix One

#### Legal

- 3.2 A new contract will be entered into by the Council and Festival Housing Group for the provision of delivering DFG's and Lifetime Loans on transfer of the service to Festival Housing Group.

- 3.3 Appendix 1 to this report is exempt in accordance with S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as it contains information relating to a contract being negotiated with a third party. For the Council to reveal details at this stage may affect the Council's negotiating position with that third party. It is therefore felt that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

#### Policy

- 3.4 Housing Assistance Policy was agreed on the 11 January 2006 for Lifetime grants. Work is currently being undertaken to revise the Housing Assistance Policy and Code of Practise.

#### Risk

- 3.5 Should the Council not join the Countywide Scheme there will be a requirement to fund our own service which there is currently no budget. The current supporting people funding for the North Worcestershire Agency is to be allocated to the Countywide Service therefore a requirement to cover this extra cost will also be required for a Redditch Service.
- 3.6 The Council will not be in a position to deliver the enhanced level of services to older and disabled people without extra funding, unless it works in partnership with all of the main partners across the County and benefits from the additional resources being made available to the HIA through Supporting People, Kickstart and the First Stop grant.
- 3.7 Failure to implement the Kickstart scheme will mean that the Worcestershire authorities will be unable to access ring fenced regional funding that is allocated to them and may lead to their not being an established alternative solution for home owners in the

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event of local authority capital becoming less available to support the allocation of local authority discretionary grant.

### Climate Change / Carbon Management

- 3.8 Grant funded energy efficiency measures will be undertaken to properties through the HIA reducing CO2 emissions and reducing occupier's energy costs.

### Report

#### 4. Background

- 4.1 Central to the Government's framework for delivery of older people's services are the roles of Home Improvement Agencies. This was clearly outlined in the Government strategy "Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods – National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society"
- 4.2 The national strategy (published in February 2008) is particularly relevant to the question of Home Improvement Agency and other statutory services such as disabled adaptations in Worcestershire. It sets out a comprehensive strategic approach to older persons housing and contains key proposals, some of which are accompanied by new funds for:
- Support to strengthen local housing advice, information and 'moving home' services for older people.
  - The modernisation of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) including the increase to 30,000 maximum grant and the ability of Local Authorities to recover grant in certain circumstances.
  - Greater encouragement of loans and equity release, with an acknowledgement that HIAs could provide information and support to help people access funding options.
  - New rapid repairs and adaptations services, expanding the coverage of handyperson schemes.
- 4.3 Following on from the national strategy a further report was published on HIAs "The Future Home Improvement Agency: Supporting choice and maintaining independence" which outlined the importance of HIAs in delivering advice services, supporting people to remain in their own home and their preventative role in terms of ill health.

#### 5. Key Issues

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- 5.1 Redditch Borough Council has been operating the North Worcestershire HIA covering Redditch, Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest since the beginning of 2005. Festival Housing Group has been operating the South Worcestershire HIA covering Wychavon and Worcester since January 2006. The expansion of this service into Malvern Hills to cover the whole of the South Worcestershire geographical area has not been achieved.
- 5.2 Supporting People has been the main driver of this initiative and a report was taken to the Chief Executives Panel outlining the key reasons for uniting the two agencies and reviewing their current roles with a view to delivering a more comprehensive and consistent service across the whole county. This work would also give the Local Authorities the opportunity to identify good practise both within the county and by considering models of HIA from across the country and to incorporate delivery of the Kickstart funding programme, for which each the Local Authorities had received a grant allocation from the Regional Assembly.
- 5.3 Any future commissioning of services needs to see a greater joining up of housing, health and social care programmes, and HIA services must be capable of meeting this broad range of demand by offering services with cross-cutting objectives across tenures. Re-commissioning HIA services will offer the opportunity to ensure they play a key role in delivering much improved housing-related services to growing numbers of older people.
- 5.4 A Project Management Group, consisting of Supporting People, Borough & District Councils, Worcestershire County Council, the PCT and Foundations (the Government's co-ordinating agency for HIAs) was set up to oversee the review. Additional project management was provided by Foundations, through grant funding provided by Worcestershire County Council and this service provided technical expertise and useful examples of service delivery in other parts of the country. In addition an officer group was established to review the District's current Housing Assistance Policies (HAP) and to develop a countywide HAP that covered the majority of services on offer including disabled facilities grants, home improvement grants and loans, handyman services etc. This revised policy will be brought to a future executive committee for approval.
- 5.5 The urgency of progressing the project remains, with the intention of the new HIA commencing from 1st April 2010 and with this in mind, the Project Management Group mapped the existing provision within the county, identified best practice examples nationally, the outcomes being met and also identified potential organisations to tender for this piece of work.

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10th March 2010

- 5.6 Supporting People, the project lead, believed that a full tender exercise would not deliver the best outcomes in terms of a service model for Worcestershire and that they would consider direct negotiations with an existing service provider, Festival Housing Group. In particular their reasons for selecting this organisation were as follows;
- A consortium was already established providing the majority of the related provision within Worcestershire; the consortium is made up of Festival Housing, Evesham and Pershore Housing Association, Worcester Community Housing, Wyre Forest Community Housing. Supporting People currently contract with Festival Housing and have no concerns over their ability to manage the Home Improvement Agency under the consortium umbrella.
  - If the group were to tender, the consortium expressed an interest with the view of submitting a tender. The consortium would be strong contenders in a tender due to their available capacity, the quality of the current provision and the opportunity to have improved value for money within this arrangement.
  - The market place in terms of appropriate and suitable providers is very limited; in regards to the providers who could have tendered for this contract (other than Festival) there were concerns over capacity to deliver in addition to a requirement to provide longer implementation phases within the contract due to the work involved to establish networks and working arrangements (which have mostly been adapted by the Consortium already).
  - It was also felt that greater benefits and outcomes could be delivered from the Consortium contract and the Project Management Group would be able to negotiate greater value for money than if we went through a tender exercise with a new provision. Although employed by Redditch Borough Council many of the staff within the North Worcestershire HIA worked directly with, and were managed by, members from within the consortium, making the transition to the new organisation likely to be more acceptable and seamless for those officers with TUPE rights. This in turn would benefit service users who wouldn't, in the majority of cases, even experience a change of personal in the transition period and would therefore get some continuity in case management.
- 5.7 The decision to proceed with a direct negotiation with Festival Housing Group was discussed by the Chief Executives Panel on 11th September 2009 and agreement reached that this approach could proceed.

- 
- 5.8 The development of the Consortium and the intent to bring services together in a more strategic manner has been endorsed by Officers within The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), and also acknowledged by Officers of the Worcestershire Partnership as an effective partnership arrangement which may increase the opportunity to access additional funding / utilise existing funding more effectively and subsequently achieve greater value for money and improved service provision for service users.
- 5.9 It is the intention of the Project Management Group to let the contract on a three year basis with an opportunity to extend for further 2 years.

### **SERVICES TO BE DELIVERED BY THE NEW HIA**

- 5.10 The Worcestershire partner organisations see significant benefits for local older and disabled residents from delivering services through a Home Improvement Agency that covers the county and works closely with social care and health professionals.
- 5.11 The vision for the new Agency is that it will deliver a range of options, including helping people to repair, improve, maintain or adapt their home. The purpose of the service is to help people live independently, in the home of their choice, warm, safe and secure. The range of services on offer, subject to the level of funding available, could include:
- a) Information, advice and signposting.
  - b) Disabled Facility grant and other housing grant work.
  - c) Fitting aids and adaptations.
  - d) Minor works and handyperson services.
  - e) Falls and accident prevention.
  - f) Hospital discharge support.
  - g) Home energy, security and safety checks.
  - h) Advocacy and support on housing options.
  - i) Kickstart loans.
- Much of the Council's work on Disabled Facilities Grants and other housing assistance to the private sector will continue to be channelled through such partnership arrangements.
- 5.12 During the process of establishing the HIA the Project Management Group bid for some additional funding to support the establishment of a signposting support, information and advice service as part of the HIA and were successful in receiving an



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allocation of £40k for 20010/11 and £40k 2011/12 to develop this crucial aspect of the new HIA. This funding will be held directly by the HIA.

- 5.13 Also during the process of establishing the HIA the Kickstart sub-group submitted the proposal for the Local Delivery Plan (LDP) (attached at Appendix Two) to the West Midlands Kickstart Partnership Board. Kickstart is a regionally funded scheme that provides an additional or alternative form of assistance to help home owners improve and renovate their dwellings through subsidised property appreciation loan facilities. The funding for this scheme is held centrally by Birmingham City Council and administered by them on behalf of the partnership.
- 5.14 The LDP outlines the mechanisms for delivery of the Kickstart programme, the timescales and the required level of funding. The Kickstart group are meeting to discuss the LDP on 3rd February and we hope that the outcome should be known spring 2010.
- 5.15 The delivery of the Kick Start loans and the cost of scheme management and supervision within the proposed new HIA will be funded from the ring fenced regional funding that is allocated to the districts for the purposes of promoting Kick Start.
- 5.16 The advantages of progressing a centralised Worcestershire scheme of engagement with Kick Start are seen to be:
- a) Reduced marketing, management and administration costs.
  - b) Ability to embody the scheme within the proposed new HIA structure.
  - c) Ability to be co terminal with the Worcestershire Local Area Agreement and become a stronger priority to support HIA funding.
  - d) Provide a consistent approach to delivery of the service across the County.
  - e) To have a stronger voice within the Regional Kick Start programme and negotiate the ring fencing of Kickstart funding to Worcestershire rather than run the risk of losing unspent allocation to other parts of the Region.
- 5.17 There is a likelihood that the availability of LA capital funds to provide discretionary grants could potentially diminish and the establishment of a Kick Start scheme will enable the public to view other forms of funding works as a valued alternative and option to gradually supplement and if necessary eventually replace the availability of discretionary grants.

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- 5.18 Whilst funding remains available the HIA, on behalf of the council, will continue to offer grants (up to £5k) for decent homes work to vulnerable households not eligible for Kickstart loans for example due to a lack of equity in their property.

### 6. Other Implications

- |                              |   |  |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Asset Management             | - | None.  |
| Community Safety             | - | The Worcestershire HIA will undertake works that will provide security to vulnerable resident's homes.   |
| Health                       | - | The Worcestershire HIA aims to provide the ageing population with more services and provide greater choice and quality and independence.   |
| Human Resources              | - | The staff of the North Worcestershire Care & Repair Agency currently employed by Redditch Borough Council will be transferred to Festival Housing Group under TUPE arrangements. |
| Social Exclusion             | - | The aim of the HIA is to provide assistance and advice to vulnerable residents to enable them to remain in their home which is safe and decent.                                  |
| Environment / Sustainability | - | None.  |

### 7. Lessons Learnt

None.

### 8. Background Papers

Lifetime Homes - see <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/lifetimehomesneighbourhoods>

### 9. Consultation

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All relevant Borough officers and all Worcestershire Local Authorities.

**10. Author of Report**

The author of this report is Matthew Bough, Housing Policy & LSP Manage, who can be contacted on extension 3120 e-mail: [matthew.bough@redditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.bough@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

**11. Appendices**

- Appendix 1 - Confidential financial information.
- Appendix 2 - Kickstart Local Delivery Plan.



By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

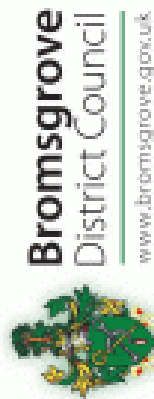


# Appendix 2

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### Appendix Two – Kickstart Local Delivery Plan



- Bromsgrove District Council
- Redditch Borough Council
- Malvern District Council
- Worcester City Council
- Wychevon District Council
- Wyre Forest District Council
- Worcestershire County Council

With the

Kickstart Partnership (ART Homes) December 2009



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Worcester City Council

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County Hall  
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**SUMMARY**

The District, Borough and County authorities of Worcestershire have formed a Partnership to submit a joint proposal bid for the implementation of "Kickstart" services through the Countywide Home Improvement Agency that is to be managed by Festival Housing from April 2010.

