

# Executive Committee

Tuesday 13th March  
2012  
7.00 pm

Committee Room 2  
Town Hall  
Redditch



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

# Access to Information - Your Rights

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The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 widened the rights of press and public to attend Local Authority meetings and to see certain documents. Recently the Freedom of Information Act 2000, has further broadened these rights, and limited exemptions under the 1985 Act.

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.
- Automatic right to inspect lists of background papers used in the preparation of public reports.
- 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  
Ivor Westmore  
Committee Support Services**

**Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH  
Tel: (01527) 64252 ext 3269 Fax: (01527) 65216  
e.mail: [ivor.westmore@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:ivor.westmore@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk) 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).

# Executive

13th March 2012

7.00 pm

## Committee

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

### Agenda

**Membership:**

Cllrs:	Carole Gandy (Chair)	Malcolm Hall
	Michael Braley (Vice-Chair)	Jinny Pearce
	Juliet Brunner	Debbie Taylor
	Greg Chance	Derek Taylor
	Brandon Clayton	

<b>1. Apologies</b>	To receive the apologies of any Member who is unable to attend this meeting.
<b>2. Declarations of Interest</b>	To invite Councillors to declare any interests they may have in items on the agenda.
<b>3. Leader's Announcements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>any other relevant announcements.</li> </ol> (Oral report)
<b>4. Minutes</b> (Pages 1 - 14) Chief Executive	To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee held on 20th February and 21st February 2012.  (Minutes attached)
<b>5. Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy</b> (Pages 15 - 36) Head of Community Services	To seek approval for the adoption of a Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy.  (Report attached)  <b>(All Wards);</b>
<b>6. Corporate Performance Report - Quarter 3, Period ending 31st December 2011</b> (Pages 37 - 46) Chief Executive	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.  (Report attached)  <b>(No Direct Ward Relevance);</b>

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<p><b>7. April - December (Quarter 3) - Finance Monitoring Report 2011/12</b></p> <p>(Pages 47 - 80)</p> <p>Head of Finance and Resources</p>	<p>To provide an overview of the budget, including the achievement of approved savings as at the end of Quarter 3, 2011/12.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(No Direct Ward Relevance);</b></p>
<p><b>8. Benefits Improvement Plan - Quarterly Monitoring - October - December 2011</b></p> <p>(Pages 81 - 94)</p> <p>Head of Finance and Resources</p>	<p>To consider a report on the actual performance of the Improvement Plan during Quarter 3, 2011/12.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(No Direct Ward Relevance);</b></p>
<p><b>9. Quarterly Monitoring of Write Offs - 1st April - 31st December 2011</b></p> <p>(Pages 95 - 100)</p> <p>Head of Finance and Resources</p>	<p>To consider the action taken by Officers with respect to the write off of debts during the third quarter of 2011/12 and to note the profile of outstanding debt.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(No Direct Ward Relevance);</b></p>
<p><b>10. Making Experiences Count - Quarterly Customer Service Report</b></p> <p>(Pages 101 - 116)</p> <p>Head of Customer Services</p>	<p>To consider a report which provides and update on Customer Services.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(No Direct Ward Relevance);</b></p>
<p><b>11. Sickness Absence Performance and Health for Period Ending 31st December 2011</b></p> <p>(Pages 117 - 134)</p> <p>Head of Finance and Resources</p>	<p>To report performance for the period 1st October – 31st December 2011 in relation to sickness absence.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(All Wards);</b></p>

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<p><b>12. Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b></p> <p>(Pages 135 - 146)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14th February 2012.</p> <p>There are no recommendations to consider.</p> <p>(Minutes attached)</p>
<p><b>13. Shared Services Board</b></p> <p>(Pages 147 - 150)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Shared Services Board.</p> <p>(Minutes attached)</p>
<p><b>14. Minutes / Referrals - Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels etc.</b></p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To receive and consider any outstanding minutes or referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels etc. since the last meeting of the Executive Committee, other than as detailed in the items above.</p>
<p><b>15. Advisory Panels - update report</b></p> <p>(Pages 151 - 154)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider, for monitoring / management purposes, an update on the work of the Executive Committee's Advisory Panels and similar bodies, which report via the Executive Committee.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>
<p><b>16. Action Monitoring</b></p> <p>(Pages 155 - 158)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider an update on the actions arising from previous meetings of the Committee.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>

