

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 8th  
December, 2010  
7.00 pm

Committee Room Two  
Town Hall  
Redditch



[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)

# Access to Information - Your Rights

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Your main rights are set out below:-

- Automatic right to attend all Council and Committee meetings unless the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- Automatic right to inspect agenda and public reports at least five days before the date of the meeting.
- Automatic right to inspect minutes of the Council and its Committees (or summaries of business undertaken in private) for up to six years following a meeting.
- Access, upon request, to the background papers on which reports are based for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting.
- Access to a public register stating the names and addresses and electoral areas of all Councillors with details of the membership of all Committees etc.
- A reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports relating to items to be considered in public must be made available to the public attending meetings of the Council and its Committees etc.
- Access to a list specifying those powers which the Council has delegated to its Officers indicating also the titles of the Officers concerned.
- 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:  
**[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)**

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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  
Jess Bayley and Michael Craggs  
Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers**

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Minicom: 595528**

# 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.

### **Special Arrangements**

If you have any particular needs, please contact the Committee Support Officer.

Infra-red devices for the hearing impaired are available on request at the meeting. Other facilities may require prior arrangement.

### **Further Information**

If you require any further information, please contact the Committee Support Officer (see foot of page opposite).

### **Fire/ Emergency instructions**

**If the alarm is sounded, please leave the building by the nearest available exit – these are clearly indicated within all the Committee Rooms.**

**If you discover a fire, inform a member of staff or operate the nearest alarm call point (wall mounted red rectangular box). In the event of the fire alarm sounding, leave the building immediately following the fire exit signs. Officers have been appointed with responsibility to ensure that all visitors are escorted from the building.**

**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).



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 8th December, 2010

7.00 pm

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

## Agenda

### Membership:

Cllrs:	Diane Thomas (Chair)	William Norton Brenda Quinney
	Anita Clayton (Vice-Chair)	Mark Shurmer Graham Vickery
	Peter Anderson	
	Bill Hartnett	
	Robin King	

<p><b>1. Apologies and named substitutes</b></p>	<p>To receive apologies for absence and details of any Councillor (or co-optee substitute) nominated to attend this meeting in place of a member of this Committee.</p>
<p><b>2. Declarations of interest and of Party Whip</b></p>	<p>To invite Councillors to declare any interest they may have in items on the Agenda and any Party Whip.</p>
<p><b>3. Minutes</b> (Pages 1 - 14)</p>	<p>To confirm the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a correct record.</p> <p>(Minutes attached)</p>
<p><b>4. Actions List</b> (Pages 15 - 16)</p>	<p>To note the contents of the Overview and Scrutiny Actions List.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>
<p><b>5. Call-in and Scrutiny of the Forward Plan</b></p>	<p>To consider whether any Key Decisions of the Executive Committee's most recent meeting(s) should be subject to call-in and also to consider whether any items on the Forward Plan are suitable for scrutiny.</p> <p>(No separate report).</p> <p><b>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</b></p>

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<p><b>6. Task &amp; Finish Reviews - Draft Scoping Documents</b></p>	<p>To consider any scoping documents provided for possible Overview and Scrutiny review.</p> <p>(No reports attached)</p>
<p><b>7. Task and Finish Groups - Progress Reports</b></p>	<p>To consider progress to date on the current reviews against the terms set by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The current reviews in progress are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. External Refurbishment of Housing Stock – Chair, Councillor Graham Vickery;</li><li>2. Joint Worcestershire Hub – Redditch representative, Councillor Roger Hill; and</li><li>3. Work Experience – Chair, Councillor Peter Anderson.</li></ol> <p>(Oral reports)</p> <p><b>All Wards</b></p>
<p><b>8. Joint Worcestershire Hub Task and Finish Group Report</b></p> <p>(Pages 17 - 82)</p>	<p>To receive the final Joint Worcestershire Hub Task and Finish Group Report and to determine whether to endorse the Group's recommendations or to propose any alternative recommendations.</p> <p>(Report attached and minutes from Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet meeting to follow)</p> <p><b>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</b></p>
<p><b>9. External Refurbishment of Housing Stock</b></p> <p>(Pages 83 - 106)</p> <p>Councillor Graham Vickery</p>	<p>To consider the final report from the External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short-Sharp Review Group</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(Greenlands Ward)</b></p>
<p><b>10. Portfolio Holder Annual Report - Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management</b></p> <p>(Pages 107 - 110)</p> <p>Councillor Michael Braley, Deputy Leader of the Council</p>	<p>To receive a presentation from the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management, Councillor Michael Braley, based on the questions proposed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>All Wards</b></p>

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<p><b>11. Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report - Second Quarter - April to September 2010</b></p> <p>(Pages 111 - 128)</p> <p>J Pickering - Exec Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)</p>	<p>To provide members with an overview of the budget, including the achievements of approved savings as at the end of quarter 2 2010/11.</p> <p>(Report attached).</p> <p><b>All Wards</b></p>
<p><b>12. Quarterly Performance Monitoring - Quarter 2 - April to September 2010</b></p> <p>(Pages 129 - 146)</p> <p>H Bennett - Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships</p>	<p>To consider the quarterly performance report, showing indicators which have improved, declined or remained static when compared to the same period in the previous financial year.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>All Wards</b></p>
<p><b>13. Feedback from the Budget Scrutiny Workshop</b></p> <p>Councillor Diane Thomas</p>	<p>To receive officer and member feedback from the Budget Scrutiny Workshop on 22nd November 2010.</p> <p>(Oral report)</p> <p><b>All Wards</b></p>
<p><b>14. Performance Report for the services within the Community Leadership and Partnerships Portfolio</b></p> <p>(Pages 147 - 156)</p> <p>Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships</p>	<p>To receive the Performance Report for the services within the Community Leadership and Partnerships Portfolio.</p> <p>(Reports attached)</p> <p><b>All Wards</b></p>
<p><b>15. Review into Public Speaking at Overview and Scrutiny meetings</b></p> <p>(Pages 157 - 164)</p> <p>M Craggs, Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer</p>	<p>To note the report on public speaking at Overview and Scrutiny meetings and to consider whether to propose any recommendations.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</b></p>

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<p><b>16. Feedback from the Worcestershire Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Network Meeting</b></p>	<p>To receive feedback from the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and from the Chair of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel on the outcomes of the latest Worcestershire Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Network Meeting on 29th November 2010 and the implications for scrutiny in Redditch.</p> <p>(Oral reports)</p> <p><b>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</b></p>
<p><b>17. Referrals</b></p>	<p>To consider any referrals to the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee direct, or arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Executive Committee or full Council</li><li>• Other sources.</li></ul> <p>(No separate report).</p>
<p><b>18. Work Programme</b> (Pages 165 - 170)</p>	<p>To consider the Committee's current Work Programme, and potential items for addition to the list arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Forward Plan / Committee agendas</li><li>• External publications</li><li>• Other sources.</li></ul> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</b></p>
<p><b>19. Exclusion of the Press and Public</b></p>	<p>Should it be necessary, in the opinion of the Borough Director, during the course of the meeting to consider excluding the public from the meeting on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged, it may be necessary to move the following resolution:</p> <p>"That, under S.100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, 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".</p>





# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17th November 2010

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Diane Thomas (Chair), Councillor Anita Clayton (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Peter Anderson, Bill Hartnett, Robin King, William Norton, Brenda Quinney, Mark Shurmer and Graham Vickery

### Also Present:

Councillors Brandon Clayton, Roger Hill, Derek Taylor and Mr M Collins (Standards Committee Observer).

### Officers:

D Bennett, H Bennett, J Bough, M Bough, S Hanley, S Horrobin, G Revans and L Tompkin

### Committee Services Officer:

J Smyth and I Westmore

### 130. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

No apologies for absence had been received.

### 131. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of any party whip.

### 132. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED that

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

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Chair

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## **133. ACTIONS LIST**

Members considered the latest version of the Committee's Actions List. Officers advised that, in relation to item 2 on the list, a report on options for public speaking at Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings would be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 8th December 2010.

In respect of Item 1 on the Actions List, the Chair requested that Officers address the outstanding query on what courses would not be provided following the closure of the REDI Centre, as soon as possible.

**RESOLVED that**

**the Actions List be noted.**

## **134. CALL-IN AND SCRUTINY OF THE FORWARD PLAN**

There were no specific call-ins relating to the Decision Notice of the Executive Committee meeting held on 10th November 2010.

It was noted that, whilst not all of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations on the Climate Change Strategy had been accepted, the Executive had agreed an additional recommendation on a policy being approved for all new public buildings to aim to exceed nationally set Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) standards. It was further noted that of the Committee's recommendations relating to the Review of the Dial A Ride Service had been accepted and incorporated in the Executive Committee's recommendations to Council.

There were no pre-scrutiny requests in relation to items scheduled on the Forward Plan for consideration by the Executive Committee.

## **135. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS**

There were no draft scoping documents for consideration.

## **136. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS**

It was noted that the final report on the External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short-Sharp Review was to be presented later in the meeting under Item 9 on the agenda.

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The Committee received the following reports in relation to current reviews:

a) Joint Worcestershire Hub

The Council's Co-opted representative, Councillor Roger Hill, reported that the report on the review of the Worcestershire Hub was due to go to the County Council's Cabinet for consideration on 25th November. Members further noted that an e-link could be provided to access the report on the County's website if they wished to view the report online.

b) Work Experience Opportunities

The Chair of the review, Councillor Peter Anderson, reported that investigations had revealed that an organisation, the Worcestershire Education Business Partnership had been set up to provide assistance and access to a substantial database that schools and young people could tap into to help them find work experience placements and which had, in the previous year, assisted with placing 6,000 students.

He further reported that some schools in Redditch were not, it would seem, taking advantage of this database or enabling their students to make use of it and the Task and Finish Group would be investigating if this was the case and why. He commented that, between this organisation, Careers Advisers and Connexions, there should be plenty of opportunities for work experience placements.

Members also noted that a planned visit by the Chair to a Student Council meeting on 16th November to consult with them on work experience issues had been postponed due to unforeseen circumstances and that he would be meeting with them at the end of January 2011 instead.

c) Promoting Redditch

On behalf of the Task and Finish Group Chair, Councillor Graham Vickery, Officers reported that the Group had held their first meeting on Friday 5th November, at which they received a presentation on the subject of the "Its My Place" Pride Campaign. The Group's next meeting would be held on 23rd November when the work of the Council's Economic Development Unit in promoting Redditch and opportunities for Redditch, given its close proximity, for tapping into Stratford's tourist market and providing places to stay would be discussed.

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Members further noted that the Group had also organised an interview with a representative from North East Worcestershire Tourism (NEWT) on 30th November and was also organising an interview with Sir William Lawrence, former Chair of the defunct Heart of England Tourist Board which, it was hoped, would take place some time in December.

Councillor Derek Taylor, reported that he had received a few responses from Councillors on his research survey "What's good about Redditch", but would welcome more. Members suggested that other external groups, such as businesses, voluntary groups, young and older people should also be consulted on the survey.

## **RESOLVED that**

**the update reports be noted.**

### **137. CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY PANEL - CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a report from the Chair of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel which provided details on discussions held with Officers from the Worcestershire PCT on the possibilities for establishing a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in the West Mercia Police area and the impact the lack of funding and changes to the NHS and PCT's would have and were asked to endorse the Panel's request that the Council write to the Health and Wellbeing Board on the issues highlighted in the report.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Chair of the Redditch Community Safety Partnership reported that she had already received the Panel's letter on funding issues and that the matter would be taken to the full Partnership for consideration.

Members also noted updates on public consultation responses the Panel had received in relation to the Home Office White Paper "Policing in the 21st Century – reconnecting police and the people".

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) Redditch Borough Council endorse and support the need for a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in the West Mercia Police area; and**
- 2) the Council issue a letter to the Health and Wellbeing Board highlighting the level of uncertainty for future provision of a SARC within the West Mercia Police Area**

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**and the apparent gaps in the NHS White Paper *Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS*” in this regard.**

## **138. EXTERNAL REFURBISHMENT OF HOUSING STOCK SHORT-SHARP REVIEW - FINAL REPORT**

The Committee considered the final report from the External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short-Sharp Review Group on proposals for a number of actions to be taken to improve the appearance of properties in the Council’s housing stock and surrounding environment in Woodrow specifically, but also potentially for future implementation in other parts of the Borough, at a relatively low financial cost to the Council.

The Chair of the Review Group, Councillor Graham Vickery, reminded Members of the reasons behind the review, which was to address concerns about the appearance of some of the Council’s housing stock and the impact it had on local residents and their environment. He outlined the stages of the review namely a walkabout in Woodrow with Officers, during which various issues were identified, followed by a further meeting of meeting of the Group when a number of recommendations were formulated for the Committee’s consideration.

Supported by photographic evidence, Councillor Vickery briefly went through each of the proposed recommendations and the reasons behind them. He considered, however, that there were still a number of outstanding issues that needed to be considered, namely:

- a) the colouring of the rough cast pebble dash on houses in Ombersley and Rushock Close; what colours tenants might prefer and consideration as to what might be achievable within existing budgets;
- b) the condition of the road surface at the entrance to Rushock Close; and
- c) the demolition of under-used garages and potential use of some Section 106 monies allocated for use on capital landscape work on soft landscaping work in the courtyard area located in Wishaw Close.

In respect of the rough cast work to houses at a) above, Members were referred to Appendix 1 of the report, which provided estimated costs. Officers advised, however, that there was currently no budget available to undertake the work.

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It was noted that the issue of the road surface in Rushock Close would be the responsibility of the County Council.

The Portfolio Holder with the responsibility for Housing, Councillor Brandon Clayton, advised that Wishaw Close was currently listed on the Council's Estate Enhancement Programme but he was not in a position to advise on timescales for works to be undertaken as the Close was one of thirty-plus in the programme.

Officers reported, in responses to a Member's query, that should tenants be interested in undertaking external redecoration of Council properties themselves, they would have to write to the Council as Landlord and that any requests would be judged on a case by case basis as appropriate.

## **RESOLVED that**

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) **Officers provide clarification on the three outstanding issues highlighted in the preamble above for Members at the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and**

## **RECOMMENDED that**

**subject to Resolution 2 above and further consideration of the outstanding issues by the Committee, the following recommendations be approved:**

- 1) **light colour paints be utilised to decorate garage doors to improve their visual appearance;**
- 2) **the lintels featured on Council properties be decorated to improve the visual appearance of those properties;**
- 3) **the retaining wall to the rear of 1-12 Martley Close be redecorated as part of a Council arts project;**
- 4) **the Council assume responsibility for the maintenance of small strips of land located close to private properties and public spaces;**
- 5) **the Council ensure that, when replacing diseased and dead plants, different types of plants are introduced to ensure there is a variety of leaf colours and foliage in any given area;**

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- 6) the remaining section 106 money available for use on capital landscaping work on the Greenlands Open Spaces be allocated to soft landscaping work in the courtyard area located in Wishaw Close;
- 7) in order to minimise the level of disruption experienced by local residents, there should be a holistic approach to the delivery of frontline services;
- 8) representatives of local schools be invited to participate in estate walkabouts; and
- 9) representatives of the local GP's Consortium be invited to participate in the estate walkabouts once the consortia have been introduced in 2012/13.

## 139. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORT - PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING, LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Further to consideration of the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Local Environment and Health's written report at the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27th October 2010, and Members agreed themed questions to be put to the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Brandon Clayton, in respect of his Annual Report to the Committee, the following responses were provided:

### 1. How are Government policy changes to housing benefit expected to impact on Redditch residents?

The Committee was advised that, as the Government's proposed changes to Housing Benefit policy was still being debated in the House of Commons, it was too early to gauge the impact on residents. Decisions on single payments to banks or rent accounts were also yet to be finalised but could potentially provide savings on administration costs and proposed changes in social housing could potentially help with housing figures.

### 2. What impact is expected of the Government White Paper *Equity and excellence: liberating the NHS* on local health provision?

Cllr Clayton advised that the White Paper was still being discussed and until the final outcomes were known it was difficult to know what impact the proposals would have on local health provision at this time.

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Members were informed, however, that the potential for some health funding to be transferred to the County Council from the PCT was already known and the proposed changes to PCTs could also potentially impact on services; discussions had taken place with the PCT and some GP's had also been approached for their views.

Some concerns were raised relating to the County Council having control of funding and whether it would be detrimental to Redditch. Whether GP's were ready and willing to take on a bigger role in local health provision and the potential changes to NICE and the allocation of drugs at a more local level was also highlighted with some Members concerned that local determination on drug allocation could lead to inequitable provision according to location.

Councillor Clayton reiterated that until final decisions had been made and all of the details were known on Policy proposals for local areas to determine their own needs in local health provision, it was too early to speculate on how it would affect the Borough.

### **3. What progress has been made on the 10:10 Climate Change agreement?**

Members were advised that the Executive Committee had already agreed an Action Plan, including those for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The Executive Committee had agreed the Salix funding, 100% of which would go into Climate Change. The Crematorium, Abbey Stadium and Council vehicles were also being looked at for potential improvements as was the use of solar panels to reduce usage at the Palace Theatre (with the potential for it to become an "A" rated building) and St David's House. It was also noted that all new buildings would have to comply with climate change requirements.

It was suggested that the Council was still using large quantities of gas and electricity and needed to be more proactive in reducing its basic energy usage. Councillor Clayton advised that long term solutions were being investigated and every effort would be made to continue reducing emissions and costs.

### **4. What have been the outcomes following the implementation of the Introductory Tenancies Service?**

Councillor Clayton advised that five hundred and forty new tenancies with good levels of security had been achieved since the implementation of the Introductory Tenancies Service, with only three tenants currently in notice of eviction and being reviewed. It was noted that no additional information had been received from the Government on Introductory Tenancies at present.



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**5. What effect has there been the switch of the Care and Repair service from a local service to the Worcestershire Care and Repair Agency?**

Councillor Clayton advised that he had attended a recent Agency Board meeting and understood that there had been a reduction of 2% in overhead costs. However, given the changes to the service had only recently taken place and that there were no figures to compare performance to at this time, this information could not be verified. Members were also advised that there had been no reduction in the number of people receiving help since the switch.

**6. What recent action has been undertaken to tackle health inequalities?**

Councillor Clayton advised that a number of actions had been taken to tackle health inequalities such as:

- a) Health Trainers being able to see more people as a result of contract changes;
- b) County Councillors in Redditch providing funding for projects to improve quality of life;
- c) action to promote smoking cessation within the Borough; and
- d) the Sustainable Community Strategy Plan was due to be considered by the Executive Committee in March 2011.

**7. What is your position regarding transition towns?**

Councillor Clayton advised that he considered transition towns to be a good concept and one that the Council supported.

**8. What costs does the Council accrue by ridding the roads of detritus?**

The Committee was advised that it was difficult to cost removal of detritus from the Borough's roads as it was not possible to separate the detritus from other debris picked up such as leaves. In response to a suggestion that removal of detritus be re-evaluated, it was reported that cleaning regimes had been revised to improve the situation at no additional cost.

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**9. What plans are there to work with partners to provide social housing during the next twelve months?**

The Committee was advised that, the Council had been working with other Social Housing providers for many years and would continue to do so, to provide different types of housing to meet its targets and Officers were in regular contact with the town's Social Landlords. Members also noted that the Council was willing to assist social landlords who were looking to formulate business plans.

In response to Members questions on the number of housing units currently in the planning process, Councillor Clayton advised that it was difficult to say, but in general terms, over a hundred new units had been provided in the previous year and it was hoped to provide similar numbers this year.

On redeveloping other areas of land for social housing, such as Church Hill District Centre, Councillor Clayton reported that all appropriate land, including Redditch Borough Council land, was considered and the Council was prepared to work in partnership with developers to provide as much social housing as possible.

In response to a Member's speculation that the Council was to be given funding to build Council homes and questioned whether the Portfolio Holder had been aware of this, it was noted that Officers had received an indication that there was something in the pipeline but that nothing had been confirmed.

**10. Will the Council consider selling off any of the existing housing stock?**

Councillor Clayton advised that the question was difficult to answer in so far as residents themselves would have to opt out of any whole sale voluntary transfer of the housing stock. The Council was, however, still selling housing stock through the Right to Buy scheme and, as appropriate, looking to dispose of specific housing stock like that at Upper Norgrove House.

Members were further advised that the matter was a HRA issue in that the Council had to consider how much debt it was able to take on. It was considered, however, that selling off stock would not be to the Council's benefit in the future as there was no funding available.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Councillor Clayton for his Annual Report.

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## 140. 2011/12 GRANTS POLICY

The Committee considered a report which detailed proposed changes to the Grants Policy 2010 to ensure the Council's voluntary sector grant funding provided value for money and increased access for voluntary and community sector organisations.

Members welcomed and supported the proposed changes which would also provide for more rigorous monitoring of how grants were being spent and assist organisations to move away from their dependence on the Council for funding.

### **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **the updated Voluntary Sector Grants Policy, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;**
- 2) **the option for themes and percentages of funding being allocated for the 2011/12 voluntary and community sector grants process, as detailed in the report, be approved;**
- 3) **the option for funding being made available from the main Grants scheme to deliver a support programme to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations, be approved; and**
- 4) **the option for authority being delegated to the Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Grants Panel, to agree the allocation of community grants under the Local Strategic Partnership 'Stronger Communities' theme, be approved.**

## 141. CAMPAIGN TO DISCOURAGE DOG FOULING

The Committee considered a report which detailed results of the dog fouling awareness campaign that had been running since late August 2010.

Officers reported on the work undertaken to draw the public's attention to the problem of dog fouling and the monitoring exercises that were undertaken in the targeted areas, which had been highlighted specifically as hot-spots. Members were referred to the before and after figures detailed in the appendix to the report.

Members noted the successful reductions in dog fouling incidents in all but one of the targeted areas, Brockhill Park and Officers

# Overview and SCRUTINY

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advised that further monitoring would be needed in the area initially to gather more evidence before any enforcement action could be carried out. Officers advised, however, that limited resources would not allow for constant monitoring of the areas at the same level but work with community support officers and taking enforcement action where appropriate would hopefully help to maintain the campaign which Officers hoped to refresh in the Spring.

Officers agreed to contact one of the Members on two other areas that she had previously reported, in relation to dog fouling issues, namely Terry Springs Field and the Redditch Rugby and Cricket Club.

Members welcomed the report and successful outcomes and congratulated Officers for their work on the campaign.

## **RESOLVED that**

**the outcomes of the dog fouling campaign detailed in the report; the ongoing work on raising awareness; and enforcement action being taken to tackle dog fouling, be noted.**

## **142. PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE SERVICES WITHIN THE CORPORATE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO**

The Committee received a written report which detailed the performance of services within the remit of the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management, Councillor Michael Braley. In response to the Chair emphasising that questions be based on the information contained in the report, Members requested that the following questions be addressed by the Portfolio Holder in his Annual Report to the Committee, which was scheduled to be delivered on 8th December 2010.

- 1) What is the current position in respect of sickness absence?
- 2) ICT Shared Services - how successful has Phase 1 been and how is Phase 2 proceeding?
- 3) What are the Options for the former Covered Market area?
- 4) What effect have the Shared Service arrangements for the Senior Management Team had on the lower levels of management at the Council?

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- 5) How can we improve Customer Services when the Council is beholden to the Worcestershire Hub which does not perform well and over which we have no control?
- 6) What has been done to sort out recent ICT and Phone system failures?
- 7) Please explain the “systems thinking” method introduced for 4th tier Managers.
- 8) What problems does he foresee in respect of services within his Portfolio and how will he deal with them?
- 9) How much has Bromsgrove District Council benefited from Shared Service arrangements?

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management be invited to answer the questions detailed in the preamble above when delivering his Annual Report to the Committee; and**
- 2) **the report be noted.**

**143. REFERRALS**

There were no referrals.

**144. WORK PROGRAMME**

Members received an update on the programme for the forthcoming Budget Scrutiny Workshop on Monday 22nd November.

**RESOLVED that**

**the Committee’s Work Programme be noted.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.02 pm  
and closed at 9.20 pm

.....  
CHAIR



**Actions requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

<b>Date Action Requested</b>	<b>Action to be Taken</b>	<b>Response</b>
14th July 2010  <b>1</b>	Members questioned what courses would not be provided if the REDI Centre were to be closed.	Officers were asked to provide this information in due course. Lead Officer, Project Development Manager, estimated completion date, not specified. DONE
4th August 2010  <b>2</b>	Members discussed the points that had been raised during the course of the Scrutiny Work Programme Planning Event concerning public engagement. With scrutiny.	Officers to scope options for public speaking at Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings and the practicalities involved in convening Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings at various locations across the borough and to report back for the consideration of the Committee at a later date. Lead Officer, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, Estimated completion date not specified.  TO BE DONE FOR THIS MEETING.
15th September 2010  <b>3</b>	Members agreed that there should be a short sharp review of the housing stock in Woodrow as an interim measure prior to further consideration of any Task and Finish Review. This would be led by Councillor Vickery and relevant Officers.	Councillor Vickery and relevant Officers to report back before the Committee on the conclusions reached in the short sharp review in November. Lead Councillor, Councillor Vickery, estimated completion date, 17th November 2010.  DONE

<p>17<sup>th</sup> November 2010</p> <p><b>4</b></p>	<p>Members requested that an update report on outstanding issues regarding the External Refurbishment of Housing Stock that were highlighted at the meeting (and as detailed in the minutes) be provided by Officers for the next O&amp;S meeting, prior to the recommendations being forwarded to the Executive Committee for consideration.</p>	<p>Relevant Officers to provide OSSO officers with further information on the issues highlighted for reporting to Members at the 8th Dec mtg.</p> <p>DONE</p>
<p>17<sup>TH</sup> November 2010</p> <p><b>5</b></p>	<p>Cllr Quinney highlighted two other dog fouling problem areas, Terry Spring Field and Redditch Rugby and Cricket Club.</p>	<p>Relevant Officers to contact Cllr Quinney to discuss the two areas referred to at the meeting.</p> <p>DONE</p>
<p>17<sup>TH</sup> November 2010</p> <p><b>6</b></p>	<p>Members proposed questions to be submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management ahead of his appearance at the next O&amp;S Committee meeting on 8th December 2010.</p>	<p>Officers to submit the proposed questions to the Portfolio Holder and to relevant Officers to enable his appropriate preparation</p> <p>DONE</p>



**Worcestershire County Council  
Worcestershire Hub Scrutiny Task Group**



# **Scrutiny Report: Worcestershire Hub**

**November 2010**

[www.worcestershire.gov.uk](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk)

 **worcestershire**  
county council

## **Scrutiny Task Group Membership**

### **County Council Members**

Bob Banks (Lead Member)  
Nathan Desmond  
Lucy Hodgson  
Beverley Nielsen (until April)  
Stephen Peters  
David Thain  
Liz Tucker (from April)

### **District Council Co-opted Members**

Bromsgrove District Council	Kit Taylor
Malvern Hills District Council	Roger Sutton
Redditch Borough Council	Robin King (January)
	Jinny Pearce (February – May)
	Gay Hopkins (May – August)
	Roger Hill (from August)
Worcester City Council	Geoff Williams
Wychavon District Council	Laurie Evans
Wyre Forest District Council	Graham Ballinger (January – March and from April)
	Jenny Greener (March – April)

### **Officer Support**

Suzanne O'Leary, Overview and Scrutiny Manager  
Emma James and Jo Weston, Overview and Scrutiny Officers  
Annette Stock and Emma Breckin, Scrutiny Liaison Officers for Corporate Services

### **Further copies of this report are available from:**

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## **Foreword**

I am very pleased to be able to present our scrutiny of the Worcestershire Hub. This report sums up our discussions, evidence taking, findings and recommendations for the Worcestershire Hub, which we hope will provide constructive steps towards the Hub's development in the future.

As part of our investigations we have looked at performance, finance, governance, customer satisfaction and experience, information technology individual services, council staff views, parish council views, councillor awareness, what other local authorities are doing, and best practice. At the start of this scrutiny we agreed that it was very important to look to the future development of the Hub.

This has been the first scrutiny I have led, and it has proved both challenging and rewarding. Within the Worcestershire Hub are single district hubs, as well as the Hub Shared Service, all participating to greater or lesser degrees, and this has made it extremely difficult, if not impossible to identify the differences and make comparisons.

The main reward for the task group has been the opportunity to understand more about an operation which is central to how the public accesses council services, both through the Hub Shared Service, and through the individual district Hubs. We have been surprised by the lack of common knowledge amongst many councillors, and urge our fellow councillors to become better informed. Hopefully, our report will contribute to an increased understanding.

There are a number of people to thank who have assisted with this report, starting with the task group members themselves. In spite of a number of membership changes over the course of the scrutiny, I am very grateful for your dedication and constructive debate.