Whilst each authority experiences a broad range of issues related to private sector housing, the basic need exists for a coordinated and practical system to facilitate the provision of fair and effective loans based systems to support improvement in the private sector housing stock of the Local Authorities involved across Worcestershire. The proposed programme will address and provide solutions for vulnerable and low income households in the private sector to effectively improve the condition of their homes.

The scheme is anticipated to require support of a capital resource of £1,629,588 over the three year programme with commencement targeted to coincide with the implementation new Countywide Home Improvement Agency from April 2010. 'The Partnership' envisages that based upon the projected available funding, the service will be able to provide 30 non equity and 36 Equity Loans in Year 1 building up to 48 Equity Loans and 50 Non Equity loans by year over the three year programme.

## Appendix 2

### INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the Local Delivery Plan for Worcestershire and explains how The Partnership intends to implement the Kickstart Scheme, following approval based on the anticipated programme of 30 non equity and 36 Equity Loans in Year 1 building up to 48 Equity Loans and 50 Non Equity loans by year over the three year with a cumulative value of £1,340,000 over the three year period.

The basis for this submission relates to the letter received from the Kickstart Partnership and associated correspondence from the Government Office of the West Midlands (GOWM) of February 2008 and 6th November 2009 outlining the proposed capital funding arrangements in the future for Local Authorities within the GOWM area.

The aim of this proposal is to enable The Partnership to provide a partnership based scheme to serve the Local Authorities equally and allow the local residents of the areas involved to have the opportunity to receive assistance. The partnership approach is proposed in preference to a local based scheme for each district, thus eliminating differences which may occur with six different schemes and adding the benefit of the 'economies of scale' that a partnership approach would introduce together with the consistency and fairness of application which would be difficult to achieve with separate schemes.

At present, three of the Local Authorities (in the North of the County) associated with this proposal contract with the North Worcestershire Care & Repair Service as their Home Improvement Agency partner. Two of the remaining three authorities (in the South of the County) share South Worcestershire Care & Repair with the remaining authority only recently signed up to join the South Worcestershire Care & Repair. All six Districts are in the process of negotiating a new contract for the provision of one countywide HIA with Festival Housing.

This proposal aims to introduce the concepts of the Kickstart scheme to all six districts and ensure that local residents in each of the areas involved can source safe and effective funding and resources to allow their homes to be brought up to the Decent Homes and current Housing Act standards by means of loan based support.

The Local Authorities will, whilst funding remains available, maintain a limited programme of low value (under £5,000) discretionary grant schemes for specific situations where the Kickstart Scheme is not appropriate – for example where the owner does not have sufficient collateral in the property to allow the Kickstart scheme to operate or where the urgency of the works is such that the timescale for Kickstart Equity Release loans would not be appropriate even though owners meet relevant criteria for assistance. However, it is recognised that local authority budgets for the provision of discretionary grants are limited and in time are likely to be phased out. Kick Start non equity loans are therefore seen to be a valuable option for customers to consider in supplementing the limited availability of discretionary grants and that in time, are likely to replace them.

## Appendix 2

### A NEW HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY FOR WORCESTERSHIRE

From April 2010, the Worcestershire Kick Start Service is to be provided and managed by Festival Housing as part of the Home Improvement Agency service they are being contracted to provide on behalf of and across the six districts in Worcestershire.

Redditch Borough Council has been operating the North Worcestershire HIA covering Redditch, Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest since the beginning of 2005 (although Redditch operated its own HIA for many years prior to that). Festival Housing Group has been operating the South Worcestershire HIA covering Wychavon and Worcester since January 2006.

Whilst there have been some very positive outcomes from the HIAs in Worcestershire, a comprehensive change in the operation of services was identified as being required because operational practices were not consistent across the county and it was identified as essential that Worcestershire Agency arrangements are fit for purpose and ready for expanding their role, in line with the Government Strategy for older persons housing, Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods Strategy. A more suitable delivery option to achieve the consistency required for customers, that would also enable best practice to be rolled out across the County is required.

The new Countywide Home Improvement Agency will deliver a range of options, including helping people to repair, improve, maintain or adapt their home. The purpose of the service is to help people live independently, in the home of their choice, warm, safe and secure. The range of services potentially on offer, subject to the level of funding available, could include:

- Disabled Facility grant and other housing grant work
- Fitting aids and adaptations
- Minor works and handyperson services
- Falls and accident prevention
- Hospital discharge support
- Home energy, security and safety checks
- Advocacy and support on housing options
- Gardening and decorating
- Kick start loans

A copy of the Project Plan for the implementation of the new Countywide HIA is attached at Appendix 3.

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### 1. BASELINE AND EVIDENCE OF NEED

The private sector housing conditions of Worcestershire are summarised below from data provided by the 2009 Building Research Establishment (BRE) survey of private sector housing that was recently commissioned across five of the 6 districts in Worcestershire.

	Dwellings (private)	households (private)	Number of dwellings				SAP less than 35	Number of Households			vulnerable households
			Inadequate thermal comfort	HHSRS Cat. 1	Disrepair	Non modern		Fuel poverty	Vulnerable households	Vulnerable non decent	
LA	25291	24466	4109	4734	1716	2598	2729	5246	1682	3564	
Redditch	32216	31479	5348	7630	2476	5584	3762	4605	1686	2919	
Bromsgrove	33962	33070	6722	9009	3426	4338	4212	7305	2584	4722	
Worcester	27055	25915	6189	10388	2824	8623	4418	4438	2384	2053	
Malvern Hills	41108	39874	7751	12146	3529	10247	5884	6297	2813	3484	
Wyre Forest	35288		8452	9694	4495	7361	2811	5488	2619	2869	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>194,920</b>		<b>38,571</b>	<b>53,601</b>	<b>18,466</b>		<b>22,816</b>	<b>33,379</b>	<b>13,768</b>	<b>19611</b>	

### PROFILE OF THE PRIVATE HOUSING STOCK IN WORCESTERSHIRE

**Tenure Profile for Worcestershire – 75.1% Owner Occupancy (National Average 71% for England.)**

**Total Number of Private Dwellings in Worcestershire – 194,920**

**The dwelling type profile in Worcestershire differs from the national pattern with a higher number of detached properties.**

LA	% of dwellings		% of households				% of vulnerable households			
	Dwellings (private)	Household ds (private)	Inadequate thermal comfort	HHSRS Cat. 1	Disrepair	Non modern	SAP less than 35	Fuel poverty	Vulnerable non decent	Vulnerable decent (PSA7)
Redditch	25291	24466	16%	19%	7%	1%	10%	11%	7%	68%
Bromsgrove	32216	31479	17%	24%	8%	1%	17%	12%	5%	63%
Worcester	33962	33070	20%	27%	10%	2%	13%	13%	8%	65%
Malvern Hills	27055	25915	23%	38%	10%	2%	32%	17%	9%	46%
Wychavon	41108	39874	19%	30%	9%	1%	25%	15%	7%	55%
Wyre Forest	35288		24%	27%	13%	1%	21%	8%	7%	52%
<b>COUNTY AVERAGE</b>	<b>194,920</b>		<b>20%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>59%</b>

### DECENT HOMES

Approximately 39% of the homes within the County are deemed non-decent.

The highest proportion of non decent homes being in Malvern Hills, where 50% (13,453 properties) of the housing stock is deemed non-decent.

The highest number of non decent homes in any one district are found within Wychavon (16,710 – 41%) where it has been assessed that in order to tackle non decency approximately £139,698,693 is required.

The lowest levels of non decency found within the county can be found within Redditch, with 30% of the stock being deemed non decent.

**The average cost of bringing a non decent property back into decency across Worcestershire is £8,360 per dwelling.**

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### **Therefore the total investment required across the whole county is £635,294,639**

#### **HHSRS**

Nationally the major cause of failure under Decent Homes has been as a result of inadequate thermal comfort, however there has been a significant shift to failures under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System increasing from 18% in 2001 to 24% in 2008.

Within the Worcestershire County there is an above average number of properties failing HHSRS (28%) with Malvern Hills having the greatest proportion (38%) of the homes in the County failing under HHSRS and Redditch to the north of the County with the lowest proportion 19%.

**The average cost of repairs for owner occupied properties with a category 1 hazard in Worcestershire is £8,811.**

#### **Thermal comfort**

The national Decent Homes rate of failure on thermal comfort is 17%.

The Worcestershire average is 20% (38,571) of dwellings failing the Decent Homes Standard as a result of inadequate thermal comfort. The district with the highest failure rate is Wyre Forest with at 24% which results in approximately £59,314,230 of investment needing to be spent to remove this risk and Redditch having the lowest proportion of homes that fail under thermal comfort at 16%.

**The Worcestershire average cost of remedying an owner occupied property with an inadequate thermal envelope is approximately £7,017.**

#### **Modernisation**

The recent BRE (Building Research Establishment) report for Worcestershire identifies that the cost of works are considerable when modernising properties throughout the county.

The Worcestershire average is 1.3% of dwellings failing Decent Homes Standard as a result of modernisation requirements.

The north part of Worcestershire is more in line with the national average of 1% with Bromsgrove recording 1% and Redditch 1% of dwellings failing under modernisation. Worcester City (2%) and Malvern Hills (2%) are further above national average of stock not meeting modernisation requirements of the Decent Homes Standard.

**The Worcestershire average cost of repairs necessary for owner occupiers to undertake in order to provide adequate modern facilities within a Worcestershire home is approximately £22,462 per property.**

### Disrepair

The National average for properties failing Decent Homes Standard for reasons of Disrepair is 8%

The Worcestershire average is 10% with Wyre Forest having the greatest proportion of housing (13%) that fails under the disrepair aspect of the Decent Homes Standard, amounting to approximately £79,841,448 of required investment to address the issue. This is significantly above Redditch's level (7%) which is below the national average of 8%.

**In order to remove disrepair issues from properties within Worcestershire it has been deemed that it would cost approximately £17,762.28 per property.**

### Vulnerable Households

Nationally the average proportion of all properties that are occupied by vulnerable people who live in non decent homes is 8%

Within Worcestershire this average proportion of all dwellings that are occupied by vulnerable people that live in non decent accommodation is 7% with Malvern Hills having the largest proportion of properties occupied by vulnerable people living in non decent homes being 9% and Bromsgrove being the lowest with 5 %.

There are 33,379 number of households that are classified as vulnerable or on a low income. Of these vulnerable households an estimated 13,768 are classified as living in non-decent homes which represents 41% of vulnerable household. Conversely this means that 59% of vulnerable households are living within decent accommodation.



## Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty is defined as householders spending more than 10% of their income on heating and fuel provisions within their property.

On average 14% of households in Worcestershire experience fuel poverty and the problem poses the greatest threat to households in Malvern with 17% of the population being in fuel poverty which is 5% higher than the national average (12%) and Wyre Forest at 8%.

## **PROFILE OF RESIDENTS**

The age profile of the County (Census 2001) generally follows the national profile, however there is a significant difference in the number of households aged between 45 and 59. (21.3% in Worcestershire compared to 18.9% in England) and people over the age of 65 16.4% for Worcestershire compared to 15.9% for England)

The number of residents within Worcestershire that are economically active also differs significantly from not only the national average but also within the County. The number of retired residents within Worcestershire (14.1%) is broadly in line with the national average (13.5%), however there is a significant rise from the national average to the north of the district in Bromsgrove (15.6%).

The average yearly income (Census 2001) of owner occupied households in Worcestershire (£35,656) is significantly higher than the national average (£28,750), however there are variations between the age profiles and locations within the County. The North of the County has an approximately £3,000 higher mean household income in comparison to the South of the County. There has, however been a significant rise in the number of people becoming eligible for Means Tested Benefits within the County which has resulted in an increase in the number of vulnerable households.

