

Executive Committee

Tue 22nd Sep
2009
7pm

Committee Room 3
Town Hall
Redditch



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- Unless otherwise stated, all items of business before the Executive Committee are Key Decisions.
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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

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Welcome to today's meeting.

Guidance for the Public

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.

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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

DO I HAVE A "PERSONAL INTEREST" ?

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

OR

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

you have a personal interest.

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

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

IS IT A "PREJUDICIAL INTEREST" ?

In general only if:-

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

and

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

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

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



Executive Committee

22nd September 2009
7pm

Committee Room 3 Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

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

<p>1. Apologies</p>	<p>To receive the apologies of any Member who is unable to attend this meeting.</p>
<p>2. Declarations of Interest</p>	<p>To invite Councillors to declare any interests they may have in items on the agenda.</p>
<p>3. Leader's Announcements</p>	<p>1. To give notice of any items for future meetings or for the Forward Plan, including any scheduled for this meeting, but now carried forward or deleted; and</p> <p>2 any other relevant announcements.</p> <p>(Oral report)</p>
<p>4. Benefits Service Improvement Plan - Quarterly Monitoring Report</p> <p>Head of Financial Revenues and Benefit Services</p>	<p>To advise Members of actual performance during the first quarter on the Improvement Plan.</p> <p>(Report to follow)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>5. Quarterly Budget Monitoring - April to June Quarter</p> <p>(Pages 1 - 14)</p> <p>Head of Financial Revenues and Benefit Services</p>	<p>To provide Members with an overview of the budget, including the achievement of approved savings as at the end of the first quarter 2009/10.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p>

Executive

Committee

22nd September 2009

<p>6. Quarterly Performance Monitoring, Quarter 1, April 2009 - June 2009</p> <p>(Pages 15 - 26)</p> <p>Head of Strategy and Partnerships</p>	<p>To consider a report which provides a view on aspects of the Council's overall performance and an opportunity to view the Council's performance for quarter 1 of the 2009/10 financial year and to comment upon it.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>7. Quarterly Monitoring of Formal Complaints and Compliments - Quarter 1, April-June 2009</p> <p>(Pages 27 - 54)</p> <p>Head of Strategy and Partnerships, Head of Customer and IT Services</p>	<p>To consider a report which provides a view on aspects of the Council's Formal Complaints Procedure, the compliments recorded during the same period and the Ombudsman 'Annual Review 2008/09'</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>8. Abbey Stadium Sports Centre</p> <p>Head of Leisure and Arts</p>	<p>To agree proposals for the long term sustainability of the Abbey Stadium Sports Centre.</p> <p>(Report to follow)</p> <p>(Abbey Ward)</p>
<p>9. Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 2nd September 2009.</p> <p>(Minutes to follow)</p>
<p>10. Minutes / Referrals - Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels, Neighbourhood Groups etc.</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To receive and consider any outstanding minutes or referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels, Neighbourhood Groups, etc. since the last meeting of the Executive Committee, other than as detailed in the items above.</p>

Executive

Committee

22nd September 2009

11. Exclusion of the Public	<p>It may be necessary, in the opinion of the Chief Executive, to consider excluding the public from the meeting in relation to the following items of business on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged. It may be necessary, therefore, to move the following resolution:</p> <p>“that, under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs (<i>to be specified</i>) of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.”</p>
12. Confidential Minutes / Referrals (if any)	<p>To consider confidential matters not dealt with earlier in the evening and not separately listed below (if any).</p>

Executive Committee

No Direct Ward Relevance

22nd September 2009

QUARTERLY BUDGET MONITORING: APRIL - JUNE QUARTER

(Report of the Head of Financial, Revenues and Benefits Services)

1. Summary of Proposals

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

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

subject to any comments the report be noted.

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

Financial

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

Legal

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

Policy

- 3.3 There are no policy implications.

Risk

- 3.4 Without adequate budget monitoring procedures, the Council will not achieve its objectives. The Council needs to monitor its financial performance in order that corrective action may be taken to minimise risks to the organisation.

- 3.5 There is also a risk that the Council will overspend its budget if action is not taken to monitor the delivery of planned savings during the year.

Sustainability / Environmental

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

Report

4. Background

- 4.1 The Council set its base budget for 2009/10 on the 23rd February 2009. Subsequent to this Council, on the 6th April 2009, approved budget savings of £870.1k for 2009/10 to enable the authority to set a balanced budget and to fund a range of bids previously approved on the 9th March 2009. The details of the approved savings are included at Appendix 1. In addition to the approved savings for 2009/10 there is a sum of £200k built into the base budget for vacancy/turnover savings.
- 4.2 A number of the savings approved required an adjustment to the original budget because they reflect savings such as reductions in vacant posts. The value of this type of saving totals £356.4k for which the base budget has been adjusted. However, there are a range of savings totalling £513.7k which require action by officers to deliver the savings. The purpose of this report is advise on the achievement of these savings and provide an outturn forecast for 2009/10.
- 4.3 Revised Budget 2009/10

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

5. Key Issues

Outturn forecast

- 5.1 Appendices 2 and 3 detail the projected outturn variances as at the end of the first quarter. The budget for 2009/10 includes £350k

Executive Committee

22nd September 2009

(£200k built into the base plus £125k addition approved 9 April plus £25k support service savings) for vacancy/turnover savings. The projected savings detailed at appendices 2 and 3 contribute towards the £350k.

- 5.2 The savings detailed within Appendices 2 and 3 may fluctuate during the year particularly where they relate to vacant posts. Any movement on these savings will be reflected in future monitoring reports.
- 5.3 The projected variances at the end of the first quarter are savings of £251,840.

Monitoring of approved savings (General Fund)

- 5.4 Appendix 4 details the savings achieved at the end of the first quarter against the target of £513.7k plus the £200k already built into the base budget for turnover savings.
- 5.5 At the end of June savings of £302.9k had been identified against the target of £713.7k. This would indicate that the Council is on target to deliver the approved savings although the figure for vacancy/turnover savings may fluctuate during the year. There are also a number of savings where action is planned for later in the year.
- 5.6 Any shortfall in savings at the end of the year will need to be met from revenue balances. General Fund balances as at the 1st April 2009 stood at £2.131million of which £255k has been allocated for reinvestment in services.