We would like to thank all of those who have contributed to our investigations, both within Worcestershire County Council and the District Councils. In particular we would like to thank the staff at the various Hub centres around Worcestershire, for the time they took to facilitate our visits, and for their obvious energy and professionalism. A considerable proportion of the information we requested was provided by Rachel Hill, as Head of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service. We are very grateful for her expertise and attention to detail in what is clearly a very demanding work area.

Finally, I would like to thank the scrutiny officers for their ongoing support in facilitating a very complex scrutiny, and for keeping us on the right track.

**Bob Banks**

**Lead Member of the Worcestershire Hub Scrutiny Task Group**

**November 2010**

## **Worcestershire Hub Scrutiny Report EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Terms of Reference**

- The development of the Worcestershire Hub, including the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service
- How to make the Worcestershire Hub fit for purpose in the future
- Differences in provision across Worcestershire, what they are and why they exist?
- What are the gaps in provision and what are the opportunities?

### **Main Findings**

#### Development of the Worcestershire Hub, including the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service

The Worcestershire Hub is made up of the Hub Shared Service and separate arrangements for four district councils. This fact means that there are many differences and perhaps, a lack of unity. However, despite the differences, our scrutiny has revealed a clear commitment to the Hub as a whole for the future; no one is retreating.

The pragmatic approach taken in the first few years, to allow authorities to participate in the Hub to greater or lesser degrees, and the subsequent emergence of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service, has led to considerable differences between shared service and non-shared service authorities in the way they handle customer engagement and differences in the breadth and depth of services provided by each customer contact centre.

It is apparent that if the County Council seeks to encourage the remaining district councils to join the Hub Shared Service, they need to communicate clear evidence about the benefits, including performance, customer satisfaction and cost savings.

#### Differences in provision

There are substantial differences in the role and depth of use of the Hub across the non-shared service councils and the corresponding lack of comparable data that is available. It is an acknowledged gap in our findings that we have therefore been unable to make clear comparisons between the different Hub operations on their performance and value for money.

#### Councillors' knowledge of the Worcestershire Hub

Many councillors' knowledge of the Hub is limited or patchy and often restricted to what happens within his or her own area.

#### Governance

The governance arrangements have developed over time due to the way the Hub has grown and evolved. In effect, two structures have evolved, one for the Worcestershire Hub as a whole and one for the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service. We consider that the current governance arrangements have developed in a piecemeal way, are complex and overly layered.

## Costs, funding and savings

There is a huge variation in the cost of the different types of transaction, whether it be in person, over the phone or online. Face to face customer service is very expensive, and although we feel strongly that there will always be a need for it, it is clear that online customer access is in growing demand and offers huge potential for the future.

The more services using the Hub, the better value it becomes.

An acknowledged gap in our findings is that we have not been able to make clear comparisons between the different Hub operations on their performance and value for money. This was due to the differences and lack of comparative data, referred to above.

## Performance / Quality of Customer Experience

We are satisfied that lessons have been learned from the performance problems experienced during the Summer 2009, which appear to have resulted when a major ICT implementation project for the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service coincided with the start of the economic decline, when revenues and benefits enquiries increased dramatically. We have made recommendations that plans should be in place to better forecast demand and unpredicted peaks in service demand.

How the Hub continues to perform in the future, and crucially how its performance is measured and monitored is important for building confidence with all partners and services.

The performance information traditionally gathered by the Shared Service and the non shared service areas, focuses largely on processes and transactions – such as numbers of calls and speed of answer. There needs to be a greater focus on measuring the quality of the customer experience. Our remaining recommendations on performance are targeted at improving customer experience as a whole, and the flow of information between the service areas and the Hub, and vice versa.

## The Hub brand

The 'Hub' means different things to different people, and more needs to be done to communicate its role and purpose.

## Changing the way in which customers access council information – council websites and self-service

There are huge savings to be made by encouraging and facilitating more customers to use online/self-service routes for their enquiries. The demand is there, and needs to be enabled by council websites that are as customer-friendly and efficient as possible. The increasing economic pressures on all public services means we cannot afford not to prioritise this, and that this will then free up the face to face and telephony services for those who need them.

## The future

The pressure on all authorities to make efficiencies means that service transformation is essential. We agree that the Hub should be at the heart of this service transformation. A co-ordinated approach to customer service across the county would enable savings to be made and minimise duplication.

## Recommendations

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** If the Hub is to be increasingly used as a basis for service transformation across the County, it is vital that there is councillor understanding and support across all authorities. All authorities should ensure their inductions include briefing about customer service strategies across the whole of the Worcestershire Hub (and not just their local area), including visits to both local centres and the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Contact Centre (based at Perry Wood Walk).

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** All authorities consider their scrutiny arrangements of shared services – this could be done at the joint scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs network.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** We recommend that each authority and the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service review governance arrangements across the Worcestershire Hub Partnership. The aim would be to ensure clarity, accountability and transparency and to move towards a single governance structure.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** We recommend that the District Councils should consider researching the cost of individual transactions for different services, which will build on the work being carried out by the Hub Shared Service.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:** The more services use the Hub, the better value it becomes. Therefore, as part of the BOLD programme, the County Council should increase its efforts to ensure all its services use the Hub.

**RECOMMENDATION 6:** In light of future funding and the move towards self-service within the Hub, all authorities and the South Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee should monitor and record the efficiencies and savings gained by use of the Hub.

**RECOMMENDATION 7:** Appropriate resource plans for the Hub are in place to better plan for forecast demand.

**RECOMMENDATION 8:** The Hub also needs to be prepared to deal with unpredicted peaks in service demand, and we recommend that Business Continuity Plans are in place across the Hub Shared Service and the non shared service Hubs.

**RECOMMENDATION 9:** Performance information should be consistent across the Shared Service and the non-Shared Service districts, to enable like for like comparisons, and we recommend a single performance management framework is established across the Hub.

**RECOMMENDATION 10:** All performance information – for shared service and non-shared service districts – should be made available to all councillors.

**RECOMMENDATION 11:** We recommend that all partners consider the role which scrutiny could play in helping to monitor performance of the Worcestershire Hub, if they have not already done so.

**RECOMMENDATION 12:** For telephone enquiries, inform customers of their place in the queue, or an estimated wait time for them to be able to speak to a customer service advisor.



**RECOMMENDATION 13:** Define and agree Service Level Agreements between the Worcestershire Hub and every service area.

**RECOMMENDATION 14:** Ensure there is sufficient time allocated for service area staff and Hub staff to review any issues or needs, and to monitor service provision via the Hub.

**RECOMMENDATION 15:** Further work on the flow of information between the service area and the Hub (and vice versa) should take place, to ensure that the correct information is provided by the Hub to the service area, and that service area staff provide a response which enables Hub staff to answer the customer enquiry. It is important that both teams understand the implications of what the information they provide will be for the customer. The creation of Service Level Agreements between the Hub and services will support this.

**RECOMMENDATION 16:** Give all customers the enquiry reference number, to encourage and enable them to track progress themselves online, and reduce the need for repeat enquiries to the Hub.

**RECOMMENDATION 17:** move towards more consistent IT packages, as contracts come up for renewal.

**RECOMMENDATION 18:** In view of the negative feedback from our survey of parish councillors, we recommend further dialogue between senior officer representatives from the Worcestershire Hub and parish councils, to ensure their feedback can be used to improve the overall Hub service.

**RECOMMENDATION 19:** The 'Hub' means different things to different people. We recommend further communication of the Hub's identity and services to the public. This could, for example, accompany the issue of council tax bills, which would present a cost-effective opportunity for marketing.

**RECOMMENDATION 20:** Our investigation of best practice advice and customer survey results supports our findings that the website offers huge potential for helping customers to help themselves, and for making substantial efficiency savings. This can only be achieved if the website is as user-friendly and effective as possible. We are pleased to see that the website is being improved and recommend that this work continues in order to realise the potential gains in customer satisfaction and efficiency gains.

**RECOMMENDATION 21:** In addressing the website and its expanding role in customer contact, we recommend that consideration is given to where the website sits within the council's organisational structure. This should take account of the need to align expertise in customer contact and communication, as well as information technology.

**RECOMMENDATION 22:** Councils' websites are very important and their profile needs to reflect this. A cabinet member for each authority should have responsibility for the website within his or her portfolio.

## **REPORT OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE HUB SCRUTINY TASK GROUP**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Worcestershire Hub was launched in 2002 and is a partnership between the County Council and the six district councils. It was established to provide a One Stop Service for customers accessing council services in Worcestershire. The aim being to provide a one stop service that could be accessed in person, online and by telephone. The Worcestershire Hub Shared Service was formally established in April 2009. The authorities participating in the Shared Service are: Malvern Hills District Council Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council
2. In June 2009 there was a Notice of Motion to the County Council which stated that 'Residents are becoming increasingly frustrated at the difficulty in accessing the Hub and obtaining a response to their enquiries. Concerns included the length of time taken to answer calls and the lack of feedback.'
3. Following an initial briefing to councillors, in December 2009 the County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) agreed to establish a scrutiny task group, chaired by Councillor Bob Banks and, as the Hub is a joint initiative, to invite each district council to co-opt a councillor onto the group.
4. Although the notice of motion was an initial trigger for considering a scrutiny of the Hub, given the key role the Hub has in the future development and reform of services, the scope of the scrutiny agreed by the OSPB was much broader than just investigating the performance of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service in 2009. Additionally, by the time the scrutiny exercise had started, it was known that the performance issues experienced during 2009 were already being dealt with.
5. It was therefore intended that the scrutiny would focus on the way forward for the Worcestershire Hub as a whole.

### **Terms of Reference**

6. The terms of reference were to look at:
  - The development of the Worcestershire Hub, including the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service
  - How to make the Worcestershire Hub fit for purpose in the future
  - Differences in provision across Worcestershire, what they are and why they exist?
  - What are the gaps in provision and what are the opportunities?
7. In addressing these terms of reference it has been necessary to obtain information about performance, funding and governance and these are dealt with in separate sections of the report.
8. We have also looked at the way in which customer access to council services is likely to change in the future. This section and our comments on governance address in part the question of how to make the Worcestershire Hub fit for purpose in the future, but we were unable to examine this issue in great depth. Our discussion of the differences in provision across the County sheds some light on the

gaps in provision, but limited time meant we could not look in detail at all service areas across all authorities to see where future opportunities for the Hub may lie.

## Methodology

9. Evidence has been gathered from discussions with a variety of officers, and through a series of smaller sub-group meetings, visits and research. Details of the task group's activity and the information considered are detailed at [Appendix 1](#).

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUB, INCLUDING THE WORCESTERSHIRE HUB SHARED SERVICE

10. The Worcestershire Hub was established in 2002 to provide customers with a one-stop shop service for all council services that is joined-up, accessible by all, supports the two tiers of local government in Worcestershire, and offers customers a choice of how to access services.
11. There were a number of drivers to establish the Worcestershire Hub:
  - a. Improving customer service including specifically dealing with more enquiries at the first point of contact;
  - b. Improving access to services across the two-tiers of local government in Worcestershire;
  - c. The eGovernment Agenda (the Government had targeted all local authorities with providing 100% of relevant services electronically by 2005);
  - d. Local Public Service Agreement.
12. A co-ordinated approach to customer service across the county would improve the accessibility of services to the general public in all seven authorities, enable savings to be made in the back offices and minimise duplication.
13. In 2002 it was felt that the establishment of a single customer contact centre would be a step too far and therefore a network of smaller teams and centres were put in place with the intention of operating as a single virtual centre, building on the existing "one stop shops" around the County. A legal agreement – the partnership agreement – was agreed to define joint funding and other arrangements.
14. Each authority participated to differing degrees and at different paces. This has resulted in a range of service delivery mechanisms continuing to exist behind a uniformly branded front of house. The Worcestershire Hub has developed progressively through the establishment of a network of customer centres and joined up service delivery.
15. The vision agreed by Leaders and Chief Executives was for “an organisation that is owned by the Local Government family in Worcestershire to deliver excellent services to our communities and being capable of delivering services to a variety of depths”.
16. In 2008 the Chief Executives and Leaders considered a business case outlining the strategic development of the Worcestershire Hub. This resulted in a subsequent decision by three of the partner authorities to establish a shared service for the Worcestershire Hub. The Worcestershire Hub Shared Service was formally established in April 2009. The authorities participating in the Shared Service are: Malvern Hills District Council, Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County

Council. The shared service is governed by the South Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee and a legal framework and agreement is in place to support this.

17. As part of the agreed development of the shared service, a contact centre at Perry Wood Walk, Worcester was opened in 2009 and handles all calls for those participating in the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service. The number of services dealt with by Perry Wood has been increasing, and includes libraries, highways, regulatory services, and revenues and benefits calls (for South Worcestershire), amongst many others.
18. The County Council is aiming to make the Hub the first point of contact for all County Council services. Currently approx 70% of County Council services do so.
19. The Worcestershire Hub continues to play a key role in transforming customer services and the way all seven councils deliver services. It is now at the heart of the County Council's BOLD (Better Outcomes, Leaner Delivery) programme to find efficiencies and transform services, and it is also an important element of the Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier (WETT) programme, helping authorities across the county to deliver efficiencies over the next few years. Key themes to the customer focused transformation are:
  - Make the Worcestershire Hub the first point of contact for council services
  - Reduce the number of contacts customers need to make
  - Increase self-service
  - Ensure services are customer focused and efficient
20. The Hub has evolved and grown since its original inception in 2002, and this journey has led to it being a complex and varied service. There is no single officer with overall responsibility for the Worcestershire Hub across the county.

### **DIFFERENCES IN PROVISION ACROSS WORCESTERSHIRE, WHAT THEY ARE AND WHY THEY EXIST?**

21. The pragmatic approach taken in the first few years, to allow authorities to participate in the Hub to greater or lesser degrees, and the subsequent emergence of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service, has led to considerable differences between shared service and non-shared service authorities in the way they handle customer engagement and differences in the breadth and depth of services provided by each customer contact centre.
22. It became clear at the start of the scrutiny that the phrase "Worcestershire Hub" means different things to different people. It can refer to the partnership between all seven authorities to consider coordinated customer services, to each authority's individual customer service provision, or to the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service. Councillors' perception of the Hub's performance and its value was largely based on their knowledge of their local customer contact centres. This complexity has hindered parts of our scrutiny, but has also prompted some of the recommendations we make in this report.

23. We held discussions with senior officer representatives from each of the district councils, whose roles were connected with the Hub. A summary of these discussions is included at [Appendix 2](#).

### **Some of the differences**

- differences in the range and depth of services provided by the customer contact centres of the shared service and the non shared service
- not all County Council services use the Hub as the first point of contact, e.g. Family Information Service
- the public could be put through directly to the service area in one district, but be dealt with in full at first point of contact in another (for district council services)
- one district Hub acts as a switchboard (with a single telephone number) for the authority. This means that there are no published direct dial numbers
- all of the district councils each have a single telephone number which customers use to contact the Hub, whereas the county council issues several numbers (3 main telephone numbers, plus service based numbers). The Shared Service has 3 main telephone numbers, plus service based numbers
- there are some different performance indicators between the shared service and the non shared service authorities
- customer contact centres have different opening times (with the exception of the shared service)
- Redditch Contact Centre had started to deal with council tax telephone enquiries from the end of 2009
- different “back office” ICT systems (most relating to district council services) with no integration to the customer relationship management system (CRM)
- other than the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service, staff are employed and managed by the individual district councils.
- the County Council hosts all of the district council websites, with the exception of Worcester City.

### **Some of the similarities**

- visitor access is equal across the county, as there are customer service centres in all the county's main towns
- a standard set of questions is used to seek customer feedback, which is used in centres dealing with contacts in person and over the phone
- if a call is received at a non-shared service district contact centre, which does not relate to one of its services (e.g. Highways), it should be dealt with if possible, or referred to the shared service contact centre
- the majority of contacts made in person relate to district council services
- Common branding and image across all centres
- Common ICT application to support service delivery
- Interactive Voice technology is being used, albeit this is limited at present.

(Interactive voice response technology automates routine telephone inquiries by leading callers through prerecorded voice prompts that let them quickly access, enter or modify data using voice commands or their telephone's touch-tone keypad)

24. One of the differences listed above is the variety of telephone numbers given to the public to access council services. The Task Group explored why this was the case and why there was no single, county-wide telephone number.

25. The Head of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service advised that the decision had been taken to have specific service numbers for the Worcestershire Hub Shared

Service (e.g. Highways, Revenues and Benefits), as this enabled the right people to answer calls, by directing calls to advisors who have been specifically trained in these areas.

26. Those of us who visited the Shared Service contact centre at Perry Wood could see the advantage of this system and **we recognise the merit in being able to channel certain calls, depending on their subject or simplicity.**

### **COUNCILLORS' KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE HUB**

27. It soon became clear that councillors' knowledge of the Hub was at different levels, partly due to the complexity of the Hub arrangements and the difference in provision across the County. Some councillors had very little knowledge of how the Hub worked, or experience of using it, whereas others made regular use of the Hub as a means of obtaining information, or following up enquires. Some councillors received performance information on the Hub in their area; others did not, or were not aware of it. It is also fair to say that there was a certain amount of distrust among some councillors around the effectiveness of Worcestershire Hub Shared Service and a lack of understanding about the areas that it covered.
28. There was also a difference between the views and experiences of Worcestershire Hub Shared Service council members (Worcestershire County Council, Malvern Hills District Council and Worcester City) and non-shared service council members. Non shared service council members felt that their councils' Hub performance had continued to serve their areas well, and had not been affected by the economic downturn. However, one factor behind this could be that their councils did not use the Hub for customer enquiries on areas such as revenues and benefits, and instead, channelled enquiries via the service areas directly.
29. To gain a better understanding and improve knowledge, we visited the majority of Hub centres across the county. These visits proved invaluable to the scrutiny, and have informed many of the recommendations contained in this report. Indeed the scrutiny as a whole has allowed us all to see what happens in other areas, both within and outside the Hub Shared Service. All of us who visited were surprised by the volume of customer enquiries, and the range and complexity of enquiries being dealt with by each customer service advisor. We would like to place on record our thanks to the staff at these centres for their time, enthusiasm and professionalism in facilitating our visits.

### **Induction Arrangements**

30. We asked each authority what their councillor induction arrangements included about the Worcestershire Hub. We found the induction programmes varied considerably: some councils provide Hub briefing sessions and facilitated visits to telephony and face to face centres, others provide little or no information on the Hub.
31. We have been surprised by the fact that many councillors' knowledge of the Hub is limited or patchy and often restricted to what happens within his or her own area. Inevitably, the future development of the Hub will be influenced by councillor understanding, and if the Hub is to be increasingly used as a basis for service transformation across the County, it is vital that there is councillor understanding and support across all authorities. Improved councillor induction is an essential way of increasing understanding of the Worcestershire Hub, and, crucially, the role it

plays for the public. The Hub is at the heart of the council's communication with the public, and it is therefore important and beneficial to councillors that they understand how it works and what the public's experiences are. A visit to Perry Wood would be especially useful in light of the WETT programme, whereby more services are becoming shared and will use this telephony centre to handle customer enquiries.

**RECOMMENDATION 1: If the Hub is to be increasingly used as a basis for service transformation across the County, it is vital that there is councillor understanding and support across all authorities. All authorities should ensure their inductions include briefing about customer service strategies across the whole of the Worcestershire Hub (and not just their local area), including visits to both local centres and the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Contact Centre (based at Perry Wood Walk).**

## **GOVERNANCE**

32. Closely linked to councillor knowledge of the Hub is their involvement in it. There was a feeling amongst some task group members that involvement of non-executive councillors was fairly limited. The main route to engage in the development of the Hub, and in particular the growing number of shared services, is through overview and scrutiny. However, other than this task group and the 2009 Scrutiny of the South Worcestershire Revenues and Benefits Shared Service, it appeared there had not been much thinking yet amongst scrutiny members across the County about how the various shared services would be scrutinised.

**RECOMMENDATION 2: All authorities consider their scrutiny arrangements of shared services – this could be done at the joint scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs network.**

33. We requested information about the governance arrangements for the Worcestershire Hub in order to look at how decisions are made and who was responsible for the Hub e.g. when performance slipped.

34. A structure chart of the current governance arrangements for the Worcestershire Hub is attached at Appendix 3.

35. The main responsible bodies are:

*Worcestershire Hub Partnership Board*

36. This comprises two members and one officer from each council, plus the Head of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service. Chaired by Cllr Stephen Clee, its role was to consider the strategic direction at the start of the Hub's development. It does not have decision making powers, although it can make endorsements, which would then be taken back to the councils. This, and a lack of effective engagement from some partners, has limited its effectiveness. As a consequence, as the direction of the Hub developed, the Chief Executives and Leaders Panel has become the preferred reporting route, and more recently this is now used and the Hub Board meets infrequently.

37. The role of the Worcestershire Hub Partnership Board is supported by the Hub Strategic Management Group which comprises a senior officer from each partner, including the Head of the Hub Shared Service.

South Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee

38. This comprises two members from each partner council (Malvern Hills, Worcester City, Worcestershire County Council and Wychavon), but voting limited to members from councils participating in the individual service being discussed. A Legal Agreement is in place to support the delegation of functions for each of the individual services to the Joint Committee. At the time of the establishment of the South Worcestershire Shared Service Joint Committee in 2007, the only participating service was Revenues and Benefits. However, more services have since been added, and the nature of the Joint Committee has evolved, and it is hoped it will now become more strategic.
39. The South Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee does not report to the Worcestershire Hub Partnership Board, although it does have links and there are also a number of common representatives.

Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Management Board

40. This comprises one member and one officer from each participating council (Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Worcestershire County Council) plus Head of Worcestershire Hub Shared Service. The Management Board is chaired by Cllr John Waring, Executive Member for Customer Services, Human Resources and Performance at Malvern Hills District Council. The Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Management Board was set up late in 2009, succeeding the Project Board that established the shared service, and meets every six weeks. As well as the officer and member representatives, other officers are engaged as relevant to specific projects or services. The establishment of the Management Board was formally agreed by the Joint Committee in 2009. The more flexible model of a management board has been chosen over a formal sub-committee of the joint committee.
41. In addition to these main bodies, there is a separate joint committee for the new Worcestershire Regulatory Shared Service which uses the Hub to deal with its customer services, and a Joint Committee for the Joint Museums Service between Worcester City and the County Council.
42. We were surprised that the Worcestershire Hub Partnership Board met so infrequently and at its lack of effectiveness. It appears to no longer have a role in its current form, although one of the District Chief Executives pointed out that it was useful for all authorities to be involved in discussions about the Hub across Worcestershire.
43. The Head of the Hub Shared Service advised that she reported to the Joint Committee and Hub Shared Service Management Board on a regular basis, and that there were clear routes to look at issues from the partners. The Worcestershire Hub Shared Services Management Board has a more 'hands on' approach and we heard from the County Council's Director of Corporate Services, and the Chair of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Management Board, that it and the Joint Committee are effective in shaping the Hub Shared Service and holding its performance to account.
44. Irrespective of when or whether all district councils choose to join the shared



service, we feel that the current governance arrangements hinder the future development of the Hub and perhaps member understanding. Strategic decisions are now taken by Leaders and Chief Executives Panel rather than the intended governance arrangements. Additionally, the current dual structure does not seem equipped to facilitate progression of the Worcestershire Enhanced Two-Tier (WETT) programme, with more services due to become shared across all councils, such as the recently established Regulatory Shared Service for which all telephony is being provided by the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Contact Centre.

45. The governance arrangements have developed over time due to the way the Hub has grown and evolved. In effect, two structures have evolved, one for the Worcestershire Hub as a whole and one for the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service. We consider that the current governance arrangements have developed in a piecemeal way, are complex and overly layered.
46. The Task Group found it difficult to determine where decisions were taken. The County Council Director of Corporate Services considered that the current governance arrangements did not restrict the Hub. He noted that not all district councils were signed up to the Hub Shared Service, and that there was a need to respect individual authorities' views and to 'work with the willing'.
47. However, we firmly believe that operating in a way which is clear and transparent to all councillors, would give the Hub a stronger base for future development, and greater opportunity to sell its services to a wider audience. We consider clearer governance is essential to enable any further expansion of the Hub Shared Service.

**RECOMMENDATION 3: We recommend that each authority and the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service review governance arrangements across the Worcestershire Hub Partnership. The aim would be to ensure clarity, accountability and transparency and to move towards a single governance structure.**

48. One way to conceptualise this would be to see the Worcestershire Hub Partnership as a "business" from which "customers" (i.e. the local authorities) "buy" a range of services. We would suggest there is an overarching, decision making body which comprises a Councillor and Director from each council (or their senior officer representative), which would have an overall view of the whole Hub across the county. As we explore in the next section, no one body that has visibility of the overall cost and budget for the Hub. This overarching body could have this role. The governance arrangements of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service and other shared services would not be affected, but would link up to the overarching body. A high level, decision making body comprising members from each authority would also help to increase the profile of customer service in Cabinet Members' responsibility, at both county and district level, where this is not already the case.

### **COSTS, FUNDING AND SAVINGS**

49. Important questions for the task group were 'How much does the Hub cost?', 'Who is paying for it?' and 'What savings has it enabled since its creation?' To answer these questions, and to gain a better understanding of the financial model, we met the Head of Worcestershire Hub Shared Service and the Principal Financial Officer with responsibility for the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service accounts.

**How much does the Hub cost and who is paying for it?**

50. The financial model for the Worcestershire Hub is highly complex and, when considering the way the Hub is funded, it is important to be clear about its different elements – i.e. the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service and the customer contact centres in the other local authorities i.e. Bromsgrove, Redditch, Wychavon, and Wyre Forest. This means there is no one body that has visibility of the overall cost and budget for the Hub.
51. The table below summarises the 2010/11 budget for the Shared Service and how this is funded. It also provides the 2010/11 spend by the non shared service authorities on their customer service/contact centres.
52. Councillors were keen to see unit costs of dealing with a call / face to face / web transaction, but these are not available. We welcome the work being done by the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service to calculate the average cost of a call for the main service areas handled in the Contact Centre, Perry Wood. We consider that this work should be carried out across each of the district councils, to build a full picture, and inform decision making about the future development of the Worcestershire Hub.

**RECOMMENDATION 4: We recommend that the District Councils should consider researching the cost of individual transactions for different services, which will build on the work being carried out by the Hub Shared Service.**

Table: 2010/11 budget for the Shared Service and how this is funded. 2010/11 spend by the non shared service authorities on their customer service/contact centres.

Service Area	Total Budget 2010/11	Partner Funding 10/11				
		County	City	MHDC	Other Shared Services	Non Shared Service authorities
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Shared Service</b>						
Contact Centre	1,268	750	149	149	220	-
Face to Face Centres	884	270	390	224	0	-
Hub management, operational development, communication, training	307	307	0	0	0	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>2,459</b>	<b>1,327</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Other district Centres (outside of Shared Service)</b>						
Bromsgrove	880	138				742
Redditch	807	185				622
Wychavon	929	208				721
Wyre Forest	741	167				574
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>3,357</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,659</b>
<b>All Partner Related</b>						
Hub management, development, Training, ICT support	856	856	0	0	0	0
Central Support Services/accommodation	449	449	0	0	0	0
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>1,305</b>	<b>1,305</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>County Specific</b>						
Reception	62	62	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>7,183</b>	<b>3,392</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>2,659</b>

Worcestershire Hub Shared Service

53. Worcestershire County Council is the host authority for the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service, for employment and support service purposes, on behalf of the South Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee. It is also the largest funder of the shared service, contributing 54% of the budget. The remaining funding is provided by Malvern Hills District Council, Worcester City Council and Shared Services. The County Council employs all staff involved in:
- Contact Centre – Perry Wood
  - Face to Face Centres – Worcester City and Malvern Hills (3 centres)
  - Hub Management, Service Development, Hub Training, Operations and ICT Support
  - WCC Switchboard and County Hall reception functions
54. The contributions from Worcester City Council (City) and Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) are based on the Shared Service legal agreement, where the districts fund the marginal costs of service, equating to agreed proportions of staff costs and non pay costs of the Face to Face Centres and Contact Centre. Funding from "Other Shared Services" includes Revenues and Benefits and planned support for Worcestershire Regulatory Service and Building Control enquiries.