## **DISABILITIES AND ADAPTATIONS**

Worcestershire districts have an above average population of residents over the age of 65 and above 75. There is an identified need to support older people to maintain and to assist them to remain in their homes through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grant and other grants. Strong, and in many cases significantly increasing, demand for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) is evident. Given the ageing population within the area this demand will almost certainly continue.

Due to constraints on capital budgets the local housing authorities are unable to satisfy demand for discretionary grants to improve private sector dwellings or even to meet requirements for mandatory DFG's. The demographics of the County support the need for the ongoing development of Home Improvement Agency services to help vulnerable residents improve their living conditions.

### **VALUE OF DWELLINGS**

Across the country, house prices have fallen significantly as mortgages have become more difficult to obtain and expensive to service. According to the Land Registry House Price Index, there was a fall of 11.8% between September 2008 and September 2009 in Worcestershire, which is more than the 7.3% fall for the West Midlands region and 5.6% in England and Wales as a whole. In Q3 2009, the mean house price in the county was £205,962, 4.0% lower than the £214,515 seen in Q3 2008, but 7.9% higher than in Q2 2009. Between Q3 2008 and Q3 2009, prices fell most in Bromsgrove (11.7%) and least in Worcester City (0.7%). In terms of property type, the largest decrease in average price was for detached properties (9.8%) and the smallest was for terraced houses (0.7%)<sup>14</sup>.

### **PRIVATELY LET ACCOMMODATION**

In most of the districts there are few private landlords and a relatively low supply of privately let flats and smaller sized dwellings. Some increases in purchase by investors of properties to let are in evidence but the majority of these properties are offered at very high market rents that are not accessible by those in housing need. The City of Worcester has a greater supply of houses in multiple occupation than other districts but the poor condition of some is not conducive to making them attractive lets.

## Appendix 2

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### SUMMARY

Whilst the County objective is reduce the overall number of dwellings failing under Decent Homes Standards across the County, the priority is to focus resources upon reducing the number of non decent homes occupied by vulnerable households.

There are four key PI's that relate to vulnerable households living in non decent homes.

- Across Worcestershire the average proportion of all dwellings that are non decent and occupied by vulnerable people is 7%.
- Across Worcestershire the proportion of non decent dwellings that are occupied by vulnerable households is 18.1 % (13,768 households).
- Across Worcestershire the proportion of all vulnerable households that are classified as living in non decent homes is 41% (13,768 households)
- Across Worcestershire the proportion of all vulnerable households that are classified as living in decent homes is means 59% (19,611 households)

Worcestershire aspires to increasing the proportion of vulnerable households that live in decent homes to 70% by 2015. Based upon the average cost of totally eliminating failure under Decent Homes standards being £8,360 per property, the total cost of achieving this target equates to £12,657,070. (calc – 11% increase = 1,514 properties x £8,360 = £12,657,040)

This equates to an annual investment requirement of £2,531,408pa. However it must be recognised that significant improvements in reducing Category 1 Hazards can be achieved through lower levels of investment.

Whilst we realise that this level of investment may be difficult to achieve our bid is submitted on the basis of the indicated level of funding likely to be available through the Kick Start Programme.

### KEY PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING PRIORITIES

- To increase the proportion of vulnerable and low income households living in a decent homes free from hazards.
- To increase thermal efficiency and affordable warmth.
- To integrate Kick Start Loan products within the range of services offered by the Countywide HIA.
- To offer home owners a range of options to enable them to carry out repair works where the cost exceeds local authority discretionary grant maximum or where they are no longer available or are over subscribed.
- To offer a way of enabling home owners to finance DFG adaptations where the total cost exceeds the grant maximum.

## 2. LOCAL POLICY OBJECTIVES

### County Strategic Vision

**‘Creating the right places to live within our local communities, meeting needs by making the best use of existing resources’**

## Appendix 2

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The purpose of this scheme is to provide a solution for vulnerable and low income home owners in the private sector to improve their housing conditions by being able to easily access funding. This scheme is being made available to groups in need throughout the six Local Authorities' areas in the whole of Worcestershire.

Whilst each of the Local Authorities involved operate slightly differently in the provision of assistance to private sector owners, all have the common base of bringing property towards the Decent Homes Standards and the expectations set out in the Housing Act 2004. The needs of the different areas will vary and this scheme is flexible enough to recognise those differences.

### County Private Sector Policy Objectives

The specific aims and objectives of the Worcestershire Scheme are:

- To help support existing neighbourhoods and encourage sustainability
- To improve the environment for the benefit of the population
- To encourage the use of properties which are in poor repair or empty
- To raise the standard of housing wherever possible
- To enable local authorities to offer an additional tool to assist residents at a time of reduced funding resources
- To assist residents to invest in their homes for future generations and lengthen the life of the existing housing stock
- To provide quality housing stock and increase the numbers of healthy homes
- To support disabled people where the cost of the works exceeds the availability of Disabled Facilities rent assistance.
- To enable independent living where at all possible
- To improve the quality of private rented accommodation

Overall the scheme seeks to support and demonstrate approaches on a joint working basis with Local Authorities and HIA's working together to address the Government's long term key priority of decent affordable housing for all.

**Scope of Programme**

The proposed scheme will serve the six Local Authorities on a client base through a new Countywide Home Improvement Agency and will address issues relating to Decent Homes standards and the Housing Act 2004 (Part 1) across the areas involved equally.

Each of the Local Authorities have existing programmes of support for local residents based upon discretionary grants. These are being unified across the County and will be limited to under £5,000. It is envisaged that they will continue to the extent that funding from each local authority will permit for specific situations where the Kickstart Scheme is not appropriate – for example where the owner does not have sufficient collateral in the property to allow the Kickstart scheme to operate or where the urgency of the works is such that the timescale for Kickstart Equity Release loans would not be appropriate even though owners meet relevant criteria for assistance. However, it is recognised that local authority budgets for the provision of discretionary grants are limited and in time are likely to be phased out. Kick Start non equity loans are therefore seen to be a valuable option for customers to consider in supplementing the limited availability of discretionary grants and that in time, are likely to replace them.

The scheme, based on the need to improve housing conditions, will encompass the Decent Homes Criteria and thermal comfort together with addressing serious hazards as defined in the Housing Act 2004. Vulnerable households will be assisted to ensure their properties are improved to modern day expectations through the application of the Kickstart Programme.

The scheme will promote the additional options to clients of loans and equity release with an acknowledgement that HIA's could provide advice and support to help people access funding options.

As part of the scheme it is proposed that there will be a Kickstart Performance Monitoring and Programme Board with officer representation from each of the member authorities in addition to representatives from Art Homes Ltd, Kickstart and the HIA as scheme managers. This Board will report to the Worcestershire Home Improvement Agency Performance Management Board at each of its meetings.

### Policy Criteria and Eligibility

Whilst some Local Authorities continue to provide limited private sector discretionary grants, it is recognised that capital funding could potentially diminish in the future, therefore the implementation of the Kickstart scheme is seen as a valuable addition to gradually supplement and in time replace discretionary grants. In the meantime, it is proposed that those Worcestershire authorities that are able to operate their individual grants schemes will continue to do so up to a locally agreed amount (£5,000) and promote the Kickstart scheme as a viable option for works in excess of £3000. Kick Start Non Equity Loans will be provided to supplement and as an alternative option to these grants for cases below £2,000.

The criteria is designed to catch those groups most susceptible to health risks as a result of poor housing conditions (the elderly, long-term sick, disabled, families with small children) who do not have the resources necessary to make repairs and improvements to their homes.

For applicants to be eligible for consideration under the scheme, they must:-

- Be a home owner
- Have had their property identified as being non decent or presenting a serious hazard as defined by The Housing Act 2004 (part 1)
- Have been identified as vulnerable (as defined in the national guidance) or be on a low income with insufficient savings (local criteria to be set with discretion to authorise outside criteria by Kickstart Performance & Monitoring Board on a case by case basis)
- Have undergone initial assessment by a caseworker that has eliminated all other sources of funding or assistance

Applications that qualify for further consideration will then be subject to further assessment by Art Homes under the Kickstart Scheme.

**Indicators of Outcomes and Success.**

The main outcome of the County Strategy in partnership with the HIA and the Kick Start Scheme will be to achieve a reduction in the number of non decent homes occupied by non vulnerable people. We aim to make 300 more private homes that are occupied by vulnerable people decent by 2015.

A range of success indicators are being developed in partnership with the new HIA to track the implementation of the strategy.



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### 3. STRATEGIC FIT WITH KICK START

<b>Kick Start Business Plan</b>	<b>Local Delivery Plan Links</b>
<p><b>Priority 1</b></p> <p><b>Ensuring homeowners are treated fairly and equally when using publicly subsidised home improvement services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All HIA applicants will receive an advisory visit from a caseworker who will carry out an options appraisal to identify the most appropriate method of achieving the required outcome. Clients for whom Kick Start loans are an appropriate option will be referred for a follow up visit by the HIA's appointed Kick Start Specialist Case Worker to provide a higher level of supporting advice and information prior to a referral being made to Art Homes.</li> <li>▪ Private Sector Housing Policy and Procedure is being developed through a Lean Management Analysis which will then be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.</li> <li>▪ A dedicated HIA Kick Start Specialist Caseworker is proposed being identified as necessary to build up client confidence in Kick Start products and to develop a consistent understanding amongst HIA generic caseworkers of the Kick Start products and their application.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Priority 2</b></p> <p><b>Ensuring appropriate service standards and qualities are provided to homeowners and made available within reasonable timescales</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Festival Housing targets to achieve Foundations Status by 2012</li> <li>▪ Service standards are to be available within a welcome pack to be provided to every client.</li> <li>▪ Timescales for service delivery are to be monitored, managed and reported through a Kick Start Officer Group to the HIA Performance and Management Board on a quarterly basis.</li> <li>▪ Customer service questionnaires are to be analysed and reported for the purposes of identifying levels of customer satisfaction with the service.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Priority 3</b></p> <p><b>An improved understanding of the costs of delivery to maximise the use of public funds and balance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Statistical analysis of the number of enquiries that have generated the need for a visit by the HIA's Kick Start Specialist Caseworker, indicating the number of hours dedicated to initial advice and assistance and the number of successful Kick Start applications it has achieved.</li> </ul>

<p><b>the operational costs against the priorities of service users</b></p>	
<p><b>Priority 4 Maximising the opportunities of working together, for example, to make management overheads proportional to the operational scale of service users.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Delivery of Kick Start products is an integral part of the Home Improvement Agency Service across Worcestershire.</li> <li>▪ Joint promotion of Kick Start within the general promotion of the HIA.</li> <li>▪ Maximisation of opportunities for low cost / free promotion through the local authority and partner agency newsletters and Customer Information Centres.</li> <li>▪ Annual review of the need for a dedicated HIA Kick Start Specialist. Initially identified as necessary to build up client confidence in Kick Start products and a consistent understanding amongst HIA caseworkers. This may become less necessary in following years and may enable the role to be merged fully into HIA Case worker posts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Priority 5 Improving our understanding of loan programme performance drivers, improving ability to design and manage programmes that are capable of making an impact and being delivered on time / in budget</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Client enquires and referrals will be traced against forms of marketing activity to assess VFM and success of advertisement.</li> <li>▪ Proposed development of a mechanism to record successful completions demographic and deprivation data.</li> <li>▪ Analysis of quarterly spend.</li> <li>▪ Analysis of referral to completion (and staged) performance.</li> </ul>

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### 4. OUTPUTS PROFILE (LDP1)

<i>Kick Start Core Outputs</i>	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	10/11 Total Projected	11/12 Total Projected	12/13 Total Projected	All years Projected
KPI 1 – The number of eligible homeowner receiving an advisory home visit resulting in a record of advice given	50	100	200	250	600	650	700	1.950
KPI 2 – The number of low income homeowners who addressed eligible works (e.g. repair, relocation or adaptations) using funding other than the affordable Equity Share Loans (including Unsecured Loans).					Included in KPI 3 below.	Included in KPI 3 below.	Included in KPI 3 below.	
KPI 3 – The number of vulnerable homeowners who addressed eligible works (e.g. repair, relocation or adaptations) using funding other than the affordable Equity Share Loans (including Unsecured Loans)	0	0	5	25	30 (inc 2.5 through KS Non Equity Loans and 5 DFG top ups)	40 (inc 35 through KS Non Equity Loans and 5 DFG top ups)	40 (inc 35 through KS Non Equity Loans and 5 DFG top ups)	110
KPI4 – The number of homeowners referred for financial assessment to identify the most appropriate loan product required to meet their needs	0	10	30	40	80	100	100	280
KPI 5 – The number of Equity	0	0	6	30	36	48	48	132