Other potential savings

- 5.7 The concessionary fares budget is currently showing potential turnover savings that are not reflected in the projected variances within the appendices. The expenditure to date is less than budgeted but the situation should be much clearer when the half year position is reported at the end of the next quarter.

6. Other Implications

Asset Management	-	None.
Community Safety	-	None.
Human Resources	-	None.
Social Exclusion	-	None.

Executive

Committee

22nd September 2009

7. **Lessons Learnt**

None.

8. **Background Papers**

8.1 Budget monitoring report.

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

9. **Consultation**

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

10. **Author of Report**

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

11. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Budget savings approved 6th April 2009.

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

Appendix 3 - Explanations for projected variances.

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

Budget Savings approved 6th April 2009

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

APPENDIX 2

Quarterly Monitoring Directorate Summary April – June 2009

Directorate	Budget	Profiled YTD Budget	YTD Actuals	Variance to date	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance
Chief Executive	3,697,380	607,489.76	638,784.62	31,294.86	3,506,970	(190,410)
Environment & Planning	6,055,330	1,563,960.00	1,414,261.80	(149,698.20)	6,045,830	(9,500)
Housing Services	1,031,900	589,202.50	348,653.20	(240,549.30)	979,970	(51,930)
Leisure Customer & Business Support	3,333,640	892,170.50	768,244.81	(123,925.69)	3,333,640	0
Corporate	90,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	90,000	0
Total:	14,208,250	3,652,822.76	3,169,944.43	(482,878.33)	13,956,410	(251,840)

Budget Monitoring Apr – Jun 2009
Explanations for projected outturn variances

Acting Deputy Chief Executives Directorate

Head of Financial Revenue and Benefits Services

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0103	Financial Services	(45,910)	Salary savings.

Head of Legal, Democratic & Property Services

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0431	Investment Properties	(75,000)	Budget assumed leaseholder would give notice in March. Notice not received.
0435	Community Related Asset Property	(52,000)	Savings on empty property rates of £27k, also £13k received for dilapidations and £11k received for a letting at Matchborough (delay in billing).

Head of Strategy & Partnership

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0706	Concessionary Travel	(17,500)	Legal fees not expected to be incurred.

Environment & Planning Directorate
Head of Environment

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0704	Allotments	9,000	Income forecast to be below estimate.

Head of Human Resource & Communications

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0137	Payroll	8,500	Additional staff required to cover sickness.

Head of Operations

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0143	Environmental Services Management	(6,000)	Salary savings of £6k.

Head of Planning & Building Control

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0142	Planning Services	(21,000)	Salary savings.

Housing, Leisure and Customer Services Directorate

Head of Asset & Maintenance

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0189	Housing capital	(11,000)	Salary savings (HRA)

Head of Housing & Community Services

Cost Centre	Description	Variance £	Explanation
0182	Rent & Welfare	(14,000)	Salary savings (HRA).
0490	Community Warden Service Support	(15,930)	Salary savings (HRA).
0187	Housing Tenancy	(11,000)	Salary savings (HRA)

Head of Leisure & Arts

Nothing to report this quarter.

Summary -

Total variances	£
General Fund	199,910
Housing Revenue Account	51,930
Total	251,840

Position as at end of first quarter

	Target 2009/10	Actual 2009/10	Comments
	£'000	£'000	
Pitcheroak Golf Course	42.7		Golf course operated by Worcestershire and Herefordshire County Golf Partnership from 11 th May. Need to monitor impact of the earlier than planned start date.
Shared Services	40.0		Dependant upon progress with planned projects
Vacancy Management/Outturn savings*	325.0	199.9	Monitoring has commenced. Procedure agreed and implemented. Level of savings will fluctuate during the year.
REDI	60.0		Due later in year
Printing	52.0		Change not yet implemented.
Procurement	70.0	63.0	Savings in insurance premiums (net of risk management provision).
Committee Services	14.0		Not fully achieved - current projected shortfall £2800 on Members cost centre - reduction in paper used by Print Unit compared to 2008: £142
Benefits Subsidy	40.0	40.0	On target to be achieved
Community Meeting Rooms	45.0		Due later in year
Support Service Costs	25.0		To be added to vacancy savings
*including £200k already built into base budget			
Total	713.7	302.9	

Executive Committee

No Direct Ward Relevance

22 September 2009

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 1, APRIL 2009 - JUNE 2009

(Report of the Head of Strategy and Partnerships)

1. Summary of Proposals

This report provides a view on aspects of the Council's overall performance. It shows which performance indicators are improving, declining or remaining static when compared to the same quarter last year.

This report provides Members with an opportunity to view the Council's performance for quarter 1 of the 2009/10 financial year and to comment upon it.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

the update on key performance indicators for the period April 2009 – June 2009 be noted and commented upon.

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

Financial

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

Legal

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

Policy

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

Risk

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

Sustainability / Environmental

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

Report

4. Background

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

5. Key Issues

Basis of Quarterly Reporting

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

Executive Committee

22 September 2009

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

Quarter	Period	Member Group	Purpose of reporting
2	July – Sept	November Overview and Scrutiny Committee / Executive Committee	Receive quarter 2 statistics Analyse exception report
3	Oct – Dec	February Overview and Scrutiny Committee / Executive Committee	Receive quarter 3 statistics Analyse exception report
4	Jan – Mar	May Overview and Scrutiny Committee / Executive Committee	Receive annual outturn statistics Analyse exception report

The Exception Report

- 5.3 The exception report compares the current quarter outturn to the same period last year and highlights those indicators that have either improved or declined in performance when compared to the same quarter last year and those indicators where performance remains static.

6. **Other Implications**

Asset Management : None specific.

Community Safety : None specific.

Human Resources : None specific.

Social Inclusion : None specific.

7. **Lessons Learnt**

None.

Executive

Committee

22 September 2009

8. Background Papers

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

9. Consultation

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

10. Author of Report

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

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Exception Report – Corporate Performance Indicators
1 April 2009 to 30 June 2009

Corporate Performance Exception Report - Quarter 1 (Apr - Jun) 2009/10

These pages show the outturns for all corporate performance indicators for which data was expected and provided in quarter 1 (April - June) 2009/10.