<p><b>17. Exclusion of the Public</b></p>	<p>It may be necessary, in the opinion of the Chief Executive, to consider excluding the public from the meeting in relation to the following items of business on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged. It may be necessary, therefore, to move the following resolution:</p> <p><b>“that, under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.”</b></p> <p><b>Item 18 – Property for Compulsory Purchase – Property A; and</b></p> <p><b>Item 19 – Property for Compulsory Purchase – Property B.</b></p>
<p><b>18. Property for Compulsory Purchase - Property A</b></p> <p>(Pages 159 - 166)</p> <p>Head of Community Services</p>	<p>To seek approval for the Compulsory Purchase of Property A in line with the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy.</p> <p>(It is anticipated that this report, or parts of it, might be considered following the exclusion of the public and press as it contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) 1, 2 and 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.)</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(Headless Cross &amp; Oakenshaw Ward);</b></p>
<p><b>19. Property for Compulsory Purchase - Property B</b></p> <p>(Pages 167 - 174)</p> <p>Head of Community Services</p>	<p>To seek approval for the Compulsory Purchase of Property B, in line with the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy.</p> <p>(It is anticipated that this report, or parts of it, might be considered following the exclusion of the public and press as it contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) 1, 2 and 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.)</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(Matchborough Ward);</b></p>



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<b>20. Confidential Minutes / Referrals (if any)</b>	To consider confidential matters not dealt with earlier in the evening and not separately listed below (if any).
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## Executive Committee

20th February 2012

### MINUTES

#### Present:

Councillor Carole Gandy (Chair), Councillor Michael Braley (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Juliet Brunner, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Malcolm Hall, Jinny Pearce, Debbie Taylor and Derek Taylor

#### Also Present:

Councillors Juliet Brunner, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Malcolm Hall, Jinny Pearce, Debbie Taylor and Derek Taylor and Mr M Collins (Vice Chair, Standards Committee)

#### Officers:

T Beech, K Dicks, C Flanagan, S Hanley, S Morgan, J Pickering, S Skinner and J Smyth

#### Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

#### 163. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 164. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 165. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements from the Leader.

.....  
Chair

**166. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS - ANNUAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2012-13**

The Committee considered the recommendations for the coming year from the Independent Remuneration Panel for Worcestershire District Councils. The Leader advised the meeting that she considered Members were placed in an invidious position each year in having to determine the level of remuneration applicable to them, most particularly at a time of considerable economic pressure. She suggested that levels of remuneration should be set externally by Central Government, or the Remuneration Panel (IRP) itself.

She recommended that the budget for Members' Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances remain at the same level as proposed by the IRP for 2011/12 and 2012/13. However, individual Members would have the discretion as to whether they accepted the full level of allowances available to them or the lower amount that had been taken by most Members in the previous year.

It was proposed that the Member Support Steering Group should critically consider the present apportionment of Special Responsibility Allowances to determine whether they were set at the appropriate levels and targeted at the appropriate positions. An amendment to the Scheme was also proposed to bring the travel allowances for Members in line with those now set for Officers by incorporating an additional amount for carrying a qualifying passenger.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) in view of the continuing exceptional economic circumstances, the Basic Allowance remains unchanged from the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations from 2011/12 for 2012/13 at £3350 per Councillor;**
- 2) the Special Responsibility Allowances similarly remain unchanged for 2012/13, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report;**
- 3) travel allowances for 2012/13 continue to be paid in accordance with the HMRC mileage allowance (currently 45p per mile) and an additional 5p per mile be paid for each qualifying passenger;**
- 4) subsistence allowances for 2012/13 remain unchanged;**

- 5) **the Dependent Carer's Allowance remains unchanged; and**
- 6) **for Parish Councils in the Borough, if travel and subsistence is paid, it is paid in accordance with the rates paid by the Borough Council and in accordance with the relevant Regulations.**

**167. INITIAL ESTIMATES REPORT 2012/13, 2012/14 AND 2014/15 AND STATEMENT OF PAY POLICY**

The meeting received a report setting out the estimates for spending for each service and any high priority capital and revenue bids for the coming years, together with a proposed Statement of Pay Policy document.

Officers highlighted the ongoing financial pressures on the authority and the expectation that these would continue for the next two years at least. The Finance Team had undertaken a rigorous examination of service budgets to identify areas for savings and additional scrutiny of the budget bids had been provided by both the Council's Budget Jury and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Savings were being achieved through measures such as the sharing of services, the Single Management Team and Transformation. However, it was proposed that £259,000 be taken from balances in the current year, retaining what was considered a prudent level of reserves of £901,000.