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	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	10/11 Total	11/12 Total	12/13 Total	All years
Share Loans reaching completion to fund improvement or relocation works								
<i>Other Non-Core Outputs</i>								
The number of Unsecured Loans reaching completion to fund improvement works*	0	0	5	20	25	45	45	135
The number of Disabled Facilities Grant applications approved, where the cost of works exceeds £30,000	0	0	2	3	5 (based upon assumption that charitable contributions will still be sought)	5 (based upon assumption that charitable contributions will still be sought)	5 (based upon assumption that charitable contributions will still be sought)	15

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- Projected outputs are based upon an assumption that there will be higher demand in the early stages of the Worcestershire Scheme for non secured loans. This is based upon an assumed need to build up confidence in equity release, the current impact of the economic climate upon levels of negative equity and the time that it will likely take for clients to accept that the availability of local authority discretionary grants is diminishing.
- Whilst it is appreciated that the projected outputs for year one are quite ambitious for a newly forming service, careful consideration has been given by the Partnership and the targets have been set in the knowledge that:
  - Festival Housing as managers of the new Countywide HIA are to recruit the Kick Start Specialist Caseworker in advance of the April 1st commencement.
  - Wyre Forest (£200k) and Redditch currently offer repayable loan options with considerable take up and interest.

### 5. FINANCIAL PROFILE (LDP2)

LDP2 Financial Profile 2010/13		2010/11				2010/11 Total		Future Years		Programme Total
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2011/12	2012/13			
<b>PROJECTS</b>										
<b>LOAN FUNDS</b>										
Equity Share Loans		Nil	Nil	50k	250k	300,000	400,000	400,000	1,100,000	
Other loans (Unsecured & Repayment)		Nil	Nil	20k	40k	60,000	80,000	100,000	240,000	
<b>Total Loan fund</b>		0	0	0	0	<b>360,000</b>	480,000	500,000	<b>1,340,000</b>	
<b>DELIVERY FUND</b>										



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### Value for Money

The financial profile is based upon the capacity of 1 F/T HIA Kick Start Specialist Caseworker and an equivalent of 20% of 6 HIA Generic Caseworkers in year 1. The proportion of Generic Caseworkers time charged to Kick Start is projected to reduce to 15% in year 2 and 12.5% in year 3.

The capacity of a caseworker to deliver Kick Start related work is detailed in the table below.

<b>KS Specialist Caseworker Activity</b>	<b>No of Cases</b>	<b>Time Spent</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>
Preliminary enquiries & initial visit	250	5 hours	1,250
Consultations with ART and further support / visits	125	5 hours	625
Processing an Equity Share Loan	50	25 hours	1,250
Processing an Unsecured Loan	54	9 hours	486
<b>TOTAL HOURS (37 x 45wks x 2.2 = 3663 hrs)</b>			<b>3,611</b>

In addition we estimate 0.5 FTE Technical Officer and 0.5 FTE Admin Officer.

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<b>Delivery Costs</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
HIA Kick Start Specialist Caseworker	1.00	£27,485	£27,485
20% of 6 Generic HIA caseworkers Yr 1 (15% Yr 2 & 12.5% Yr 3)	1.2 0.9 0.6	£27,485	£32,982 (Yr 1) £24,737 (Yr2) £16,491 (Yr3)
Technical Officer	0.50	£32,000	£16,000
Administration	0.50	£22,000	£11,000
Management			£5,000
<b>Total Staff Costs</b>			£92,467
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>			£537,000
<b>Staff Costs as a percentage of Capital Expenditure</b>			Yr 1- 19.9% Yr 2 – 14.8% Yr 3 – 13.1%
<b>Total Delivery Costs as a percentage of Capital Expenditure</b>			Yr 1- 23.5% Yr 2 - 16.3% Yr 3 - 14.6%

All management and on costs not detailed in LPT2 will be met by the Home Improvement Agency.



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A Role Profile for the County Kick Start Specialist Caseworker is attached at Appendix 2.

#### 6. Milestone Profile (LDP3)

Milestones 2010/11	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
<b>1. Recruitment</b>	Existing Staff from North and South HIAs TUPE into new organisation. Appoint KS Specialist Caseworker by end of quarter			
<b>2. Training of staff</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training of all new technical staff to HHSRS</li> <li>Training for all staff and partners on agreed procedures</li> <li>Operational staff trained (ART)</li> <li>Lead authority to provide direction for training programme to meet expectation of partners</li> <li>Regular feedback sessions to ensure staff are clear about the service standards and have opportunities to add value to the process.</li> </ol>	Continuing support for staff. Regular feedback sessions to ensure staff are clear about the service standards and have opportunities to add value to the process.	Continuing support for staff. Regular feedback sessions to ensure staff are clear about the service standards and have opportunities to add value to the process.	Continuing support for staff. Regular feedback sessions to ensure staff are clear about the service standards and have opportunities to add value to the process.
<b>3. Promotion and Marketing</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree HIA communication process with lead LA</li> <li>Agree scheme branding with all partners</li> <li>Marketing materials produced</li> <li>Campaign commences-</li> </ol>	Major scheme marketing	Major scheme marketing	Major scheme marketing

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	major scheme marketing. 3. Inform building contractors about the principles of the Kick Start Scheme, that homeowners are paying for their work, highlighting the added value that contractors can bring to the service			
<b>4. Lead LA responsibilities</b>	Agree between partner LA's reporting and support processes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agree procedures with all partners</li> <li>2. Reports on progress to steering group</li> <li>3. Lead authority to agree with partners and concepts of expected standards.</li> <li>4. Procedure document produced and implemented</li> <li>5. Reports on progress to steering group</li> </ol>		
<b>5. Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	Adapt FEMIS database (HIA) to enable monitoring reports to be produced. Steering group set up . Review homeowner information to check clarity and that it remains up to date to help homeowner understand the service and can make informed choices		Produce customer satisfaction surveys in association with lead LA  Review homeowner information to check clarity and that it remains up to date to help homeowner understand the service and can make informed choices	Evaluate initial promotion campaign in association with steering group

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<b>Milestones 2011/12</b>	<b>Quarter 1</b>	<b>Quarter 2</b>	<b>Quarter 3</b>	<b>Quarter 4</b>
<b>1. Promotion and Marketing</b>	Follow on advertising	Follow on advertising Adopt any changes	Follow on advertising	Follow on advertising
<b>2. Training of staff</b>	Continuing support for staff	Continuing support for staff	Continuing support for staff	Continuing support for staff
<b>3 Lead LA responsibilities</b>	1. Implement any alterations to scheme following review. 2. Review partnership working and expectations	Reports on progress to steering group	Reports on progress to steering group	Co-ordinate end of year report, review of outcomes and relationships
<b>4. Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	Review marketing strategy and effectiveness of scheme with steering group			Evaluate client satisfaction surveys with steering group and partners
<b>Milestones 2012/13</b>	<b>Quarter 1</b>	<b>Quarter 2</b>	<b>Quarter 3</b>	<b>Quarter 4</b>
<b>1. Promotion and Marketing</b>	Review marketing strategy and effectiveness	Follow on advertising	Follow on advertising	
<b>2. Training of staff</b>	Continuing support for staff	Continuing support for staff	Continuing support for staff	Continuing support for staff
<b>3 Lead LA responsibilities</b>	Implement any alterations to scheme following review Reports on progress to steering group	Reports on progress to steering group	Reports on progress to steering group	Review with all partners the scheme and move to next programme
<b>4. Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	Review marketing strategy and effectiveness of scheme with steering group			Evaluate client satisfaction surveys with steering group and partners  Review scheme with all partners

## 7. Project Delivery

### *The Kick Start Scheme*

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The key delivery partners are:

- The six Local Authorities working jointly – Bromsgrove District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Malvern District Council, Worcester City Council, Wychavon District Council, Wyre Forest District Council
- Worcestershire County Council – Supporting People
- HIA
- Kickstart Partnership (ART Homes)

#### **Local Authority role**

General

- Each of the Local Authorities associated with the provision of this Kickstart programme ensures, through the lead authority that their strategies, policies and processes reflect the use of the Kickstart programme and the associated relationships with the HIA involved.
- Each Local Authority ensures that information about the makeup, development and changes to their areas are reflected in updated strategies and policies to enable an accurate assessment to be made through the scheme as a whole as to needs and expectations for the Kickstart programme.

- To liaise on a monthly basis in the first year moving to a quarterly basis thereafter through the lead authority with the partners involved with the Kickstart programme and ensure that relevant and timely information is available for that purpose.
- Each authority will encourage the use of the Kickstart programme in their areas, liaising with the HIA.

### **Lead Authority – Worcestershire County Council – Supporting People Team as lead authority commissioning the Home Improvement Agency.**

- All of the general requirements in respect to their area, together with the reporting and consolidation role for the programme as a whole.
- Ensuring that the processes, procedures and strategies are in place for the programme as a whole and that they are up to date.
- Liaison with the group of Local Authorities on a regular basis to ensure the scheme is operating in line with the Kickstart business plan and expectations of those Local Authorities.
- Liaison with the Home Improvement Agencies involved with the scheme on a monthly basis to ensure the programme is running in accordance with expectations.
- Ensure that the staff involved with the programme are properly trained and assessed to meet the criteria of the activity and the Housing Act 2004 (HHSRS).
- Appropriate liaison takes place with Art Homes to ensure the successful implementation of the programme.

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### Home Improvement Agency

Roles and Responsibilities of Worcestershire Home Improvement Agency

The six Local Authorities will enter into an arrangement with Festival Housing Worcestershire HIA to deliver the Kickstart programme in all six areas. The partnership aims to assist vulnerable and low income homeowners retain their independence and remain in their own home through a range of services including:

- PALS (Art Homes)
- Houseproud (Home Improvement Trust) ???
- Minor Works Grants (Discretionary Grants)
- Warmfront
- Disabled Facilities Grants

Worcestershire HIA will be responsible for managing the Kickstart program enquiry lists, assessing all clients, undertaking initial financial assessments, technical surveys and delivering the works on site. Worcestershire HIA will work to ensure the consistent delivery of the programme across the six areas, with a 'no boundary' policy in place in order to smooth out any peaks and troughs in need.

Worcestershire HIA will appoint a coordinator to be responsible for the development and delivery of an effective marketing strategy with all of the six partner Local Authorities, the strategic development of the service, monitor and ensure Performance Indicators are met and produce monitoring reports to the lead Authority and the partnering Local Authorities.

## ART Homes Ltd

The Local Authorities will enter into contractual arrangements for the provision of the loans service on terms to be agreed. The following services will be provided by ART Homes:

**Individual Loan administration** which include logging cases, initial assessments and local authority liaison; telephone contact with clients; liaison with valuers; obtaining credit references; making loan offers; liaison with clients' Solicitors and issuing completion cheques.

**Annual fund management** which includes back office charges from ART Homes; monitoring and reporting; responding to queries from borrowers and lawyers; regular contact with borrowers; legal and development issues; administrative of loan redemptions; system review and development.

**Scheme development/consultancy** which includes production of standard legal agreement in association with Birmingham City Council and Kickstart regulatory and finance compliance; support and training for officers; support and set up of "front end" delivery mechanisms; policy advice; development of processes; marketing and publicity.