	DCX	E&P	HLCS	Total
Total number of corporate performance indicators providing outturn data for quarter 1	15	10	10	35
Total number of indicators showing improvement ▲	9	4	8	21
Total number of indicators showing a decline ▼	6	2	1	9
Total number of indicators showing no change* ◀▶	0	4	1	5

* All those indicators showing no change in their performance are currently at optimum performance and as such it is impossible to improve

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

Place Survey - Position Statement

The Policy Team are to create a set of proxy indicators to address performance highlighted by the place survey. Raw data from the Place Survey is currently being analysed in order to identify perceptions at a post-code and demographic level.

Performance Management Group

The Performance Management Group has been established to review performance against performance indicators (PI's) across the Council and to escalate concerns regarding underperformance to Senior Management Team (SMT) and Corporate Management Team (CMT). The group will act as a critical friend and will monitor recovery plans for areas of underperformance. It is anticipated that the group, which will meet on a monthly basis, would act as performance management champions.

Key Findings for Quarter 1

Out of all corporate performance indicators a higher proportion have improved compared to the same quarter last year. By way of example HIP 001 (percentage of urgent repairs completed within government time limits - categories A, B and C) has significantly improved at 91.63% compared with 75.75% at the same time last year. Likewise WMO 004 (enquiries dealt with at first point of contact) has also demonstrated a positive direction of travel, increasing from 86.31% to 93%. However there are also indicators which are highlighted as areas for concern; the Housing Benefit indicators (BV 079b i, ii and iii) have performed poorly compared with this time last year. To address this a benefits improvement plan is in place, and a PI recovery plan is being monitored.

Corporate Performance Exception Report - Quarter 1 (Apr - June) 2009/10

Corporate performance indicators showing an **improvement** in performance when compared to the same quarter last year

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 April 09 - 30 Jun 09	1 April 08 - 30 Jun 08	Direction of Travel	Target 2009/10	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	
Deputy Chief Executive Directorate									
Assault with injury crime rate	NI 020	1.83	2.31	▲	7.64 by 2011 (local target)	NA	NA	7.99	<p>Crimes in this category have fallen by 38 offences compared to the same period last year. Year-on-year there has been a 19% reduction.</p> <p>Walton Close site completed May 09 - One month ahead of schedule.</p> <p>Continuing to proactively identify change events.</p> <p>New Officers recruited and trained during May and June</p> <p>At the same period last year reporting centres were not fully operational. The fact that reports are now being received and action taken is seen as a significant improvement.</p> <p>At the same period last year reporting centres were not fully operational. The fact that reports are now being received and action taken is seen as a significant improvement.</p> <p>Not all claims received as yet however there is an increased usage which will impact on the concessionary fares budget, which officers are monitoring</p> <p>New Benefit Officers recruited June 2009.</p>
Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	NI 155	19	0	▲	94	NA	NA	10	
The number of changes of circumstances which affect customers' Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit entitlement within the year	NI 180	238.9	67.24	▲	550	NA	NA	178.0	
Time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events (days)	NI 181	16.2	18.37	▲	13	NA	NA	17.7	
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	94.41%	90.36%	▲	95.00%	94.05%	90.64%	91.62%	
The number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population	BV 174	6.28	0	▲	Contextual Measure	18.92	30.21	12.59	
The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action	BV 175	100%	No reported incidents	▲	Contextual Measure	93.33%	100.00%	100%	
Number of concessionary journeys per year	ET 015	397,422	390,225	▲	Contextual Measure	1,498,838	1,474,325	1,614,815	
Percentage of new Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims where a decision was made within 14 days of receiving all information	HH 016	83.00%	79.00%	▲	85.00%	66.81	81.03%	80%	
Environment & Planning									
Processing of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	NI 157(b)	93.33%	85.71%	▲	90%	NA	NA	90.41%	<p>Only 1 application beng determined out of time, which is an improvement from last quarter and above national target.</p> <p>We have changed the way that this data is collected and chased up and this has lead to a big increase in the number of returns that we have received.</p>
Satisfaction of business with local authority regulation services	NI 182	71.01%	27.56%	▲	50%	NA	NA	44.22%	

Corporate Performance Exception Report - Quarter 1 (Apr - June) 2009/10

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 April 09 - 30 Jun 09	1 April 08 - 30 Jun 08	Direction of Travel	Target 2009/10	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	
Residual household waste per household (kg)	NI 191	144.43	148.93	▲	575kg	NA	NA	566.74	This continues the downward trend in the amount of waste that we are collecting. However as you can see from the comment on NI192 it may also be having an effect on the recycling rate in that residents are buying less expensive products, due to the recession, that use lighter packaging such as bottles made of plastic rather than glass.
The number of working days/shifts lost to the local authority due to sickness absence per FTE staff member	BV 012	1.83	2.26	▲	8.00	10.62	8.53	9.60	Improvement on Quarter 4 08/09. Current outturn is under the target of 2 days for the quarter.

Housing, Leisure & Customer Services									
Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	1 April 09 - 30 Jun 09	1 April 08 - 30 Jun 08	Direction of Travel	Target 2009/10	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Comments
Number of households living in temporary accommodation	NI 156	8	9	▲	15	NA	NA	10	With the increase in households approaching the Council for housing advice, the number of households requiring temporary accommodation should continue to reduce.
One Stop Shop: Customer satisfaction	WMO 003	94.72%	94.55%	▲	96%	95.46%	95.05%	95.19%	Satisfaction with the service remains consistently high, now investigating other methods of gathering customer feedback.
Enquiries dealt with at first point of contact	WMO 004	93.00%	86.31%	▲	90%	84.57%	88.31%	92.86%	Since the introduction of a new process to gather this information, we are able to monitor areas where there has not been resolution and investigate how this can improve by better access to information, and improving processes between front and back offices.
Website Page Views (millions)	WMO 008	3.02	4.097	▲	23.35	#	14.15	16.4	Whilst visitors remain similar to Q1 08/09, page views for Hub portal are approximately 50% to Q1 08/09. This is due to improvements in search functionality making the required pages easier to find.
Number of e-enabled web payments	WMO 010	3,423	2,264	▲	9,110	#	5,175	8,530	Web payments and telephone payments continue to rise which indicates that more customers are becoming more comfortable using this facility.