Non shared service

55. The County Council does not employ the staff at the Hub customer service/contact centres outside the shared service: Bromsgrove, Redditch, Wychavon and Wyre Forest. For these centres the district councils are the employer and the County Council fund an agreed share of operating costs.
56. The basis for joint funding of the Worcestershire Hub is set out in the agreed Partnership Agreement. Information on the specific budgets and costs funded by the district councils was not readily available to the County Council. However, the scrutiny needed to have a full picture of Hub costs, and therefore we asked the districts for the information. We were pleased that all the district councils shared with us the relevant financial information for their customer service / contact centres. These costs are included in the table above.
57. This scrutiny is not commenting on the expenditure by authorities on their customer service/contact centres and has not compared this spend or analysed it to consider value for money. In addition the figures are not directly comparable due to the different nature of services, the different depth of services and differing practices provided and used by each district and the shared service. However we feel it is important that all authorities have an understanding of how much customer service centres cost across the county, to inform discussion of the future development of the Hub.
58. The table above shows the proportion funded by the County Council of the cost of Hub Centres outside the Shared Service. The allocations from the County Council to non shared service contact centres broadly equates to four Customer Service Advisors per district, and recognises that only a small percentage of enquiries received by the districts relate to County Council services.

Additional funding from the County Council

59. The County Council, in its community leadership role to work with the district councils to simplify and improve access to council services, agreed to fund a considerable portion of the central overheads relating to the Worcestershire Hub, e.g. central systems infrastructure.
60. In addition, because the Hub has a key role in driving customer-focussed service transformation within authorities, the budget includes some "implementation effort" to drive further development to enable greater choice in terms of contact, enable the Hub to be the first point of contact, actively seeking to reduce avoidable contact, increase self service and work with service areas to streamline processes. These can be considered as "transition costs" rather than ongoing operational overheads.
61. Overall, the County Council's financial contribution to the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service and non-shared service in 2010/11 is £3.392m, out of a total spend by all authorities on customer service / contact centres across the County of £7.183m.
62. Councillors asked about the County Council's funding of training and it was clarified that the County pays for central training. Each district would have its own budget for specific training needs, for example training for Hub staff in Bromsgrove dealing with revenues and benefits would be met by Bromsgrove DC
63. We heard that the infrastructure costs for the Hub remained relatively steady and would not be greatly impacted by new services coming in to the Hub. The 10-year contract with Hewlett Packard is approaching the end (2013) and discussions have begun regarding future requirements. It is anticipated that arrangements will be different in the future recognising the upskilling of ICT staff in WCC over recent years, making the model more self-sufficient.
64. The task group acknowledge the decision by the County Council to pick up costs for Hub management, operational development, communication and training to drive the Hub forward in its early stages; this is at the heart of the Hub Partnership Agreement. Nonetheless we were surprised to find that the County Council was still funding a large proportion.

County Council Recharges to Frontline services

65. The County Council recharges its "frontline" services for the cost of customer services, in line with other support services such as Human Resources, Information technology and others. When we met with the Interim Head of Culture and Community Service/Strategic Libraries and Learning Manager, it emerged that the Library Service was recharged £689,000 in 2009/10 for the Hub. It was understood that this had been calculated using 2007 data on the forecast call volumes that the Hub would handle for the Library Service, and in the previous five months the Hub had only been receiving about 70% of the calls that had been estimated. This meant that on a basic calculation, the cost of the Hub dealing with a library call was £14 per call, and we were concerned that this was poor value for money. We therefore asked for further briefing about how the Hub's recharges to County Council services were calculated. Details of how County Council recharges are calculated are attached at Appendix 4.
66. The high recharge for libraries reflected the fact that this was a high volume service.

Work had been done to assess the potential volume of library enquiries which were appropriate to route through the Hub. A number of enquiries for library services did not come through the Hub, and further promotion of the shared service number would take place with a view to changing this customer behaviour. A change in customer demand for a service (e.g. more customers accessing the library online rather than through the Hub) would lead to a reduction in the recharge. It was explained that recharges cannot be used to work out the unit (transaction) costs of a visit or telephone call.

67. We queried why all services were charged (even those which did not use the Hub), and were advised that when the Hub was created, this was on the basis that the Hub would be the initial point of contact for all County Council services. The Head of Financial Appraisal stressed that recharges could be scrutinised as part of any scrutiny of the relevant support service.

### **Is the Hub value for money?**

68. We asked whether the value for money offered by the Hub Shared Service was reviewed, and were advised that this was a complex thing to do routinely. However, the Shared Service is constantly reviewing its costs and areas where it can improve and has plans in place to drive efficiencies in conjunction with other shared services.
69. The budget and recharging approach works on the basis that the Worcestershire Hub is the first point of contact for all County Council services. There is an opportunity to make greater use of the Worcestershire Hub for a number of County Council services. If all services were to make greater use of the Hub, this would reduce the overall unit costs.

**RECOMMENDATION 5: Since the more services use the Hub, the better value it becomes. Therefore, as part of the BOLD programme, the County Council should increase its efforts to ensure all its services use the Hub.**

70. A gap in our findings is that we have been unable to build up a complete picture of the relative value for money of each non-shared service district Hub compared with the Hub Shared Service.

### **Has the creation of the Hub saved money?**

71. The original Business Case for the creation of the Worcestershire Hub stated that the aim of the Hub was to improve customer focus and not to deliver savings. Any savings generated by services from their use of the Hub had therefore not been specifically calculated or recorded in the early years.
72. It was explained that it is possible to look at the improvements in service and efficiencies which have been enabled by use of the Hub, for example the length of the application process for the Blue Badge service, where a customer can now receive their badge during their visit – approx. 15 minutes - to the relevant centre (subject to having the right supporting evidence). Additionally, the South Worcestershire Revenues and Benefits Shared Service scrutiny found that the projected savings in the revenues and benefits shared service had been achieved.
73. We acknowledge that it would be a huge task to retrospectively consider what savings had been created for each service since 2002. Nonetheless we consider it

regrettable that the financial information had not been gathered at the time. This type of information could be a powerful motivator to authorities and service areas to use the Hub, and it would also have allowed a proper understanding of the costs and benefits of the Hub.

**RECOMMENDATION 6: In light of future funding and the move towards self-service within the Hub, all authorities and the South Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee should monitor and record the efficiencies and savings gained by use of the Hub.**

## **PERFORMANCE OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE HUB**

74. Although the scrutiny has focused on the development of the Hub in the future, given the concerns raised in the Notice of Motion, councillors wanted to understand the performance of the Hub Shared Service in 2009 and what lessons could be learned. In addition, how the Hub performs and crucially how its performance is measured and monitored is important for building confidence with all partners and services. We were therefore keen to understand the Hub's performance.

### **Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Performance in 2009**

75. There were real concerns about the performance of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service, especially in relation to call wait times, during the latter half of 2009.

76. As of June 2009 the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Contact Centre was handling revenues and benefits calls for all three of the South Worcestershire authorities interfacing with the South Worcestershire Revenues and Benefits Shared Service. Revenues and Benefits calls for Malvern Hills District Council customers had always been handled by the Hub and calls for Worcester City were transferred in November 2008. The South Worcestershire Revenues and Benefits Shared Service carried out a major ICT implementation, converging from three to one system in March / April 2009. This coincided with starting to see the impact of the economic downturn on customers.

77. This resulted in a dramatic increase in demand for revenues (council tax and business rates) and benefits enquiries. The Shared Service equivalent average monthly call volumes in 2008/9 were 37,000. This rose to an average of 53,000 per month between April and September 2009. Call volume across the whole of the Worcestershire Hub (not just the shared service) increased from an average of 60,000 calls per month in 2008/9 to almost 100,000 in 2009/10.

78. This increase had an impact on call handling, worsening performance and increasing the time customers had to wait on the phone:

- In 2008/09 over 75% of calls were answered in 20 seconds (20 seconds is the service level agreement). In August and September 2009 this fell below 20%.
- During September 2009, the time to answer peaked at just over 5 minutes. [though the average speed was 177 seconds over the month]
- The number of abandoned calls was 6,023 in May 2009. In September 2009 it peaked at 23,920 with only 50.5% of calls being answered.

79. There was no increase in funding from the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service to support this significant peak in demand. In addition, during September the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service experienced its usual large volume of School Transport enquiries.

80. Another factor was that many of the revenues and benefits enquiries were complex and from people who had not previously claimed benefits, increasing the average "handle time" from 3.22 minutes in May 2009, to 4.22 minutes in September 2009.
81. The Worcestershire Hub Shared Service implemented the following actions to improve call response times:
- Extending opening hours for handling calls relating to revenues and benefits, with customers now able to call from Mon-Fri: 8am – 8pm and Sat: 9am – 5pm.
  - Recruiting new customer service staff as planned. The staffing levels within the Hub Shared Service of 9 additional staff to handle calls, were based on the Revenues & Benefits shared Service Business Case produced in 2006. No additional funding was provided to handle the increase in demand due to the economic downturn.
  - Moving all Hub Shared Service contact centre staff to a single location. This enables robust disciplines and single processes to be embedded.
  - Working with the South Worcestershire Revenues and Benefits Shared Service on a range of actions, including; introducing a single evidence checklist, better staggering of council tax reminders, and improving the quality of information available for Hub advisors and customers.
82. Performance of the Shared Service did improve week on week during October 2009. The average time to answer a call improved from 177 seconds in September, to 38 seconds in October 2009. The percentage of calls answered within the service level agreement (20 seconds), rose from 14.2%, to 59% for the same period. [Appendix 5](#) provides further performance information figures.
83. The Revenues and Benefits scrutiny concluded that the performance problems were caused by the large increase in demand for revenues and benefits services in the south of the county due to the economic downturn. The joint scrutiny found that the recession had placed the service under enormous pressure, testing the resilience of the business case, but there was a clear view that without the shared service, the service would have been much more badly affected. The role of the Hub has been central to Revenues and Benefits Shared Service achievements to date (saving of £1m per annum).
84. The Head of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service was sure that the district councils which did not form part of the revenues and benefits shared service would have experienced similar increased demand, which they would have handled in a different way. This view was backed up by our discussion with the non-shared service district councils, during which we learned, for example, that Redditch Borough Council revenues and benefits team had struggled and had introduced extra resources as a result.
85. Whilst accepting the unprecedented impact of the recession on revenues and benefits call volumes, some of us asked whether there had been a lack of preparedness? How quickly were the changes in performance information as a result of the recession acted on, and why had this not triggered earlier action? The Head of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service confirmed that the Hub team had been working hard to address the issues, with a key learning point being the need to have communicated the impact of the recession on customers, demand and therefore performance earlier. More staff had been recruited as soon as possible, and earlier than planned as part of the 2006 business case. However, it had not



been possible to hire staff in May 2009 because of a recruitment freeze which had been advised by Human Resources, in order to minimise staff redundancies as the shared service was formed.

86. We asked how service areas worked with the Hub to help it anticipate changing customer demands, and were advised that the Hub worked very closely with service areas to understand peaks in demand for different services, and that the Operations Manager met with service managers on a regular basis. For example understanding that demand for school transport peaked in September, and demand for revenues and benefit rose at the beginning and middle of the month, as well as in March and April. Council tax queries would be high during April. Apart from this, the Hub did not receive any particular information regarding forecasting of customer demand.
87. There are lessons to be learned from the revenues and benefits situation in 2009. It highlights the importance of having sufficient resilience and capacity to absorb peaks in demand, acknowledging that these cannot always be forecast.

**RECOMMENDATION 7: Appropriate resource plans for the Hub are in place to better plan for forecast demand.**

**RECOMMENDATION 8: The Hub also needs to be prepared to deal with unpredicted peaks in service demand, and we recommend that Business Continuity Plans are in place across the Hub Shared Service and the non shared service Hubs.**

#### **How is the Hub performing?**

88. When considering performance it is vital to understand the differences between the Hub Shared Service and the customer contact centres in the non shared service areas. It is also important to consider actual performance, rather than perceptions, as we found that councillor and officer perceptions differed depending on levels of knowledge, or which part of the service they were familiar with.
89. Within the County Council, the scrutiny function plays a role in monitoring performance, through reports which are submitted to the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel, twice a year. In some other authorities, performance information is also considered by overview and scrutiny.
90. Monthly performance information for the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service and the Worcestershire Hub as a whole, broken down for 2009/10, is attached at Appendix 5. Some of the issues emerging from this data are:
- wait times for face to face visits was recorded by the Shared Service, but was not included in the area breakdown, as it could not be obtained from all centres
  - telephony figures for Wychavon were not listed as all enquiries were dealt with by the service area, apart from the revenues and benefits service (which were included in figures for the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service)
  - call figures for Redditch had significantly increased because the contact centre now dealt with all calls previously received by the switchboard
  - switchboard figures for the County Council were not included, and totalled around 30,000 per month, the majority being business calls
  - the high numbers of face to face enquiries for Wychavon related to the fact that there were three centres, Droitwich, Evesham and Pershore, where the latter is also Wychavon District Council's main reception area.

91. Traditionally the performance of the Worcestershire Hub has been good with over 75% of calls being answered within 20 seconds (the service level). It was clarified that speed of answer is the time it takes for the caller to be answered by a Customer Service Advisor.

### **Quality of customer experience**

92. The performance information traditionally gathered by the Shared Service and the non shared service areas, focuses largely on processes and transactions – such as numbers of calls and speed of answer. It is clear, though, that there needs to be a focus on measuring the quality of the customer experience. We found it is possible to track calls from end to end with some services which are more advanced, such as Highways, but not with all service areas.
93. The task group heard that the Shared Service management team in conjunction with the Operational Management Group across the whole Hub Partnership have been working to measure quality of customer service. This has been done by a number of routes, Mystery Shopping, Customer Satisfaction Surveys and Service Requests Quality Audits. An upgraded customer relationship management (CRM) system was implemented in July 2009. This provides a solid basis on which to improve the quality of recording and processing enquiries as well as underpinning future self service developments. In addition, call recording will also be introduced into the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Contact Centre later this year.
94. Our discussions with the district councils revealed that customer satisfaction monitoring also takes place for customers visiting centres in person. For example Redditch and Bromsgrove complete 100 questionnaires per month. Wychavon District Council use a simple visual 'How did we do?' survey prompt as part of the GovMetric system also used for Revs and Bens enquiries. Wyre Forest also carries out monthly surveys covering phone, email and face to face channels.
95. We found that there have been a number of satisfaction surveys carried out including very recently the Worcestershire Viewpoint Survey May 2010.<sup>1</sup> This included questions about customer services generally, not specifically about the Worcestershire Hub. The 'topline' results from the survey can be found at [Appendix 6](#) and overall show that there is demand for online access to services, but this is not yet being enabled. An 'Our Customer Questionnaire' was carried out in January/February 2010, to help shape a customer strategy for Worcestershire. This was not a Worcestershire Hub specific piece of consultation, and the responses are more generally about customer contact and experience.
96. It is essential, as councils try to shift customers away from the more traditional communication routes, that sufficient customer satisfaction monitoring is carried out on the telephone, email and online services.
97. The Worcestershire Hub Shared Service has now agreed to focus on the six key performance indicators (KPIs) which cover both quantitative and qualitative measures:

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<sup>1</sup> 'ViewPoint' is a survey organised and managed by the Research and Intelligence Unit on behalf of the seven local authorities in Worcestershire, NHS Worcestershire and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Services. It replaces the previous Citizen's Panel survey.

- KPI 1 – telephone service level – target of 80% of calls answered in 20 seconds
- KPI 2 – face to face average wait time – target of customers to be seen by a customer service advisor in less than 15 minutes
- KPI 3 – self-service – proportion of payments through self-service channels
- KPI 4 – Reducing Avoidable contact
- KPI 5 – Resolution at first point of contact – target of 80%
- KPI 6 – Customer satisfaction – 90% target

98. The Head of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service would like to see a single performance management framework used across the Hub.

**RECOMMENDATION 9: Performance information should be consistent across the Shared Service and the non-Shared Service districts, to enable like for like comparisons, and we recommend a single performance management framework is established across the Hub.**

**RECOMMENDATION 10: All performance information – for shared service and non-shared service districts – should be made available to all councillors.**

**RECOMMENDATION 11: We recommend that all partners consider the role which scrutiny could play in helping to monitor performance of the Worcestershire Hub, if they have not already done so.**

**RECOMMENDATION 12: For telephone enquiries inform customers of their place in the queue, or an estimated wait time for them to be able to speak to a customer services advisor.**

#### **Service area and staff views on using the Worcestershire Hub**

99. We spoke to officers whose service areas used the Hub as first point of contact, including Library Services and the Shared Regulatory Services. They were very supportive of Hub handling their telephone calls. The Library Service had noted that library staff were now in a position to deal with more people face to face in the library, rather than deal with routine enquiries, such as renewing books. The regulatory service acknowledged that the Hub was key to business transformation and training of all staff was important to understand each other's role.
100. There was a view that there would always be a small percentage of enquiries which would need to be dealt with by specialist staff, and that this percentage may vary depending on the complexity of the service.
101. We carried out an internet based survey of staff of all seven authorities and received over 500 responses. A summary of the results can be found at [Appendix 7](#). The results from 6 core questions and general comments were mixed; a large number of them were rather critical. However, many recognised that there had been some improvement and spoke of the difficulty faced by the customer service advisors, who could only work with the information which was provided to them from individual service areas.
102. What we heard from the staff survey reveals many service area staff, whilst complimentary about the helpfulness and professionalism of Hub staff, question the ability of the Hub to deal with an increasing range and depth of enquiries. There were a number of comments about service to the customer having deteriorated. We perceived an impression that this may be partly due to service area staff's

resistance to change and reluctance to 'let go' of their expertise. There may also be fears of a threat to job security.

103. There were some concerns that the public is not always given the right information, which in turn causes problems and reduces the quality of service received by the customer. Many staff mention problems with the flow of information between the service area and the Hub (and vice versa).
104. Another thread to the free comments was the view that the term 'Hub' was not the best way to describe the service and its purpose.
105. One element that was clear throughout was the professionalism of the customer service staff in the Hub centres.
106. Positive comments focused on staff manner, approach and helpfulness, the efficiency of being able to answer straight-forward queries which gave service area staff more time to do their jobs, and the potential of their unique central role. There appeared to be more appreciation of the face to face service, followed by the telephony service, and then the email/web-based service.
107. Negative comments questioned the expectation on staff to answer in-depth queries on such a range of areas, the need for better flow of information from the service areas to the Hub (and vice versa), the dangers of staff trying to help when in fact they did not know the accurate answer, an unwillingness to put people through to the service area and mis-allocation of queries. Call wait times was a criticism, and several comments referred to the need for clearer navigation of the website and online systems, as well as compatibility of IT systems.
108. Several members felt that although many people had complained about problems getting through to the Hub by phone, once they had made contact they had found the staff very helpful. The Head of the Hub Shared Service acknowledged that Hub staff get frustrated at not being able to 'close the loop'. There was not clear agreement with every service regarding at what point an enquiry would be referred to the service area. If the Hub experiences problems as a result of an action by a service area (e.g. an incorrect letter being sent), it was clarified that the service area would not pick up the cost of any resulting additional customer contact.

**RECOMMENDATION 13: Define and agree Service Level Agreements between the Worcestershire Hub and every service area.**

**RECOMMENDATION 14: Ensure there is sufficient time allocated for service area staff and Hub staff to review any issues or needs, and to monitor service provision via the Hub.**

**RECOMMENDATION 15: Further work on the flow of information between the service area and the Hub (and vice versa) should take place, to ensure that the correct information is provided by the Hub to the service area, and that service area staff provide a response which enables Hub staff to answer the customer enquiry. It is important that both teams understand the implications of what the information they provide will be for the customer. The creation of Service Level Agreements between the Hub and services will support this.**

109. There is further work to do to improve the service, standardise where possible, reduce avoidable contact, increase self-service and to ensure customer feedback is consistent, with more attention given to the quality of the response. Work is ongoing to reduce avoidable contact (i.e. reducing the amount of contact a customer has to make to resolve their enquiry, not reducing overall contact with the customer) and part of this is to document and standardise processes between the contact centre and the service area. The aim is to ensure the Hub can deal with over 75% of enquires at the first point of contact.

**RECOMMENDATION 16: Give all customers the enquiry reference number, to encourage and enable them to track progress themselves online, and reduce the need for repeat enquiries to the Hub.**

110. Full integration of IT systems between the Hub and the service areas has not yet been achieved and this hinders the flow of information relating to an enquiry. The Head of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service was very keen to speed this process up, and considerable improvement had been made in some areas. The task group considered that a single software provider would be beneficial and we note that the current contracts are up for renewal from 2013. This gives an opportunity to take this forward.

**RECOMMENDATION 17: Move towards more consistent IT packages, as contracts come up for renewal.**

#### **Parish Council views on contacting the Hub**

111. Our survey was included in the weekly parish bulletin circulated by the Worcestershire branch of CALC (a representative body for parish and town councils), and we received responses from representatives (Clerks, Chairs, Councillors) from over 60 parishes. Parish council representatives often play a role in escalating queries brought to them by parishioners.

112. The preferred methods of contacting the Council were telephone (67%), and email (33%). When asked which services they normally contacted the Worcestershire Hub about, 95% of respondents had lodged enquiries about Highways, 50% about refuse/waste, and 50% had made enquiries about planning. 61% of respondents reported that their enquiries were not normally resolved to their satisfaction and within advertised timescales, which was a disappointing result.

113. A common complaint was the lack of feedback, which meant they had to chase up enquiries, in order to be able to give feedback to their parishioners. The most mentioned service was Highways. For these issues they found using the Hub took much longer and it was difficult to obtain feedback. Several respondents complained that problems occurred through misallocation of the enquiry, or being let down by the website reporting mechanisms.

114. When asked if there were specific occasions when it would be helpful to speak to an officer from a service area, the consistent response was yes, always. When asked how the Hub service could be improved for parish councillors, the consistent response was very critical, with several reports of the Hub being openly criticised in public meetings. Suggestions for improvement included the facility to be able to talk to a member of service staff on occasion, for example in order to be able to explain what action was being taken, or not being taken to their parishioners, a dedicated helpline for parish clerks, direct numbers for service staff, a better online Hub and a

quicker response.

115. Our impression is that parish councillors and clerks see themselves as first tier of the council organisation and that they find it inappropriate that they should have to use the Hub. Many continued to use direct telephone numbers for service officers where possible.

116. We discussed the idea of a dedicated parish line (similar to that trialled in a recent member casework management pilot<sup>2</sup>). However, the majority view was that this was not needed and that it was more important to work on making sure the system worked, by addressing issues raised such as feedback, website reporting mechanisms etc.

**RECOMMENDATION 18: In view of the negative feedback from our survey of parish councillors, we recommend further dialogue between senior officer representatives from the Worcestershire Hub and parish councils, to ensure their feedback can be used to improve the overall Hub service.**

117. There were a number of comments made in the staff survey which suggested there may be better brand names to communicate the purpose of the Hub. We also heard similar anecdotal evidence from comments received by councillors from the general public. We believe there are better brand names – in particular we liked Kent County Council's 'Gateway'. However, we accept that re-branding would be a costly exercise, which would certainly not be appropriate in the current economic climate. Nonetheless, there may be other marketing initiatives which could improve public understanding of what the Hub can offer.

**RECOMMENDATION 19: The 'Hub' means different things to different people. We recommend further communication of the Hub's identity and services to the public. This could, for example, accompany the issue of council tax bills, which would present a cost-effective opportunity for marketing.**

### **Benchmarking with other local authorities**

118. In order to think more about the service in Worcestershire, it was important to look at what other local authorities are doing in relation to customer service and how customers contact their own authority. The Worcestershire Hub participates in benchmarking, but we acknowledge the difficulty of making comparisons because of the differences in provision and huge range and depth of services. We asked other county and unitary local authorities for information about how they enable easy access to council services in person, by telephone and in person. We used a common set of questions, and received results from 11 authorities. A summary of the results is attached at [Appendix 8](#).

119. There was a huge variation in the content of responses, for example, from those councils which have taken the first steps to an integrated approach, to those that have not joined up working. Ten of the authorities have shared customer contact services with other partners, or are in the process of developing shared facilities.

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<sup>2</sup> **Member Casework Management:** This was a pilot project, which ran from December 2009 to February 2010, with the aim of designing a clear route of access for member logging enquiries via the Hub and managing member enquiries on a casework basis. A dedicated member telephone number was established which was administered by a customer service advisors who were trained as specialist in the process.

## CHANGING THE WAYS IN WHICH CUSTOMERS ACCESS COUNCIL SERVICES

120. The main ways in which the public can access a council service, such as reporting a pothole are in person, by telephone or online. As more people have access to the internet, increasingly, services in both the public and private sector are encouraging customers to move away from face to face or telephone contact, and to use online methods of communication or transaction. This is known as changing behaviour, or 'channel shifting'.
121. At the start of the scrutiny some of us were concerned that increasing use of the internet would exclude many residents. We were reassured that the Hub recognised that some customers would always prefer a face to face service and that there was no intention to remove choices for the customer, but to maximise the use of self-service options, where there is evidence of demand from customers.
122. A major factor in channel shifting is cost savings, and we were surprised by the huge difference in costs for different transaction types:

### Transaction costs (Socitm Insight December 2009)

Face to face	£8.23 per visit
Phone	£3.21 per call
Web	£0.39 per visitor

123. All of the officers we spoke to at each council were supportive of encouraging greater use of internet contact by the public, and had started to work on this. Although cost saving was a motivation, we also learned that the website provides the best way to connect with the back office, and removes the need for data input by the Hub, which was cheaper and less prone to mistakes. Experience has revealed that people find it much easier to submit information online rather than on paper, and a further advantage is that information can be validated along the way. Customers can also access information at anytime, whereas some district Hubs only provide a service around general office hours.
124. The Task Group heard that there needed to be a drive to market self-service, making it as simple as possible, and that as soon as the facilities were available, it was considered this route would take off.
125. During our scrutiny we visited the majority of the Hub centres around the county and witnessed the quality of the face to face service, and its popularity. As one senior district officer pointed out, their face to face service was very good ('perhaps too good'), but is also very expensive in terms of resources, staff and opening times.
126. Although we strongly believe a face to face service will always be required for some customers and for some enquiries, we can see that increasingly, there is a preference for other ways. There are huge savings to be made by encouraging and facilitating more use of self-service options for customers. We can see that increasing economic pressures on all public services means we cannot afford not to prioritise self-service access to council services, and that this will then free up the face to face and telephony services for those who need them.

### **How easy is it to use the Councils' websites?**

127. We were unable to dedicate a great deal of time to this question. However, we consulted Socitm (the Society for Information Technology Management which is the

professional association for information technology managers working in and for the public sector in the UK). The County Council subscribes to Socitm, which also surveys visitors to the website, via a pop-up box which appears on screen for every fifth visitor to the website. We looked at its 2010 survey which compares all local authority websites, looking at factors such as ease of access to information, ease of carrying out transactions, resilience and volume of use. The county and district websites all rated only one or two stars, out of a possible four star rating.

128. We sought advice from Socitm about what local authorities should be doing. Their advice was:

- A need for clear and consistent branding, communicated to the public
- 'You get out what you put in' – this does not necessarily need to be financial, for example the right individuals could transform a website and its navigation
- Cost is crucial (online is much cheaper)
- 'silver surfers' are the fastest growing area in online access
- A face to face service cannot be replaced totally but most things can easily be transferred to a website
- Web content needs to be relevant and topical – for example Exeter City Council's site features the weather and travel information, encouraging the public to make it their homepage
- Websites should have their own cabinet member (or for it be part of their portfolio)
- Websites will inevitably grow, to accommodate some of the intended local authority cutbacks

129. We also heard a lot of anecdotal evidence about the lack of clarity and ease of use of the councils' website. This message also came across through our parish council survey. Initial results from the Council's May 2010 Viewpoint survey results indicate that a high proportion of residents would consider using the website to report issues – however, we learned that for a high volume service such as Highways, currently only 5% of the total number of enquiries are logged in this way.

130. This suggests that the demand for online access to services is there, but is not yet being enabled. However, we are aware that work is underway to improve this, which we would obviously support in order that the council is able to encourage more people to use this method of transaction and access to information.

131. In considering the growing profile of the website in customer communications, it will be important to ensure that development of the website is as customer friendly as possible. We looked at the fact that within the County Council, the teams responsible for communications and for the website, sit within different directorates.

132. A common IT policy would certainly be desirable, although complicated by the fact that IT packages vary between each authority.

133. We are aware that Worcestershire County Council, together with the Worcestershire Hub and District partners, is responding to these low ratings and aiming to improve, by updating our online services to make them easier to use and to give customers access to more services. The county council is aiming to achieve a 3 star rating by the end of 2010/11, and 4 stars by the end of 2011/12. We welcome continuation of this work if we are to encourage as many people as possible to use electronic access, and to enable people to monitor the progress of their enquiry for themselves.



## Use of email

134. Similarly, time constraints meant we have not dedicated a great deal of time to looking at the use of email communication. The Shared Service reported that email enquiries are increasing, with approximately 2000 emails received per month (March 2010). Anecdotal evidence indicated that systems to monitor response times and quality of response etc. are not as robust as for telephony enquiries.