The Localism Act had placed a new requirement on local authorities, the publication of a Pay Policy Statement, and this had been incorporated as an appendix to the current report. It was noted that the levels of pay reflected in the Policy Statement reflected the position prior to Job Evaluation as that was still awaiting final agreement by all parties. It was also noted that the Statement incorrectly asserted that the Head of Housing post was a shared cost, whereas it was a cost borne solely by Redditch.

The Leader stated that the budget proposals were focussed on investment in the Council's equipment, staff and physical resources as well as the environment and local neighbourhoods. Whilst the Council would have liked to have invested more in services, this was not possible in the current financial situation.

It was finally noted that the Taxpayers' Alliance had recently congratulated the Council on the reduction achieved in its management cost by transferring to a shared management team.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the high bids as identified in Appendix A to the report be approved:

2012/13	£116,000
2013/14	£101,000
2014/15	£101,000;

- 2) the high capital bids as detailed in Appendix B to the report be approved:

2012/13	£1,217,000
2013/14	£1,586,000
2014/15	£1,687,000;

- 3) the use of balances totalling £259,000 be approved;
- 4) the Pay Policy Statement attached at Appendix D to the report be approved;
- 5) the retention by Redditch Cricket, Hockey and Rugby Club of the sum representing the refund on VAT on the grant funded works undertaken at their grounds in 2005/06 be approved and, in return, the Club agree to relieve the Council's of its commitment to provide a sinking fund for the refurbishment/replacement of the all weather pitch (ATP) which will in future be the exclusive responsibility of the Club; and
- 6) the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services be requested to prepare an agreement that brings Resolution 5), above, about.

**168. SETTING OF THE COUNCIL TAX 2012/13**

Members considered the report that would enable them to set the level of Council Tax for the Borough for the coming year.

Given the prevailing economic conditions and the effect that this was having on the residents of the Borough it was proposed that the Council Tax level for 2012/13 remain at the same level it had been for the previous two years.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **it be noted that at its meeting on the 16th of January 2012 the Council calculated the following amounts for the year 2012/13 in accordance with regulations made under Section 33 (5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:**
  - a) **27,611.67**

being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax Base for the year;
  - b) **Feckenham Parish – 363.60**

being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the regulations, as the amount of its Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate;
  
- 2) **the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2012/13 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:**
  - a) **£ 71,045,020**

being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account the precept issued by Feckenham Parish Council.

**(2012/13 Gross General Fund Expenditure)**
  - b) **£65,260,831**

being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

**(2012/13 Gross General Fund Income)**
  - c) **£5,784,189**

being the amount by which the aggregate at 2(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year.

**(2012/13 Council Tax Requirement)**

d) **£209.48**

being the amount at 2 (c) above divided by the amount at 1 (a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of Council Tax for the year (including parish precept).

**(The average amount Band D properties pay for Redditch Borough Council services)**

e) **£8,300**

being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34 (1) of the Act;

**(Feckenham Parish Precept)**

f) **£209.18**

being the amount at 2(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2(e) above by the amount at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of Council Tax for dwellings in those parts of the area to which no special item relates.

**(The amount Band D properties pay (except within the Parish of Feckenham) for Borough Council Services)**

g) **£232.01**

being the amount given by adding to the amount at 2(f) above, the amount of the special item relating to the Parish of Feckenham, divided by the amount in 1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (3) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in the Parish of Feckenham;

**(The amount Band D properties pay within the Parish of Feckenham for Borough Council Services including the Parish Precept)**



h)

Valuation Band	Proportion of Band D tax paid	Part of Council's area	
		Parish of Feckenham	All other parts of the Councils area
<b>A</b>	6/9	<b>£154.67</b>	<b>£139.46</b>
<b>B</b>	7/9	<b>£180.45</b>	<b>£162.70</b>
<b>C</b>	8/9	<b>£206.23</b>	<b>£185.94</b>
<b>D</b>	1	<b>£232.01</b>	<b>£209.18</b>
<b>E</b>	11/9	<b>£283.57</b>	<b>£255.67</b>
<b>F</b>	13/9	<b>£335.13</b>	<b>£302.15</b>
<b>G</b>	15/9	<b>£386.68</b>	<b>£348.64</b>
<b>H</b>	18/9	<b>£464.02</b>	<b>£418.37</b>