Corporate Performance Exception Report - Quarter 1 (Apr - June) 2009/10

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 April 09 - 30 Jun 09	1 April 08 - 30 Jun 08	Direction of Travel	Target 2009/10	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	
Number of households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the local authority's housing advice service, and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation, per 1,000 population.	BV 213	1.89	1.01	▲	6.50	2.89	4.24	7.62	The number of approaches the council is receiving for homelessness is continuing to increase however the housing advice and prevention work being offered through the Housing Options Service is finding resolutions and preventing the homelessness. Through our Housing Options Trailblazer action plan further options are becoming available to increase the housing advice and alternative housing options.
Percentage of urgent repairs completed within Government time limits (Categories A, B and C)	HIP 001	91.63%	75.75%	▲	85%	77%	78.20%	83.72%	This is above target as urgent repairs are given priority over other works
Average time taken (days) to complete non-urgent responsive repairs (Categories D&E)	HIP 002	20.31	25.40	▲	25 days	20	32	21.19	Still within target but a drop in performance from last quarter because of the high volume of external works raised as due to the better weather tenants are identifying fence repairs, slabbing, brickwork etc. We have a backlog of fencing works which will impact on next quarters figures too. We have 3 full time fencers and a labourer to assist and one Supervisor has been dedicated to monitor both fencing inspections and works on site. Annual leave will also impact on the throughput of work.

Corporate Performance Exception Report - Quarter 1 (Apr - Jun) 2009/10

Corporate performance indicators showing a **decline** in performance when compared to the same quarter last year

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 April 09 - 30 Jun 09	1 April 08 - 30 Jun 08	Direction of Travel	Target 2009/10	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	
Deputy Chief Executive Directorate									
Serious violent crime rate	NI 015	0.19	0.06	▼	TBC	NA	NA	0.57	<p>The number of crimes associated with this indicator is fortunately very small averaging 4 per month since the start of 2008/9. The Council remains committed to undertaking initiatives to reduce the likelihood of serious violent crime such as: providing security upgrades at the homes of victims of domestic abuse and working through the licensing system to regulate premises and the night time economy.</p> <p>Crimes in this category (theft of and from a vehicle, burglary and attempted burglary, and robbery) have risen by 21 offences compared to the same period last year. In order of volume: year-on-year vehicle crime is up, burglary is stable at a five-year low and robbery is up. Council departments, acting through the Community Safety Partnership, continue to contribute to the Burglary Action Plan which includes the distribution of SmartWater.</p> <p>The quarter one collection rate is higher than last year, however, early projections for quarter two indicate that the rate is slowing and falling behind last year. Work is being undertaken to ensure that cases are progressing through the recovery cycle</p> <p>The area of overpayments and recovery is scheduled in on the Benefits improvement plan.</p> <p>The area of overpayments and recovery is scheduled in on the Benefits improvement plan.</p> <p>Improvement plan for overpayments and recovery may impact on this BV in the future.</p>
Serious acquisitive crime rate	NI 016	2.94	2.68	▼	TBC	NA	NA	12.93	
The percentage of Council Tax collected by the Authority in the year	BV 009	29.79%	29.92%	▼	98.50%	96.67%	96.97%	97.10%	
The amount of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered as a percentage of all HB overpayments	BV 079b(i)	76.38%	93.64%	▼	TBC	#	69.46%	69.46%	
Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments recovered during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period plus amount of HB overpayments identified during the period	BV 079b(ii)	8.43%	10.44%	▼	TBC	#	26.39%	26.39%	
Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments written off during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period, plus amount of HB overpayments identified during the period	BV 079b(iii)	0.99%	0.55%	▼	TBC	#	0.32%	0.32%	

Corporate Performance Exception Report - Quarter 1 (Apr - Jun) 2009/10

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 April 09 - 30 Jun 09	1 April 08 - 30 Jun 08	Direction of Travel	Target 2009/10	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	
Environment and Planning									
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	NI 192	29.98%	31.13%	▼	32%	NA	NA	31.43%	Although the % recycled is slightly down, the total amount of waste collected (NI191) is down, which is positive. A neighbouring authority with the same collection system has seen a significant drop in % recycled in the first quarter. A big publicity campaign to promote recycling and new products which will be accepted in the green bins from January is being planned to begin in the autumn. Percentage of staff from minority ethnic communities has decreased since previous quarter. Currently not meeting target.
The percentage of local authority employees from minority ethnic communities	BV 017(a)	2.62%	3.21%	▼	3.43%	3.49%	3.15%	2.80%	
Housing, Leisure and Customer Service									
Website Unique Visitors (thousands)	WMO 009	64.69	65.14	▼	212.07	#	175.26	274.64	There was a dramatic increase in usage last year which has slowed in this quarter. There is no particular reason which could explain this other than there may have been less promotion of the web by individual services and because we are in the process of introducing a new content management system which is due to go live in September 2009

Corporate Performance Exception Report - Quarter 1 (Apr - Jun) 2009/10

Corporate performance indicators showing **no change** in performance when compared to the same quarter last year

Indicator Description	Indicator Reference	Current				Historic			Comments
		1 April 2009 30 Jun 2009	1 April 2008 30 Jun 2008	Direction of Travel	Target 2009/10	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	
Deputy Chief Executive									
None									
Environment & Planning									
Processing of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	NI 157(a)	100.00%	100.00%	◀▶	96%	NA	NA	93.75%	Static- Has remained at 100% for last three quarters, which is above national targets. Second Quarter running we have achieved 100%.
Processing of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	NI 157(c)	100.00%	100.00%	◀▶	95%	NA	NA	97.83%	
Has the local planning authority met the milestones which the current Local Development Scheme sets out?	BV 200(b)	YES	YES	◀▶	Meet milestones set out in LDS Maintain up to date character appraisal	YES	YES	YES	Static
Percentage of conservation areas in the local authority area with an up-to-date character appraisal	BV 219(b)	100%	100%	◀▶		100%	100%	100%	Static
Housing, Leisure & Customer Services									
Percentage of repair appointments made that were kept by RBC	HH 018	100.00%	100.00%	◀▶	99%	98.00%	99.00%	100.00%	We endeavour to keep all of the appointments we make with customers and service will only fail due to unforeseen circumstances eg high levels of sick absence.