135. The summary results from the May 2010 ViewPoint Survey show that a considerable number of people prefer this method of communication with the Council, and therefore it is important to have clear frameworks to monitor the timeframe, quality and customer satisfaction with all methods of communication. We have made some recommendations connected to customer satisfaction in the 'performance' section of our report.

**RECOMMENDATION 20: Our investigation of best practice advice and customer survey results supports our findings that the website offers huge potential for helping customers to help themselves, and for making substantial efficiency savings. This can only be achieved if the website is as user-friendly and effective as possible. We are pleased to see that the website is being improved and recommend that this work continues in order to realise the potential gains in customer satisfaction and efficiency gains.**

**RECOMMENDATION 21: In addressing the website and its expanding role in customer contact, we recommend that consideration is given to where the website sits within the council's organisational structure. This should take account of the need to align expertise in customer contact and communication, as well as information technology.**

**RECOMMENDATION 22: Councils' websites are very important and their profile needs to reflect this. A cabinet member for each authority should have responsibility for the website within his or her portfolio.**

## CONCLUSION

136. In reflecting back on this scrutiny, it has without doubt been extremely educational and revealing to all members of the task group. Our attention has been drawn to areas which we did not anticipate at the start. In particular our investigations into governance arrangements and councillor awareness have surprised many of us.

137. The Worcestershire Hub is made up of the Hub Shared Service and separate arrangements for four district councils. This fact means that there are many differences and perhaps, a lack of unity. However, despite the differences, our scrutiny has revealed a clear commitment to the Hub as a whole for the future; no one is retreating. Our recommendations on governance and councillor induction seek to bring greater transparency, clarity and accountability across the partnership. We think it is important that those councils operating within and outside of the shared service have an awareness of what is happening 'on the other side of the fence'.

138. Our scrutiny has involved representation and consultation with each of the district councils. It is apparent that if the County Council seeks to encourage the remaining district councils to join the Hub Shared Service, they need to communicate clear

evidence about the benefits, including performance, customer satisfaction and cost savings.

139. The pressure on all authorities to make efficiencies means that service transformation is essential. We agree that the Hub should be at the heart of this service transformation. A co-ordinated approach to customer service across the county would enable savings to be made and minimise duplication.
140. An acknowledged gap in our findings is that we have not been able to make clear comparisons between the different Hub operations on their performance and value for money. This was due to the difference in the role and depth of use of the Hub across the non-shared service councils and the corresponding lack of comparable data that was available. To enable some comparisons to be made in the future we have recommended a uniform performance framework and that work is done on establishing transaction costs on the non-shared service authorities.
141. A revelation to many of us has also been the huge variation in the cost of the different types of transaction, whether it be in person, over the phone or online. Face to face customer service is hugely expensive, and although we feel strongly that there will always be a need for it, our evidence demonstrates that online customer access is in growing demand and offers huge potential for the future.
142. We are all agreed that self-service using the website is the way forward. If we encourage the public to make use of online access where possible to self-serve, it frees up the face to face service for those members of our community who really need it. Essentially, online access allows helping customers to serve themselves, as well as making some of the savings we need to make. Clearly, we will only maximize online self service if the councils' websites are as user-friendly and effective as possible. We are aware that many improvements to the website are planned, and we are very keen for this pace to continue, as addressed in our report.
143. Regarding the performance of the Worcestershire Hub, although there is always more to be done, we are satisfied that lessons have been learned from the performance problems experienced during the Summer 2009. We have made recommendations that plans should be in place to better forecast demand and unpredicted peaks in service demand. Although the problems experienced in the Summer 2009 were the catalyst for this scrutiny, this was only one aspect of our work, and our remaining recommendations on performance are targeted at improving customer experience as a whole, and the flow of information between the service areas and the Hub, and vice versa.
144. As our scrutiny reaches its conclusion, in many ways the Worcestershire Hub is embarking on major development, especially with the growing pace of service transformation and the growing number of shared council services across the county. We hope that our recommendations help to facilitate this future, and have agreed that we would like to reconvene the Worcestershire Hub task Group at an appropriate point in the future, to consider what influence our report has had, and to assess progress on the recommendations we have made.

## SCRUTINY TASK GROUP ACTIVITY

Member briefing for the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel Patrick Birch, Director of Corporate Services Rachel Hill, Head of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service	5 November 2009
A scrutiny proposal was discussed and agreed with the Lead Member, and a Scrutiny Task Group was set-up.	November 2009 – January 2010
Initial overview of the Worcestershire Hub provided to the Task Group Rachel Hill, Head of Customer Service for the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service and Patrick Birch, Director of Corporate Services Covered: background, vision, achievements, current position, performance, future direction, customer focus, challenges, opportunities and thoughts on areas for improvement	27 January 2010
Small group visits to the Hub centres (Malvern, Redditch, Pershore, Kidderminster, Bromsgrove, Shared Service Contact Centre at Perry Wood, Worcester) Sharon Ryder, Telephony Channel Manager	February - March 2010
"Mind mapping" exercise to sharpen our focus on what we wanted to find out from the scrutiny, and what was needed to achieve this Tony Dipple, Head of Financial Appraisal	18 March 2010
Evidence gathering:  <u>Wychavon</u> – Vic Allison, Deputy Managing Director, Amanda de Warr, Democratic Services Manager and Nick Jefferies, Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service  <u>Redditch and Bromsgrove</u> – Kevin Dicks, Joint Chief Executive, (Bromsgrove – Jayne Pickering, Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Resources and Roger Horton, Customer Services Manager), (Redditch – Lynn Jones, Customer Services Manager)  <u>Malvern Hills</u> – Ivor Pumfrey, Head of Customer Services and Environmental Services  <u>Worcester City</u> - David Thorpe, Head of Customer Services and Business Transformation and Malcolm Cox, Service Manager for Refuse and Recycling  <u>Wyre Forest</u> - Linda Collis, Director of Community and partnership Services and Lucy Wright, Customer Services Manager  <u>Library Service</u> Kathy Kirk, Interim Head of Culture and Community Service /	March - July

<p>Strategic Libraries and Learning Manager Steve Mobley, Quality and Standards Manager</p> <p><u>South Worcestershire Revenues and Benefits Shared Service</u> Nick Jefferies, Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service</p> <p><u>Members involved in the Autumn 2009 Scrutiny of the South Worcestershire Revenues and Benefits Shared Service</u>; Cllrs Rob Adams (Wychavon DC), Paul Cummings (Malvern Hills DC) and Geoff Williams (Worcester City DC)</p> <p><u>Highways</u> Position statement from Matt Nichols, Project Manager for the Worcestershire Hub</p>	
<p>Examination of:</p> <p>Performance information (with Rachel Hill, Head of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service) Organisational charts (with Rachel Hill) Governance information (with Rachel Hill) Funding and costs (with Tony Dipple, Head of Financial Appraisal, Nick Hughes, Principal Finance Officer for Financial Services and Rachel Hill) Role of Hub within Regulatory Shared Service (with Steve Jordan, Head of Regulatory Shared Service and Ivor Pumfrey, Head of Customer Service and Environmental Service at Malvern Hills DC)</p>	March - July
<p>Information/evidence review:</p> <p>Funding and costs Customer feedback analysis Staff survey results Parish council survey results What are other local authorities doing? Comments from Cllr John Waring, Chair of the Hub Shared Service Management Board</p>	July
<p>Emerging findings / recommendations, including discussion with Director of Corporate Services and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services</p>	29 September – 1 October

**INFORMATION CONSIDERED**

	<b>Date provided</b>
Handouts from presentation by the Head of Customer Services for the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service, including performance information for 2008/9 – 2009/10	27 January 2010
Agreed action points and requests for information – resulting from task group meeting on 27/01/10	
Contact details for the Worcestershire Hub Customer Service Centres	24 February
Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Customer Service Briefing Bulletins (January 2010, February 2010) – to co-opted district councillor task group members	24 February
Diagram of South Worcestershire Shared Service Partnership Governance arrangements	24 March Task Group Meeting
Worcestershire Hub governance : paper to Worcestershire Hub Board (July 2009)	24 March Task Group Meeting
Membership of Worcestershire Hub shared Service (WHSS) Management Board	24 March Task Group Meeting
Worcestershire Hub Shared Service: paper to Joint Committee recommending establishment of the WHSS management Board (Nov 09)	24 March Task Group Meeting
South Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee – link to online agendas and minutes	9 April
'Online services will make savings' – interview article with Martha Lane Fox (Local Government Chronicle 25 Feb 2010)	9 April
Scrutiny plan following mind mapping exercise	14 April
Worcestershire Hub and Libraries - overview	14 April
South Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee 19 April 2010 – report on WHSS, including performance report 2009/10	
Summary of comments from visits to Worcestershire Hub contact centres	30 April
Performance information for the Worcestershire Hub Shared Services, and annual summary breakdown for the non-shared service districts	19 May (agenda papers)
Performance report for WHSS Management Board	26 May
Briefing about the Hub submission for Customer Service Excellence accreditation	10 June
Customer Satisfaction Data: Our Customers Consultation ViewPoint May 2010 Customer feedback carried out by the Hub	10 June
Worcestershire County Council Cabinet report and minutes:	24 June

'Worcestershire Enhances Two-Tier Shared Services Programme' 8 February 2010	
News article from Worcestershire County Council staff intranet 'Hub works with service areas to identify improvements'	24 June
News article from Worcester Evening News on a meeting of Worcester City Council's Licensing Committee's consideration of the proposed merger of council regulatory services	24 June
Regulatory Services Business Case and supporting appendices	25 June
List of work underway	22 July
Highways Update	22 July
Comments from Chair of Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Management Board	22 July
Member casework management	22 July
Financial / budget Information (non-shared service)	22 July
Council staff survey results	27 July
Results of questions to other local authorities	27 July
Kent Total Place Initiative – gateway Multi-channel	27 July
Extracts from 'Better Connected 2010: a snapshot of all local authority websites' – from the Society for Information Technology Management (Socitm)	27 July
Parish council survey results	August
Viewpoint Survey 2010 - results	22 September
Worcestershire Hub Full Business Case – Summary Report	7 October
Worcestershire Hub Online Self Service Proposal	7 October
Worcestershire Hub Customer Charter website link	13 October

## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DISTRICT COUNCILS

### Malvern Hills District Council and Worcester City Council (Joint discussion)

Both Malvern District Council and Worcester City Council are part of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service. For services using the Hub, Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Contact centre deals with telephone calls and emails.

Malvern DC has three face to face centres (at Malvern, Tenbury and Upton Libraries)

Worcester CC has a face to face centre at Orchard House.

Malvern had taken the decision to put the Hub at the front of all services.

Worcester City's decision to join the WHSS had been based on a desire to improve customer service. At the time the move was cost neutral, and saving money had not been the motivation to join. However, there were now added pressures to save and to make processes leaner.

Both Worcester City and Malvern felt it was important to address the end to end process of service delivery, and to look at this from the customer point of view.

It was felt that the senior management teams at Worcester and Malvern had similar confidence in the Hub. Confidence had dipped during the period of massive demand as a result of the recession, but there had been general acceptance that the Council wouldn't have coped under previous arrangements.

Some of the members who had initiated this scrutiny were Malvern members. It was acknowledged that the Hub had indeed gone through a bad patch last year and Malvern had carried out analysis to understand the reasons, as well as looking at the Hub through scrutiny arrangements (Joint scrutiny of South Worcestershire Revs & Bens). Some problems were unearthed, for example the flow of information between the Hub and service areas. Having gone through the difficult patch, members were now very supportive.

Members asked the officers' views on the fact that Wyre Forest, Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils would have encountered the same problems during the economic downturn, and yet did not appear to have had the same problems in dealing with the situation. The Malvern officer did not feel it was possible to make comparisons because of the different role of the Hub in different areas in dealing with revenues and benefits enquiries. The Shared Service sought to deal with these enquiries to a much greater depth, and required an average customer time of 4 minutes, compared to the overall Hub average of 2-3 minutes

The Worcester Officers stressed the importance of doing as much as possible at the first point of contact, as each referral meant more time and greater cost.

The Worcester Officers felt that being part of the WHSS gave them a better drive on customer focus, enabling them to work with the cabinet members, and with the Head of Worcestershire Shared Service. They felt less isolated, and were happy with the current Management Board and Joint Committee set-up

When asked whether they felt it was necessary to set up a new Board for each service joining the Hub – the Malvern officer felt that this depended on the complexity of the service concerned. The Joint Committee had to focus at an overall level, and therefore for some services it was useful to have a project team.

The Worcester officers felt that it was important to offer choices, and that the same should be available to customers whether via phone, online etc. The website gave the best way to connect with the back office, and had the fantastic advantage of removing the need for data input by the Hub, which was cheaper and less prone to mistakes. Experience revealed that people found it much easier to submit information online rather than on paper, and a further advantage was that the machine could validate the information along the way. He felt there needed to be a drive to market self-service, and felt that as soon as the facilities were available, this route would take off. Simplicity was key.

The Malvern officer pointed out that currently, many web options did not present themselves easily, and did not present a better offer for the customer. For example, when introducing the recent garden waste scheme, customers had been able to sign up online, but the Hub had had to call them to collect payment

It was agreed that it was important to extend self-service options to those without computers at home, and one way to do this would be via kiosks.

### **Wychavon District Council**

Not a 'typical model' within the Hub partnership. Face to face contact centre provision for over 20 years, with three contact centres (Droitwich High Street, Pershore civic centre, Evesham), managed within Hub partnership.

Unlike the other district councils, all telephone calls (except for revenues and benefits) are answered by a Wychavon DC switchboard (not part of Hub) .

Revenues and benefits enquiries dealt with by Worcestershire Hub Shared Service contact centre (Wychavon has joined Revenues and benefits shared service).

For all services except for revenues and benefits, face to face staff dealt with calls up to a certain point (which varied for each service), after which the enquiry would be passed onto the service area. There was a small facility within each service area, to provide a 'hub-like' service.

Wychavon had not joined the Hub in its full capacity when the partnership was set up in 2002, because its own telephony operation was managed very differently to other districts and the transition to the Hub would have been hugely complex. At the time members felt it important to have experts answering the phones and did not want an automated system, although this view went against officer advice at the time. Some members continued to hold the view that 'calls should be answered by the experts'

The way in which councils worked with their customers continued to change and evolve and Wychavon's integration to the Hub was something which would be kept under review. There was potential for change – the prime incentive to join would be customer experience, although cost saving would also be important

Wychavon's experience of working with the Hub as regards face to face customer service was very positive, and had brought benefits such as improved service, value for money and extended opening hours. Greater partnership working had resulted in a wider service (the Evesham centre worked in partnership with West Mercia Police)

50% of the face to face service time was attributed to revenues and benefits enquiries, something which was a consequence of the shared service. Previously, the face to face service would have dealt with enquiries up to a certain point, after which they would have referred on to the service area – now the face to face staff had to deal with much more in-depth enquiries, of up to one and a half hour duration

The Deputy Managing Director pointed out that face to face service, although popular (maybe too popular) was very expensive in terms of resources, staff and opening times. In addressing the current economic pressures, the scope of this provision would need to be looked at.

### **Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council (Joint discussion)**

At Redditch, all external and internal telephone calls are routed through the switchboard. There are no direct dial numbers, even for staff. The Redditch Customer Service Centre is at the Town Hall.

It was made clear during the meeting that Redditch and Bromsgrove had not agreed to have a shared service approach to the Hub and there are no plans to join the shared service, reasons for this differed between the 2 authorities. As Redditch retained a housing stock many of the calls received by the Redditch customer contact centre related to housing, maintenance, rents, repairs etc. and Redditch had a very high volume of calls. There was some concern that the Hub Shared Service (WHSS) would not be able to cope



with all these extra calls.

Bromsgrove members in particular were concerned about a perceived loss of local knowledge in dealing with enquiries. It was argued that the focus of each branch of the Worcestershire Hub needed to remain local as it was important for the customer to feel that the operator had local knowledge.

Bromsgrove had not retained a housing stock and therefore the types of enquiries received there and the use made of the Hub tended to be different, they dealt with many council tax queries. The Bromsgrove customer contact centre had had a major impact in Bromsgrove following the introduction of the service in 2005. Many enquiries were dealt with at the level of the Hub which had helped to reduce the amount of time spent by back office staff on responding to enquiries. For example, out of a sample of 600 calls in a given period only 100 would be referred to a back office function. One consequence of this had been that the length of calls had often become longer, particularly when responding to more complicated enquiries.

Redditch used a number of bespoke systems such as PayPal for customers paying council rents. These could be accessed at a number of local shops and neighbourhood offices. This helped to reduce the flow of customers within the Town Hall and was more convenient for some customers. Increasingly, the Council was also encouraging residents to use direct debit for payments for Council services. There was a discussion about use of kiosks. Bromsgrove had looked at them, but now want to send customers elsewhere. Worcester has had IT problems with kiosks.

The Chief Executive of Redditch Borough Council believed that R&B customer service centres represented value for money. However, assessing the value of the service needed to be explored in further detail. It was questioned whether assessment of the quality of the service should only focus on response times to customer calls and it was suggested that it should also include asking residents whether the Hub was delivering the job they expected and meeting their needs – more work needed to measure the quality of customer experience in the Hub (and maybe in their own customer contact centres?).

Members felt that DCs were dealing with highways queries but not being paid for this and it was noted that some service queries would always go to DCs as people are used to calling a particular number and it is hard to change this habit.

The performance of the quality of the customer service delivered by the R&B's customer contact centres was measured face to face through the completion of 100 questionnaires per month.

In relations to revenues and benefits queries, Bromsgrove had seen a sharp initial increase, which had then tailed off and there had been no significant impact on calls taken (n.b. most revs & bens queries are face to face). The Benefits team in Bromsgrove had a voice recognition analysis (VRA) system. This system was used when responding to benefits calls. The system operated as a form of lie detector test, identifying both high and low risks. Some low risk claims could easily be processed and finalised for payment within a 48 hour period.

Redditch had a more significant increase, especially with face to face queries. Resources to revs & bens team had been increased.

There were particular arrangements in place for responding to complicated enquiries. In these cases the operator recorded all the relevant details provided by a customer. These details were then referred to the back office function and a relevant Officer was required to call the customer to provide a response.

In relation to Regulatory Services, it was noted that there was a need to ensure processes and systems were agreed before launching the shared service; lessons would be learned from the revs & bens change. There would not be an overnight move to Perry Wood taking all calls, there was a phased approach to ensure the systems were in place first. It was noted that building a relationship with the service area is crucial and takes time.

In relation to Hub governance, Kevin Dicks would not like to see the demise of the Worcestershire Hub Partnership Board as it was useful for all authorities to be involved in discussions about the Hub. [i.e. if it was only shared service joint committees, R&B would not be involved at all.]

At both Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils there were Customer Service Managers and both attended this meeting. There did not appear to be a specific structure for operating Hub branches throughout the county. Instead, Hub branches appeared to operate in diverse ways from location to location.

On 15th July a new Head of Customer Services would start work at Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils. This Officer would be working to implement a more customer focussed service with an ultimate aim to reduce the number of calls to the Hub. Increasingly, residents would be encouraged to use the internet rather than to call the Hub. It was also intended that there would be regular meetings for all of the relevant Customer Services Managers in the County with responsibility for the Hub.

Kevin Dicks highlighted R&B's current focus on "service transformation". The WETT programme has secured funding from the West Midland Regional Improvement & Efficiency Partnership to support local authorities to deliver 'transformation' programmes. The idea is the customer should be at the heart of services. R&B's focus will be on transforming the way they do business (from the customer's point of view) and then tackling how they deal with customer service.

Some obstacles to future development were:

Concerns about loss of local knowledge by having a central call centre

Not enough work has been done so far asking customers how they want to contact councils

There was not a clear enough focus on customer satisfaction/quality

20 R&B service areas could potentially move to Hub, but it was not clear how CSAs could deal with all of these. Also, it was perceived that CSAs would not pick up customers' "hidden agendas" (these are training issues)

### **Wyre Forest District Council**

Wyre Forest Customer Service Centre opened in November 2006 and is based in Kidderminster Town Hall. There are also two smaller centres in Bewdley and Stourport. All District Council telephone calls are routed through a single number and handled by the service. Equally, there is one e-mail address for general enquiries. There is one team, with 18FTE staff, who rotate between the 3 sites and are trained in reception, face to face and telephone enquiries to ensure that demand can be met more efficiently. Cashiers are also employed in Kidderminster and handle transactions, 60% of which are cheques.

There are always 2 members of staff when Bewdley and Stourport offices are open, but staff can "plug in" to the telephone system to provide back up to Kidderminster if the need arise. We were told that there is always the need to have at least 4 people on the telephone.

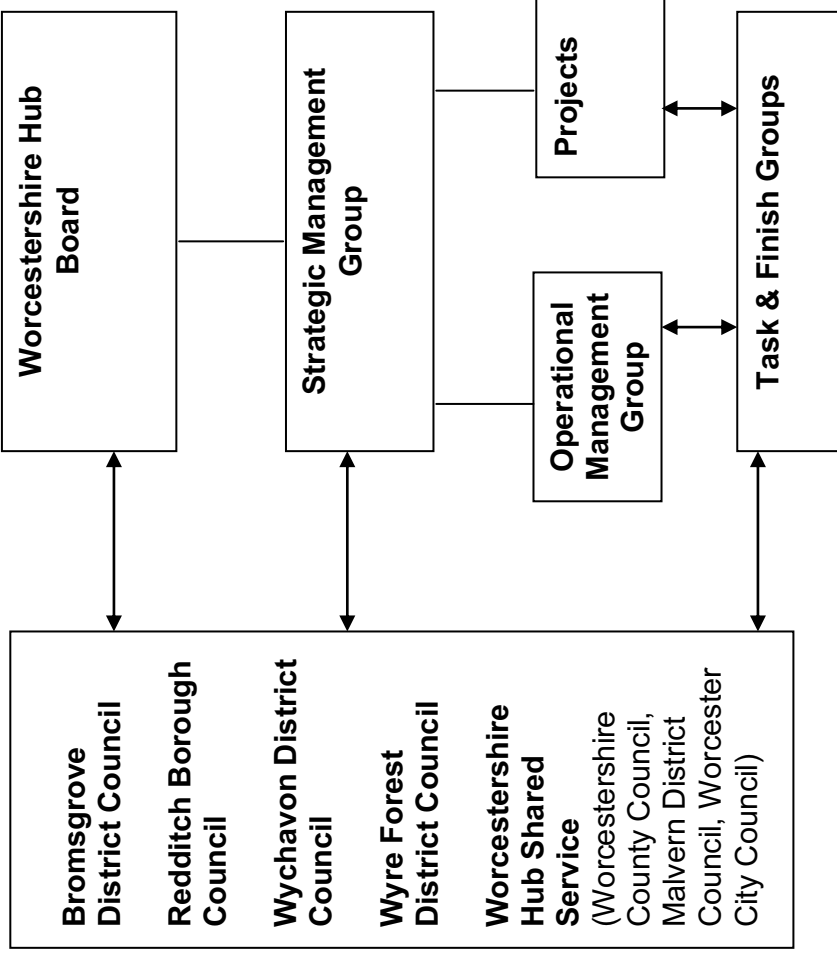
Identifying aspects of the service which could be improved, it was noted that increasing the number of staff would always be useful. Equally it was suggested that departments could update customer service advisors more frequently to enhance the customer experience.

When Highways calls were no longer answered virtually by all Partners in 2009, funding was reduced accordingly. Despite this, customers still call WFDC to report Highways issues and 60-70% of all Highways calls logged for this area, were actually still dealt with by WFDC staff, rather than by Perry Wood staff.

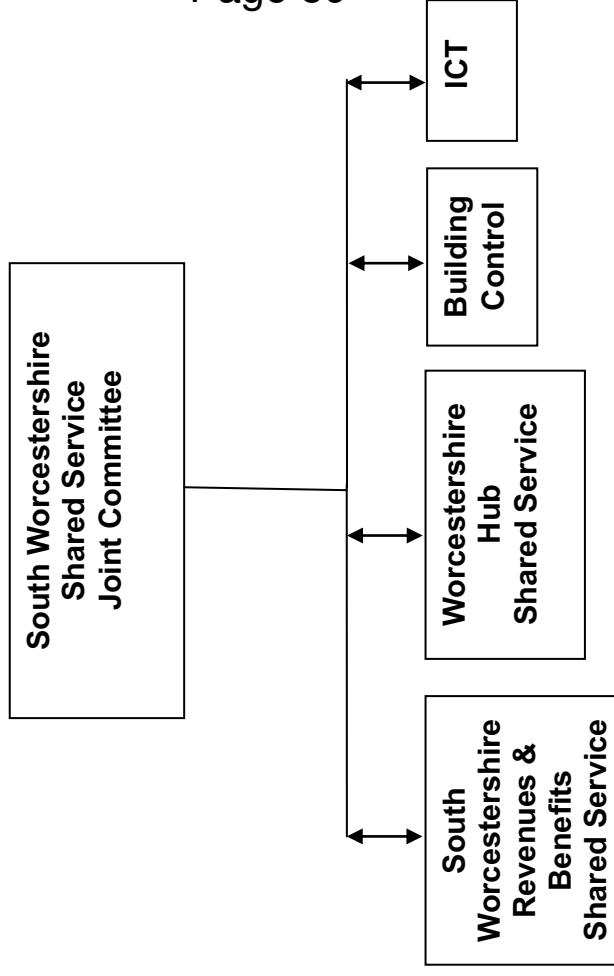
Chief Officers believe the customer service centres provide good value for money for the District Council and provide a consistently good level of performance. Councillors and the public have been impressed with the level of professionalism, although admit there was some resistance in the beginning.

The District Council has the customer at the heart and when considering the future of shared services, it would have to be clear where efficiencies and cash savings are. They are a high performing service and would not accept a drop in service for their customers.

**WORCESTERSHIRE HUB GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**



**WORCESTERSHIRE HUB SHARED SERVICE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**



**COUNTY COUNCIL RECHARGES**

It was explained that the Customer Services function exists to support the frontline services of the County Council and the Hub partners. As such, the recharges system worked in the same way as for other support service functions, such as Human Resources and IT. Under the CIPFA Best Value Accounting Code of Practice, local authorities are required to apportion the costs of service to the services it supports. The County Council adopt a high level approach to this; rather than creating a bureaucratic internal accounting process of charging for actual services provided on an ongoing basis, an apportionment of the approved revenue budget is determined at the time of setting budgets on the basis of actual or planned service, allowing for the possibility for a service to migrate to the Hub. Discussion with Directorates on how to resource the Hub had taken place three years previously.

A budget for the recharge for frontline services is added to the appropriate frontline service's budget as a "top slice" and the actual charge is made at this budgeted level. The frontline service therefore carries the cost of its support services but the recharge does not impact on the service's controllable budget and nor does the service control the recharge's expenditure or take responsibility for budget variances. The Head of Customer Services therefore takes responsibility for control of the revenue budget for the service.

The basis for the apportionment of Customer Services costs to the WCC service areas takes account of:

- The volume of customer contacts for each service made via the Worcestershire Hub in person and over the phone. This data is taken from the management information systems used by the Worcestershire Hub at the time of the recharge calculation.
- A view of plans for any changes including the "migration" of services to the Worcestershire Hub, e.g. known plans to deal with a new service or extension of a service.
- Application of a weighting to take account of the average length of the customer contact (for contacts made in person or over the phone). This recognises that some enquiries, e.g. renewing a library book over the phone, are quicker than others, e.g. application for a Blue Badge.

The following table summarises the recharge to frontline services within the County Council for Customer Services for 2010/11.

<b>Service</b>	<b>Recharge 2010/11 £000</b>	<b>Directorate Total £000</b>
<b>Children's services (non DSG<sup>3</sup>)</b>		
LEA functions	17.3	
Social Care	120.5	137.8
<b>Adult and Community services</b>		
Social care	150.9	
Blue badge	556.1	
Registration	124.8	
Arts	36.4	
Libraries	740.4	1608.6
<b>Environmental services</b>		
Trading standards	47.7	
Highways	315.9	
Countryside	48.4	
Integrated Transport –Schools	183.5	
Traffic Management	160.5	
Street Lighting	11.9	
Waste Management	212.1	980.0
<b>Corporate services</b>		
Recruitment and Student Finance	111.6	
Admin Buildings – reception services	60.5	172.1
<b>Planning, Economy &amp; Performance</b>		
Emergency Planning	8.8	8.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,907.3</b>
<b>Schools DSG Funded</b>		
School Admissions		351.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,259.1</b>
Corporate Management Costs (not recharged to frontline services)		133.0
<b>Total County Council Budget</b>		<b>3,392.1</b>

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<sup>3</sup> Dedicated Schools Grant

**PERFORMANCE INFORMATION**

**APPENDIX 5**

The following tables show information for the Worcestershire Hub and Worcestershire Hub Shared Service broken down by month for the year 2009/10.