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 2(f) and 2(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band, divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in Valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands;

- 3) **it be noted that, for the year 2012/13, Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Police Authority and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:**

Valuation Band	Proportion of Band D tax paid	Precepting Authority		
		Worcestershire County Council	West Mercia Police Authority	H & W Fire & Rescue Authority
<b>A</b>	6/9	£692.71	£119.15	£49.10
<b>B</b>	7/9	£808.16	£139.00	£57.28

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<b>C</b>	8/9	£923.61	£158.86	£65.46
<b>D</b>	1	£1,039.06	£178.72	£73.64
<b>E</b>	11/9	£1,269.97	£218.44	£90.01
<b>F</b>	13/9	£1,500.87	£258.15	£106.38
<b>G</b>	15/9	£1,731.77	£297.87	£122.74
<b>H</b>	18/9	£2,078.13	£357.44	£147.28

- 4) having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 2(h) and 3 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2012/13 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Band	Proportion of Band D tax paid	Part of Council's area	
		Parish of Feckenham	All other parts of the Council's area
<b>A</b>	6/9	£1,015.63	£1,000.42
<b>B</b>	7/9	£1,184.89	£1,167.14
<b>C</b>	8/9	£1,354.16	£1,333.87
<b>D</b>	1	£1,523.43	£1,500.60
<b>E</b>	11/9	£1,861.99	£1,834.09
<b>F</b>	13/9	£2,200.53	£2,167.55
<b>G</b>	15/9	£2,539.06	£2,501.02
<b>H</b>	18/9	£3,046.87	£3,001.22

- 5) the level of General Fund balances to be utilised in 2012/13 be £258,945; and
- 6) the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2012/13 is not excessive in accordance with the principles determined for the year by the Secretary of State under Section 52ZB Local Government Act 1992.

The Meeting commenced at 7.04 pm  
and closed at 7.28 pm

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Chair



# Executive Committee

21st February 2012

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Carole Gandy (Chair), and Councillors Juliet Brunner, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, Jinny Pearce, Debbie Taylor and Derek Taylor

### Also Present:

Councillors Peter Anderson and Robin King

### Officers:

M Bough, E Cartwright, C Flanagan, D Hancox, S Hanley, J Knott, T Kristunas, D Poole and L Tompkin

### Committee Services Officer:

D Sunman

### 169. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Michael Braley.

### 170. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 171. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

- Highway Impact and Accessibility Modelling Report – Worcestershire County Council (Halcrow) - May 2011

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Chair

She also advised that she had accepted the following items as Urgent Business:

- Item 5 and Item 7 – Additional information from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2012

(Not meeting the publication deadline)

- Item 9 – Employment Policy – Review

(Not on the Forward Plan for this meeting)

## **172. MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 31st January 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

## **173. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - OUTCOME OF REVIEW**

The Committee received a report on the review of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Members were advised that the Government would be dismantling the current HRA subsidy system and that it would be replaced with a new regime of self financing with effect from April 2012.

Officers advised that the Council would have to take on a share of the national housing debt but would be entitled in future years to keep the subsidy, which is currently paid each year to Central Government.

Members were informed that the Council's share of this debt amounted to £98,929 million, payable to central government on 28th March 2012 with self financing operational from 1st April 2012. The Council would be compensated for the interest paid in respect of the days between 28th March and 1st April 2012, which is expected to be £35,000.

An additional recommendation was proposed from the Chair as follows:

*“Officers bring forward a report outlining the proposals for how this Council might build council houses on some of the land owned by the Council and already declared surplus.”*

**RESOLVED that**

**subject to the Council's approval of the budgetary implications,**

- 1) the 5 year Housing Capital Programme as set out at Appendix 1 to the report be approved;**
- 2) the Director of Finance and Resources be authorised to acquire debt from the Public Works Loans Board up to the amount of the actual Debt Cap in line with the profile set out at Appendix 4 to the report;**
- 3) subject to Members' comments, the viability of the 30 Year Business Case for the Housing Revenue Account, and the projected availability of resources within the Business Plan to undertake projects such as regeneration be noted;**
- 4) Officers be authorised to incur expenditure as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, up to the limit approved by the Council and for the purposes detailed in the report;**
- 5) Officers bring forward a report outlining proposals for how this Council might build council houses on some of the land owned by the Council and already declared surplus; and**

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 6) the Council approve the financial / budgetary implications, as detailed in the report.**

**174. PRIVATE SECTOR HOME SUPPORT SERVICE**

Members considered a report on extending the Home Support Service to non Council tenants who would not be eligible for funding through the Supporting People programme and who could afford to pay for a service.