Executive

No Direct Ward Relevance

Committee

22 September 2009

QUARTERLY MONITORING OF FORMAL COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS QUARTER 1, APRIL 2009 – JUNE 2009

(Report of the Head of Strategy and Partnerships/Head of Customer & IT Services)

1. Summary of Proposals

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

The report also shows the compliments recorded during the same period and the Ombudsman 'Annual Review 2008/09'.

This report provides Members with an opportunity to review the Council's performance for quarter 1 of the 2009/10 financial year and to comment upon it.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

the update on complaints and compliments for the period April 2009 – June 2009 be noted and commented upon.

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

Financial

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

Legal

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

Executive Committee

22 September 2009

Policy

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

Risk

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

Sustainability / Environmental

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

Report

4. Background

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

Formal Complaint	Relevant Director/Head of Service for that service area responds. Target for response 10 working days.
Complaint Appeal	Joint Chief Executive investigates and responds. Target for response 10 working days.
Member Complaint Appeal	Panel of Members consider complaint. Committee Services respond on Panel's behalf. No target set for response time.
Ombudsman	Joint Chief Executive investigates and responds. Target of 28 working days (set by Ombudsman)

- 4.2 This is the first time that such information has been reported to Committee, including the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review 2008/09.
- 4.3 Quarterly reporting is intended to drive improvement based on organisational need and local priorities.

Executive Committee

22 September 2009

- 4.4 A report 'Reviewing and Refreshing the Complaints Procedure' is due to be brought to Executive in September 2009.

5. Key Issues

Basis of Quarterly Reporting

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

Quarter	Period	Member Group	Purpose of reporting
2	July – Sept	November Executive Committee / Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	Receive quarter 2 statistics and to recommend improvements to services.
3	Oct – Dec	February Executive Committee / Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	Receive quarter 3 statistics and to recommend any improvements to services.
4	Jan – Mar	May Executive Committee / Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	Receive annual outturn statistics and to recommend any improvements to services.

- 5.3 The response times for Formal Complaints and Complaint Appeals needs to be improved and actions have been put in place to achieve this. Currently only 50% are responded to within the 10 working day target.

- 5.4 There are a number of reason for these delays:

- a) time taken to investigate and receive information from officers, especially if other agencies are involved.
- b) to investigate those for housing, officers may need to contact tenants for access. Normally cards are left and in some cases

Executive Committee

22 September 2009

have to write to the tenant to arrange a date. This can then delay the date for replying formally to the complaint.

- c) administrative delays i.e:
 - i) officer responding has been on leave;
 - ii) information received from officers but Director has required additional information;
 - iii) waiting for HofS to agree draft letter.

5.5 Holding letters are sent if there is a delay to keep the Complainant informed.

5.6 To improve performance:

- a) there will be closer control on response times and Officers administering the complaints process will be much stricter.
- b) If requests for information are sent to non-Town Hall offices, they will be scanned and e-mailed, as well as sending a hard copy to speed up response times.
- c) Officers keeping records to track where there are delays and the reason.

This is the process used successfully to improve the Ombudsman response times.

5.7 The Audit Commission monitors the Ombudsman Response times and these are used in Audit Commission reports/reviews including Direction of Travel and Service Reviews.

5.8 The Ombudsman Response times have improved greatly over the past two years, following efforts by Officers:

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

5.9 Appendix five provides the detailed report from the Ombudsman.

6. Other Implications

Asset Management - None specific.

Community Safety - None specific.

Human Resources - None specific.

Social Exclusion - None specific.

7. **Lessons Learnt**

Appendix 4 shows the lessons learnt and service improvement.

8. **Background Papers**

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

9. **Consultation**

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

10. **Author of Report**

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

11. **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Monitoring data 1st Quarter (April-June).

Appendix 2: Quarterly Complaints Statistics.

Appendix 3: Quarterly Compliments Statistics.

Appendix 4: What has been learnt and Service Improvements

Appendix 5: Local Government Ombudsman - Annual Review 2008/09

Appendix 5a: Covering letter e-mailed document;

Appendix 5b: Local Authority Report – Redditch BC;

FORMAL COMPLAINTS MONITORING
JUNE - JULY 2009-10 (1st Quarter)

1. Formal Complaints (Stage 2)

Number of complaints	Target met (10 days)	Complaint Justified	Complaint Partly Justified	Complaint Not Justified
18	9	3	5	10

Details of those Justified/Partly Justified

Service	Nature of Complaint	Justified/ Partly Justified	Action taken or explanation	Service Improvement Recommended
Revenues	Rude / attitude of officer and did not take account of what able to pay	Partly	Spoke with member of staff who was the subject of the complaint. Spoke with her about how non priority debt and failure to make payments can be discussed with taxpayers when contacting them about financial statements	None - One off situation
Benefits	How she was spoken to and clarity of information/how much taken by direct debit	Partly	Less experienced temporary worker took original call - may not have been confident of response - reminded to transfer call or ask for help if not sure of answer	None - One off situation
Property	Sale of land - poor service/boundaries not marked out/delays in progressing	Partly	Decision on extent of boundary to be taken	None - One off situation

Service	Nature of Complaint	Justified/ Partly Justified	Action taken or explanation	Service Improvement Recommended
Council Tax, OSS, Environmental Services	Not able to leave post dated cheques for Council Tax whilst away and unhappy with response received from Council Tax & OSS	Partly	Details advised to complainant in phone call to Council Tax reconfirmed in letter. Two ways to pay whilst away offered. Acknowledge that could have had better service from CSAs.	None - One off situation
Capital	Leaking shower at property	Justified	Inspected - inherited bathroom put in by previous tenant. A pipe located behind boxing at back of the shower was leaking. Brough forward new bathroom due to repairs required	Matter should have been identified sooner. Communication between contractors and Redditch Borough Council to be quicker
Asset Maintenance	Uneven path	Partly	Further inspection carried out. Instructions issued for repairs within 28 days	Former RBC properties should consider 'external' liabilities at the RTB application stage.
Care & Repair	North Worcs Care & Repair Service	Justified	Works now being undertaken and fees to be paid	None - One off situation
Tenancy	Problem with mutual exchange and rent arrears	Justified	Housing benefit appeal re-assessed and tenant was not in rent arrears	None - One off situation

2. Complaints Appeals (Stage 3)

Number Received	Target Met
4	2

3. Member Complaint Appeals (Stage 4)

None received during 1st Quarter.