The Worcestershire Kick Start Scheme managed by Festival Housing HIA will develop working practices based upon:

- An understanding of the Countywide residents and the housing stock;
- A planned marketing campaign and subsequent review;
- Developing a good working relationship with ART Homes;
- Working with approved contractors who provide an insurance backed warranty;
- A specialist caseworker to achieve a full understanding of client's circumstances and options;
- Booking an appointment with a financial advisor during a visit;
- Using an outline specification which allows the client and contractors to discuss and agree the detailed specification;
- Holding pre-start meetings with clients and offering a guidance;

### **8. Quality Standards**

*Festival Housing as provider of the Worcestershire Home Improvement Agency targets to achieve Foundations Quality Mark standard by April 2011.*

#### **Customer Satisfaction**

*All HIA customers will be surveyed by the use of customer questionnaire and results will be reported to the quarterly meetings of*

*the HIA Performance Management Board.*

The lead authority will monitor the performance of the agency against the baseline indicators with regular reports made available to the West Midlands Sub Regional Group.

Contract compliance and financial arrangements will be closely monitored. Commitments against the loan fund will be reported monthly by ART Homes. We will be responsible for reporting to the West Midlands Sub Region Group. This process will also inform the draw down, scheduling payments to ART Homes. Contract monitoring will include:

Art Homes

- Timescales for the processing of applications for PALs and other loan products
- Costs of service provision – measured on open book principles
- Quality of documentation and advice provision.
- Telephone Support
- Loan defaults and abortive.



HIA

- Costs of service provision-measured on open book principles
- Satisfaction of clients with the service
- Quality of documentatin and support services
- Completion of works to properties against budgets
- Timescales to appoint contractors and complete works
- Quality of work to properties

### ***Marketing and Promotion***

A Marketing strategy will be submitted by Festival Housing by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.

The Strategy will be monitored and regularly reported upon to analyse its effectiveness and to inform future marketing activity and budget requirement.

### **Review and Evaluation**

Review and Evaluation of the project will form a key part of this project, and will cover the following:

The evaluation process will determine if the planned goals and objectives were actually achieved. We will document the accomplishments of the programme and identify the factors that have influenced the implementation and effectiveness of the scheme, We will then use these results to strengthen the future design of the programme. This will be completed annually.

Formal and informal feedback from clients, staff, contractors and other stakeholders will be collected, collated and used to positively improve the programme. A log will be kept of lessons learned during delivery of the programme. Regular reviews will be held to consider potential improvements.

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### 9. Risk Assessment (LDP4)

#### Risk Log

The Risk Log highlights risks that might impact upon the delivery of the Kick Start programme in Worcestershire. The log will be kept under review and any actions reported to the project board.

Factors	Likelihood			Impact			Total	Contingencies
	H	M	L	H	M	L		
<b>Strategic</b>								
Support for the partnership being inconsistent across partnership.			1	3			3 (Low)	Continue to work with other partners, the programme team and local members
<b>Operational</b>								
Delay in commencement of New Countywide HIA			1	3			4 (Med)	Marketing could commence in advance of HIA change over.
TUPE Issues delaying progress with new HIA.			1	3			4 (Med)	Early consultation has commenced with staff well ahead of statutory requirement. Again the marketing of Kick Start products could commence in advance of the HIA.
Reduced funding for HIA			3	3			6 (High)	Review configuration of services and seek further funding
Reduced Kick Start Funding	3			3			6 (High)	Review alternative Equity Release products and sources.
Slow take-up of loan funding		2			2		4 (Med)	Use communications strategy. Pro-active monitoring of inputs and outputs
<b>Delivery</b>								
Capacity to deliver the service			1	3			4 (med)	Redeploy staff from other Housing

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Factors	Likelihood			Impact			Total	Contingencies
	H	M	L	H	M	L		
Availability of suitable contractors to deliver improvement works			1		2		3 (low)	functions Develop existing contractors. Proactively recruit and approve new contractors



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No specific Ward relevance

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### HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING ADVICE REVIEW, ENHANCED HOUSING OPTIONS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

(Report of the Head of Housing)

#### 1. Summary of Proposals

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the Redditch Homelessness and Housing Advice Review and approve the implementation of the Redditch Enhanced Housing Options Strategy.

The recent review takes account of current services in the borough; identifies progress made since the Redditch Homelessness Strategy published in 2003 and highlights lessons learned during the first nine months of the two year 'Trailblazer Initiative' which saw the Council being awarded £180,000 in grant by Communities and Local Government.

The Enhanced Housing Options Strategy was developed in partnership with all key stakeholders and will provide a framework for improving services for homeless households or those in housing need in Redditch.

#### 2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND** that

**subject to community consultation and Members' comments, the Enhanced Housing Options Strategy be approved and implemented.**

#### 3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Climate Change / Carbon Management Implications

##### Financial

- 3.1 There are currently no financial implications in adopting the Strategy. The implementation of the action plan could highlight areas for further consideration by Elected Members.

##### Legal

- 3.2 In line with the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) the Local Authority has a statutory duty to carry out a review of homelessness and homelessness services in

their area and to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on this review. The Council has already met its legal obligations by working with the other districts to produce the County Homelessness Strategy 'Working together to change lives'. There are no legal implications regarding the development of a Redditch Enhanced Housing Options Strategy.

### Policy

- 3.3 The Enhanced Housing Options Strategy was developed in partnership with all key stakeholders and will provide the framework for improving services for homeless households or those in housing need in Redditch. If approved it will enable the Council to take a more strategic approach in tackling Homelessness and encourage the Council and its partners to work together in a more joined up way so that customers are able to make informed decisions regarding housing, education and employment.

### Risk

- 3.4 Failure to approve the strategy will make it difficult for the Council to achieve national, regional, county and local strategic aims.

### Climate Change / Carbon Management

- 3.5 No implications.

### Report

#### **4. Background**

- 4.1 Redditch Borough Council published its first Homelessness Strategy in 2003 which outlined the vision to 2009. The Council delivered all the key objectives outlined within that document.
- 4.2 The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook a review of the Homelessness Service which concluded on 6th May 2006. The review recommended that greater resources were focused towards the prevention of homelessness and led to a restructure and the development of the Housing Options Service.
- 4.3 Officers from Redditch Borough Council worked as part of a County Wide Project Team to develop the Countywide Strategy 'Working Together to Change Lives' which was approved by Full Council in January 2009.
- 4.4 The overall number of Statutory Homeless Acceptances has drastically reduced since 2003, despite the amount of people

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approaching the Council for assistance increasing by approximately 35%.

- 4.5 In August 2008 the Council had the second highest Statutory Homeless Acceptance rate in the West Midlands, averaging at 6.0 acceptances per one thousand in the population. They were ranked 13<sup>th</sup> highest of all 354 Local Authorities in England.
- 4.6 By the end of the year in 2008/09, the Council had improved its position considerably with the average number of Homeless Acceptances dropping to 2.4 per thousand households. The Council was then ranked 100<sup>th</sup> highest out of 326 Local Authorities in England (some areas became unitary, which is why the number has changed).
- 4.7 The Council has continued to improve its performance in 2009/10 and early predictions suggest that they are likely to do even better in the national rankings at the end of this year.
- 4.8 In 2009 the Council was awarded £180,000 in grant as part of the Communities and Local Government Trailblazer initiative to improve services for those in housing need, reduce overcrowding and provide more joined up advice regarding housing, education and employment.

### 5. Key Issues

- 5.1 A review of housing advice and homelessness services for all client groups has been undertaken which involved questionnaires and telephone interviews being undertaken with individuals from statutory agencies, voluntary sector partners and customers.
- 5.2 The review takes account of the lessons learned during the first nine months of the two year 'Trailblazer Initiative' which saw the Council being awarded £180,000 in grant by Communities and Local Government.
- 5.3 A number of partner and customer events have been held over the last twelve months which have been used to identify customer priorities for service improvements.
- 5.4 The findings from the Local Homelessness and Housing Advice Review have been used to develop the Enhanced Housing Options Strategy which sets out our local objectives for the next three years.
- 5.5 The development and publication of a Redditch Enhanced Housing Options Strategy will highlight the Council's commitment to keeping

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the needs and opinions of local people at the forefront of service development.

- 5.6 Key priorities from the Redditch Homelessness and Housing Advice Strategy will be fed into the Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy - 'Working Together to Change Lives' when that is reviewed in 2010.

### 6. Other Implications

- |                              |   |  |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Asset Management             | - | None.  |
| Community Safety             | - | Initiatives in the strategy should improve services for individuals suffering Domestic Violence or Anti-social behaviour.  |
| Health                       | - | Initiatives in the strategy should improve services for those with Mental Health problems.   |
| Human Resources              | - | None.  |
| Social Exclusion             | - | Initiatives in the strategy should reduce Social Exclusion by encouraging individuals to access appropriate support or undertake education or employment opportunities.                            |
| Environment / Sustainability | - | The initiatives in the Strategy provide customers with a greater number of housing options and allow a larger number of households to access suitable good quality housing which can be sustained. |

### 7. Lessons Learnt

The comments received during the consultation period will be taken into account prior to the implementation of the action plan. The Council has already seen benefits as a result of the Trailblazer Initiative and it is hoped that the new strategy will ensure that future services are designed to take account of the lessons learned.

### 8. Background Papers

Redditch Borough Council Homelessness Strategy — 2003.  
The Housing Act 1996 (as amended by homelessness Act 2002).



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Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy 'Working Together to Change Lives' – 2009.  
Redditch Homelessness and Housing Options Review.  
Redditch Enhanced Housing Options Strategy and Action Plan.

### 9. **Consultation**

The Homelessness and Housing Advice Review and Enhanced Housing Options Strategy have been produced following consultation with relevant Council Officers, statutory and voluntary sector partners and former customers.

### 10. **Author of Report**

The author of this report is Elise Hopkins (Housing Options Manager) who can be contacted on extension 3510 (e-mail: [elise.hopkins@redditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:elise.hopkins@redditchbc.gov.uk)) for more information.

### 11. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Redditch Homelessness and Housing Options Review.

Appendix 2 – Redditch Enhanced Housing Options Strategy (the full action plan can be provided on request)



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No Direct Ward Relevance

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### PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS and MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY

(Report of the Head of Resources)

#### 1. Summary of Proposals

To set the limits under the new Prudential Code for borrowing which the Council is required to agree before the start of the 2010/11 financial year and to review the Prudential Indicators for the current financial year.

To seek members approval to the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2010/11.

#### 2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND** that

- 1) the Prudential Indicators as set out in the report be approved; and
- 2) the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2010/11 as defined in option 3, be approved.

#### 3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Climate Change / Carbon Management Implications

##### Financial

- 3.1 The financial implications are contained throughout the report.

##### Legal

- 3.2 The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (Prudential Code) was developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy to provide a code of practice to underpin the new system of capital finance embodied in Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003. Local Authorities are no longer subject to government controlled borrowing approvals and are free to determine their own level of capital investment controlled by self-regulation.

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- 
- 3.3 The setting and revising of prudential indicators should be undertaken by the body that sets the budget, namely, full Council.

### Policy

- 3.4 The Council's policy regarding borrowing and investments is contained in its Treasury Management Strategy.
- 3.5 This report will determine the Council's policy on making a MRP for 2010/11.

### Risk

- 3.6 The Council would be failing in its legal obligations under the Local Government Act 2003 if it failed to agree a set of Prudential Indicators for the forthcoming financial year and in its legal obligations under the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 if it failed to prepare an annual statement of policy on making a MRP.

### Climate Change / Carbon Management

- 3.7 None have been identified.

### Report

## **4. Background**

### Prudential Indicators

- 4.1 The key objectives of the Prudential Code are to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable; also, that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice and in a manner that supports prudence, affordability and sustainability.
- 4.2 To demonstrate that local authorities have fulfilled these objectives, the Prudential Code sets out the indicators that must be used, and the factors that must be taken into account. The Code does not include indicative limits or ratios, these are for the local authority to set for itself subject to the controls under [clause 4] of the Local Government Act 2003.