Officers reported that provision of a service would have to be on a cost-recovery basis and an hourly rate of £13.22 had been proposed for the service.

Officers confirmed that the current proposal did not anticipate any increase in the number of staff required to provide the service.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **the Home Support Service be extended to the private sector within current capacity;**
- 2) **an hourly rate of £13.22 be introduced to pay for the Home Support Service; and**
- 3) **any proposal to increase staffing or the capacity of the service be brought back before the Executive Committee with a full Business Case.**

**175. STREET NAMING POLICY - REVIEW**

The Committee received a report which sought approval for a revised policy on Street Naming and Numbering for the Borough.

Officers outlined changes to the report that had been made following pre-scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 14th February 2012.

Officers were asked to notify Ward Members of any post code changes made by Royal Mail within their Wards.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **the revised policy on Street Naming and Numbering, as attached to the report at Appendix 1 and 2, be approved and adopted;**
- 2) **authority be delegated to the Head of Business Transformation or Executive Director, Planning & Regeneration, to carry out all functions relating to the addressing process, as appropriate and as now detailed in the revised Policy;**
- 3) **the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be updated accordingly; and**
- 4) **Mr Norman Neasom, a significant local artist, be added to the list of potential street names.**

**176. GRANTS PROGRAMME 2012/13**

The Committee received a report which sought approval for the recommendations made by the Grants Assessment Panel in awarding grants to voluntary sector organisations for 2012 – 2013.

The Committee was informed that the Grants Assessment Panel had met on 3 occasions. The total budget available for allocation was £240,000 and that 37 applications had been received totalling £336, 300.

Officers reported that successful schemes would be monitored quarterly.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **grants be awarded to voluntary sector organisations as detailed in Section 3.6 of the report; and**
- 2) **the additions to the Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Policy at paragraphs 5.4 and 6.2 be approved (Appendix 3 of the report) - these additions give clearer guidance to fundees as to the type of projects / services suitable to be submitted to Redditch Borough Council's Voluntary & Community Sector Grants programme.**

**177. EMPLOYMENT POLICY - REVIEW**

The Committee received a report which sought approval of the revised Special Leave policy.

Members were advised that both Corporate Management Team and Trade Union representatives had been consulted and had agreed the revised policy.

**RESOLVED that**

**the Special Leave policy attached to the report at Appendix 1 be approved and adopted.**

**178. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee received the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14th February 2012.

With reference to Minute 149 regarding the Petition on Short Stay Parking in the Town Centre, Members were informed that a meeting had been arranged with relevant agencies and stakeholders, including the petitioners, on 1st March 2012.

**RESOLVED that**

**the minutes be noted.**

# Executive Committee

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**179. MINUTES / REFERRALS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE PANELS ETC**

There were no Minutes / Referrals to consider.

**180. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee considered the latest Advisory Panels report.

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

**181. ACTION MONITORING**

Members considered the Committee's Action Monitoring report.

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and closed at 8.15 pm

.....  
Chair



**EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE**

13th March 2012

**PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Brandon Clayton, Housing, Local Environment & Health
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Angie Heighway, Head of Community Services
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	Not Applicable
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 This report therefore seeks Members approval for the adoption of the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy attached at Appendix 1 which sets out the legal responsibilities, principles and priorities that the Private Sector Housing Service will follow when enforcing legislation to demonstrate compliance with national regulatory requirements.
- 1.2 The Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy also incorporates a new Compulsory Purchase Policy.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that**

**The Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy attached at Appendix 1 be approved and adopted.**

**3. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 Section 49 of the Housing Act 2004 provides a power to levy reasonable charges as a means of recovering certain administrative and other expenses incurred in serving Enforcement Notices. Where it has been determined under the Enforcement Policy that the service of formal Notice is the most appropriate action to obtain statutory compliance charges will be levied in accordance with the Councils Annual Scale of Fees & Charges.
- 3.2 The Financial Services Manager has been consulted with regard to the financial implications