4. Ombudsman Monitoring

Complaint (service)	Date of Letter	Target	Letter sent on (by e-mail)	Response time	Average Resonse time (culmulative)	Ombudsman Determination
Property Services	22 4 09	16 05 09	09 06 09	48 days	48 days	(not yet received)
Housing recharges	24 04 09	18 05 09	08 05 09	14 days	31 days	No Maladministration
Housing Options	02 06 09	26 06 09	23 06 09	21 days	28 days	(not yet received)
Housing Repairs	30 06 09	24 07 09	21 07 09	21 days	26 days	No Maladministration

Ombudsman - Previous performance

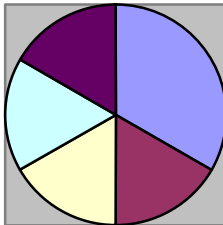
Year	Number of Enquiries	RBC average days
03/04	-	66.7 days
04/05	-	36.4 days
05/06	-	22.5 days
06/07	8	39.6 days
07/08	6	26.7 days
08/09	5	14.6 days

Redditch Borough Council Quarterly Complaints Statistics

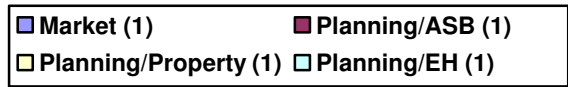
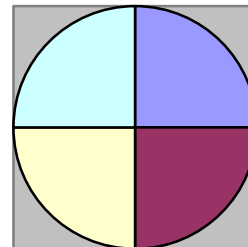
April - June 2009

There were a total of 18 complaints in the last quarter

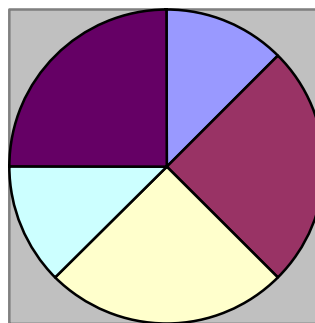
**DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
DIRECTORATE**



**ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING
DIRECTORATE**



**HOUSING, LEISURE & CUSTOMER
SERVICES DIRECTORATE**



What did you complain about?

The majority of complaints related to Revenues (Council Tax), Planning and Housing related issues.

What did we do about this?

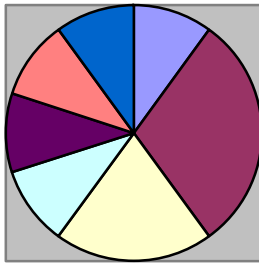
We addressed each case individually, and tightened up our procedures. We have reviewed/improved services where possible

Redditch Borough Council Quarterly Compliment Statistics



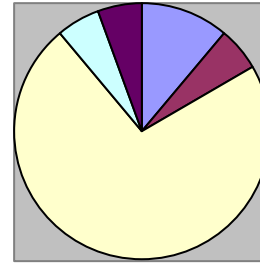
April - June 2009
There were a total of 57 compliments in the last quarter

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE



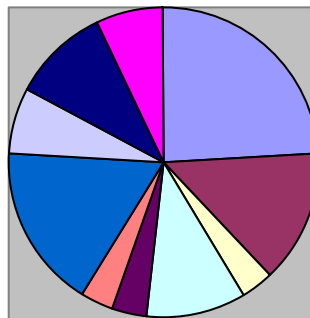
- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Elections (1) | Committee Svs (3) | Community Safety (2) |
| Housing Strategy (1) | PA/Admin (1) | Cashiers (1) |
| Property (1) | | |

ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING DIRECTORATE



- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| Building Control (2) | DialARide (1) |
| Landscape & Countryside (13) | Licensing (1) |
| Waste Collection (1) | |

HOUSING, LEISURE & CUSTOMER SERVICES DIRECTORATE



- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Asset Maintenance (7) | Capital (4) |
| Contact Centre (1) | Community Centres (3) |
| Admin (1) | Homelessness (1) |
| OSS (5) | Theatre (2) |
| Repairs (3) | Wardens (2) |

What did you compliment?

The majority of compliments related to Landscape & Countryside, Asset Maintenance, Capital Teams and the One Stop Shop possible

Appendix 4

Redditch Borough Council Quarterly Complaints Statistics



April - June 2009

What we Learnt and Service Improvement

Issue	Action Taken/Improvement
Leaking Shower in property	Communication to be improved between contractors & RBC
Uneven Path	Former RBC properties should consider 'external' liabilities at RTB application stage
Various	<p>For a number of complaints we also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information clarified with & explained to customer • Spoken to staff and extra training given

**The Local Government Ombudsman's
Annual Review**

Redditch Borough Council

**for the year ended
31 March 2009**

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) provides a free, independent and impartial service. We consider complaints about the administrative actions of councils and some other authorities. We cannot question what a council has done simply because someone does not agree with it. If we find something has gone wrong, such as poor service, service failure, delay or bad advice, and that a person has suffered as a result, the Ombudsmen aim to get it put right by recommending a suitable remedy. The LGO also uses the findings from investigation work to help authorities provide better public services through initiatives such as special reports, training and annual reviews.

Contents of Annual Review

<u>Section 1: Complaints about Redditch Borough Council 2008/09</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Introduction.....</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Enquiries and complaints received</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Complaint outcomes</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Liaison with the Local Government Ombudsman.....</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Training in complaint handling</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Conclusions</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Section 2: LGO developments</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Introduction.....</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Council First.....</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Statement of reasons: consultation.....</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Making Experiences Count (MEC).....</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Training in complaint handling</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Adult Social Care Self-funding</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Internal schools management.....</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Further developments.....</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Appendix 1: Notes to assist interpretation of the statistics 2008/09</u>	<u>7</u>
Appendix 2: Local authority report 2008/09	

Section 1: Complaints about Redditch Borough Council 2008/09

Introduction

This annual review provides a summary of the complaints we have dealt with about Redditch Borough Council. We have included comments on the authority's performance and complaint-handling arrangements, where possible, so they can assist with your service improvement.

I hope that the review will be a useful addition to other information your authority holds on how people experience or perceive your services.

Two appendices form an integral part of this review: statistical data for 2008/09 and a note to help the interpretation of the statistics.