**Summary for the Worcestershire Hub**

Indicator	2009/10													
	2008/9						2009/10							
	Total	Average	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>Telephone Channel</b>														
Total Incoming Calls	798055	66505	89614	83148	106681	107173	97080	112229	91964	87724	73444	121037	89980	116725
Total Calls during Opening Hours	757172	63098	84075	78384	102365	103411	93376	108999	88706	85313	70516	117339	88955	114692
Total Calls Answered	651086	54257	72166	66197	76415	75977	62707	71419	77070	73060	62868	97068	75561	94943
Percentage of Calls Answered	85.9%	85.9%	85.8%	84.5%	74.6%	73.5%	67.2%	65.5%	86.9%	85.6%	89.2%	82.7%	84.9%	84.1%
Service Level: Percentage of Calls Answered within 20secs	75.6%	75.6%	63.9%	64.9%	51.0%	47.5%	38.7%	37.4%	65.7%	61.6%	77.1%	56.0%	64.7%	61.9%
Average Speed of Answer (seconds)	19	19	32	30	53	58	81	94	29	35	17	36	30	35
Average Call Duration (hh:mm:ss)	00:02:28	00:02:28	00:02:25	00:02:26	00:02:37	00:02:45	00:02:49	00:02:54	00:02:48	00:02:56	00:02:55	00:03:03	00:02:59	00:03:44
<b>Face to Face Channel</b>														
Total Number of Visitors (CRM)	179657	14971	14821	12929	13877	11872	11508	16913	17658	17890	14669	17709	16262	21413
Total Number of Visitors (other)	215401	17950	22516	19151	20587	23728	20580	23791	24169	22783	17974	20047	18380	
Total Number of Payments made in Person	482057	40171	43323	39651	42718	44178	39367	41586	38550	36436	34601	31172	19311	
Total Number of Payments made using the Kiosks	12297	1537	3898	3634	3754	3408	3060	3449	3944	3838	3479	2990	1576	2004

## Worcestershire Hub Shared Service

Indicator	2008/9		2009/10											
	Total	Average	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>Telephone Channel</b>														
Total Incoming Calls	513544	42795	45372	42405	60317	60381	56539	67483	50503	47224	36985	59568	44726	61560
Total Calls during Opening Hours	443636	36970	42360	39975	57984	58669	54693	66000	48973	46470	36125	58262	44118	60770
Total Calls Answered	374116	31176	34240	30955	36277	36607	29183	33301	41023	37671	33591	49480	39204	51252
Percentage of Calls Answered	84.3%	84.3%	80.8%	77.4%	62.6%	62.4%	53.4%	50.5%	83%	81%	93%	84.9%	88.9%	84.3%
Service Level: Percentage of Calls Answered within 20secs	75.6%	75.6%	55.3%	53.1%	31.6%	30.7%	17.4%	14.2%	59%	51%	80.1%	54.6%	62.2%	56.4%
Average Speed of Answer (seconds)	18	18	41	43	91	96	146	177	38	51	15	39	31	42
Average Call Duration (hh:mm:ss)	00:03:14	00:03:14	00:03:11	00:03:22	00:03:47	00:03:56	00:04:10	00:04:22	00:03:48	00:03:51	00:03:42	00:03:19	00:03:42	00:03:48
<b>Face to Face Channel</b>														
Total Number of Visitors (CRM)	30752	2563	1939	1585	1702	2017	2804	5574	6684	6311	5356	6925	5105	7043

Total Number of Visitors (other)	67496	5625	5968	4243	3527	8409	6799	9004	7766	6525	5612	6475	5756	10342
Total Number of Payments made in Person	76812	6401	4382	4077	4241	4567	3942	4290	3674	3369	2683	2478	1519	2173
Total Number of Payments made using the Kiosks	12297	1537	3898	3634	3754	3408	3060	3449	3944	3838	3479	2990	1576	2004



## 1. Information by Centre

The following tables show information for the Worcestershire Hub broken down by channel – telephony and face to face, and by centre. The information shown is for the full financial year 2009/10. A comparison to the 2008/9 position is also shown.

### Telephone Contacts

09/10	Worcestershire Hub Contact Centres						Total
	Bromsgrove	Redditch	Wychavon	Wyre Forest	Worcestershire Hub Shared Service		
Total Incoming Calls	151051	276553	n/a	115232	633063	1175899	
Total Calls during Opening Hours	142120	265662	n/a	109755	614339	1136071	
<i>Comparison to 08/09</i>	-2%	77%		4%	38%	33%	
Total Calls Answered	127334	229894	n/a	96876	452784	903859	
<i>Comparison to 08/09</i>	0%	77%		0%	21%	28%	
Percentage of Calls Answered	90%	87%	n/a	88%	73.7%	80%	
Service Level	76%	57%	n/a	83%	48%	58%	
Average Speed of Answer (seconds)	20	46	n/a	8	64	44	
Average Call Duration (seconds)	170	205	n/a	151	228	177	

**Contacts made in person (2009/10)**

<b>09/10</b>	<b>Customer Service Centres (Summarised by area)</b>							<b>Total</b>
	<b>Bromsgrove</b>	<b>Redditch</b>	<b>Wychavon</b>	<b>Wyre Forest</b>	<b>Malvern Hills</b>	<b>Worcester City</b>		
Total Number of Visitors (CRM)	11566	18639	92430	11841	20149	32896	187521	
Total Number of Visitors (other)	19177	94928	n/a	65150	22095	58331	259681	
Total Number of Payments made in Person	30324	124090	134157	115688	12754	28641	445654	
Total Number of Payments made using the Kiosks	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12659	26375	39034	

**2008/9 Information - Telephony**

<b>2008/9</b>	<b>Worcestershire Hub Contact Centres</b>					<b>Total</b>
	<b>Bromsgrove</b>	<b>Redditch</b>	<b>Wychavon</b>	<b>Wyre Forest</b>	<b>Worcestershire Hub Shared Service</b>	
Total Calls during Opening Hours	145176	63123	n/a	105237	443638	757172
Total Calls Answered	127506	52766	n/a	96698	374116	651086
Service Level	72%	63%	n/a	87%	n/a	75%

Summary for the Worcestershire Hub

Indicator	2010/11													
	2009/10													
	Total	Average	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>Telephone Channel</b>														
Total Incoming Calls	1175899	97992	97568											
Total Calls during Opening Hours	1136131	94678	93784											
Total Calls Answered	906987	75582	82436											
Percentage of Calls Answered	79.83%	79.83%	87.9%											
Service Level: Percentage of Calls Answered within 20secs	57.73%	57.73%	64.09%											
Average Speed of Answer (seconds)	44	44	32											
Average Call Duration (hh:mm:ss)	00:02:57	00:02:57	00:03:05											
<b>Face to Face Channel</b>														
Total Number of Visitors (CRM)	187521	15627	19939											
Total Number of Visitors (other)	259681	21640												
Total Number of Payments made in Person	445654	37138												
Total Number of Payments made using the Kiosks	39034	3253	4126											

Worcestershire Hub Shared Service

Indicator	2009/10		2010/11											
	Total	Average	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>Telephone Channel</b>														
Total Incoming Calls	633063	52755	48339											
Total Calls during Opening Hours	614339	51200	47043											
Total Calls Answered	452784	37732	43536											
Percentage of Calls Answered	73.7%	73.7%	92.5%											
Service Level: Percentage of Calls Answered within 20secs	48.0%	48.0%	77.7%											
Average Speed of Answer (seconds)	64	64	18											
Average Call Duration	3m 48s	3m 48s	3m 48s											
<b>Face to Face Channel</b>														
Total Number of Visitors (CRM)	53045	4420	6588											
Total Number of Visitors (other)	80426	6702	8249											
Total Number of Payments made in Person	41395	3450	3617											
Total Number of Payments made using the Kiosks	39034	3253	4126											

## APPENDIX 6

## MAY 2010 WORCESTERSHIRE VIEWPOINT SURVEY – TOPLINE RESULTS

From the questions asked about customer services, some key findings are set out below. *(It should be noted that this was not a Worcestershire Hub specific piece of consultation and therefore the responses are more generally about customer contact and experience):*

Base	Question	Response	%
5264	Do you have access to the internet?	Yes	86%
		No	14%
4434	If yes, please indicate where you access the internet most regularly?	Home Work Library Internet cafe	84% 14% 2% -
5167	How would you be most likely to get in touch about council services?	In person Telephone Email Online Letter Local councillor	10% 49% 18% 16% 6% 1%
5184	When you have asked for a council service and we need to get back in touch with you, how would you like us to contact you?	Telephone Email Letter Text message	44% 39% 17% 1%
5179	How important is it that you have a single point of contact for all your council services?	Very important Fairly important Neither important nor unimportant Fairly unimportant Very unimportant	40% 34% 17% 5% 4%
	Would you consider using the following methods to access council services?		
5098	Website – to make payments	Yes No	59% 41%
5090	Website to report issues	Yes No	70% 30%
5087	Website – to apply for services	Yes No	70% 30%
5096	Website – to access information	Yes No	82% 18%
5045	Text messaging	Yes No	24% 76%
5094	Payment kiosks in Hub centres	Yes No	32% 68%
5074	Voice activated technology	Yes No	22% 78%

## **WORCESTERSHIRE HUB SCRUTINY: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE STAFF SURVEY**

This was a short online survey of all county council and district council staff. There were 540 responses of which 390 were from county council employees, 68 were from District Council employees (Bromsgrove - 6, Malvern – 2, Redditch -1, Worcester – 21, Wychavon – 16, Wyre Forest – 22) and 82 blank responses.

Staff were asked 6 questions:

- Do you work for the Worcestershire Hub
- Does the service area you work in use the Hub?
- Have you contacted the Hub as part of your day job, and if so, how?
- Have you contacted the Hub as a member of the Public and if so, how?
- What services have you used?

The majority of respondents came from staff whose service area uses the Hub. Of respondents who had contacted the Hub as part of their day job, the most popular method was by phone. (Between 50 and 100% of respondents). However, email was also a very popular method (between 23 and 71%), and the face to face service had been used by around a third of respondents at Worcester City, Wychavon and Wyre Forest.

A surprisingly high % of council respondents had not contacted the Hub as a member of the public (over 40% at Worcester, Wyre Forest and Worcestershire). Of those who had, the majority had used the phone (45.6% at County Council). Email and web were little used by County Council staff who had contacted the Hub (only 11.5% and 22.7% respectively). At Wyre Forest and Wychavon around a quarter had used email. The services most used via the Hub were Highways, council tax, refuse and waste and libraries. Of the 30+ services given as 'other', the top ones planning, finding out a staff or service number and the blue badge scheme.

### **Free comments**

The survey also asked for further comments (including a number of prompts as to what might be included), and almost 300 were received, the vast majority of which came from county council staff. There were 5 comments from Bromsgrove, 1 from Redditch, 15 from Worcester, 17 from Wychavon and 17 from Wyre Forest.

Main themes from the comments:

- A much higher %age were critical than were complimentary, though even some of the critics recognised improvement and the difficulties faced by Hub staff in needing to have detailed knowledge over a number of service areas
- In general Hub staff are found to be friendly, helpful and efficient
- Several staff pointed out the value of the Hub service as a central repository of all customer contact, which does not work in isolation like so many areas, and so is able to make recommendations for information sharing and process improvements.

- Hub staff are expected to know a huge range of information 'staff have become 'jack of all trades and masters of none" – some suggestions that it would be better to train and focus on particular areas, through close working with that service team
- Need improved flow of information between services and the Hub, and vice versa. Where comments specified a particular service, the most commonly referred to was Highways, and the majority of these comments were critical. Many comments spoke about the difficulty faced by hub staff, who needed improved flow of information from Highways staff, and for Highways to answer and take action to calls logged by the Hub
- many complaints received from the public in relation to libraries, about having to go through the Hub, when they know that their enquiry can only be answered by library staff
- Many comments about the Hub being reluctant to put people through to the service area, even when the member of public is confident they need to speak to the service directly. '(the Hub)...should not be used as an obstacle to prevent members of the public accessing the specialist staff'.
- The Hub is an efficient way to answer straight-forward queries information
- Comments that Hub has simply created 'another layer', and that enquiries should be dealt with by the service directly. A number of comments about service to the customer having deteriorated
- Clearer navigation of website and online systems is needed. Difficulty of using the online systems and accessing information on website, including highways reporting system
- Several comments about conflicting IT systems 'an application strategy is needed'. Comments about confusion caused by Highway's IT system (PEM)
- A number of comments were also made about Hub staff mis-allocating enquiries, due to lack of knowledge particularly between Client Services and Highways, which wasted time for the customer and frustrated the staff involved.
- The use of the word Hub to describe the service was confusing and didn't define its purpose.
- 'A little information can be dangerous' - a number of comments pointed out that sometimes Hub staff try to be helpful by providing information, when in fact they do not know the accurate answer – which is misleading for the customer, who believes they are talking to a member of staff from the actual service concerned.
- Many staff valued the role of the Hub and its staff, but would prefer the Hub to put through more queries to the service area than they currently do
- Many comments about queries being 'lost in translation' between the public, Hub and officer.
- Some comments gave the impression that some of the criticism was a resistance to change that might be seen as a threat to job security
- Many staff feel that the public would prefer to speak to the service directly
- There were mixed views on whether the Hub should be for just the public, or also for staff, with more people saying it should just be for the public
- Comments about the face to face service were mainly positive
- Complaints about call wait times.

**RESPONSES FROM OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES - SUMMARY**

- Do you share customer contact services with any other partners? E.g. Police. If so, how does this work?
- How are you tackling the challenge of changing the way the public access services. E.g. telephone, web, self-service online.
- What key performance indicators do you use to measure performance of customer contact?
- Do your contact centres handle all customer enquiries, or can enquiries be referred on to the service area? Is it realistic to aim to answer all queries at first point of contact?
- Are you doing any particular work to tackle avoidable contact?
- What impact has the recession had on customer contact and its performance?
- For two-tier authorities, do you have a shared customer contact provision?
- Overall, what are your Councillors' views on customer contact provision? Is there political support?

All of the authorities have various initiatives to tackle the challenge of changing the way the public access services. Examples given include poster campaigns to encourage direct debit and online payments, highlighting website contact on any documentation, training call centre staff to promote online access. Somerset County Council and Kent County Council have used Total Place projects to look at customer contact. The Kent Gateway Programme is summarized later in this section.

Most responses indicated they aimed to answer the majority of queries at first point of contact, with the general consensus being that some matters would always need specialist 'back office' knowledge and/or judgement, and that there needed to be the facility to pass some calls on. The '80/20' balance was quoted to by several respondents, based on the belief that 20% of business calls were too complicated to be dealt with at the first point of contact, and required back office resources, or expert knowledge.

The type of performance indicators used was broadly similar.

Avoidable contact was measured by all of the responding authorities. Two authorities, Suffolk County Council and Buckinghamshire County Council use specific tools to capture data and analyse why customers may end up in the wrong place. Southend Borough Council had collected data daily across 8 service areas, and through a specific action plan had reduced avoidable contact last year from a baseline of 36% to less than 10%.

When asked about the effect of the recession on the volume of enquiries, surprisingly, only 4 of the 11 responses recognised increased volumes of enquiries, 3 of these specifically for revenues and benefits enquiries.

Most responses indicated there was general political support for customer contact provision.

Some authorities have chosen to outsource their customer contact (where a company is contracted to carry out this service on their behalf), or to set up a partnership with



providers such as IBM or BT. Outsourcing is a growing option for local authorities. However, time constraints have meant we have been unable to look at this option.

### Kent Gateway Programme

This project, a joint venture between the County Council and the 12 District Councils, was featured in FOSS 2007 as an innovative example of two-tier working. The Kent Gateway operates on the principle that customer needs determines both the location and mix of services provided in an area. Each of 5 gateways offers services delivered by a range of partners including the County, Districts, NHS and voluntary sector. The participating partners also agreed common governance arrangements, performance indicators and IT infrastructure.

We observed that the Worcestershire Hub has taken on similar ways of working. The main differences appeared to be the inclusion of a greater range of partners such as the NHS, and the perhaps stronger focus on customers' needs, for example regarding opening hours. Of great interest to us was their 'Tell us once' message, where information received from a customer would be automatically passed on to other affected service areas (for example, a customer reporting a bereavement).

We also liked the term 'Gateway', which would seem to be more indicative of its purpose than 'Hub'.

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## **Scrutiny Review: Worcestershire Hub November 2010**

### **Response of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Corporate Services to the Recommendations Cabinet, 25 November 2010**

#### **Summary**

The recommendations of the Joint County / District Scrutiny of the Worcestershire Hub are welcomed and provide further support to the developments already underway or planned. This is valuable in driving a “whole organisation” approach to customer service.

When the Scrutiny exercise was commissioned, the Hub was experiencing challenging times primarily resulting from the increase in demand for service. It is encouraging to receive this vote of confidence in the Hub and the work staff undertake.

The Scrutiny is right to stress the value of the Hub and potential to secure further service improvements and cash savings by using the Hub for more services and developing and promoting the more cost effective online and telephone channels.

It is acknowledged that this exercise has increased the shared understanding of the members involved and that this is critical with regards future developments in customer service provision. The recommendations regarding member induction and sharing performance information with members are welcomed and will be taken forward.

The partnership of seven authorities remains strong within the framework of the partnership agreement that has been in place since 2003. The more recent development of the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service has brought about some more definitive governance arrangements for those participating authorities and whilst this means the governance may be seen as complex, it has been developed in a conscious way. Work is underway to review the overall governance arrangements for the Worcestershire Hub taking account of the key role of the Hub in service transformation. This recognises the aim to have single governance arrangements in place.

Each of the recommendations made as part of the Scrutiny have been taken in turn and a comment provided. A clear updated plan of work is emerging across the partnership and this report is being used to shape and inform the details.

## Recommendations

### RECOMMENDATION 1

*If the Hub is to be increasingly used as a basis for service transformation across the County, it is vital that there is councillor understanding and support across all authorities. All authorities should ensure their inductions include briefing about customer service strategies across the whole of the Worcestershire Hub (and not just their local area), including visits to both local centres and the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Contact Centre (based at Perry Wood Walk).*

**This recommendation is welcomed recognising the increasingly central role of the Hub within each authority. Over recent years, Worcestershire County Council has included the Worcestershire Hub as part of the new member induction process. Consideration can also be given to the inclusion of the Hub as part of Senior Management induction.**

**Work will take place to enable this for 2011 onwards.**

**Over the last year there have been many visits to the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Contact Centre from members from a number of the authorities.**

### RECOMMENDATION 2:

*All authorities consider their scrutiny arrangements of shared services – this could be done at the joint scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs network.*

**The Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the overview and scrutiny committees of each authority within Worcestershire meet regularly to share good practice, avoid duplication of work programmes and discuss possible joint scrutiny. It will be helpful to consider possible ways to scrutinise shared services at this network, and the matter will be raised at a future meeting.**

### RECOMMENDATION 3

*We recommend that each authority and the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service review governance arrangements across the Worcestershire Hub Partnership. The aim would be to ensure clarity, accountability and transparency and to move towards a single governance structure.*

**The governance arrangements for the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service have been established in a conscious, deliberate way. However it is acknowledged that the governance arrangements appear complex recognising the wider partnership agreement for the Worcestershire Hub and then specific arrangements for the Shared Service.**

**A review of governance arrangements is currently underway by the Worcestershire Hub Strategic Management Group as part of a wider piece of work agreed by the Chief Executives of all authorities in August 2010. The Strategic Management Group will report back to Chief Executives with proposals at the end**

of the year.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** *We recommend that the District Councils should consider researching the cost of individual transactions for different services, which will build on the work being carried out by the Hub Shared Service.*

**Work to identify transaction costs and the differences across the various “access channels” is important. The basis for calculating transaction costs needs to be agreed across the partnership to confirm what costs elements are / are not included.**

**The Worcestershire Hub Strategic Management Group has agreed to undertake a piece of work looking at the cost model – end-to-end – for key services. This is important as looking at the transaction costs within the Hub alone does not present the complete picture recognising the depth of service provided as the first point of contact varies.**

**RECOMMENDATION 5**

*The more services use the Hub, the better value it becomes. Therefore, as part of the BOLD programme, the County Council should increase its efforts to ensure all its services use the Hub.*

**This is included as part of the Customer Focus work within the WCC BOLD Programme.**

**Work is also well underway with the Worcestershire Regulatory Service where the Hub will be the countywide first point of contact.**

**RECOMMENDATION 6**

*In light of future funding and the move towards self-service within the Hub, all authorities and the South Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee should monitor and record the efficiencies and savings gained by use of the Hub.*

**Agreed. There are two clear areas of efficiency to be gained through increasing the availability and use of self-service. These are; (1) savings within the Worcestershire Hub by reducing the amount of “assisted” contact both in person, by telephone and post and (2) savings within service areas through streamlined processes, removal of re-keying data, reduced data checking, right first time approach, as well as a reduction in paper publications and forms.**

**RECOMMENDATION 7**

*Appropriate resource plans for the Hub are in place to better plan for forecast demand.*

**This requires continued close working with service areas to understand what influences customer demand and patterns of demand. Forecast effects on demand will be covered as part of the regular service review process (where this is not already happening).**

**The Worcestershire Hub Shared Service is currently in the process of implementing a Workforce Management System. This provides greater capability for using information regarding forecasts to better match resource capacity and demand.**

***RECOMMENDATION 8***

*The Hub also needs to be prepared to deal with unpredicted peaks in service demand, and we recommend that Business Continuity Plans are in place across the Hub Shared Service and the non shared service Hubs.*

**A review of existing Business Continuity Plans will be carried out. The tools available within the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service Contact Centre, including the Workforce Management system, will enable greater ability to plan for peaks in demand. Plans will obviously need to take account of the resources available.**

***RECOMMENDATION 9***

*Performance information should be consistent across the Shared Service and the non-Shared Service districts, to enable like for like comparisons, and we recommend a single performance management framework is established across the Hub.*

**The Worcestershire Hub Strategic Management Group has already acknowledged that information needs to be clear, consistent and visible in order to drive service improvements. As part of the work to address this, the specific elements of performance information will be reviewed and agreed.**

***RECOMMENDATION 10***

*All performance information – for shared service and non-shared service districts – should be made available to all councillors.*

**Once the Performance Management Framework is established, the information will be made available to councillors on a regular basis. It is likely this will be via the internet.**

***RECOMMENDATION 11***

*We recommend that all partners consider the role which scrutiny could play in helping to monitor performance of the Worcestershire Hub, if they have not already done so.*

**Performance monitoring is a key role of the County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board and the overview and scrutiny panels. The Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel receives twice yearly performance information which includes the Worcestershire Hub's key performance indicators. The same process is in place for many – if not all – of the other authorities.**

***RECOMMENDATION 12***

*For telephone enquiries, inform customers of their place in the queue, or an estimated*

*wait time for them to be able to speak to a customer services advisor.*

**The Worcestershire Hub Operational Management Group (Customer Service Managers from across the partnership) will review this in order to determine an appropriate course of action. However, it is important to recognise the recent and current performance with average telephone wait times of approximately 30 seconds. With this level of performance, information regarding the queue is probably not appropriate.**

**Customers are informed about queues/increased demand at peak times and any incidents which impact on call volumes or customer service. Messages are also used as appropriate to signpost customers to websites or provide information.**

***RECOMMENDATION 13***

*Define and agree Service Level Agreements between the Worcestershire Hub and every service area.*

**Agreed. This is critical to improving the quality of service for our customers. Agreements already exist between some service areas and the Worcestershire Hub and clearly there is an opportunity for these to be reviewed in light of increased focus on self service.**

**Service level agreements recognise the end-to-end process and provide clarity about the process followed, information available to customer service staff, information passed to service areas, timescales, performance targets, information in order to set customer expectations etc.**

***RECOMMENDATION 14***

*Ensure there is sufficient time allocated for service area staff and Hub staff to review any issues or needs, and to monitor service provision via the Hub.*

**Many regular service reviews take place between customer service managers and service managers. The format of these reviews will be “firmed up” and managers will ensure these take place on a regular, scheduled basis within the resources available. The frequency of service reviews is determined by the nature of the service and / or the stage of development. Clear contact points and escalation routes will also be confirmed (where they are not already clear) for matters arising.**

**The focus of these reviews is; improving customer service, finding solutions and driving efficiencies.**

***RECOMMENDATION 15***

*Further work on the flow of information between the service area and the Hub (and vice versa) should take place, to ensure that the correct information is provided by the Hub to the service area, and that service area staff provide a response which enables Hub staff to answer the customer enquiry. It is important that both teams understand the implications of what the information they provide will be for the customer. The creation of*

*Service Level Agreements between the Hub and services will support this.*

**Good customer service is the responsibility of all and the creation of Service Level Agreements for all services will support this.**

**The Worcestershire Hub Strategic Management Group (7 authorities represented) is concluding the development of a Customer Strategy. This strategy sets out a number of clear principles to improve customer service. The work to adopt this will then be completed within each authority this year.**

***RECOMMENDATION 16***

*Give all customers the enquiry reference number, to encourage and enable them to track progress themselves online, and reduce the need for repeat enquiries to the Hub.*

**When customers make contact via the Worcestershire Hub they are given a service request number as appropriate, depending on the nature of their enquiry.**

**Work is underway to implement tools to enable the improved monitoring of the status of some open service requests (for certain services) and it is intended to link this to text or email status updates for customers in the future.**

**For certain services, e.g. Highways, customers will be able to track the status online. This is the desired position for self-service.**

***RECOMMENDATION 17***

*Move towards more consistent IT packages, as contracts come up for renewal.*

**It is important to ensure that the direction of self-service, web services and improved workflow are fundamental elements of any future ICT activity. This will be reflected in ICT strategies and service transformation work across the authorities in Worcestershire.**

**A contract is currently in place for the support of elements of the Worcestershire Hub infrastructure, e.g. Telephony System, Customer Relationship Management (CRM). This contract ceases in 2013 and work is already underway to scope the requirements of future arrangements beyond this point. This acknowledges that there is now increased knowledge and experience “in-house”.**

***RECOMMENDATION 18***

*In view of the negative feedback from our survey of parish councillors, we recommend further dialogue between senior officer representatives from the Worcestershire Hub and parish councils, to ensure their feedback can be used to improve the overall Hub service.*

**Specific developments and improvements are communicated via the CALC Newsletter. However, representatives from the Worcestershire Hub Strategic Management Group will meet with CALC to take account of feedback to explore making improvements to the service.**



The majority of contact made by Parish Councils via the Worcestershire Hub relates to Highways matters. The work currently underway between Customer Services and Highways to improve the quality of information available to customers will help improve the experience had by Parish Councils.

**RECOMMENDATION 19**

*The 'Hub' means different things to different people. We recommend further communication of the Hub's identity and services to the public. This could, for example, accompany the issue of council tax bills, which would present a cost-effective opportunity for marketing.*

Information regarding the Worcestershire Hub has been included in previous years as part of the information issued along with Council Tax bills. Work is underway to start preparing for the information to go out with bills in March 2011 and this will take the points regarding Hub Identity into account.

Further communications and marketing activity will also take these points into account.

**RECOMMENDATION 20**

*Our investigation of best practice advice and customer survey results supports our findings that the website offers huge potential for helping customers to help themselves, and for making substantial efficiency savings. This can only be achieved if the website is as user-friendly and effective as possible. We are pleased to see that the website is being improved and recommend that this work continues in order to realise the potential gains in customer satisfaction and efficiency gains.*

In the current climate, it is even more important that a commitment is made to self-service as a strategic issue. A working group made of representatives from across the seven authorities has recently prepared a Self Service Strategy and this was presented to Chief Executives at the end of October. This recognises the key role of self service in the future of improving customer service as well as enabling efficiencies.

A joint plan to deliver the strategy is currently being prepared, this acknowledges that progress has been and continues to be made in a number of areas, however further development work and changes are required to make self-service a core part of service delivery.

The web is fundamental to the Self-Service strategy; however it does include other media such as automated telephone services.