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**Legal Implications**

- 3.3 The statutory powers of Local Authorities to take Enforcement Action in relation to Private Sector Housing are set out in a number of pieces of legislation. Where appropriate the Enforcement Policy makes reference to the enabling legislation. The main Acts concerned are :-
- a) Housing Act 1985
  - b) Housing Act 2004
  - c) Building Act 1984
  - d) Environmental Protection Act 1990
  - e) Public Health Act 1961
- 3.4 The Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 Section 21 imposes a duty on any person exercising a specified regulatory function to have regard to the five principles of good regulation. The principles provide that regulatory activities should be carried out in a way which is transparent, accountable, proportionate and consistent and should be targeted only at cases in which action is needed.
- 3.5 The Regulators' Compliance Code is a Statutory Code of Practice relating to the exercise of regulatory functions issued under a provision of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 Section 22 and must be considered when determining general policies or principles by reference to which that person exercises those functions. The code is intended to promote efficient and effective approaches to regulatory inspection and enforcement and to improve the outcome of regulation without the imposition of unnecessary burdens.
- 3.6 Members are asked to note that whilst the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy is a new document it enshrines many of the principles previously incorporated within the Councils Voluntary Enforcement Concordat originally created to establish conformity of regulatory enforcement across the Council's Environmental Health, Building Regulation, Planning and other enforcement roles. The recent formulation of the Worcestershire Regulatory Service (which has developed its own Enforcement Policy particular to the functions for which it has responsibility) and the adoption of shared service provision for the remaining Private Housing functions have necessitated the development of an Enforcement Policy specific to Private Sector Housing in order to maintain statutory compliance and consistency.
- 3.7 The Compulsory Purchase Policy is specific to the compulsory purchase of property or land under the provisions of Section 17 of the Housing act 1985. Such actions are only taken as a last resort when all attempts to persuade owners to bring them back into use have failed.

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- 3.8 The Legal Services Manager has been consulted with regard to the legal implications

**Service/Operational Implications**

- 3.9 Monitoring, maintenance and improvement of Private Sector Housing Standards and Conditions are functions of the Strategic Housing Section of Community Services, shortly to become a shared service with Bromsgrove District Council. Within Redditch Borough this function includes licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation, housing disrepair inspections, statutory overcrowding, Empty Homes and enforcement of the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System.
- 3.10 Service demands and individual cases will vary and a degree of flexibility and discretion in the use of enforcement will always be required it is vital that the decision making process can be aligned to a policy designed to ensure consistency, proportionality and transparency in application at all levels from initial contacts, advice and guidance through to enforcement options, default measures and prosecution.
- 3.11 The Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy provides a framework tailored specifically to the provision and enforcement functions currently within the remit of Redditch Private Sector Housing. It also displays a commonality of approach with a similar Enforcement Policy recently approved by Bromsgrove District Council.

**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.12 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out in conjunction with Bromsgrove District Council Private Sector Housing Team
- 3.13 A core function of the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy is to ensure a balanced approach to service provision and the use of enforcement provisions, it will therefore provide a means by which Officers can reference and qualify actions and decisions whilst similarly enabling persons subject to enforcement or seeking use of the service to satisfy themselves that the service received is fair and appropriate.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 Failure to formulate or adopt a Policy for Enforcement may constitute a material consideration in any challenge to enforcement action by the Council and may affect the ruling of the Residential Property Tribunal or in some circumstances a finding of maladministration by the Local Government Ombudsman.

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4.2 The opportunity to improve clarity, consistency and transparency on why and how the Authority takes enforcement action may be lost.

**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Redditch Borough Council Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (Draft for Approval)

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Local Better Regulation Office-Appling the Regulators Compliance Code and Enforcement Concordat. Link.  
[www.lbro.org.uk/docs/regulators-compliance-code.pdf](http://www.lbro.org.uk/docs/regulators-compliance-code.pdf)

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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## Appendix 1

# **REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL** **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Council's approach to tackling poor housing conditions particularly within the private sector. This work is primarily undertaken by the Private Sector Housing Team within the Strategic Housing Section of Community Services. Work to improve housing conditions is mainly undertaken through our advisory and partnership role with landlords, the Landlord Forum, with owner occupiers, empty home owners and businesses.

The primary aim of this policy is to ensure compliance with relevant legislation by providing an effective, equitable, practical and consistent service. Redditch Borough Council considers that fair and proportionate enforcement is essential in protecting the health, safety and economic interests of all those concerned. The Enforcement Policy therefore provides advice and guidance to officers, businesses, owners, landlords and tenants on the range of options that are available to achieve this.