Changes to our way of working and statistics

A change in the way we operate means that the statistics about complaints received in 2008/09 are not directly comparable with those from 2007/08. Since 1 April 2008 the new LGO Advice Team has been the single point of contact for all enquiries and new complaints. The number of calls to our service has increased significantly since then. It handles more than 3,000 calls a month, together with written and emailed complaints. Our advisers now provide comprehensive information and advice to callers at the outset with a full explanation of the process and possible outcomes. It enables callers to make a more informed decision about whether putting their complaint to us is an appropriate course of action. Some decide to pursue their complaint direct with the council first.

It means that direct comparisons with some of the previous year's statistics are difficult and could be misleading. So this annual review focuses mainly on the 2008/09 statistics without drawing those comparisons.

Enquiries and complaints received

Our Advice Team received 12 complaints and enquiries during the year. Of these four were about planning-related matters, two concerned housing, one was about public finance related matters and five concerned other matters.

We treated two of those complaints and enquiries as premature and in a further four cases advice was given (usually to make a complaint direct to the Council). The remaining complaints were forwarded to the investigative team either as new complaints or as premature complaints that had been resubmitted.

Complaint outcomes

I decided seven complaints against the Council during the year. In four of those cases I found no evidence of maladministration. In two cases I took the view that the matters complained about were outside my jurisdiction and so they were not investigated and a further case resulted in a local settlement.

Of the seven complaints that I decided in the year one had been resubmitted after initially being referred to your Council as premature.

Local settlements

A 'local settlement' is a complaint where, during the course of our investigation, a council takes or agrees to take some action that we consider to be a satisfactory response to the complaint. In 2008/09, 27.4% of all complaints the Ombudsmen decided and which were within our jurisdiction were local settlements. Of the complaints against your Council one was decided as a local settlement.

That case concerned a complaint about how the Council processed a complainant's homeless application. In that case I was satisfied that the complainant in question did not qualify for assistance as he was not in a priority group and that the Council gave him adequate advice and offered him temporary accommodation. However, I criticised the Council for failing to put its decision in writing, thereby depriving the complainant of a reasoned decision and the ability to request a review. The Council agreed to conduct a formal review if the complainant still wanted it and to revise its policy to ensure that officers are aware of the need to make formal decisions on homeless cases. The Council also agreed to pay £100 compensation.

Liaison with the Local Government Ombudsman

Formal enquiries were made on five complaints during the year. Your Council's average response time of 14.6 days is commendable and a significant reduction on the previous year. I am most grateful for the Council's efforts in this area.

Training in complaint handling

Part of our role is to provide advice and guidance about good administrative practice. We offer training courses for all levels of local authority staff in complaints handling and investigation. All courses are presented by experienced investigators. They give participants the opportunity to practise the skills needed to deal with complaints positively and efficiently. We can also provide customised courses to help authorities to deal with particular issues and occasional open courses for individuals from different authorities.

I have enclosed some information on the full range of courses available together with contact details for enquiries and bookings.

Conclusions

I welcome this opportunity to give you my reflections about the complaints my office has dealt with over the past year. I hope that you find the information and assessment provided useful when seeking improvements to your Council's services.

**J R White
Local Government Ombudsman
The Oaks No 2
Westwood Way
Westwood Business Park
Coventry
CV4 8JB**

June 2009

Section 2: LGO developments

Introduction

This annual review also provides an opportunity to bring councils up to date on developments – current and proposed – in the LGO and to seek feedback. It includes our proposal to introduce a ‘statement of reasons’ for Ombudsmen decisions.

Council First

From 1 April 2009, the LGO has considered complaints only where the council’s own complaints procedure has been completed. Local authorities have been informed of these new arrangements, including some notable exceptions. We will carefully monitor the impact of this change during the course of the year.

Statement of reasons: consultation

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 made provision for the LGO to publish statements of reasons relating to the individual decisions of an Ombudsman following the investigation of a complaint. The Ombudsmen are now consulting local government on their proposal to use statements of reasons. These will comprise a short summary (about one page of A4) of the complaint, the investigation, the findings and the recommended remedy. The statement, naming the council but not the complainant, will usually be published on our website.

We plan to consult local authorities on the detail of these statements with a view to implementing them from October 2009.

Making Experiences Count (MEC)

The new formal, one stage complaint handling arrangement for adult social care was also introduced from 1 April 2009. The LGO is looking to ensure that this formal stage is observed by complainants before the Ombudsmen will consider any such complaint, although some may be treated as exceptions under the Council First approach. The LGO also recognises that during the transition from the existing scheme to the new scheme there is going to be a mixed approach to considering complaints as some may have originated before 1 April 2009. The LGO will endeavour to provide support, as necessary, through dedicated events for complaints-handling staff in adult social care departments.

Training in complaint handling

Effective Complaint Handling in Adult Social Care is the latest addition to our range of training courses for local authority staff. This adds to the generic Good Complaint Handling (identifying and processing complaints) and Effective Complaint Handling (investigation and resolution), and courses for social care staff at both of these levels. Demand for our training in complaint handling remains high. A total of 129 courses were delivered in 2008/09. Feedback from participants shows that they find it stimulating, challenging and beneficial in their work in dealing with complaints.

Adult Social Care Self-funding

The Health Bill 2009 proposes for the LGO to extend its jurisdiction to cover an independent complaints-handling role in respect of self-funded adult social care. The new service will commence in 2010.

Internal schools management

The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Bill (ASCL) 2009 proposes making the LGO the host for a new independent complaints-handling function for schools. In essence, we would consider the complaint after the governing body of the school had considered it. Subject to legislation, the new service would be introduced, in pilot form, probably in September 2010.

Further developments

I hope this information gives you an insight into the major changes happening within the LGO, many of which will have a direct impact on your local authority. We will keep you up to date through LGO Link as each development progresses but if there is anything you wish to discuss in the meantime please let me know.

**J R White
Local Government Ombudsman
The Oaks No 2
Westwood Way
Westwood Business Park
Coventry
CV4 8JB**

June 2009

Appendix 1: Notes to assist interpretation of the statistics 2008/09

Introduction

This year, the annual review only shows 2008/09 figures for enquiries and complaints received, and for decisions taken. This is because the change in the way we operate (explained in the introduction to the review) means that these statistics are not directly comparable with statistics from previous years.

Table 1. LGO Advice Team: Enquiries and complaints received

This information shows the number of enquiries and complaints received by the LGO, broken down by service area and in total. It also shows how these were dealt with, as follows.