**RECOMMENDATION 21**

*In addressing the website and its expanding role in customer contact, we recommend that consideration is given to where the website sits within the council's organisational structure. This should take account of the need to align expertise in customer contact and communication, as well as information technology.*

**The website is at the heart of improvements and the previous point emphasises the importance of getting self service right and usable. As part of this the positioning of the website within the organisations will be considered. In the meantime, the various services and functions will work together to deliver improvements, e.g. Customer Services, ICT and Marketing & Communications.**

***RECOMMENDATION 22***

*Councils' websites are very important and their profile needs to reflect this. A cabinet member for each authority should have responsibility for the website within his or her portfolio.*

**Alongside the positioning of the website within the organisation, Cabinet Member responsibility for the website will also be clarified where appropriate.**

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**EXTERNAL REFURBISHMENT OF HOUSING STOCK SHORT, SHARP  
REVIEW – FINAL REPORT**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Brandon Clayton, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Local Environment and Health.
Relevant Head of Service	Liz Tompkin, Head of Housing
Non-Key Decisions	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

The External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short, Sharp Review Group is proposing that a number of actions be taken to improve the appearance of properties in the Council's housing stock and the surrounding environment. Whilst the Group focussed on conditions in Woodrow many of the actions they have recommended could be implemented in other parts of the Borough and at a relatively low financial cost to the Council.

A copy of this report was considered during the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 17th November. During the course of this meeting Members endorsed the recommendations listed below, though requested that further details be provided regarding a couple of issues that had been discussed during the course of the review. This version of the report contains these further updated details. (In particular please refer to paragraphs 4.11-4.13.2 and Appendix 3).

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee is asked to note existing RECOMMENDATIONS that**

- 1) light colour paints be utilised to decorate garage doors to improve their visual appearance (as detailed in paragraphs 4.2 – 4.2.3 to the report);**
- 2) the lintels featured on Council properties be decorated to improve the visual appearance of those properties (as detailed in paragraphs 4.3 – 4.3.2);**
- 3) the retaining wall to the rear of 1-12 Martley Close be redecorated as part of a Council arts project (as detailed in paragraphs 4.4 – 4.4.4);**

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- 4) the Council assume responsibility for the maintenance of small strips of land located close to private properties and public spaces (as detailed in paragraphs 4.5 – 4.5.3);
- 5) the Council ensure that, when replacing diseased and dead plants, different types of plants are introduced to ensure there is a variety of leaf colours and foliage in any given area (as detailed in paragraphs 4.6 – 4.6.3);
- 6) the remaining Section 106 money available for use on capital landscaping work in the Greenlands Open Spaces be allocated to soft landscaping work in the courtyard area located in Wishaw Close (as detailed in paragraphs 4.7 – 4.7.6);
- 7) in order to minimise the level of disruption experienced by local residents, a holistic approach to the delivery of frontline services be adopted (as detailed in paragraphs 4.8 – 4.8.2);
- 8) representatives of local schools be invited to participate in estate walkabouts (as detailed in paragraphs 4.9 – 4.9.6); and
- 9) representatives of the local GP's Consortium be invited to participate in the estate walkabouts once the consortia have been introduced in 2012/13 (as detailed in paragraphs 4.10 – 4.10.4); and

to RESOLVE that

- 1) the updated details contained within this report in paragraphs 4.7.5; 4.11 - 4.13.2; 19.2; and Appendix 3 be noted;
- 2) consideration be given as to whether to make any further recommendations in relation to the updates contained in the report and that any such additional recommendations be incorporated into the report for presentation before the Executive Committee; and
- 3) the report be noted.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The review of the external refurbishment of the Council's housing stock was launched in September 2010. Initially, it had been intended that this review

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would be considered by a Task and Finish Group over a period of six months. However, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested on 15th September that the exercise be completed as a short, sharp review. The Committee requested that Councillor Vickery, who was appointed to lead the review, report back to the Committee by 17th November. Councillor Norton was also invited to participate in the exercise.

- 3.2 The review was launched to address concerns about the aesthetic appeal of some of the Council's housing stock. Members recognised that many of the Council's properties in the Borough were maintained to a high standard both in terms of internal facilities and external appearance. However, concerns were expressed about the urban design of many of the Council's properties, particularly on the estates in Woodrow. The design of these buildings was generally not considered to be aesthetically appealing. Moreover, it was suggested that the outward appearance of a property was important as this could impact on: the morale of local residents; the extent to which they felt that they were valued as members of a local neighbourhood or community; and also on the perceptions of other residents and visitors towards the area.
- 3.3 The review was completed in two parts. In the first place, Councillors Vickery and Norton attended a walkabout in Woodrow on 6th October 2010 and were accompanied by relevant expert Officers. During the course of this walkabout Members visited Marley Close, Ombersley Close, Rushock Close and Wishaw Close and observed the condition of Council properties and the surrounding environment in those areas.
- 3.4 A number of issues were identified during the course of the walkabout which Members agreed required further consideration. In particular, issues were identified which had implications for: repairs and maintenance; housing; landscaping; and highways services. These were discussed in further detail during a meeting on 1st November, which formed the second part of the review. Based on these discussions Members proposed a number of recommendations.

**4. KEY ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 Further information about each of the External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short, Sharp Review Group's recommendations is provided below:
- 4.2 **Recommendation One: We recommend that light colour paints be utilised to decorate garage doors to improve their visual appearance.**

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- 4.2.1 During the course of the walkabout Members observed a number of garage doors for Council properties which had been painted brown. Members were concerned that this might not be the most suitable colour to apply to those garage blocks as the impact was to create an unappealing visual image, particularly for residents living in properties overlooking garage blocks. By contrast, Members agreed that where lighter colours could be used the appearance of such buildings was improved. Moreover, this served to improve the aesthetic appearance of local neighbourhoods, which it is contended could have a beneficial impact on local residents' quality of life.
- 4.2.2 Brown paint has been applied to numerous Council garages across the Borough. The supply of the paint and reapplication of paint to the garage doors is currently funded as part of the Council's standard repairs and maintenance process. Officers have advised that the introduction of lighter coloured paints into the Council's paint supply could be achieved relatively easily using existing budgets.
- 4.2.3 The Group were made aware, during the course of the walkabout, that a fresh coat of paint would recently have been applied by the Council to some garage doors. To ensure that the Council secures value for money, Members are suggesting that recently painted surfaces should not be reassessed immediately. Instead the lighter colour paint would only need to be applied as and when required.
- 4.3 **Recommendation Two: We recommend that the lintels featured on Council properties be decorated to improve the visual appearance of those properties.**
- 4.3.1 Lintels feature on the exterior façade of a number of properties in the Council's housing stock. Currently, these lintels are often plain features on similarly plain brick or concrete walls. However, the Group noted that the lintels could alternatively be painted in a bright colour to improve the visual appearance of these properties.
- 4.3.2 Officers have advised that this action could be completed at a relatively limited financial cost to the Council. The supply of paints used to decorate the garage doors could be utilised for this purpose.
- 4.4 **Recommendation Three: We recommend that the retaining wall to the rear of 1-12 Martley Close be redecorated as part of a Council arts project.**

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- 4.4.1 Members observed a concrete wall to the rear of 1-12 Martley Close during the walkabout. As this was a retaining wall Members accepted that this feature could not be demolished. However, because the wall had been constructed using concrete Members expressed concerns that this feature was not aesthetically appealing to view. This added to the generally unattractive view to the rear of Martley Close, where a series of brown garage doors and a visibly large wall stain could be observed. In particular, the view was considered potentially oppressive for residents living in properties located along Woodrow Walk which overlooks the area. Members therefore agreed that particular action needed to be taken to improve the appearance of this local feature.
- 4.4.2 A number of community arts projects have been delivered in recent years which have involved both Redditch Borough Council, local partner organisations and local residents. These art projects have been delivered in a range of locations including pedestrian subways, bus shelters and the shutters utilised for shop units. Frequently, local young people have been involved in producing the artwork and this involvement has helped to encourage a feeling of community ownership and pride in the feature.
- 4.4.3 It is difficult to provide an exact estimate for how much this project would cost to deliver. Financial costs will vary according to a variety of factors including: the ambition of the project; the charges levied by the professional artists; and the materials that are used. However, Officers have estimated that the minimal costs for the project that has been recommended would be approximately £400. (Further information about the financial costs involved in delivering this type of arts project are provided in Appendix 2)
- 4.4.4 Members believe that the wall to the rear of 1-12 Martley Close could usefully form the focus for another community art project. Indeed, Members are keen to encourage community pride in the local area as this could help to secure greater community cohesion.
- 4.5 **Recommendation Four: We recommend that the Council assume responsibility for the maintenance of small strips of land located close to private properties and public spaces.**
- 4.5.1 During the course of the walkabout Members observed a case of fly tipping in Rushock Close, which was subsequently reported through the Council's standard reporting channels. The particular case

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involved the disposal of a certain amount of debris in both the garden of a property and on a narrow strip of public land bordering a public footpath.

4.5.2 Officers have advised that similar small or narrow strips of land are located at various locations across the Borough, and often border both private properties and public spaces. These small strips of land can become overgrown and are unfortunately sometimes used for the disposal of litter.

4.5.3 Ownership of these areas of land is sometimes open to interpretation. However, the Group noted that inappropriate use of such areas could have a detrimental impact on the local environment and on the quality of life for local residents. Therefore, they are recommending that the Council should assume responsibility for the maintenance of these spaces.

4.6 **Recommendation Five: We recommend that the Council ensure that, when replacing diseased and dead plants, different types of plants are introduced to ensure there is a variety of leaf colours and foliage in any given area.**

4.6.1 Members agreed that the numerous plants, particularly the trees, located in Redditch overall created an appealing visual image for the town. However, Members expressed concerns that in some neighbourhoods there was a lack of variety amongst the plant life. As a consequence, Members are suggesting that sometimes the view created by this plant life could be considered potentially dull and uninspiring.

4.6.2 Members have been advised that the Council does not have a programme for planting work in the Borough. In the early years of the Development Corporation numerous trees and other plants were grown in local neighbourhoods. However, over time this had created difficulties. Many plants had unfortunately attracted vandalism or had not been properly cared for, which had created long-term maintenance problems. Consequently, to avoid extending this problem it was not considered appropriate to introduce additional plants into neighbourhoods in order to create greater diversity in the local foliage.

4.6.3 Due to the limited availability of resources planting often now only occurs when there is a need to replace diseased or dead plants. The Group are suggesting that when replacing these plants consideration



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should be given to introducing different plants to a Neighbourhood in order to encourage greater diversity.

**4.7 Recommendation Six: We recommend that the remaining Section 106 money available for use on capital landscaping work in the Greenlands Open Spaces be allocated to soft landscaping work in the courtyard area located in Wishaw Close.**

4.7.1 Members visited a courtyard area close to 88 and 94 Wishaw Close during the course of the walkabout in Woodrow. This courtyard area bordered a number of residential properties as well as a small area of grassland. The ground surface lacked consistency and there was evidence that sections were overgrown with weeds whilst separate patches of tarmac had been added to fill the spaces that had been left when former children's play features had been removed.

4.7.2 Originally a couple of drains had been located on the ground surface of this courtyard. However, over time these drains had become overgrown with weeds and filled with debris. A number of residents encountered during the course of the walkabout explained that the problem had been consistently reported and, whilst the Council's landscaping and cleaning teams did clean these drains when they received reports, it remained a recurring problem. The residents also explained that the drainage problem was compounded by the increasing introduction of driveways throughout the area which was replacing formerly green spaces. This had reduced the surface area for natural drainage so that flooding was increasingly experienced in the neighbourhood following periods of heavy rainfall.

4.7.3 Attempts had been made in the past to improve the visual appearance and practical use of the space for the benefit of local residents. The children's play features and a bench had been installed at the location some years previously. However, residents reported that these features had attracted anti-social behaviour and had eventually been removed.

4.7.4 The Group was keen to resolve the continuing problems associated with the courtyard area to the benefit of local residents. They believe that an appropriate solution to the problem would be to extend the soft landscaping, or grassy area, to cover the whole of the outside space. This would help to resolve the existing problems with the ground surface and would extend the area of natural drainage that might help to reduce the impact of flooding in the neighbourhood.

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- 4.7.5 Members have been advised that a proportion of section 106 money was secured in recent years for investment in capital projects that could be delivered in areas defined as the Greenlands Open Spaces. A portion of this funding remains available and the Group have been advised that it this could legitimately be spent on the project proposed by the Group and within budget. However, Officers have also noted that this project could legitimately be funded using other landscaping budgets without necessarily needing to use Section 106 funds. Further information about the estimated costs involved in delivering the project and the funds available are provided in Appendix 3.
- 4.7.6 Sections of the courtyard area are adopted land. Negotiations would therefore need to be undertaken with Worcestershire County Council over this project. Precedents have been established for negotiations over such works on approved lands and Officers anticipate that the proposed project would be welcomed by relevant departments at both Councils.
- 4.8 **Recommendation Seven: We recommend that in order to minimise the level of disruption experienced by local residents, a holistic approach to the delivery of frontline services be adopted.**
- 4.8.1 During the course of the walkabout Members discussed the arrangements in place for the delivery of frontline services. The Council delivered a variety of services which could impact on local tenants and residents, including repair and maintenance work to Council properties and landscaping work on local greenery.
- 4.8.2 However, delivery of these services was not co-ordinated but tended to be undertaken as and when required throughout the year. Members expressed concerns that this could potentially lead to a greater degree of disruption to residents' lives than might be necessary. The Group are contending, therefore, that there should be corporate planning over the timetables for delivering these services. As part of this process Officers from different departments would be required to liaise over forthcoming works and to attempt to co-ordinate service delivery so that such frontline services were delivered at the same time. Officers would potentially need to spend an extended period of time planning service delivery. However, the Group contends that this would minimise the level of disruption then experienced by local residents.

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- 4.9 **Recommendation Eight: We recommend that representatives of local schools be invited to participate in estate walkabouts.**
- 4.9.1 Estate Walkabouts are increasingly taking place in all wards across the Borough. The walkabouts provide an opportunity for representatives from a variety of services and organisations to work together to address residents', including Council tenants', needs at the local neighbourhood level. This could include reviewing many of the issues assessed by the Short Sharp Review Group and identifying suitable solutions to any problems that are observed.
- 4.9.2 The Council's Housing Team co-ordinates an annual schedule of Estate Walkabouts around the Council's housing estates. Frequently, representatives from the local Landscaping; Community Safety; Tenancy; and Anti-Social Behaviour teams are invited to participate in these walkabouts alongside local Police Officers and ward Councillors.
- 4.9.3 The value of these walkabouts has been recognised by Councillors in previous years and was promoted as an example of best practice for community engagement by the Neighbourhood Groups Task and Finish Group in 2009. However, the Group are suggesting that the value of these walkabouts could be further extended to help address some of the differences in quality of life affecting Redditch which were identified in the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) for Worcestershire in 2009.
- 4.9.4 The CAA identified low educational attainment amongst young people in Redditch as a cause for concern. Members recognise that the CAA has now been disbanded. However, they are also aware that this does not mean that the problems with educational attainment in Redditch have been resolved.
- 4.9.5 The Group are suggesting that the conditions in which young people live, socialise and study indirectly impact on their achievements in education. As such, local schools should be familiar with these conditions so as to address the many factors impacting on the educational experiences of their pupils. The Group contends that participation in estate walkabouts would help representatives of local schools to develop this familiarity.
- 4.9.6 The Redditch Partnership has taken a strategic lead in addressing the low educational attainment levels that were identified in the CAA. The

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Group are therefore suggesting that it would be appropriate for the partnership to be advised about this recommendation.

- 4.10 **Recommendation Nine: We recommend that representatives of the local GP's Consortium be invited to participate in the estate walkabouts once the consortia have been introduced in 2012/13.**
- 4.10.1 Health inequalities were also identified as a cause for concern in the CAA. Within Worcestershire Redditch was discovered to have the highest smoking levels and the least healthy lifestyles.
- 4.10.2 The Group is suggesting that the conditions in which a resident lives, works and socialises may impact on the health of local residents. Some residents may also have received limited education about healthy lifestyles. Under these circumstances the Group are contending that it would be appropriate to invite an expert medical practitioner to participate in the estate walkabouts as this could lead to improvements in public health. The participation of these medical practitioners would provide them with an opportunity to share ideas with local partner organisations as well with the chance to educate any local residents encountered during the course of the walkabouts about healthy lifestyles.
- 4.10.3 The Group are aware that the GP's Consortia are not scheduled to be launched until 2012/13. However, Members noted that these consortia would have a more localised focus than the current Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). Consequently, the Group contends that it would be appropriate to invite representatives of the consortia to participate in the estate walkabouts once these consortia have been established.
- 4.10.4 The Redditch Partnership has taken a strategic lead in addressing the health inequalities that were identified in the CAA. The Group are therefore suggesting that it would be appropriate for the partnership to be advised about this recommendation.
- 4.11 **Additional Issues: Pebbledash façade – Houses situated on Ombersley Close and Rushock Close**
- 4.11.1 During the course of the walkabout the Group observed a number of terraced houses with a pebbledash façade in Ombersley Close and Rushock Close. The pebbledash on these houses was arranged so that the top and bottom of the facing walls had been decorated in a different colour. For the majority of the blocks the top half of the

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buildings had been painted a light grey colour. The bottom half of these pebbledash walls had traditionally been painted black.

- 4.11.2 Members expressed some concerns that the appearance of these pebbledash buildings, particularly the darker lower half of the façade, was not visually appealing. Instead, they suggested that the use of brighter colours to decorate the bottom half of these properties might be more aesthetically pleasing. In particular, the Group agreed that improvements to the visual appearance of the pebbledash buildings could potentially have a beneficial impact on community morale. It was observed during the course of the walkabout that a number of owner occupied properties had been redecorated so that brighter colours had been applied to the lower half of the buildings. This, the Group is suggesting, may indicate that many residents have already recognised the benefits in terms of visual appearance that could be accrued from such redecoration works.
- 4.11.4 Officers have advised Members that the use of lighter colours to decorate the top of the pebbledash buildings and black to decorate the bottom half formed part of the original design for these buildings. As such, numerous coats of paint would be required to alter the colour of the surface. This type of work has been undertaken on similar properties in the past. However, this has tended to form part of a complex process, as it involves spray work and is relatively expensive (For further information about the costs involved in delivering this work please refer to Appendix 1). Consequently, additional expenditure might be required on appropriate paints as well as on the labour required to deliver the service.
- 4.11.5 A number of the pebbledash properties located on Ombersley Close and Rushock Close retain the original light grey and black appearance. Officers have identified 83 such properties, of which 36 are in the Council's housing stock. The Group recognises that the Council could not require owner occupiers to make alterations to the appearance of their houses. However, Members have suggested that it might be possible for the Council to alter the appearance of the 36 Council properties.
- 4.11.5 The demand for redecoration of the property surfaces would need to be assessed prior to any changes being made to the appearance of the buildings. This would require Officers to consult with tenants. The financial costs involved in undertaking this work would also need to be considered as part of this process.

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**4.12 Additional Issues: Road Surface – Rushock Close**

- 4.12.1 Members also observed during the walkabout that the road surface in the entrance to Rushock Close and in the car park beside the garage blocks on that location were in a bad state of repair. The road had been affected by general wear and tear, though had also been disrupted by works undertaken by the utilities companies and the ground frost the previous year.
- 4.12.2 By contrast, during the walkabout Members had noted approvingly a recently paved area close to one of the garage blocks in Rushock Close on which several bollards had been situated. This had been installed as part of the Estates Enhancement Programme in the area.
- 4.12.3 The Group were in agreement that the road surface needed to be improved in this area. They felt that the matter should be reported to the County Highways Department using existing reporting channels. As requested, Officers forwarded this request for the road surface in the entrance to Rushock Close to relevant Officers at the County Highways Department on 25th November for consideration.
- 4.12.4 During the course of the review there had also been some question as to whether the road surface at the entrance to Rushock Close was the responsibility of Redditch Borough Council or the Highways Department at Worcestershire County Council, though it has subsequently been confirmed that the road surface is the responsibility of the County Highways Department. Based on this uncertainty the Group have suggested to Officers that it might be useful for a detailed map of the Borough to be developed to clarify areas of responsibility for all designated roadways and pathways. This could be made available to assist Officers and could be circulated for Members' consideration.

**4.13 Additional Issues: Garages in Wishaw Close**

- 4.13.1 A number of garage blocks were observed during the course of the walkabout. There are 39 garages located on Wishaw Close. 26 of these garages are currently rented by residents. A further 13 of the garages are currently empty.
- 4.13.2 Members expressed particular concerns about the condition of the garage blocks located in Wishaw Close. Many of the garages were in

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a bad state of repair and some, rather than retaining garage doors, had been boarded over. Officers advised the Group that use of these garage blocks by local residents was low. In part, many residents were dissuaded from using the garages because there was limited lighting in the area and there were concerns about anti-social behaviour. Furthermore, many residents were keen to park their vehicles close to their properties, rather than in a separate garage block.

- 4.13.3 The Council has already recognised that there are significant issues in relation to use of the garages. Officers are currently working with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Local Environment and Health, Councillor Brandon Clayton, to review car parking arrangements as part of an ongoing car parking project. Councillor Clayton has confirmed that as part of this process the garages located on Wishaw Close have been included on the car parking project list to be considered for possible demolition.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The majority of the recommended actions could be implemented not just in Woodrow but also in other parts of the Borough at a relatively low financial cost to the Council.
- 5.2 Implementation of the actions requested in recommendation six would require a greater degree of expenditure. However, the Group has been assured that the funding required is available in the form of the section 106 funding secured on a previous occasion. This can be utilised to fund projects that would benefit the local community and should be spent in accordance with set rules and procedures. The Group has been advised that the project they are proposing would comply with these requirements.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications.

**7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The Group are recommending a number of changes to working practices which could have policy implications for particular Council services.

**8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

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The Group's recommendations are designed to enable the Council to meet the objective to be a well managed organisation. In addition, the Group believes that many of the actions they are suggesting, particularly with regards to the visual appearance of Council properties, would help the Council to meet the corporate aim to be clean and green.

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

There are no direct risk management including health and safety implications.

**10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

The Short, Sharp Review Group are recommending actions which are designed to improve living conditions, particularly for the Council's tenants. Furthermore, the Group are suggesting that if the Council was to adopt a holistic approach to service delivery the level of disruption experienced by local residents, including Council tenants, would be minimised. Implementation of this recommendation would therefore have positive implications for local customers.

**11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct equalities and diversity implications.

**12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

The Group recognises that any measures which are implemented in response to this report should be cost effective and represent value for money. In particular, the Group are requesting that if recommendation one is approved, any Council garage doors that were recently painted brown should only receive a fresh coat of lighter paint once redecoration is required. This would ensure that the Council obtains value for money from work that has already been completed.

**13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

The introduction of soft landscaping features in the courtyard area located in Wishaw Close would expand the surface area suitable for natural drainage.



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This would help to address some of the problems that residents have recently reported with flooding in the vicinity.

**14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct human resources implications.

**15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct governance or performance management implications.

**16. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF  
CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998**

During the course of the walkabout on 6th October Members and Officers observed some evidence of anti-social behaviour. Evidence of anti-social behaviour is generally identified by Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Safety Officers when conducting regular site visits to locations across the Borough and is not strictly within the remit of the Group to review. The evidence that was observed has been referred to the Redditch Community Safety Partnership's Tasking Group for further consideration.

**17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

The proposal to involve representatives of the local GP's Consortium in estate walkabouts does have health inequalities implications. The inclusion of representatives from the health service in these walkabouts might help local partners to identify issues within the local environment which encourage unhealthy lifestyles. Moreover, medical practitioners could provide expert advice on healthy lifestyles to any residents encountered during the walkabouts.

**18. LESSONS LEARNT**

Short, sharp scrutiny reviews have rarely been undertaken in Redditch. However, this review has demonstrated that short sharp reviews can add value and can be completed relatively quickly. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee might therefore wish to consider expanding the use of short sharp review arrangements for scrutinising relevant subjects in future years.

**19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

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19.1 During the course of the walkabout two residents engaged in conversation with the Members and raised a number of concerns about Wishaw Close. The views expressed by these residents were taken into consideration by the Councillors and helped to inform their final recommendations.

19.2 Wider community consultation has not been undertaken to date, in part due to the brief length of time available to complete a short, sharp review. Consultation with tenants would need to be considered as part of any additional recommendations that may be made on the subject of the appearance of the Council housing stock, including the pebbledash buildings.

**20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	Not directly, though Councillor Brandon Clayton was present at the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when the report was originally considered.
Chief Executive	No.
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	No.
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	No.
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	No.
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	No.
Head of Service	The Head of Community Services and the Head of Housing

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	both participated in the walkabout in Woodrow and have been consulted over the Group's recommendations.
Head of Resources	No.
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	No.
Corporate Procurement Team	No.

**21. WARDS AFFECTED**

Greenlands ward is directly affected by the recommendations detailed within this report. However, many of the Group's recommendations could also be implemented in other wards in the Borough.

**22. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1- Repair and Maintenance Costs.

Appendix 2 – Art Projects – Financial Costs.

Appendix 3 – Estimated Cost of Proposed Soft Landscaping Works in Wishaw Close.

**23. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Comprehensive Area Assessment 2009, Audit Commission.

Neighbourhood Groups Task and Finish Group, Final Report, 2009.

Notes from the walkabout in Woodrow which took place on Wednesday 6th October 2010.

Notes from the meeting of the External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short, Sharp Review Group which took place on Monday 1st November 2010.

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Photographic evidence taken during the walkabout on 6th October 2010.

**24. KEY**

CAA – Comprehensive Area Assessment.

**25. EXPRESSIONS OF THANKS**

The External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short sharp Review Group would like to thank the following individuals for the help they provided during the course of the review. As this was a short sharp review the process had to be completed quickly and a number of people provided information when requested in a very short space of time.

The Group would particularly like to thank the residents from Wishaw Close who engaged with the Councillors during the walkabout.

Members also wish to thank the following Officers for the contributions they have made to this review:

Jayne Bough, Housing Services Manager  
Angie Heighway, Head of Community Services  
Peter Hill, Community Safety Project Officer  
Amar Hussain, Assistant Solicitor  
Ian Ranford, Capital Operations Manager  
Liz Tompkin, Head of Housing  
Carl Walker, Landscape and Countryside Manager  
Mark White, Capital Projects Officer

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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Tel: (01527) 64252 Extn: 3268.

**Appendix 1**

**Repair and Maintenance Costs**

The External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short Sharp Review Group have recommended that the garage doors and lintels featuring on Council properties should be painted in light colours.

**Paint:**

The estimated cost for any colour of paint that could be applied to garages, lintels and concrete uprights, is £87.50 per garage.

**Rough Cast Works:**

Repair and maintenance can also carry out rough cast works to houses. This was considered by the Group for the redecoration of the pebbledash houses in Ombersley Close and Rushock Close, 39 of which are in the Council's housing stock. Eventually this idea was rejected on the basis of the financial costs involved.

The estimated cost of applying paint to the pebbledash on the inner property section (including scaffolding) is £1,266.

The estimated cost of applying paint to the pebbledash lower section (including scaffolding) is £431.12.

The estimated cost of painting the pebbledash gable (including scaffolding) is £1,936.60.

It is anticipated that the costs would reduce when accurate site measurements and constructors' discounts are applied.



## **Appendix 2:**

### **Arts Projects – Financial Costs**

The financial costs involved in delivering an arts project vary according to the scale of the project. However, based on the costs levied for a recent arts project it is possible to estimate the minimal costs.

#### Recent Arts Project: Brick Bus Shelters

For this project two brick bus shelter were spray painted, (covering a space approximately equivalent to two to three times the space of the wall in Martley Close). Each bus shelter also received an anti-graffiti coating. Two professional artist were contracted to deliver the art project in co-operation with a small group (4-12) supervised young people. The designs were created by the young people. The total financial cost involved in delivering this project was £660.

#### Arts Project, Martley Close: Estimated Cost

The wall appears to cover a smaller surface area than the two bus shelters, and would be approximately the size of a width of a standard garage door (though no measurements have been taken). It has been estimated that for an area the size of one garage door space, and if the art work was completed to the same standard as the bus shelter project, the minimum costs involved in delivering the project would be approximately £400. This is based on an estimate that the work would take four hours to complete.

Officers have advised that if the area needed to be pre-painted ready for the artwork an additional £80.00 would be added to the price.





**Appendix 3: Estimated Cost of Proposed Soft Landscaping Works in Wishaw Close**

The External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short, Sharp Review Group are proposing that soft landscaping work should be undertaken in the courtyard area located to the front of 94 and 88 Wishaw Close using Section 106 funds. The following information has been provided by Officers to produce an estimate for the financial costs involved in completing this work:

**Work required:**

The courtyard area to the front of 94 and 88 Wishaw Close currently has a bitumen coating. This covers a surface area of approximately 89m<sup>2</sup>. A main sewer cover is located in this area which will need to be lifted by brickwork.