The Council recognises the important role that the private rented sector has to play in reducing the burden on social housing by providing good quality accommodation to meet the housing need of the Borough. The majority of landlords maintain their properties to a good standard but there are some who neglect their responsibilities and have properties that are in a substandard condition.

Similarly the majority of home owners act responsibly in maintaining their properties. However, there are small numbers of owners who give little consideration to the condition of their home, the safety of the occupiers or the quality of the surrounding environment.

The primary role of the Private Sector Housing Team is to provide advice and support to those seeking compliance, whilst tackling those who choose not to comply by using proportionate action. In some circumstances it is necessary to take appropriate formal action to resolve disrepair issues which may include utilising powers to improve, repair, close or demolish dwellings that are not fit for purpose. The detail on how and when action may be taken is outlined within the body of this policy.

## **2. Background**

The Building Research Establishment dataset for the Borough produced in 2006 indicated that approximately 6912 (27%) dwellings failed the Decent Homes

Standard, with 645 (3%) being unfit as a result of a Category 1 Hazard being present and a further 1396 (6%) being in substantial disrepair.

The Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2003 previously highlighted several priorities concerning the improvement of private housing standards including implementation of new Housing Assistance Policy providing assisted funding to address disrepair and Category 1 hazards, a registration scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation to improve accommodation standards (since superseded by national HMO Licencing requirements) an Energy Efficiency Strategy supporting a variety of funded schemes to improve energy/thermal efficiency across all tenures and the expansion and promotion of the Care & Repair agency.

This enforcement policy will contribute to the Council addressing a broad range of issues such as substandard housing conditions, preventing homelessness, tackling fuel poverty, reducing empty homes and contributing to Community Plans. Tackling poor housing conditions also supports the work of many other organisations including social care, health organisations and the Police.

### **3. General Enforcement Policy and Principles**

The Local Authority must comply with any statutory requirement placed upon it and align its procedures with best practice. Enforcement in the context of this policy is not limited to formal enforcement action such as serving notices or prosecution, but includes the provision of advice.

All investigations into alleged breaches of legislation will follow best professional practice and the requirements of: -

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Enforcement Concordat
- The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 – Codes of Practice
- The Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996
- The Code for Crown Prosecution
- Enforcement Guidance issued under section 9 of the Housing Act 2004

Particular regard must be made to the following 7 principles specified in the Statutory Code of Practice for Regulators made under Section 23 of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006: -

- **Economic Progress** - The Private Sector Housing service will only intervene when there is a risk to the health and safety of occupants, neighbours or visitors to a property. It is widely recognised that the supply of good quality, affordable privately rented accommodation is essential in meeting the local housing needs and promoting economic activity. Private landlords in the area range from those with large portfolios to those with one or two properties.

- **Risk Assessment** – The Service will use risk assessment to concentrate resources in the areas that need them most and on the properties in the worst condition. For example, the results of the most recent House Condition Surveys will be used to identify areas or types of accommodation in the Borough to pro-actively target action accordingly.

Following the receipt of a service request or complaint about poor housing conditions, an initial risk assessment will be carried out. Any follow up advice or action will be dependant upon the outcome of the initial assessment.

- **Advice and Guidance** – The Service will provide information that will distinguish between statutory requirements and advice or guidance. General advice will be made readily available on the Council's website. This will ensure landlords, agents, home owners and others understand their regulatory obligations. The information provided will be in clear, concise and accessible language, using a range of appropriate formats and media.

The Service welcomes enquiries from home owners and landlords about complying with minimum standards and ensuring homes are safe and warm on the basis that this will not directly trigger any enforcement action.

- **Inspections and other visits** – No inspection will take place without a reason. Inspections and other visits will take place in response to a reasonable complaint, a request for service, where poor conditions have been brought to our attention or as part of a risk-based and targeted programme.

Unless the visit is intended solely for advice purposes, the landlord or his or her agent will be contacted and will be given the opportunity to accompany the investigating officer during the visit. Following an inspection, positive feedback will be provided wherever possible to encourage and reinforce good practices.