Formal/informal prematures: The LGO does not normally consider a complaint unless a council has first had an opportunity to deal with that complaint itself. So if someone complains to the LGO without having taken the matter up with a council, the LGO will usually refer it back to the council as a 'premature complaint' to see if the council can itself resolve the matter. These are 'formal premature complaints'. We now also include 'informal' premature complaints here, where advice is given to the complainant making an enquiry that their complaint is premature. The total of premature complaints shown in this line *does not include* the number of resubmitted premature complaints (see below).

Advice given: These are enquiries where the LGO Advice Team has given advice on why the Ombudsman would not be able to consider the complaint, other than the complaint being premature. For example, the complaint may clearly be outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction. It also includes cases where the complainant has not given enough information for clear advice to be given, but they have, in any case, decided not to pursue the complaint.

Forwarded to the investigative team (resubmitted prematures): These are cases where there was either a formal premature decision, or the complainant was given informal advice that their case was premature, and the complainant has resubmitted their complaint to the Ombudsman after it has been put to the council. *These figures need to be added to the numbers for formal/informal premature complaints (see above) to get the full total number of premature complaints. They also needed to be added to the 'forwarded to the investigative team (new)' to get the total number of forwarded complaints.*

Forwarded to the investigative team (new): These are the complaints that have been forwarded from the LGO Advice Team to the Investigative Team for further consideration. The figures may include some complaints that the Investigative Team has received but where we have not yet contacted the council.

Table 2. Investigative Team: Decisions

This information records the number of decisions made by the LGO Investigative Team, broken down by outcome, within the period given. **This number will not be the same as the number of complaints forwarded from the LGO Advice Team** because some complaints decided in 2008/09 will already have been in hand at the beginning of the year, and some forwarded to the Investigative Team during 2008/09 will still be in hand at the end of the year. Below we set out a key explaining the outcome categories.

MI reps: where the LGO has concluded an investigation and issued a formal report finding maladministration causing injustice.

LS (local settlements): decisions by letter discontinuing our investigation because action has been agreed by the authority and accepted by the Ombudsman as a satisfactory outcome for the complainant.

M reps: where the LGO has concluded an investigation and issued a formal report finding maladministration but causing no injustice to the complainant.

NM reps: where the LGO has concluded an investigation and issued a formal report finding no maladministration by the council.

No mal: decisions by letter discontinuing an investigation because we have found no, or insufficient, evidence of maladministration.

Omb disc: decisions by letter discontinuing an investigation in which we have exercised the Ombudsman's general discretion not to pursue the complaint. This can be for a variety of reasons, but the most common is that we have found no or insufficient injustice to warrant pursuing the matter further.

Outside jurisdiction: these are cases which were outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.

Table 3. Response times

These figures record the average time the council takes to respond to our first enquiries on a complaint. We measure this in calendar days from the date we send our letter/fax/email to the date that we receive a substantive response from the council. The council's figures may differ somewhat, since they are likely to be recorded from the date the council receives our letter until the despatch of its response.

Table 4. Average local authority response times 2008/09

This table gives comparative figures for average response times by authorities in England, by type of authority, within three time bands.

16 June 2009

Mr K Dicks
Chief Executive
Redditch Borough Council
DX 19106
Redditch

Our ref: JRW/rt
(Please quote our reference when contacting us)

**If telephoning contact: Mr D Pollard on 02476 820062
or email: d.pollard@lgo.org.uk**

Dear Mr Dicks

Annual Review 2008/09

I am writing to give you a summary of the complaints about your Council that my office has dealt with over the past year, set out in the annual review attached. We have changed the name from annual letter to annual review to better describe the updated document format. I hope you find the review a useful addition to other information you have on how people experience or perceive your services.

The review is split into two sections. The first concerns complaints about your Council and the second section provides a general update on LGO developments. This includes our proposal to introduce 'statements of reasons' for Ombudsmen decisions. I would welcome your views on this and any comments you may have on the form and content of the review.

We will publish all the annual reviews on our website (www.lgo.org.uk) and share them with the Audit Commission. We will wait for four weeks after this letter before doing so, to give you an opportunity to consider the review first. If any material factual inaccuracy is found we will reissue it. We will also publish on our website a summary of statistics relating to the complaints we have received and dealt with against all authorities.

I would again be happy to consider requests for me or a senior colleague to visit the Council to present and discuss the letter with councillors or staff. We will do our best to meet the requests within the limits of the resources available to us.

I am also arranging for a copy of this letter and the review to be sent to you electronically so that you can distribute it easily internally and put the annual review on your Council's website. You do not need to include this covering letter on your website.

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Advice Team: 0845 602 1983

Jerry White
Local Government Ombudsman
Neville Jones
Deputy Ombudsman

This is the last Annual Review that I will have the honour of presenting to your authority. I retire from my position as Local Government Ombudsman on 30 September 2009, after more than fourteen years in post, in order to become Professor in London History at Birkbeck, University of London. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the unfailing courtesy I have received from officers and Members of the Council during my period in office; and I offer the Council warmest wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J R White', with a stylized, cursive script.

J R White
Local Government Ombudsman

LGO Advice Team

Enquiries and complaints received	Housing	Public Finance inc. Local Taxation	Planning and building control	Other	Total
Formal/informal premature complaints	0	1	0	1	2
Advice given	0	0	2	2	4
Forwarded to investigative team (resubmitted prematures)	1	0	0	2	3
Forwarded to investigative team (new)	1	0	2	0	3
Total	2	1	4	5	12

Investigative Team

Decisions	MI reps	LS	M reps	NM reps	No mal	Omb disc	Outside jurisdiction	Total
01/04/2008 / 31/03/2009	0	1	0	0	4	0	2	7

Response times	FIRST ENQUIRIES	
	No. of First Enquiries	Avg no. of days to respond
1/04/2008 / 31/03/2009	5	14.6
2007 / 2008	6	26.7
2006 / 2007	8	39.6

Average local authority response times 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009

Types of authority	<= 28 days %	29 - 35 days %	> = 36 days %
District councils	60	20	20
Unitary authorities	56	35	9
Metropolitan authorities	67	19	14
County councils	62	32	6
London boroughs	58	27	15
National park authorities	100	0	0