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### Minimum Revenue Provision

- 4.3. The requirement to make a MRP is contained within the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.
- 4.4. Following the publication of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations issued on the 26th February 2008 local authorities are required to prepare an annual statement of policy for making a MRP. The annual statement should be submitted to Council before the start of the financial year.
- 4.5 MRP is the amount of revenue which an authority sets aside for the repayment of the principal element of any borrowing undertaken to finance capital expenditure. The interest cost of borrowing continues to be a direct charge to revenue. The new regulations that came into force on the 31st March 2008 impose a duty on the Council to make an amount of MRP which it considers to be a “prudent provision”.
- 4.6 The broad aim of “prudent provision” is to ensure that debt is repaid over a period that is either reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits, or, in the case of borrowing supported by Government Revenue Support Grant, reasonably commensurate with the period implicit in the determination of the grant. This authority does not have any borrowing supported by Revenue Support Grant.
- 4.7 MRP is calculated in the financial year after the capital expenditure has been incurred and so the capital spend in 2009/10 informs the MRP set aside in the revenue account for 2010/11. The new regulations have added an exception to this in that if expenditure has been incurred on an asset which has not become operational then MRP does not need to be set aside until the financial year after the asset becomes operational. In effect authorities are entitled to a “MRP holiday” until the new asset becomes operational.

## **5. Key Issues**

### Prudential Indicators

- 5.1 The Council is required to publish the following indicators introduced by the Code for the next and following two financial years:
- a) Actual and estimated capital expenditure,
  - b) Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream,
  - c) Capital financing requirement,
  - d) Actual limit for external debt,
  - e) Operational boundary for external debt,

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- f) Council tax implications of the incremental effect of capital decisions,  
g) Treasury Management indicators.
- 5.2 The prudential indicators for the forthcoming and following years must be set before the beginning of the financial year. They may be revised at any time, and must be reviewed, and revised if appropriate, for the current year when the prudential indicators are set for the following year.

### Capital Expenditure

- 5.3 The estimates of capital expenditure for 2009/10 and future years included in the Council's approved capital programme are:

Approved Programme	2009/10 Estimate £'000	2010/11 Estimate £'000	2011/12 Estimate £'000	2012/13 Estimate £'000
HRA	10,101.4	7,773.0	6,500.4	6,020.0
General Fund	5,653.0	2,169.0	1,670.0	845.0
Total Approved Programme	15,754.4	9,942.0	8,170.4	6,865.0

### Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

- 5.4 The financing costs include the amount of interest payable and receivable in respect of borrowing and investments. The Net Revenue Stream for the HRA is the amount to be met from housing subsidy and rents and for the General Fund it is the "amount to be met from government grants and local taxation". The estimates of the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream for the current and future years are:

Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream				
	2009/10 Estimate	2010/11 Estimate	2011/12 Estimate	2012/13 Estimate
HRA	1.46%	1.37%	1.22%	1.10%
General Fund	(1.08)%	1.85%	2.42%	2.60%

- 5.5 The figures in the above table are shown as negatives where the interest received from temporary and long term investments is estimated to exceed the cost of temporary borrowing.

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## Net Revenue Streams for 2009/10 and 2010/11

5.6 The Net Revenue Stream for the HRA is calculated as follows:

	2009/10 Estimate £	2010/11 Initial £
Dwelling rents	19,280,170	19,827,780
Non-dwelling rents	567,410	516,730
Charges for services and facilities	174,090	188,460
Less		
Negative subsidy	6,167,830	6,037,140
Net Revenue Stream	13,853,840	14,495,830

5.7 The Net Revenue Stream for the General Fund is calculated as follows:

	2009/10 Estimate £	2010/11 Estimate £
Revenue Support Grant	1,205,022	818,847
Non-Domestic Rates	5,220,774	5,639,079
Council Tax	5,573,345	5,754,643
Collection Fund	13,782	10,200
Net Revenue Stream	12,012,923	12,222,769

## Capital Financing Requirement

5.8 The capital financing requirement is a measure of the extent to which the Council needs to borrow to support capital expenditure. It does not necessarily relate to the actual amount of borrowing at any one point in time. The Council has an integrated treasury management strategy where there is no distinction between revenue and capital cash flows, and the day to day position of external borrowing and investments constantly changes.

Capital Financing Requirement				
	2009/10 Estimate £'000	2010/11 Estimate £'000	2011/12 Estimate £'000	2012/13 Estimate £'000
HRA	13,076	17,576	20,576	22,876
General Fund	15,426	17,125	18,326	18,823
Total	28,502	34,701	38,902	41,699

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## 5.9 Calculation of Capital Financing Requirement from the Council's Balance Sheet

Extracts from Balance Sheet	2008/09 £'000
Fixed Assets	329,945
Less	
Capital Adjustment Account	268,059
Government Grant Deferred Account	967
Revaluation Reserve	42,017
<b>Capital Financing Requirement</b>	<b>18,902</b>

5.10 CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance includes the following key indicator of prudence:

5.11 "In order to ensure that over the medium term net borrowing will only be for a capital purpose, the local authority should ensure that net external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of Capital Financing Requirement in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional Capital Financial Requirement for the current and next two years."

5.12 As at the 31st March 2009 the Council's borrowing exceeded its investments by £9.25 million.

### External Debt

5.13 In respect of any external debt, it is recommended that the Council approves the following Authorised Limits for its total external debt gross of investments for the next three financial years. The Authorised Limit for external debt for the forthcoming year is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003: "A local authority shall determine and keep under review how much money it can afford to borrow."

5.14 The Authorised Limits are consistent with the current capital programme and the proposals for capital expenditure included in the Medium Term Financial Plan and the Council's Capital Strategy. The limits are based on the most likely financial circumstances but with an allowance made for unusual cash movements. It is not anticipated that any borrowing will be undertaken except temporarily until further revenues are received.



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Authorised Limit for External Debt				
	2009/10 Revised Estimate £'000	2010/11 Estimate £'000	2011/12 Estimate £'000	2012/13 Estimate £'000
Borrowing	38,000	44,500	49,000	52,000
Other long term liabilities	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,000</b>	<b>44,500</b>	<b>49,000</b>	<b>52,000</b>

- 5.15 The Council is asked to approve the following Operational Limit for external debt for the same period. The Operational Limit is based on the same estimates as for the Authorised Limit but differs in that it does not take into account the allowance for unusual cash movements.

Operational Limit for External Debt				
	2009/10 Revised Estimate £'000	2010/11 Estimate £'000	2011/12 Estimate £'000	2012/13 Estimate £'000
Borrowing	35,000	41,500	46,000	49,000
Other long term liabilities	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,000</b>	<b>41,500</b>	<b>46,000</b>	<b>49,000</b>

- 5.16 The Council's actual external debt at the 31st March 2009 was £26,708 million (£21.195 million in short term borrowing, £5.1 million long term borrowing and £0.383 million bank overdraft). It should be noted that the actual external debt is not directly comparable to the authorised limit and the operational boundary, since the actual external debt reflects the position at one point in time.

### Treasury Management

- 5.17 The Council has previously adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services. Interest rate risk management is a priority and therefore the Code identifies two indicators that will provide the Operational Boundaries to the exposure to interest rate risk.
- Upper limits for variable rate exposure and
  - Upper limits to fixed rate exposure.

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- 5.18 It is recommended that the Council sets an upper limit on its fixed interest rate exposures for 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 of 100% and on its variable interest rate exposures on 50%. This limit on variable rates is consistent with the current approved limit.
- 5.19 The medium term strategy is to undertake borrowing for capital expenditure. The timing of any longer term borrowing will depend on the profile of capital spend.
- 5.20 The Council's investments are held in a relatively flexible form and therefore fixed interest rate exposure is not considered to be a significant risk.

Maturity Structure of any Fixed Rate Borrowing (as a percentage of total projected borrowing that is fixed rate)		
	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
Under 12 months	100%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	100%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	100%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	100%	0%
10 years and above	100%	0%

- 5.21 The Council has recalled its externalised investments of £15 million, which originated in relation to the Council's reserved capital receipts. This sum is now being invested by the in-house team. The Code requires that authorities set out the total principal of sums invested for periods longer than 364 days and set an upper limit for each forward financial year for the maturity of these investments. The purpose of the indicator is to manage the investment portfolio within good treasury management practice guidelines and ensure there is a spread of investment maturities to reduce risks inherent in interest rate volatility. The following limits are recommended.

Total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days	
	£ million
31 March 2008	0.0
31 March 2009	0.0
31 March 2010	0.0

Minimum Revenue Provision Policy

- 5.22 For all unsupported (prudential) borrowing the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) will be based on the estimated life of the assets financed by borrowing in accordance with the MRP guidance.

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## 6. Other Implications

Asset Management	-	None identified.
Community Safety	-	None identified.
Health	-	None identified.
Human Resources	-	None identified.
Social Exclusion	-	None identified.
Environment / Sustainability	-	None identified.

## 7. Lessons Learnt

- 7.1 In order to comply with the requirement of the Local Government Act 2003 the Council needs to approve a range of prudential indicators as detailed in the body of this report before the start of the forthcoming financial year. At the same time the Council also needs to approve a Minimum Revenue Provision Policy.

## 8. Background Papers

Working papers held in Financial Services Team.  
CIPFA's Prudential Code – Fully revised 2nd edition  
Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England)  
(Amendment) Regulations 2008

Changes to the Capital Finance System – consultation [DCLG]

Minimum Revenue Provision Guidance – An informal commentary -  
Department for Communities and Local Government.

## 9. Consultation

Relevant Council Officers have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## 10. Author of Report

The author of this report is Teresa Kristunas (Head of Resources), who can be contacted on extension 3295 (e-mail [teresa.kristunas@redditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:teresa.kristunas@redditchbc.gov.uk)) for more information.

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11. Appendices

None.

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No Direct Ward Relevance

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### TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2010/11

(Report of the Head of Resources)

#### 1. Summary of Proposals

Members are asked to approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2010/11.

#### 2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND** that

**the Treasury Management Strategy for 2010/11 be approved.**

#### 3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Climate Change / Carbon Management Implications

##### Financial

- 3.1 The financial implications are contained throughout the report

##### Legal

- 3.2 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, the authority has to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. The Council has previously resolved to comply with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. Under the Code of Practice the Council is required to approve the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy before the start of the financial year.
- 3.3 Guidance issued under Section 15 (1) (a) of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to approve an Annual Investment Strategy before the start of the financial year.
- 3.4. Local authorities have a specific requirement to adopt the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services under the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities which authorities are required to comply with under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 3.5. The treasury management code of practice requires all organisations covered by it to have a treasury management strategy stating the policies and objectives of its treasury management function.

- 3.6. On the 16th November 2009 the Department for Communities and Local Government issued a consultation paper on various changes to the prudential Capital Finance system introduced by the Local Government Act 2003. The revised guidance impacts on an authority's investment strategy.

Policy

- 3.7 There are no direct policy implications.

Risk

- 3.8 The Council needs to ensure that the risks associated with the treasury function have been properly identified and evaluated. The risks include interest rate exposure, counterparty or credit risk, liquidity (insufficient cash to meet liabilities) risk, funding (inability to repay or replace loans) risk, and the failure of internal controls.

Climate Change / Carbon Management

- 3.9 There are no Climate Change / Carbon Management implications.

**Report**

**4. Background**

- 4.1 Treasury Management is:-

“the management of the local authority's cash flows, its bankings, money market and capital market transactions and loan management; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of the optimum performance consistent with those risks”.

- 4.2 The approved activities of the Treasury Management operation are as follows:-

- a) Cash flow (daily balances and long term forecasting).
- b) Investing surplus funds in Approved Investments.
- c) Borrowing to finance cash deficits.
- d) Funding of capital expenditure through borrowing, capital receipts, grants or leasing.
- e) Management of debt (including rescheduling and monitoring)
- f) Interest rate exposure management.
- g) Dealing procedures with brokers, banks, building societies and the Public Works Loans Board.