To complete the soft landscape work in a simple form the old bitumen surface would first need to be removed and disposed of. Top soil would then need to be imported and graded over the area to seed for grass.

Estimate: An estimate has been requested from one of the council's contractor's to provide an approximation of the costs involved in delivering this work. The contractor estimated that the work would cost £2,000 – £2,500 + VAT to complete.

**Section 106 funding available:**

It is estimated that £16,000 of section 106 funds are available which could legitimately be allocated to funding this project.





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No Direct Ward Relevance

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#### **PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORTS: QUESTIONS AND SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION WITH COUNCILLOR MICHAEL BRALEY, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CORPORATE MANAGEMENT**

The following themes have been suggested by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Questions relating to these themes will be posed to Councillor Michael Braley, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on Wednesday 8th December 2010.

- 1) **What is the current position in respect of sickness absence?**
- 2) **ICT Shared Services - how successful has Phase 1 been and how is Phase 2 proceeding?**
- 3) **What are the Options for the former Covered Market area?**
- 4) **What effect have the Shared Service arrangements for the Senior Management Team had on the lower levels of management at the Council?**
- 5) **How can we improve Customer Services when the Council is beholden to the Worcestershire Hub which does not perform well and over which we have no control?**
- 6) **What has been done to sort out recent ICT and Phone system failures?**
- 7) **Please explain the “systems thinking” method introduced for 4th tier Managers.**
- 8) **What problems does he foresee in respect of services within his Portfolio and how will he deal with them?**
- 9) **How much has Bromsgrove District Council benefited from Shared Service arrangements?**

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*NB Note draft revision /Update – Page 2. S*

## REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL GUIDE TO / FOR PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Portfolio Holders are appointed annually by the Council (separate sheet refers) and between them cover all areas of the Council's work and responsibility.

"Portfolio" indicates a specified area of responsibility allotted by formal resolution, for the purposes listed below.

"Portfolio Holder" indicates a member of the Council's Executive Committee who, within the allotted area of responsibility, .....

<b>CAN</b>	1.	<b>Monitor Council performance</b> informed by documents such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Strategy</li> <li>• Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Service Plans</li> <li>• Budgets</li> <li>• E.Government statements</li> <li>• BVPI's / Local PI's (separate document available)</li> <li>• Forward Plan</li> </ul>	*
	2.	<b>Monitor the implementation of Council policy and decisions</b> informed, in addition to the above, by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council reports and Minutes</li> <li>• Personal contact with Officers</li> </ul>	*
	3.	<b>Act as consultee</b> for Members and Officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formally, in accordance with approved delegations of authority to Officers</li> <li>• Informally for general reference.</li> </ul>	*
	4.	<b>Act as "Spokesperson"</b> for the Council in relation to Press / Media / outside the Council, <b>but not exclusively (other Members may also</b>	

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		<b>have this shared role)</b> (Council decision – 11th October ??)	
	5.	<b>Act as “Rapporteur”</b> a) to report annually to Overview & Scrutiny on the Services for which the Portfolio Holder has responsibility; and b) to act as a channel for feedback from representatives of outside bodies which fall within the remit of the Portfolio Holder. (Council Annual Meeting 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2006)	
	6.	<b>the role of Portfolio Holders be expanded to include a higher level of involvement with the Local Strategic Partnership, and, more specifically, with relevant Sub-Groups of the Redditch Partnership, as and when formed.</b> (Exec January 2007 / Council ...)	
<b>CANNOT</b>		Act with delegated authority in any personal capacity (PFHs cannot therefore commit resources – financial / staffing, without further authority – Exec., Council, or Officer authority)	
			*
<b>MAY</b>	1.	Represent and “sponsor” their allotted Portfolio(s) at meetings of the Executive and the Council, and, <i>where appropriate</i> , at other Council meetings, e.g. O&S.	
	2.	Develop closer working relationship with relevant lead Directors and, via Directors, other relevant Officers.	
	3.	Attend relevant meetings, e.g. relevant O&S meetings, beyond those to which formally appointed by the Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As an approved duty where invited to the meeting</li> <li>• Also as an approved duty when present on own initiative.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">in accordance with current approved constitutional requirements.</p>	
	4.	Seek to trigger reports to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Executive or Council, via normal report / agenda preparation processes</li> <li>• Regulatory Committees, via normal report /</li> </ul>	

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		<p>agenda preparation processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview and Scrutiny Committee</li> </ul> <p>in accordance with current approved constitutional requirements.</p>	

G:M&C/Members/Portfolio Holder Guide  
& Constitution / Const.documents/revised sms/8.7.6/16.7.7

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**QUARTERLY BUDGET MONITORING - APRIL TO SEPTEMBER QUARTER**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Michael Braley, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Relevant Head of Service	Teresa Kristunas, Head of Finance and Resources
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

The report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the budget including the achievement of approved savings as at the end of the second quarter of 2010/11.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that**  
  
**subject to any comment, the report be noted.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

The Council set its base budget for 2010/11 on the 22nd February 2010. This included budget savings which were approved on 6th April 2009, the detailed savings for 2010/11 are included in Appendix 1. In addition to this there is a sum of £200k built into the base budget for vacancy/turnover savings.

**4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 Appendices 2 and 3 detail the projected turnover variances as at the end of the first quarter. The budget for 2010/11 includes £350k for vacancy / turnover savings.
- 4.2 The savings detailed within Appendices 2 and 3 may fluctuate during the year particularly where they relate to vacant posts. Any movements on these will be reflected in future monitoring reports.
- 4.3 The projected variances for General Fund at the end of the second quarter are savings of £532.2.
- 4.4 Appendix 4 details savings achieved at the end of the second quarter against the target of £1,153.9k.

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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4.5 At the end of September savings of £532.2K have been identified against the target of £1,153.9k. This would indicate that the council is not on target to deliver the approved savings although the figure for vacancy/outturn savings may fluctuate during the year. The savings for REDI however will start to be realised during the third quarter of the year. The estimated shortfall at the end of 2nd quarter is 89K.

4.6 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 2010 stood at £1.504million.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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.

**7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

None Specific – information only.

**8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

The report is required to ensure that the authority is managing its budgets effectively and to ensure that Members are aware of any unexpected expenditure and effects on Council's balances during the year. This is part of a Well Managed Organisation.

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY  
CONSIDERATIONS**

9.1 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.



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9.2 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.

**10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

None Specific.

**11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

None Specific.

**12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

None Specific.

**13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

None Specific.

**14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

None Specific.

**15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

None Specific.

**16. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998**

None Specific.

**17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

None Specific.

**18. LESSONS LEARNT**

None Specific.

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****Overview and Scrutiny  
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**19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

None Specific.

**20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	Yes
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	Yes
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	Yes
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Resources	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	N/A

**21. WARDS AFFECTED**

All Wards

**22. APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1 Budget savings approved on 6th April 2009  
Appendix 2 Quarterly Monitoring Directorate Summary April – September 2010 (to follow)  
Appendix 3 Explanations for projected variances

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Appendix 4 Budget savings – position as at end of second quarter  
2010/11

**23. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Council Minutes 6th April 2009 and 22nd February 2010.

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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Tel: (01527) 64252 extn 3790



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Appendix 1

8th December 2010

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

Description	2010/11 £'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
Arrow Valley Countryside Centre	24.0
Pay Award	120.0
Property Services	10.3
Licensing Officer	13.3
Cllrs Personal Budgets	16.5
INCOME	
Forge Mill	10.0
Private Sector Lifeline to breakeven	28.4
Car parking (Town Hall/Trafford Park)	22.0
Dial- a- Ride	10.0
Arrow Valley Countryside Centre	10.0
<b>Subject to ongoing monitoring -</b>	
Pitcheroak Golf Course	56.9
Shared Services	290.0
Vacancy Management	125.0
REDI	160.0
Printing	52.0
Procurement	70.0
Committee Services	14.0
Benefits Subsidy	100.0
Community Meeting Rooms	61.0
Support Service Costs	25.0

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**Appendix 1**

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Total savings/additional income	1,370.3
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# Executive Committee

2nd December 2010

## APPENDIX 2

### Quarterly Monitoring Directorate Summary April - September 2010

Directorate	A Budget £	B Profiled YTD Budget £	C YTD Actuals £	D Commitments £	E (C+D) Actual + Commitments £	F (B - E) Variance to Date £	Projected Outturn £	Projected Variance £
Chief Executive	14,480	31,213	(119,682)	149,910	30,228	985	6,060	(8,420)
Leisure, Culture, Environment and Community	9,404,350	5,165,216	4,861,653	92,350	4,954,003	211,213	9,502,589	68,239
Planning, Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing	2,315,110	1,026,899	651,720	5,000	656,720	370,179	2,194,128	(120,982)
Finance and Corporate Resources	3,263,440	1,016,772	1,074,540	231,379	1,305,919	(289,147)	3,184,787	(128,653)
Policy, Performance and Partners	166,830	88,836	(214,101)	260,692	46,591	42,245	166,830	0
Un-apportioned Overheads	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(342,384)
<b>Total:</b>	<b>15,164,210</b>	<b>7,328,936</b>	<b>6,254,130</b>	<b>739,331</b>	<b>6,993,461</b>	<b>335,475</b>	<b>15,054,394</b>	<b>(532,200)</b>
Housing Revenue Account	146,000	7,300	12,400	0	12,400	5,100	146,000	(30,000)
HRA Repairs	4,080,150	2,040,051	1,884,699	0	1,884,699	(155,352)	4,080,150	30,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>4,226,150</b>	<b>2,047,351</b>	<b>1,897,099</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,897,099</b>	<b>(150,252)</b>	<b>4,226,150</b>	<b>0</b>





# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Appendix 3

8th December 2010

### Budget Monitoring Apr – September 2010 Explanations for projected outturn variances

#### Chief Executive Directorate

##### CE Head of Paid Service

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0114	PA & Directorate Support	(8,420)	Vacant Post
<b>Total</b>	<b>Chief Executive Directorate</b>	<b>(8,420)</b>	

#### Executive Director of Finance & Resource

##### Head of Finance & Resources

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0107	Local Taxation	(20,740)	Two Vacant Posts
0606	Corporate Expenses	(10,209)	IFRS Rebate-Audit Commission
0607	Corporate Activities	15,056	Advert – Shared Services
0430	M'Ment of Investment Properties	12,070	Additional costs relating to Arrow Valley Social Club
0435	Comm Related Asset Property	(49,900)	Additional provision for NNDR void properties
0141	Human Resources	(15,000)	Salary savings, review to be undertaken January 2011

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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## Appendix 3

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### Head of Customer Services

0124	Customer Service Centres	(9,930)	Vacant Post and Maternity Leave
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<b>Total</b>	<b>Finance &amp; Resources</b>	<b>(78,653)</b>	
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# Overview and Scrutiny

## Appendix 3

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### Executive Director of Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory & Housing Services

#### Head of Housing & Community

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0189	Hsg Capital	(24,355)	Vacant post
0482	St Davids Hse Canteen	6,295	Social Services reduced funding

#### Head of Planning & Regeneration

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0432	Business Centres	(39,270)	Additional provision for NNDR void properties
0142	Planning Services	(33,652)	Vacant posts
0751	Planning Applications	(30,000)	Additional receipts in first half of year

<b>Total</b>	<b>Planning &amp; Ren., Regulatory &amp; Housing</b>	<b>(120,982)</b>	
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### Executive Director of Leisure, Environment & Community Services

#### Head of Community Services

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0705	Shopmobility	15,000	Town Centre Management have reduced grant to RBC & charged for electricity

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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0780	ASB	(3,818)	Salary saving vacant post 80% HRA
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### Head of Environmental Services

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0151	L'Scape & Cntryside/Waste Management	(17,495)	Staff vacancy
0143	Environmental Service Management	(19,769)	Staff vacancies (now being covered by agency/fixed term staff)
0717	Garden Waste Collection	(10,322)	Pilot scheme introduced in April – income received
0472	Pay & Display Car parks	19,000	Service not achieving budget income

### Head of Leisure and Cultural Services

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0052	Free Swimming	23,143	Net effect of loss of grant and saving of pool hire
0005	Hewell Rd Swimming Pool	11,250	Loss of income due to free swimming pool hire
0025	Kingsley School Swimming Pool	11,250	Loss of income due to free swimming pool hire

<b>Total</b>	<b>Leisure, Environment &amp; Community</b>	<b>28,239</b>	
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### Housing Revenue Account

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
	Housing Repairs	30,000	Increased boiler repairs and electrical contracts

# Overview and Scrutiny

## Appendix 3

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	Item 8	(30,000)	Reduced interest rates on Item 8
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<b>Total</b>	<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>	<b>(0)</b>	
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### Summary -

<b>Total variances</b>	<b>£</b>
General Fund	(158,706)
Housing Revenue Account	(21,110)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(179,816)</b>



# Executive Committee

# Appendix 4

8th September 2010

## APPENDIX 4

### Position as at end of Second Quarter

	Target 2010/11 £'000	Actual for 2nd Quarter 2010/11 £'000	Comments
Pitcheroak Golf Course	56.9	13.5	Will not achieve income this year –expected to underachieve by 30K
Shared Services	290.0	210.0	Identified from shared management structure
Vacancy Management/Outturn savings*	325.0	158.7	Monitoring in place
REDI	160.0	0.0	This is likely to achieve just 30K this financial year no savings at present due to redundancy costs
Printing	52.0	-	Unlikely to be achieved/contract negotiations currently in place
Procurement	70.0	70.0	On track to be achieved
Committee Services	14.0	-	Not likely to be achieved.
Benefits Subsidy	100.0	50.0	On target to be achieved
Community Meeting Rooms	61.0	30.0	Will achieve this financial year
Support Service Costs	25.0	-	Added to vacancy savings
*including £200k already built into base budget			
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,153.9</b>	<b>532.2</b>	





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**QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT**  
**QUARTER 2, 2010/11 – PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 2010**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Michael Braley, Redditch Portfolio holder for Corporate Management
Relevant Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

This report provides Members with an opportunity to review the Council's performance for quarter 2 of the 2010/11 financial year and to comment upon it.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that**

**subject to any comments, the update on key performance indicators for the period ending September 2010 be noted.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The National Indicator (NI) set was introduced with effect from 1st April 2008 and became the only indicators that public authorities are required to report on to central Government. Figures collected for 2008/09 formed the baseline for future reporting. 27 national indicators are included in the Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Worcestershire of which 12 are district indicators.
- 3.2 The LAA is to be abolished and NI set reduced. We will review the indicator set as part of the production of the Council Plan 2011/12, however the situation may remain fluid for a while.
- 3.3 To maintain data quality, the Council uses an electronic data collection (EDC) spread sheet. This shows our current and historic performance against selected national indicators and local performance indicators.

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**4. KEY ISSUES**

Basis of Quarterly Reporting

4.1 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.
- c) Continuing to monitor selected National Indicators and retained Best Value Performance Indicators (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.

4.2 Member involvement in monitoring performance will continue during the 2010/11 reporting year with quarterly performance updates.

Corporate Performance Report

4.3 The corporate performance report compares the year to date outturn with the same period last year and shows those indicators which are included in the Council Plan and whether they have improved, declined and remained static in performance.

4.4 In total, data has been provided for 34 indicators for quarter 2. Of these, 20 have improved in performance and 13 have declined compared to the same quarter last year. In addition there is 1 indicator which has remained static, but this indicator is currently at optimum performance and as such no improvement is possible.

4.5 This report shows that of the 34 indicators reported this quarter, 58.8% have improved when compared to the same period last year. By way of example:

- NI 195(a) – the levels of litter in the borough have also reduced when compared to the same period last year, down from 9% to 3%;

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- NI 181 – the time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events has demonstrated a positive direction of travel as the length of time to process the claims has reduced by 4.98 days compared to the same period last year;
- NI 016 – serious acquisitive crime rate has fallen when compared to the same period last year, reducing by 74 offences;
- NI 155 – number of affordable homes delivered (gross) has improved with 58 properties being delivered for the period compared to 39 properties for 2009/10;
- EC 005 – there has been an increase of 17588 visitors to Hewell Road and Abbey Stadium when compared to the same period last year;
- EC 008 – number of visitors to the Museum and Bordesley Abbey Visitor Centre has increased by 5,669 compared to the same period last year;
- EC 015 - number of visitors to the Arrow Valley Countryside Centre has increased its visitor numbers by 30011 when compared to the same period last year
- BV 212 – when compared to the same period last year, the average length of time taken to re-let local authority housing has reduced from 28.32 days to 18.99 days.

4.6 There are also indicators which are highlighted as areas for concern:

- NI 015 – serious violent crime rate has increased by 14 offences, an equivalent of 70%, when compared to the same period last year;
- NI 195(b) – the levels of detritus have increased when compared to the same period last year, rising from 27% to 34%;
- BV 012 – the number of working days / shifts lost to the Local Authority due to sickness absence per full time equivalent staff member has increased from 3.88 days to 4.91 days when compared to the same period last year;
- WM 017 – the number of people using the Shopmobility service has fallen by 1,410 when compared to the same period last year.

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**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Poor financial performance will be detrimental to any Council assessment and overall performance. Specific financial indicators included in the 2010/11 set are listed below:

- NI 181 – time taken to process housing benefit / council tax benefit new claims and change events;
- BV 008 – 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 79b (i) – the amount of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered as a percentage of all HB overpayments.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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, but are not all applicable to Redditch Borough Council. The Government have announced that the NI set is to be reduced and these changes will be reviewed as part of the production of the Council Plan 2011/12.

**7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The Council's current Council 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. Appendix 1 reports on the 2010/11 performance indicators contained within the Council Plan.

**8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

The performance data contained in the attached report relates directly to all the Council's priorities and objectives.

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY  
CONSIDERATIONS**

Assessing the Council's performance forms part of the Council's approach to risk management.

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**10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Information contained in the attached appendix will be communicated to both internal and external customers via the intranet/Internet following resolution at committee.

10.2 Additional customer service performance indicators have been added for 2010/11:

- WMO 011 – Percentage of calls resolved at first point of contact;
- WMO 012 – Percentage of calls answered (switchboard and contact centre);
- WMO 013 – Average speed of answer (seconds);
- WMO 014 – Number of complaints received;
- WMO 015 – Number of compliments received.

Performance for these indicators can be found in Appendix 1

10.3 Enhanced performance will assist to improve customer service.

**11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are two performance indicators included in the 2010/11 corporate set which relate to equality and diversity. These indicators are both performing well with the number of racial incidents recorded (BV 174) improving and the percentage of recorded incidents resulting in further action (BV 175) remaining at 100%.

**12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

Performance indicators would form part of any assessment of a service's value for money along with financial information and customer feedback.

**13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

There are a total of 4 performance indicators that relate to air quality and climate change within the list of National Indicators all of which are included in the corporate set. These indicators are all reported annually.

- NI 185 – Percentage reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> from Local Authority operations;

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- NI 186 – Per capita reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the local authority area;
- NI 188 – Planning to adapt to climate change and,
- NI 194 – Air quality – percentage reduction in NO<sub>x</sub> and primary PM<sub>10</sub> emissions through local authority's estate and operations.

**14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

The performance indicator set includes BV 012 which reports on the number of working days / shifts lost to the local authority due to sickness absence per full time equivalent staff member. Quarter 2, 2010/11 shows an increase in the amount of time lost due to sickness absence compared to the same period last year.

**15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Performance management implications are detailed within this report at Appendix 1.

**16. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998**

There are a number of performance indicators relating to community safety in the 2010/11 corporate indicator set.

- NI 15 – Serious violent crime rate;
- NI 16 – Serious acquisitive crime rate;
- NI 17 – Perceptions of anti-social behaviour and
- NI 21 – Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police;
- NI 27 – Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police and,
- NI 41 – Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem
- CS 002 – Total British Crime Survey crimes.

Performance for these indicators can be seen in Appendix 1.

**17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

None specific.

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**18. LESSONS LEARNT**

Any lessons learnt in the course of carrying out performance management of the Council are communicated to the organisation via the Performance Management Group.

**19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

The performance indicators are based on the corporate priorities upon which the public are consulted.

**20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	YES at Portfolio Holders Briefing
Chief Executive	YES at CMT
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	YES at CMT
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	YES at CMT
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	YES at CMT
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	YES
Head of Service	N/A
Head of Resources	YES at CMT
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	YES at CMT
Corporate Procurement Team	NO

**21. WARDS AFFECTED**

All wards

**22. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Quarter 2, 2010/11 Corporate Performance Report.

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**23. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

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**Corporate Performance Report**  
**Quarter 2, 2010/11 - Period Ending September 2010**

The following pages provide a report for all corporate performance indicators which are contained in the Council Plan, for which data was expected and provided in quarter 2 (July - September) 2010/11; the information relates to a year to date comparison where data is available for both periods.

	Finance & Corporate Resources (FR)		Leisure, Environmental & Community Services (LEC)		Areas of Highest Need (AOHN)		Policy, Performance & Partnerships (PPP)		Planning, Regeneration, Regulatory & Housing Svcs (PRRH)		Total	
		%		%		%		%		%		%
Total number of corporate performance indicators providing outturn data for quarter 2	5		24		0		0		5		34	
Total number of indicators showing improvement compared to the same period last year	4	80.0%	14	58.3%	NO OUTTURNS EXPECTED THIS QUARTER		NO OUTTURNS EXPECTED THIS QUARTER		2	40.0%	20	58.8%
Total number of indicators showing a decline compared to the same period last year	1	20.0%	9	37.5%					3	60.0%	13	38.2%
Total number of indicators showing no change compared to the same period last year**	0	0.0%	1	4.2%					0	0.0%	1	2.9%

\*\*The indicator showing no change is currently at optimum performance and as such, no improvement is possible

**Key Findings for Quarter 2**

This report shows that of the 34 indicators reported this quarter, 58.8% have improved when compared to the same period last year. By way of example, the time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events (NI 181) has demonstrated a positive direction of travel as the length of time to process the claims has reduced by nearly 5 days compared to the same period last year. Likewise, serious acquisitive crime rate (NI 16) has fallen by 29% when compared to the same period last year and the percentage of litter found (NI 195a) has fallen from 9% to 3% showing a high standard of street cleanliness.

However there are also indicators which are highlighted as areas for concern; BV 012, the number of working days / shifts lost to the Local Authority due to sickness absence per full time equivalent staff member continues to be a cause of concern as this has increased from 3.88 days to 4.91 days compared to the same period last year. In addition, levels of fly-tipping have increased (NI 196) resulting in the level increasing from 1 to 3 (where 1 is good and 4 is poor).

**Additional Information**

In quarter 1 a new column was added to this report showing the most recent benchmarking data where it is available. These benchmark figures have been collated by taking the best outturn from a list of our 'nearest neighbours'. The nearest neighbour list is put together by CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy) and contains a list of authorities which most closely match the characteristics of Redditch. The benchmark for BV 008 (percentage of invoices paid) and BV 012 (sickness absence) is no longer available nationally, therefore we have taken the best outturn for Worcestershire as a benchmark for these indicators.

**Corporate Performance Report**  
**Quarter 2, 2010/11 - Period Ending September 2010**

Areas of Highest Need is a new project and performance indicators are currently in development. Performance measures are being actively examined by Worcestershire County Council Research and Improvement Team to develop an appropriate set. The challenge is disaggregating the information into a very small geographical area (Lower Super Output Area). It was hoped that data for these indicators would be available from quarter 2 however this is now expected for quarter 3 (Oct - Dec), 2010.

The table below shows a key to terms and symbols used throughout this report.

<b><u>Key to Terms and Symbols</u></b>			
Improving performance compared to same period last year	☺	Positive Trend	+ve
Worsening performance compared to same period last year	☹	Negative Trend	-ve
No change in performance compared to same period last year	☺☹	Data is provisional	*
No data available for the period	#	To be confirmed	TBC
Not applicable for this indicator/period	NA	Place Survey	(PS)
		Recovery plan in place	(RP)
		Lower Super Output Area	LSOA
		West Midlands	WM
		Department of Energy and Climate Change	DECC

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 April 2009 30 Sep 2009	1 April 2010 30 Sep 2010	Direction of Travel	Target 2010/11	Benchmark (where applicable)	2008/09	2009/10	
		17.25 70.45% 93.68% 3.88 NA NA NA 46 122	12.27 81.62% 92.77% 4.91 97.99% 78.75% 15.5 44 145	☺ ☺ ☹ ☹ NA NA NA ☺ ☺	12 days 80.00% 95% 9.02 90% 80% 20 secs Contextual measure Contextual measure	5 NA 98.24% 9.02 NA NA NA NA NA	17.70 65.24% 91.62% 9.60 NA NA NA NA NA	13.40 75.99% 93.55% 9.02 NA NA NA 83 287	
Time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events (days)	NI 181	17.25	12.27	☺	12 days	5	17.70	13.40	Target met.
The amount of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered as a percentage of all HB overpayments	BV 079b(i)	70.45%	81.62%	☺	80.00%	NA	65.24%	75.99%	Performance has significantly improved in Q2. Housing Benefit Overpayment Recovery Officer is now being effective in improving recovery rates.
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	93.68%	92.77%	☹	95%	98.24%	91.62%	93.55%	Awaiting new system to be implemented.
The number of working days/shifts lost to the local authority due to sickness absence per FTE staff member	BV 012	3.88	4.91	☹	9.02	9.02	9.60	9.02	Increase in sickness from last quarter.
Customer services - percentage of enquiries resolved at first point of contact	WMO 011	NA	97.99%	NA	90%	NA	NA	NA	We have made significant progress in capturing more of our enquiries in the Customer Relationship Manager.
Customer services - percentage of calls answered (switchboard and contact centre)	WMO 012	NA	78.75%	NA	80%	NA	NA	NA	We have seen a slight improvement in the % of calls answered despite also logging more information on systems. We are continuing to look at ways in which we can improve performance.
Customer services - average speed of answer (seconds)	WMO 013	NA	15.5	NA	20 secs	NA	NA	NA	This does not include calls a customer pins in the extension for themselves.
Number of complaints received	WMO 014	46	44	☺	Contextual measure	NA	NA	83	The number of complaints received have increased in the last quarter, however we have received fewer complaints when compared to the same period last year.
Number of compliments received	WMO 015	122	145	☺	Contextual measure	NA	NA	287	We have received slightly more compliments than the same quarter last year, and the year to date figure shows that we continue to receive increasing numbers of compliments.

Key to Terms and Symbols		
☺	Positive Trend	+ve
☹	Negative Trend	-ve
☺	Data is provisional	*
#	To be confirmed	TBC
NA	Place Survey	(PS)
☺	Recovery plan in place	(RP)
☹	Lower Super Output Area	LSOA
☺	West Midlands	WM
#	Department of Energy and Climate Change	DECC
NA		

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 April 2009 30 Sep 2009	1 April 2010 30 Sep 2010	Direction of Travel	Target 2010/11	Benchmark (where applicable)	2008/09	2009/10	
			Viewpoint Survey	NA	+ve	81.90%	72% (P)	71.7%	
% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area (former PS)	NI 001	NA	Viewpoint Survey	NA	+ve	81.90%	72% (P)	71.7%	Bi-annual indicator. The next survey is to take place in November 2010 and initial data is expected toward the end of January 2011. NI 15 rates have increased by 70% (equivalent of 14 additional offences) compared to last quarter, and by 18% (equivalent of 5 offences) compared to the same quarter of last year, which had the highest rate of all quarters last year. Last year, high rates in Q2 are attributed to a spike of offences in August; this year, the volume of offences sharply increased in July, with high levels maintained for the rest of the quarter. Year to date, rates are 28% greater than 2009/10 (54 offences compared to 42 last year). Performance is significantly worse than our IQuanta Most Similar Group peers: with Redditch rates more than double the group average. Taking all factors into consideration, performance for NI15 remains assessed as red.
Serious violent crime rate	NI 015	0.55	0.70	☹	0.98	NA	0.57	0.98	NI 16 rates have decreased by 10% (equivalent of 20 offences) compared to last quarter. Further, this rate represents a 29% decrease (equivalent of 74 offences) compared to Q2 09/10. Performance is in line with IQuanta Most Similar Group peers, with a rate lower than the group average. As rates have continued to decrease and performance against peers is strong, assessment remains green.
Serious acquisitive crime rate	NI 016	6.06	4.69	☺	11.50	NA	12.93	11.51	NI 16 rates have decreased by 10% (equivalent of 20 offences) compared to last quarter. Further, this rate represents a 29% decrease (equivalent of 74 offences) compared to Q2 09/10. Performance is in line with IQuanta Most Similar Group peers, with a rate lower than the group average. As rates have continued to decrease and performance against peers is strong, assessment remains green.
Perceptions of anti-social behaviour (former PS)	NI 017	NA	Viewpoint Survey	NA	19.5% by 2011	13.6	21.1% (P)	12.9%	Bi-annual indicator. The next survey is to take place in November 2010 and initial data is expected toward the end of January 2011.
Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police (former PS)	NI 021	NA	Viewpoint Survey	NA	30.1% by 2011	30.8	24.8% (P)	30.5%	Bi-annual indicator. The next survey is to take place in November 2010 and initial data is expected toward the end of January 2011.
Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police (former PS)	NI 027	NA	Viewpoint Survey	NA	TBC	28.5	25.1% (P)	31.6%	Bi-annual indicator. The next survey is to take place in November 2010 and initial data is expected toward the end of January 2011.
Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem (former PS)	NI 041	NA	Viewpoint Survey	NA	TBC	20.5	30.8% (P)	23.9%	Bi-annual indicator. The next survey is to take place in November 2010 and initial data is expected toward the end of January 2011.
Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	NI 155	39	58	☺	64	250	10	111	Consistent with LAA target.
Residual household waste per household (kg)	NI 191	293.99	306.00	☹	570kg	480	566.74	574.93	There is a slight increase on the total amount of residual waste collected compared to the same period last year. More waste finds its way into the household waste stream over the spring/summer period with more garden waste being placed into grey bins and it is hoped that the figure will reduce during the autumn/winter periods.