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- 
- 4.3 On the 1st April 2004 the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Prudential Code was introduced to support the new system of capital finance embodied in part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003. This introduced a number of prudential indicators that impact on treasury management activity.
- 4.4 The revised guidance issued in draft on the 16th November 2009 makes it clear that investment priorities should be security and liquidity, rather than yield and that authorities should not rely just on credit ratings, but consider other information on risk.
- 4.5 The draft guidance requires investment strategies to comment on the use of treasury management consultants and on the investment of money borrowed in advance of spending needs.
- 4.6 The investment strategy for periods commencing 1st April 2010 are to be approved by full council and published.

### 5. Key Issues

- 5.1 The turmoil within financial markets, in particular the failing of a number of Icelandic banks and the issue with Northern Rock has highlighted the risks associated with treasury management activities.
- 5.2 The strategy adopted by many local authorities has been to protect capital sums with minimal returns on investments. There are now only a handful of institutions with a F1+ credit rating.
- 5.3 The bank base rate has remained at 0.5% since 5th March 2009.
- 5.4 The Council currently has £15 million which it invests for periods up to one year. These monies are currently invested with a number of banks and building societies at rates ranging from 0.37% and 2.25%.
- 5.5 Despite other Authorities experiencing significant potential losses on investments, the Council's investments have remained secure.

### Capital Resources

- 5.6 The Council's capital programme for 2010/11 shows a requirement for capital resources of £7.5 million. In order to fund the 2010/11 capital programme the Council will need to undertake further prudential borrowing of £3.6 million. The availability of capital receipts from asset disposals is limited because of market conditions.
- 5.7 The Council currently has £5.0 million of long term borrowing. The remainder of the Council's borrowing is currently undertaken on a

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short-term basis. Further long term borrowing will be undertaken when market conditions are favourable.

- 5.8 The decision on when borrowing will be taken up will depend on expenditure plans and market conditions. The Council only has the power to borrow to fund capital expenditure.

### 6. Other Implications

Asset Management - None identified.

Community Safety - None identified.

Health - None identified.

Human Resources - None identified.

Social Exclusion - None identified.

Environment / Sustainability - None identified.

### 7. Lessons Learnt

None.

### 8. Background Papers

Changes to the capital finance system – Consultation [Department for Communities and Local Government

Treasury Management Code - CIPFA

### 9. Consultation

Relevant Borough Council Officers have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

### 10. Author of Report

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

### 11. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Treasury Management Strategy 2010/11



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**TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2010/11**1. Objectives

The main objectives of Treasury Management are:-

## a) Borrowing

- To effect funding in any one year at the cheapest rate commensurate with future risk.
- To forecast average future interest rates and borrowing accordingly.
- To monitor and review the level of variable interest rate loans in order to take greater advantage of interest rate movements.

## b) Investment

- To maximise the return on investments while maintaining capital security.

## c) Cash Flow

- To either borrow on a temporary basis to cover shortfalls in funds or make temporary investments in order to manage the Council's cash flow in the most cost effective way.
- To maintain minimum balances with the Council's bankers.

2.0 Sources of Financing

The following list specifies which borrowing instruments can be adopted:-

- Market – Long Term - Loans available through the London Money Market.
- Market – Temporary (up to 364 days) – Loans available through the London Money Markets.
- Public Works Loans Board – the low risk source of longer term borrowing for the Council.
- Overdraft - Redditch Borough Council has an overdraft limit of £1million with Lloyds TSB Bank plc.
- Internal (Capital receipts and revenue balances) - including “set aside” capital receipts earmarked to repay debt used as a substitute for new borrowing.
- Leasing.

**3.0 Borrowing Limits**

The prudential indicator for the Authorised Limit for external debt for the current year is the statutory limit determined under section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003: "A local authority shall determine and keep under review how much money it can afford to borrow."

**4.0 Interest Rate Exposure**

The Council will set for the forthcoming financial year and following two financial years upper limits to its exposures to the effects of changes in interest rates. These indicators will relate to both fixed interest rates and variable interest rates.

**Annual Investment Strategy - 2010/11****Introduction**

5.0 Guidance issued under section 15 (1) (a) of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to approve an Annual Investment Strategy before the start of the financial year.

**Objective**

6.0 The objective of the Council's Investment Strategy is to prudently invest all surplus funds held on behalf of the authority. Priority will be given to security and liquidity but at the same time maximising yield.

6.1 The Council will not borrow funds to invest.

**Types of Investments**

7.0 The investments which the Council are able to use are categorised as 'Specified Investments' and 'Non-Specified' Investments. Specified Investments offer high security and high liquidity. They must be in sterling and have a maturity of less than a year. The Strategy is for the Council to restrict its investment activity to specified investments.

**7.1 Specified Investments**

All short-term investments arising from the management of the Council's cash flow shall be invested with:

- 
- the major British clearing banks, National Westminster, Lloyds TSB, HSBC and Barclays, also Coutts and Company, the wholly owned subsidiary of National Westminster,
  - building societies and building society conversions that are F1 or F1+ credit rated for short-term lending'
  - all other local authorities (non-capped)
  - 'AAA' rated Money Market Funds.

The maximum amount placed with any single institution will be £2.5 million.

Monies placed on call (on demand) or for less than 3 months may be placed with:

- the major British clearing banks, National Westminster, Lloyds TSB, HSBC and Barclays, also Coutts and Company, the wholly owned subsidiary of National Westminster,
- building societies and building society conversions that are F2 or F2+ credit rated for short-term lending'
- all other local authorities (non-capped)

The maximum amount placed with any single institution will be £1.0 million.

#### Credit ratings.

8.0 The Council's requirements in terms of credit ratings of lending parties are notified to the broker's. The Council principally relies on the credit ratings published by Fitch Ratings, to establish the credit quality of counterparties. Where a counterparty does not have a Fitch rating, the equivalent Moody's rating will be used.

8.1 Officers from within Financial Services have daily contact with money market brokers who are aware of emerging issues within the finance markets.

#### External Fund Management

9.0 The Council has withdrawn from the use of external fund managers. Investments made or committed by the Council's fund managers have been returned to the Council and are now invested in-house. No new investments will be placed by external fund managers.

#### Treasury Management Consultants

10.0 The Council does not engage consultants for treasury management advice.

Training of the In-house Team

- 11.0 The Council subscribes to CIPFA's Financial Advisory Network who provide access to relevant training events, technical information and a venue for knowledge sharing. Consideration is also being given to an officer undertaking CIPFA's new Treasury Management qualification.
- 12.0 Reporting Arrangements
- 12.1 The Director of Corporate Resources and Finance will report on the prudential indicators as set out in CIPFA's Prudential Code for the coming year to the Council, at or before the start of the financial year and on the Treasury Management Strategy (including the Annual Investment Strategy) it is proposed to adopt for the forthcoming year.
- 12.2 The Director of Corporate Resources and Finance will produce an annual report for the Council by the 30th of September of the succeeding financial year.

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No Specific Ward Relevance

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### VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANT APPLICATIONS 2010 - 2011

(Report of the Head of Community Services)

#### 1. Summary of Proposals

The committee is asked to consider the recommendations of the Grants Assessment Panel in awarding grants to voluntary sector organisations for 2010 - 2011. The grants for this year include applications from the five organisations that were formerly "Core Funded" as it was not possible to implement the "shopping" element of the new Grants Policy within the available timescale. The total budget available for grants is £244,800 and applications totalling £391,966 have been received.

#### 2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that

- 1) **grants be awarded to voluntary sector organisations as detailed in paragraphs 5.4 of this report, subject to Council approval of the budget.**
- 2) **£3,000 be donated to Redditch Arts Council for 2010/11**
- 3) **The policy on funding the voluntary and community sector Organisations be reviewed**

#### 3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Climate Change / Carbon Management Implications

##### Financial

- 3.1 The total budget for grants to voluntary organisations for 2010 – 2011 is £244,800.

##### Legal

- 3.2 Under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to incur expenditure which in its opinion is in the interest of and will bring direct benefit to its area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants. The direct benefit accruing must also be commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred.

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- 3.3 There is a further power to make grants to voluntary organisations providing recreational facilities under Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

### Policy

- 3.4 The grants process is in accordance with the Policy for Award of Grants to Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations (Grants Policy) previously presented to the Executive Committee and Council.

### Risk

- 3.5 There is a risk that allocated funds may not be used for the purposes for which they are allocated. To mitigate this risk, the Grants Panel will ensure that appropriate monitoring and reporting procedures are followed and that amounts over £1,000 are paid in instalments, as detailed in the Grants Policy.
- 3.6 There is a risk that the Council will be criticised for failing to support certain projects or organisations. To mitigate this risk, the Grants Panel used an objective scoring mechanism to formulate their funding recommendations, as detailed in Appendix 1.

### Climate Change / Carbon Management

- 3.7 A number of grant applications have indicated that their projects will tackle the issue of climate change and impact on high levels of domestic energy consumption.

### Report

#### **4. Background**

- 4.1 The total grant funding available to voluntary organisations for 2010/11 is £244,800.
- 4.2 The Council has adopted the Shopping, Investing and Giving funding framework.
- 4.3 “Shopping” refers to procurement and contractual arrangements with external providers to deliver services on behalf of the Council that the Council has a statutory duty to provide or priority areas the Council wishes to invest in.
- 4.4 It has not been possible to implement the Shopping element for 2010/11 in the short timescale since the Grants Policy was approved by Council. Therefore, for 2010/11 the five organisations that were

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previously core-funded have been asked to submit applications for funding for 2010/11 at a level not above their current funding.

4.5 Applications for grant funding were required to have a strong link to at least one of the six themes set out in the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy. These are:

- a) Communities that are safe and feel safe
- b) A better environment for today and tomorrow
- c) Economic success that is shared by all
- d) Improving health and well being
- e) Meeting the needs of children and young people
- f) Stronger communities.

4.6 The Grants Panel met on 15th February 2010 to consider the applications.

### 5. Key Issues

5.1 A total of 26 applications were received requesting a total of £392,686. This was £147,886 more than the funds available for allocation.

5.2 An annual donation of £3,000 had been made to the Redditch Arts Council for a number of years to support small projects. Officers advised that they had not submitted a grant application as this had not been raised with them or with the Executive. The Panel agreed that the donation should be given for 2010/11 but that in future the Redditch Arts Council should be required to make an application for a grant.

5.3 Applications were screened to ensure that they met the criteria. Three applications were rejected without scoring as they did not meet the criteria.

- a) The Stop Partnership is a private company so did not meet the criteria for a grant.
- b) The Friends of Southcrest Woods had requested money for improvements to Council owned land. The Head of Environmental Services had been consulted and had confirmed that they worked closely with this group who had been given a remit to seek external funding. This did not include applying for a grant from the Council as any Council funding would come from the Capital Landscape budget.
- c) An application had been made on behalf of the Community Forum for £15,000 to be distributed to member organisations

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via an application process in the same way that funding originally allocated to MECA/RICA had been redistributed in 2009/10. The application was rejected as it did not meet the criteria and Members felt that the Forum could apply for grant on specific projects via the current process.

- 5.4 The grants panel considered each of the remaining applications and recommend that grants are awarded to the following organisations:

Organisation	Amount	Details
Where Next Association	£19,000	Small social enterprise businesses in which clients with learning difficulties gain work experience and life skills training.
Age Concern Redditch District	£7,500	Information and advice to older people in Redditch by telephone and to those visiting the office in Easemore Road. Enquiries cover a wide range of subject's e.g. affordable warmth, income maximisation, access to other services and services provided by Age Concern.
Redditch Citizens' Advice Bureau	£90,000	To provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice for the people of Redditch.
The Sandycroft Wellbeing Centre	£20,000	Various programmes offering support to women, children, families, older persons and providing a designated 'Hate Crime Centre'.
Redditch Play Council	£53,000	To help provide care and play for approximately 15,000 child places, inclusive of children with special needs and continued support to parents.
Worcestershire Credit Union (T/A Black Pear)	£10,500	Training, IT upgrades and marketing costs to implement Saving Gateway accounts in line with the Government scheme.
Batchley Support Group	£7,030	Domestic Violence Training & Signposting Service. A project looking at domestic violence enabling women to become peer mentors.



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<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Details</b>
NewStarts	£8,000	Assistance with furnishing properties, with recycled furniture, in RBC area for tenants on benefits or very low incomes - referrals received from RBC Housing Options, CAB, YMCA, Lifeways, Night Stop, Turning Point.
Astwood Bank Scouts & Guides	£6,732	Purchase of a new marquee to use for their own camps and events and that can be hired out to raise funds for the group
Feckenham Community Shop Association Limited	£5,000	To expand the not-for-profit village community shop which opened in January 2009 in order to provide more retail space and create a Coffee Shop area.
Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Families Association Forces Help	£1,600	Costs involved in cases, visit and written/IT and telephone exchanges with eligible clients and/or charities and statutory authorities.
North Worcestershire Dial	£12,500	To employ a part time Information Officer who will be based at the Age Concern Advice Centre in the former Market who will support both Dial and Age Concern volunteers. Dial will also co-ordinate outreach activities in the town.

- 5.5 The Panel were concerned with the number of applications for the funding of new employees and the lack of clarification on how these posts would be sustainable. Members felt that the current policy should now be reviewed by officers.
- 5.6 Members considered it is necessary to ensure the “shopping” element of the policy is implemented in good time for the 2011/12 grants process and areas for shopping should be identified without delay.
- 5.7 Members felt that there should be a limit set on the level of grant permitted under the “giving” element, for example £10,000.
- 5.8 There is a need to look at a mechanism for funding projects such as those carried out by the Community Forum in 2009/10.

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### 6. Other Implications

- |                              |   |  |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Asset Management             | - | None.  |
| Community Safety             | - | “Communities that are safe and feel safe” is one of the themes in determining grant allocations for 2010/11.   |
| Health                       | - | “Improving health and well being” is one of the themes in determining grant allocations for 2010/11.   |
| Human Resources              | - | None identified.   |
| Social Exclusion             | - | Three of the themes in determining grant allocations for 2010/11 contribute to reducing social exclusion. These are “economic success that is shared by all”, “meeting the needs of children and young people” and “stronger communities”. |
| Environment / Sustainability | - | “A better environment for today and tomorrow” is one of the themes in determining grant allocations for 2010/11.   |

### 7. Lessons Learnt

The current policy promotes larger grant requests by allowing full cost recovery and it was felt that for the ‘Giving’ element this should not be included. The ‘Shopping’ element must be introduced for 2011/12 process to ensure Council resources are used in an effective manner.

### 8. Background Papers

Grant Application Forms  
Policy for Award of Grants by Redditch Borough Council to Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations.

### 9. Consultation

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

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**10. Author of Report**

The author of this report is Matthew Bough, Housing Policy & LSP Manager, who can be contacted on extension 3120 (e-mail: [matthew.bough@redditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.bough@redditchbc.gov.uk)) for more information.

**11. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Scoring Mechanism

**12. Key**



**EXECUTIVE****Appendix 1**

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**Grants Assessment Scoring 2010/11**

Name of applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of funding requested: \_\_\_\_\_

**Stage One:**

This confirms that the application meets the basic application criteria:

The applicant organisation has provided:

- Clear evidence of operating within the VCS
- Information that matches Companies House/Charity Commission records.
- Annual accounts/bank statements (not required for start-up grant)
- Confirmation of a bank/building society account in organisation's name
- Confirmation that at least two unrelated signatures are required for withdrawals

The proposed project:

- Is a new project not previously funded by RBC
- Is not for the purpose of political or religious activity
- Could not be funded out of organisational reserves or other resources
- Will be delivered during 2010/11
- Will operate in Redditch Borough on behalf of Borough residents
- Has a strong link to one of the six application themes
- Has clear objectives

**Stage Two**

Grant applications are scored on the evidence provided against each of ten predetermined criteria. The scoring is weighted to favour sustainable, well –structured projects that will have a lasting impact.

The final score is reduced according to the total amount of money requested, to take account of the requirement for applications for larger sums of money to provide more detailed information as part of their application.

The Assessment is undertaken as a group exercise involving no fewer than 3 Members. Panel members make a judgement based on the 4 point scale which is:-

- A. **No.**
- B. **Only brief details to support this.**
- C. **Yes but could be improved.**
- D. **Yes and is comprehensive.**

<b>Section 1: Background to the project</b>		<b>A(0)</b>	<b>B(1)</b>	<b>C(3)</b>	<b>D(5)</b>
<b>The project .....</b>					
1.	has clearly set out its aims and aspirations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	supports local priorities (in addition to identified theme).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	is low risk to the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Section Score ( /15)**

<b>Section 2: Project Planning</b>		<b>A(0)</b>	<b>B(2)</b>	<b>C(4)</b>	<b>D(6)</b>
<b>The project .....</b>					
4.	has a clear and robust financial outline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	addresses the needs of people suffering social or economic disadvantage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	gives clear details on how the project will be structured, co-ordinated and promoted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Section Score ( /18)**

<b>Section 3: Added Value of the Project</b>		<b>A(0)</b>	<b>B(3)</b>	<b>C(5)</b>	<b>D(7)</b>
<b>The project .....</b>					
7.	has provided clear evidence of a local need that is not met by current or planned provision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	provides specific, measurable, and realistic targets that clearly address the chosen theme.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	provides a robust and realistic plan for sustaining the project after the period of grant aid.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	has clearly identified methods and structures to increase participation and/or increase the number of beneficiaries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Section Score ( /28)**

Total Score (/61) : \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Final Score:</b> _____
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Confirmed by Chair: .....

# Executive Committee

No direct Ward relevance

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## ADVISORY PANELS, WORKING GROUPS, ETC - UPDATE REPORT

(Report of Chief Executive)

### 1. Purpose of Report

To provide, for monitoring / management purposes, an update on the work of the Executive Committee's Advisory Panels, and similar bodies which report via the Executive Committee.

### 2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that

**subject to Members' comments, the report be noted.**

### 3. Updates

#### A. ADVISORY PANELS

	<u>Meeting :</u>	<u>Lead Members / Officers :</u> (Executive Members shown underlined)	<u>Position :</u> (Oral updates to be provided at the meeting by Lead Members or Officers, if no written update is available.)
1.	Climate Change Advisory Panel (formerly Environment Advisory Panel)	Chair <u>Cllr B Clayton</u> / Guy Revans.	Next meeting - 9th March 2010.
2.	Community Safety Advisory Panel	Chair <u>Cllr Brunner</u> / Vice-Chair Cllr Banks Angie Heighway	Date to be arranged.
3.	Economic Advisory Panel	Chair <u>Cllr MacMillan</u> John Staniland / Georgina Harris	Last meeting – 8th February 2010.

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4.	Housing Advisory Panel	Chair <u>Cllr B Clayton</u> / Vice-Chair Cllr Pearce  Jackie Smith	Last meeting – 17th November 2009.
5.	Leisure Contracts Advisory Panel	Chair <u>Cllr Anderson</u> / Vice-Chair Cllr MacMillan  Ken Watkins / Kevin Cook	Last meeting – 1st February 2010.
6.	Customer Services Advisory Panel	Chair <u>Cllr Braley</u> Jackie Smith / Jane Smith	Last meeting – 10th December 2009.
7.	Planning Advisory Panel	Chair <u>Cllr MacMillan</u> / Vice-Chair  Cllr Chalk  John Staniland / Ruth Bamford	Next meeting – 3rd March 2010

**B. OTHER MEETINGS**

8.	Constitutional Review Working Party	Chair Cllr MacMillan / Vice Chair <u>Cllr Braley</u>  Steve Skinner	Last meeting - 24th February 2010.
9.	Grants Panel	Chair Cllr Chance / Vice Chair  <u>Cllr Braley</u>  Angie Heighway	Next meeting – to be arranged.
10.	Independent Remuneration Panel	Independent Members / Chair Mr Andrew Powell	Last meeting – 5th February 2010.



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11.	Member Development Steering Group	Chair <u>Cllr MacMillan</u> / Vice-Chair Cllr Brunner  Steve Skinner / Trish Buckley	Next meeting – 23rd March 2010
12.	Procurement Steering Group	Chair <u>Cllr Braley</u> / Vice-Chair Cllr Hall  Sue Hanley	Last meeting – 18th January 2010.
13.	Church Hill District Centre – Members' Panel	Chair <u>Cllr B Clayton</u>  Rob Kindon / Jim Prendergrast	Last meeting – 25th November 2009.

**4. Author of Report**

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

**5. Appendices**

None.



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No direct Ward relevance

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## ACTION MONITORING

(Report of the Chief Executive)

Portfolio Holder(s) / Responsible Officer	Action requested	Status
13th January 2009		
<b>Cllr Gandy / Executive Committee</b>	<b>Third Sector Task and Finish Group</b>  The Executive to consider the further work to be undertaken (detailed in recommendation 5) and come back with suggestions for further work in due course.	Awaiting further consideration by relevant Members.
22nd April 2009		
<b>Cllr MacMillan/ Ruth Bamford</b>	<b>Action Monitoring – Economic Advisory Panel</b>  Economic Development Strategy - Visits to Redditch businesses being arranged.	
7th October 2009		
<b>Cllr C MacMillan / R Bamford / A Rutt</b>	<b>Publication of Planning Applications – Consultation</b>  Officers were asked to consider a slight expansion of the circulation of notifications of planning applications should these new measures come into effect.	
18th November 2009		
<b>Cllr M Braley / D Riley</b>	<b>Benefits Improvement Plan</b>  Officers were requested to highlight the Inspector’s comments regarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s involvement in	

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	overseeing the management of performance. [Appendix 1 (R7a)]	
<b>9th December 2009</b>		
<b>Cllr Anderson / A Heighway</b>	<b>Voluntary Sector Grant Applications</b> Members were keen that photographs be included in Redditch Matters to publicise the grant funding that was being provided.	Officers highlighted the publicity that was already being planned.
<b>27th January 2010</b>		
<b>Cllr Gandy / A Heighway</b>	<b>Single Equalities Scheme</b> Members requested that a report/action plan be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee or Council detailing what the Council, as Community Leader, expected to receive in terms of education provision for the Borough and its children and young people.	
<b>Cllr Gandy / K Dicks</b>	<b>Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier (WETT) Programme</b> Officers highlighted the undertaking that had been made at a recent meeting of the WETT Programme Management Group to provide further detail to the participating Councils on the proposed service standards and related information (due April 2010)	
<b>Cllr Braley / R Kindon / B Haycock</b>	<b>Easemore Road Site – Consultation with Tenants</b> Officers undertook to carry out a basic check of all such Leases held by the Council by the end of the financial year.	
<b>3rd February 2010</b>		
<b>Cllr Braley / T Kristunas</b>	<b>Initial Estimates 2010/11</b> Officers to write, in the first instance, to Worcestershire County Council highlighting	

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	the increasing pressure on the Council's budgets for staff pensions.	
<b>Cllr Braley / B Barr</b>	<b>Corporate Sickness Statistics</b>  Officers were asked to provide Councillor Hartnett with information regarding the SLA with Worcestershire County Council for the provision of Occupational Health services.	
<b>17th February 2010</b>		
<b>Cllr MacMillan / A Rutt</b>	<b>Planning Services - Increase In Charging For Pre-Application Discussions</b>  Officers were asked to circulate Appendix 2, as detailed in the report, prior to the meeting of Council on 29th March 2010.	
<b>Cllr Anderson / K Cook</b>	<b>Leisure Contracts Advisory Panel - Abbey Stadium Redevelopment</b>  Officers were asked to arrange a visit for Councillors to a leisure centre in Coventry, which had been subject to a similar refurbishment to that being suggested at the Abbey Stadium.	
<b><u>Note:</u></b>	<i>No further debate should be held on the above matters or substantive decisions taken, without further report OR unless urgency requirements are met.</i>	Report period: 13/01/09 to 22/2/10