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 April 2009 30 Sep 2009	1 April 2010 30 Sep 2010	Direction of Travel	Target 2010/11	Benchmark (where applicable)	2008/09	2009/10	
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	NI 192	28.55%	25.64%	☹	30%	51.91%	31.43%	28.30%	Improvement plan to be produced as performance has dropped. Initial investigations show that this is due to significant reduction in bring bank usage, increased street sweeping and recyclables in green bins remaining constant rather than increasing.
Improved street and environmental cleanliness - levels of litter	NI 195(a)	9%	3%	☺	6%	0%	5%	8%	This is a good score and shows that the streets have a high standard of cleanliness with regards to litter levels.
Improved street and environmental cleanliness - levels of detritus	NI 195(b)	27%	34%	☹	25%	1%	11%	26%	Detritus levels are found to be higher than previously, an improvement plan is already being implemented and we know that we have swept more detritus from the streets compared to the first quarter of last year.
Improved street and environmental cleanliness - graffiti	NI 195(c)	2%	3%	☹	2%	0%	1%	2%	Very low levels of graffiti found.
Improved street and environmental cleanliness - fly-posting	NI 195(d)	0%	4%	☹	0%	0%	0%	0%	Although slightly higher than in previous surveys, this indicates that there is a very low level of fly-posting across the town.
Improved street and environmental cleanliness – fly tipping (Level 1 - Good, Level 4 - Poor)	NI 196	1	3	☹	Level 1	1	2	1	Unfortunately for the first four months of the year the number of fly-tipping incidents is higher than for the same period last year. Despite the fact that the number of enforcement actions has increased, the higher level of fly tips has resulted in a lower score so far. It is hoped that this will level out as the year progresses.
The number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population	BV 174	10.16	19.05	☺	Contextual measure	NA	12.56	23.88	Levels of reporting have increased compared to last year which potentially indicates an increase in confidence in or awareness of reporting processes, and may not necessarily reflect an increase in incidents.
The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action	BV 175	100%	100%	☹	Contextual measure	NA	100%	100%	All reports continue to have initial follow up call and referral to responsible agency. Where contact details are not supplied information is shared across partner agencies to raise awareness and identify potential trends.
Number of British Crime Survey Comparator crimes reported	CS 002	1,921	#	NA	Contextual measure	NA	3,690	3,469	Data for September will not be available until the end of October. An updated quarterly assessment will be provided when available.
Morton Stanley Park - number of visitors to the festival	CG 001	4,500	7,000	☺	7,000	NA	NA	NA	Significant increase on previous year due to festival being held over 2 days, expansion of programme of activities provided and more proactive marketing approach.
Satisfaction with parks and open spaces (%)	CG 002	NA	Viewpoint Survey	NA	Baseline year	NA	NA	NA	This indicator is currently under review following abolition of the Place Survey.
Number of visitors to the Abbey Stadium and Hewell Road Swimming Pool	EC 005	144,643	162,231	☺	296,903	NA	NA	291,081	Increase on previous quarter due to new activities in programme and summer holiday programme. Slight increase from same period in 09/10.

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments		
		1 April 2009 30 Sep 2009		1 April 2010 30 Sep 2010		Direction of Travel	Target 2010/11	Benchmark (where applicable)		2008/09	2009/10
		16,963	18,365	273,771	285,005						
Number of visitors to the Palace Theatre	EC 006	16,963	18,365	273,771	285,005	☺	45,756	NA	44,857	Seasonal figure. Downturn in visitor numbers in quarter 2 as a limited number of shows in this period, following national trend. However, year to date shows an increase in visitor numbers.	
Number of visitors to leisure centres	EC 007	273,771	285,005			☺	576,460	NA	565,157	Increase on previous quarter due to new activities in programme and summer holiday programme / extended opening hours in Dual Use Centres. Slight increase from same period in 09/10.	
Number of visitors to the Museum and Bordesley Abbey Visitors Centre	EC 008	11,008	16,677			☺	15,369	NA	15,068	Significant increase due to two new events and summer long Dinosaur exhibition. Weather was much improved from previous year resulting in higher attendances at standard events provided.	
Number of over 60's swimming usage	EC 009	4,554	4,730			☺	9,176	NA	8,996	Decrease in quarter 2 due to end of Free Swimming Programme; although year to date figures show a small increase in numbers.	
Number of under 16's swimming usage	EC 010	16,771	11,486			☹	23,667	NA	23,203	Decrease due to end of summer holiday programme and cessation of free swimming programme.	
Attendance at community events	EC 011	28,741	49,151			☺	43,248	NA	42,400	Significant increase due to 3 large events being provided (Landscape & Countryside Services).	
Attendance at community centres	EC 012	78,896	87,391			☺	154,683	NA	151,650	Seasonal trend. Reduction from previous quarter due to regular pre-school sessions closing down for summer period. Year to date figures show an increase in attendance.	
Attendance at sports development sessions	EC 013	29,200	29,556			☺	60,935	NA	59,741	Seasonal trend, Schools programme closes down for Summer period.	
Attendance at arts development sessions	EC 014	3,796	8,729			☺	10,048	NA	9,851	Increase due to September Arts Festival.	
Number of visits to Arrow Valley Countryside Centre	EC 015	181,509	211,520			☺	341,726	NA	335,025	Seasonal trend. High figure over summer period particularly in view of weather conditions. Increase from comparable period 09/10 due to improved weather conditions.	

Key to Terms and Symbols			
	Positive Trend	+ve	Recovery plan in place
Improving performance compared to same quarter last year	☺		(RP)
Worsening performance compared to same quarter last year	☹	-ve	LSOA
No change in performance compared to same quarter last year	☺	*	WM
No data available for the period	#	TBC	DECC
Not applicable for this indicator/period	NA	(PS)	

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 April 2009 30 Sep 2009	1 April 2010 30 Sep 2010	Direction of Travel	Target 2010/11	Benchmark (where applicable)	2008/09	2009/10	
Perceptions of anti-social behaviour (former PS)	NI 017 H	NA	Viewpoint Survey	NA	TBC	NA	39.0% (P)	Annual indicator.	
Assault with injury crime rate	NI 020 H	NA	#	NA	TBC	NA	NA	This is a new project targeted at a specific LSOA in Winyates. Baseline data is currently being disaggregated and area specific targets set. Backdated information will be provided once data is available.	
Rate of hospital admissions per 100,000 for alcohol related harm	NI 039 H	NA	#	NA	TBC	NA	NA	This is a new project targeted at a specific LSOA in Winyates. Baseline data is currently being disaggregated and area specific targets set. Backdated information will be provided once data is available.	
Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area	NI 186 H	NA	Annual	NA	TBC	NA	NA	Annual indicator.	
Improved street and environmental cleanliness - litter	NI 195(a) H	NA	#	NA	TBC	NA	NA	This is a new project targeted at a specific LSOA in Winyates. Baseline data is currently being disaggregated and area specific targets set. Backdated information will be provided once data is available.	
Incidents of criminal damage to all residential properties	SA 001a	NA	#	NA	TBC	NA	NA	This is a new project targeted at a specific LSOA in Winyates. Baseline data is currently being disaggregated and area specific targets set. Backdated information will be provided once data is available.	
Incidents of criminal damage to local authority residential properties	SA 001b	NA	#	NA	TBC	NA	NA	This is a new project targeted at a specific LSOA in Winyates. Baseline data is currently being disaggregated and area specific targets set. Backdated information will be provided once data is available.	

Key to Terms and Symbols			
Improving performance compared to same quarter last year	☺	Positive Trend	+ve
Worsening performance compared to same quarter last year	☹	Negative Trend	-ve
No change in performance compared to same quarter last year	☺	Data is provisional	*
No data available for the period	#	To be confirmed	TBC
Not applicable for this indicator/period	NA	Place Survey	(PS)
		Recovery plan in place	(RP)
		Lower Super Output Area	LSOA
		West Midlands	WM
		Department of Energy and Climate Change	DECC

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 April 2009 30 Sep 2009	1 April 2010 30 Sep 2010	Direction of Travel	Target 2009/10	Benchmark (where applicable)	2008/09	2009/10	
		Annual	Annual	NA	4% reduction on 08/09 baseline	NA	3,637	TBC	
Total tonnage of CO2 emissions from Local Authority operations	NI 185 (a)	Annual	Annual	NA	4% reduction on 08/09 baseline	NA	3,637	TBC	This is an annual indicator. Provisional outturn is Q4 2009/10 outturn is approximately a 6% reduction; the majority of savings coming from reduction in buildings emissions. Before this outturn is validated we are awaiting guidance from DECC on the methodology they want us to use. DECC still have not announced when this will be.
CO2 reduction from Local Authority operations previous 12 months (April - March)	NI 185 (b)	Annual	Annual	NA	4% reduction on 08/09 baseline	NA	NA	TBC	As above, 6% reduction.
Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area	NI 186	Annual	Annual	NA	3% reduction	8.1	7.3	#	This is an annual indicator. 2005 benchmark. 2008/09 data refers to 2008 data supplied by DECC (there is always a 2 year time lag). Although we are demonstrating a 6.4% reduction from 2005 it remains to be seen whether or not the majority of this reduction is related to the economic downturn as opposed to activity specifically undertaken by RBC.
Planning to adapt to climate change (Level 0 - low performance, Level 4 - high performance)	NI 188	Annual	Annual	NA	2	1	0	1	This is an annual indicator. Quarter 4 2009/10 shows the is on target, and Level 1 has been achieved.
Air quality - total NOx and PM10 emitted through local authority estate and operations	NI 194(a)	Annual	Annual	NA	4% reduction on 08/09 baseline	NA	8,787	TBC	This is an annual indicator. With the same proviso as for NI185 the current provisional outturn is as shown.
Air quality - % reduction in NOx and PM10 emitted through local authority's estate and operations for previous 12 months (April - March)	NI 194(b)	Annual	Annual	NA	4% reduction on 08/09 baseline	NA	NA	TBC	This is an annual indicator. With the same proviso as for NI185 the current provisional outturn is as shown.
Percentage of people who agree that the Council provides value for money	WMO 018	NA	Viewpoint Survey	NA	+ve	NA	35.0%	35.6% (P)	Bi-annual indicator. The next survey is to take place in November 2010 and initial data is expected toward the end of January 2011.
Percentage of people who are satisfied with the way the Council runs things	WMO 019	NA	Viewpoint Survey	NA	+ve	NA	43.0%	47.3% (P)	Bi-annual indicator. The next survey is to take place in November 2010 and initial data is expected toward the end of January 2011.

Key to Terms and Symbols			
	Positive Trend	+ve	(RP)
Improving performance compared to same quarter last year	☺		
Worsening performance compared to same quarter last year	☹	-ve	LSOA
No change in performance compared to same quarter last year	☺	*	WM
No data available for the period	#	TBC	DECC
Not applicable for this indicator/period	NA	(PS)	



Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 April 2009 30 Sep 2009	1 April 2010 30 Sep 2010	Direction of Travel	Target 2010/11	Benchmark (where applicable)	2008/09	2009/10	
Number of households living in temporary accommodation	NI 156	2	7	☹	15	0	10	7	Remains the same as last quarter which is well within the set target of 15.
Processing of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	NI 157(a)	100.00%	80.00%	☹	97%	100%	93.75%	100%	1 application determined out of time this quarter.
Processing of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	NI 157(b)	97.30%	100.00%	☺	93%	100%	90.41%	95.24%	All applications determined within 8 weeks.
Processing of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	NI 157(c)	98.70%	93.88%	☹	96%	100%	97.83%	98.16%	Only 1 application determined out of time within the last quarter, above national average.
New business registration rate (per 10,000 population)	NI 171	Annual	Annual	NA	4 more than WM rate	68.8	50.9	51.4	Annual indicator.
% of small businesses in an area showing employment growth	NI 172	Annual	Annual	NA	2% points above WM rate	15.90%	15.90%	#	Annual indicator.
Average time taken to relet local authority housing (days)	BV 212	28.32	18.99	☺	24 days	NA	27.46	NA	Performance is well within our target this continues to be down to teams working together. Where properties have taken longer to turn around this is normally due the installation of new bathrooms / kitchens.
Business events per annum	EC 004	NA	Annual	NA	2	NA	NA	NA	Annual indicator.
Number of vacant units in Town Centre	EC 016	NA	Annual	NA	TBC	NA	NA	NA	Annual indicator.

Key to Terms and Symbols			
Improving performance compared to same quarter last year	☺	Positive Trend	+ve
Worsening performance compared to same quarter last year	☹	Negative Trend	-ve
No change in performance compared to same quarter last year	☹	Data is provisional	*
No data available for the period	#	To be confirmed	TBC
Not applicable for this indicator/period	NA	Place Survey	(PS)
		Recovery plan in place	(RP)
		Lower Super Output Area	LSOA
		West Midlands	WM
		Department of Energy and Climate Change	DECC



**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****8th DECEMBER 2010****PORTFOLIO HOLDER: ANNUAL REPORT**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Carole Gandy, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Responsible Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships
Non Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY**

The report provides a summary of the Council's progress for the Community Leadership and Partnership portfolio.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE:**

- 1) a number of questions based on the content of the attached report to be addressed by the Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership and Partnerships during her annual report on 19th January 2011; and
- 2) that the report be noted.

**3. BACKGROUND**

As part of Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work programme it has been agreed that each Portfolio Holder will provide a written report on progress in their area or responsibility and attend a meeting of the Committee.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising directly from the report, however, the report does refer to revenue and capital budget issues.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications to this report.

**6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES**

The Community Leadership and Partnership portfolio is critical to achieving the Council's priorities.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

There are no risks arising directly from this report.

**8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct recommendations on customer service; however, the report does provide information on services to our customer over the last year.

**9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct recommendations on equalities and diversity.

**10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

Part of the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to determine whether value for money is being achieved within this Portfolio.

**11. CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct recommendations on equalities and diversity.

**12. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Procurement Issues: None.
Personnel: None.
Governance/Performance Management: None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998: None.
Policy: None.
Biodiversity: None.

**13. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Please include the following table and indicate 'Yes' or 'No' as appropriate. Delete the words in italics.

Portfolio Holder	No.
Chief Executive	No.
Executive Director and Deputy Chief Executive	No.
Executive Director – Finance and Resources	No.
Executive Director – Regeneration and Planning	No.
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	Yes.
Head of Service	Relevant Head of Service.
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	No.
Head of Finance and Resources	No.
Corporate Procurement Team	Not applicable.

**14. WARDS AFFECTED**

All Wards

**15. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1- Portfolio Holder Annual Report: Community Leadership and Partnership.

**16. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Not applicable

**CONTACT OFFICER**

Name: Hugh Bennett, Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships.  
E Mail: hugh.bennett@redditchbc.gov.uk  
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# Portfolio Holder Annual Report

Portfolio: Community Leadership and Partnership

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Gandy

**Year: 2009/10**

## **1. Executive Summary**

**1.1. Please provide a summary of progress over the last year (no more than one page).**

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## 2. Performance

2.1. Please detail areas of good performance over the past year.

•

2.2. Please detail key performance indicators that are of concern

Key Performance Indicators – Areas of Concern			
PI Ref	PI Description	Explanation and/or corrective action.	Impact on budget

### 3. Revenue Budget

3.1. Explain problem areas – what has been done, what is planned to be done – impact on priorities, key deliverables

Revenue Budget – Areas of Concern			
Budget Code	Description	Explanation and/or corrective action.	Impact on performance and priorities

## 4. Capital Budget

4.1. Explain problem areas – what has been done, what is planned to be done – impact on priorities, key deliverables

Revenue Budget – Areas of Concern			
Budget Code	Description	Explanation and/or corrective action.	Impact on performance and priorities

## **5. The Year Ahead**

5.1 Please detail the portfolio holder's main areas of focus in 20XX/20XX:-

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****Overview and Scrutiny  
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8th December 2010

**REVIEW INTO PUBLIC SPEAKING AT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MEETINGS**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Carole Gandy, Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership and Partnership
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equality and Democratic Services
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

This report contains a summary of existing arrangements employed by local authorities across the country to facilitate public participation in the Overview and Scrutiny process. This had previously been identified by the Committee as a facility that needed to be reviewed.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that

- 1) **the arrangements of other local authorities to facilitate public participation be noted; and**
- 2) **particular practices which might be appropriate for adoption by Redditch Borough Council and areas for further research be identified.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Promotion of the Overview and Scrutiny process to the public and the Council's partner organisations was identified within the 2009/10 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report as an area for further work. A subsequent review was undertaken of public participation arrangements for the Overview and Scrutiny processes at other local authorities in order to identify current practice from which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee might consider adopting similar arrangements.
- 3.2 Information was obtained from the following local authorities: Bath and North East Somerset District Council; Bromsgrove District Council; Buckinghamshire County Council; Cambridgeshire County Council; Canterbury City Council; Chorley Borough Council; Cornwall Council; Dover District Council; Fylde Borough Council; Hackney Council; Northampton Borough Council;

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee**

8th December 2010

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Scarborough Council; South Gloucestershire Council; South Kesteven District Council; and Wychavon District Council.

- 3.3 The local authorities from which the information was obtained were prioritised by an internet search engine for 'Public Speaking at Overview and Scrutiny meetings'. Information was gathered from the relevant website page and, in some cases, through email correspondence with the relevant Scrutiny officer(s). Some local authorities were selected for research for having a known reputation for effectively engaging members of the public in their Overview and Scrutiny process.

**4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 Information was obtained from the local authorities to answer a number of questions pertaining to public participation at Overview and Scrutiny meetings in order to help identify both common and unique practice: which members of the public can speak? When can members of the public speak? What notice do members of the public need to provide of their intention to speak? For how long can members of the public speak? Where are meetings advertised? Where are meetings held? How has it worked in practice?

4.2 Which members of the public can speak?

Some local authorities were more exact in terms of specifying which members of the public could speak at their meetings. Whilst some local authorities (e.g. Dover District Council) specified that 'anyone who lives or works in the Dover District Council administrative area, including Town / Parish Councillors and County Councillors' could speak at their Overview and Scrutiny meetings, others were less specific (e.g. South Kesteven District Council) and merely stated that 'any member of the public can speak'. The most common requirement was for the member of public to be a 'resident' of the particular area.

4.3 For how long can members of the public speak?

Many of the local authorities researched impose a time restriction for public speaking at their meetings. In particular, members of the public are usually restricted to three minutes per item. A maximum time allocation for public speaking within a particular meeting is also in existence (e.g. thirty minutes at Dover District Council). Alternatively, local authorities impose restrictions on the number of public questions at a particular meeting (e.g. six questions at

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee****8th December 2010**

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Wychavon District Council); or alternatively within a particular year (e.g. a maximum of two questions per financial year at Cornwall Council).

Conversely, some local authorities impose few limits on public speaking. For example, at Hackney Council, the length of the public speaking session and the number of questions that can be asked is entirely at the discretion of the Chair and dependent upon the length of the agenda. Also, at Fylde Borough Council, the Chair may extend the time allocated for Public Platform if he considers that doing so would assist the Committee in its deliberations.

4.4 How much notice do members of the public need to provide of their intention to speak?

A number of the local authorities require members of the public to provide advanced written notice to Officers of their intention to speak at a future meeting. For example, members of the public are required to provide written notice either two full working days before the meeting (e.g. Bath and North East Somerset District Council and Chorley Borough Council) or by no later than 10.00am on the Friday preceding the meeting (e.g. Buckinghamshire County Council).

However, other local authorities do not require members of the public to formally register their intention to speak in advance of a particular meeting. However, these local authorities do advise members of the public to contact either the Chairman of the relevant Committee (e.g. South Kesteven District Council) or Scrutiny Officer(s) and to complete a Public Address protocol (e.g. Northampton Borough Council) on the day of the meeting.

4.5 Where are the meetings advertised?

All of the local authorities researched advertise their meetings in advance on their website. Meetings are also advertised at one stop shops; local libraries; on notice boards outside Town Halls; within Council magazines or press releases; or at the premises where the meeting is held if away from the Town Hall.

4.6 Where are the meetings held?

Meetings are rarely held away from the Town Hall. On the rare occasions that they are, they would usually be held at review specific locations. For example, at Hackney Council, a recent Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting was held on a housing estate due to the consideration of resident participation on

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the agenda. Also at Hackney Council, a recent Health Scrutiny meeting was held at a meeting room at the local hospital.

Similarly, the Enterprise and Economic Development Panel at Bath and North East Somerset District Council recently held a meeting about the future of the Cadbury factory site in Keynsham as this was an affected area.

4.7 How often do members of the public engage in the Overview and Scrutiny process?

Of those local authorities contacted, the general message was that members of the public rarely engage in the Overview and Scrutiny process, despite the commitment to advertising meetings in the public domain.

However, there were occasions when the Overview and Scrutiny process attracted public participation. For example, at Dover District Council, a rail operator pulled out of attending one of the neighbourhood forums (a joint county and district area forum) with little notice. One of the Councillors on the forum raised the issue with their outward facing Scrutiny Committees and the rail operator was asked by the scrutiny Officer to come speak to the Committee. Following press attention three people registered to speak on the issue.

Also, at Bath and North East Somerset District Council's recent Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel an issue on 'redesigning youth services' was on the agenda. This issue was picked up by the press which prompted a lot of interest from the public. Approximately 80, mainly young people, were in attendance with 5-6 public speakers.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are very minimal financial implications expected for adopting the public participation practices employed at other local authorities. It is thought that any costs would result from holding a meeting at an external venue. (This could all be met from existing budgets).

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no expected implications.



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**7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This relates to working practices and procedures that do not require Full Council approval.

**8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

Working with members of the public to ensure that their views are heard within the Council's policy process corresponds with the Council's aim to be a well managed organisation.

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

There are no risk management implications.

**10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

It is expected that the implementation of any measure to help increase public participation in the Overview and Scrutiny process would improve customer relations.

**11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

T There are no expected equality and diversity implications.

**12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

There are no expected value for money, procurement of asset management implications.

**13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

There are no expected climate change, carbon management or biodiversity implications.

**14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

There are no expected human resources implications.

**15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

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Minimal extra work might expected from Committee Services for facilitating public speaking requests. However, this support is already provided when residents elect to speak at Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings.

**16. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998**

There are no expected community safety implications.

**17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

There are no expected implications for health inequalities.

**18. LESSONS LEARNT**

Lessons have been learnt from this authority's experience and from benchmarking comparisons.

**19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

There has been no community or stakeholder engagement in the production of the report.

**20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	No
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	No
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	No
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	No
Head of Service	No

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Head of Resources	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

**21. WARDS AFFECTED**

'All Wards'.

**22. APPENDICES**

There are no appendices.

**23. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There are no background papers

**24. KEY**

Not applicable

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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No Direct Ward Relevance

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### WORK PROGRAMME

(Report of the Chief Executive)

Date of Meeting	Subject Matter	Officer(s) Responsible for report
<b>ALL MEETINGS</b>	<b>REGULAR ITEMS</b>	<b>(CHIEF EXECUTIVE)</b>
	Minutes of previous meeting Consideration of the Forward Plan Consideration of Executive Committee key decisions Call-ins (if any) Pre-scrutiny (if any) Consideration of Overview and Scrutiny Actions List Referrals from Council or Executive Committee, etc. (if any) Task & Finish Groups - feedback Committee Work Programme	Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive
	<b>REGULAR ITEMS</b> Quarterly Performance Report Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report Annual Update on the Implementation of the Civil Parking Enforcement Scheme	Chief Executive Chief Executive Relevant Lead Heads of Service

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	<p><b>REGULAR ITEMS</b></p> <p>Update on fly tipping and progress with the Worth It campaign</p> <p>Update on the work of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel.</p>	<p>Relevant Lead Heads of Service</p> <p>Relevant Lead Heads of Service</p>
	<p><b>REGULAR ITEMS</b></p> <p>Oral updates on the progress of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the External Refurbishment of Housing Short, Sharp Review;</li> <li>2. Joint Worcestershire Hub Scrutiny;</li> <li>3. Promoting Redditch Task and Finish Review; and</li> <li>4. Work Experience Task and Finish Review.</li> </ol>	
<b>OTHER ITEMS - DATE FIXED</b>		
<b>8th December 2010</b>	Portfolio Holder Annual Report – Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management	Relevant Lead Councillor
<b>8th December 2010</b>	Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report – Second Quarter	Relevant Lead Head of Service

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<b>8th December 2010</b>	Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report – Second Quarter	Relevant Lead Head of Service
<b>19th January 2011</b>	National Angling Museum Task and Finish Group – Update on Actions	Relevant Lead Head of Service
<b>19th January 2011</b>	Performance report for the services within the Community Leadership and Partnerships Portfolio	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
<b>19th January 2011</b>	Town Centre Landscape Improvements (including Church Green Improvements)	Relevant Lead Head of Service
<b>9th February 2011</b>	Children and Young Peoples Plan – Pre-Scrutiny	Relevant Lead Head of Service
<b>9th February 2011</b>	Civil Parking Enforcement - Annual Monitoring Report	Relevant Lead Head of Service
<b>9th February 2011</b>	Disabled Facilities Grants and the Lifetime Grant – scrutiny of the Countywide Scheme	Relevant Lead Head of Service
<b>9th February 2011</b>	Performance Report for the services within the Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development and Local Transport Portfolio	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
<b>9th February 2011</b>	Portfolio Holder Annual Report – Leadership and Partnerships	Relevant Lead Councillor
<b>2nd March 2011</b>	Council Flat Communal Cleaning Task and Finish Group – Update on Implementation of Recommendations Stage Two.	Relevant Lead Head of Service

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<b>2nd March 2011</b>	Performance Report for the services within the Leisure and Tourism Portfolio	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
<b>2nd March 2011</b>	Promoting Redditch Task and Finish Review – Final Report	Relevant Lead Councillor
<b>2nd March 2011</b>	Portfolio Holder Annual Report – Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development and Local Transport	Relevant Lead Councillor
<b>23rd March 2011</b>	Performance Report for the services within the Community Safety and Regulatory Services Portfolio	Relevant Lead Head(s) of Service
<b>23rd March 2011</b>	Portfolio Holder Annual Report – Leisure and Tourism	
<b>23rd March 2011</b>	Youth Employment at Redditch Borough Council – Update Report	Relevant Lead Head of Service
<b>13th April 2011</b>	Portfolio Holder Annual Report – Community Safety and Regulatory Services	
<b>13th April 2011</b>	Update on fly tipping and progress with the Worth It campaign	Relevant Lead Head of Service
<b>1st June 2011</b>	Third Sector Task and Finish Group – Stage Two Update on Responses to the Group's Recommendations	Relevant Lead Head of Service
<b>1st June 2011</b>	Staff Volunteering Policy – Update	Relevant Lead Head of Service



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<b>1st June 2011</b>	Work Experience Task and Finish Review – Final Report	Relevant Lead Councillor
<b>OTHER ITEMS – DATE NOT FIXED</b>		
	Education Action Plan – Report from the Local Strategic Partnership	Relevant Lead Director
	Economy Action Plan – Report from the Local Strategic Partnership.	Relevant Lead Director
	Health Action Plan – Report from the Local Strategic Partnership	Relevant Lead Director
	Overview and Scrutiny Member Training on Pre-Scrutiny.	Relevant Lead Head of Service
	Options for Public Speaking at Scrutiny Meetings – Officer report	Relevant Lead Head of Service
	Private Sector Home Support Service – Pre-Scrutiny	Relevant Lead Head of Service
	Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy	Relevant Lead Head of Service