- **Compliance and Enforcement Actions** – The Service will seek to identify landlords, agents, property owners or businesses that persistently breach the regulations. Proportionate and meaningful action will be taken. The service will facilitate compliance through a positive and proactive approach therefore reducing the need for reactive enforcement action.
- **Accountability** - The Service will be accountable for the decisions that it makes. Officers will provide a courteous, prompt and efficient service and will identify themselves by name and position. A contact point, telephone number and email address will also be provided. Applications for licences e.g. HMO or Caravan Site will be dealt with efficiently, promptly, and services will be effectively coordinated to minimise unnecessary overlap and time delays.

Information relating to the appeal mechanisms e.g. Residential Property Tribunal and the Council's corporate complaints procedure will be provided. The complaints procedure will be followed for any complaints received about the Service or the application of this Enforcement Policy.

#### **4. Shared Enforcement**

The range of enforcement matters dealt with by the Council in this policy area is such that there may well be occasions when there is a need to work with other agencies, for example the Fire Authority, by carrying out joint inspections. Where a fire hazard is identified, the Council will consult with Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority on works required in accordance with the jointly agreed consultation policy.

In determining the most appropriate form of investigation and enforcement action, officers will have regard, so far as they are aware, to any potential or existing action of other Council services or outside agencies. Where matters are identified by, or reported to our officers that are the enforcement responsibility of another Council service or outside agency, persons involved will, so far as is reasonably practicable, be informed that the matter will be referred to the appropriate service or agency.

Where enforcement action is being taken by another Council service or outside agency, we will provide all reasonable assistance including the production of witness statements and collection and sharing of evidence etc. subject to any legal constraints and the meeting of any reasonable expenses.

#### **5. Authority to investigate or enforce**

The Housing Act 2004 and associated secondary legislation sets out the duties and powers that the Council has in relation to regulating property standards in its capacity as Local Housing Authority. Powers are also contained in the Housing Act 1985 as amended and other legislation, such as the Environmental Protection Act (this list is not exhaustive).

This policy deals with housing enforcement in all residential dwellings, Houses in Multiple occupation, empty dwellings, and mobile home sites (should these be developed within the Borough).

The Council has the power of entry to properties at any reasonable time to carry out its duties under Section 239 of the Housing Act 2004. A notice is not required where entry is to ascertain whether an offence has been committed. If admission is refused, premises are unoccupied or prior warning of entry is likely to defeat the purpose of the entry then a warrant may be granted by a Justice of the Peace upon written application. A warrant under this section includes power to enter by force, if necessary and may include accompaniment by contractors or others if necessary.



The Council also has power under Section 235 of the Housing Act 2004 to require documentation to be produced in connection with exercising its function and investigations as to whether any offence has been committed under Parts 1-4 of the Housing Act 2004.

The Council also has powers under Section 237 of the Housing Act 2004 to use the information obtained above and Housing Benefit and Council Tax information obtained by the authority to carry out its functions in relation to these parts of the Act.

## **Inspections**

The Housing Act 2004 introduced the **Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**. It is a calculation of the effect of 29 possible hazards on the health of occupiers and any visitors. The legislation provides a range of actions to address these hazards.

The process of a HHSRS is two stage, the inspection and the subsequent calculations. HHSRS calculation provides a combined score for each hazard identified, however it does not provide a single score for the dwelling as a whole.

The scoring of any hazard combines the likelihood of an occurrence taking place (within 12 months) and then the range of probable harm outcomes that may arise from that occurrence. A numerical value is then provided which is then converted into bands (from A to J).

Bands A to C (ratings of 1,000 points and over) are considered to be the most severe and are known as **Category 1 hazards**. for which the Council has a **duty** to take appropriate action. When a Category 1 hazard is identified, the Council must decide which of the available enforcement options is the most appropriate course of action. These are explained in more detail within Section 5.

Bands D to J, are less severe (rating less than 1,000 points) and known as **Category 2 hazards** for which the Council has a **power** to take action. This process is repeated for each of the hazards present within the dwelling. If the Council decides to take action for category 2 hazards, it will consider taking action in the following circumstances: -

- Where a Category 2 hazard falls within band D or E and there is one or more Category 1 hazards
- Where the cases involves a vulnerable person that would benefit from having Category 2 hazards addressed
- Cases in which a premises suffers from multiple Category 2 hazards, which when considered together, create a more serious situation,
- Where a House Condition Survey highlights specific local hazards relating to that type of dwelling.
- Any other exceptional case determined by the Head of Community Services

The assessment is based upon the group most vulnerable to that particular risk not the actual occupier. Once scored, any action that is then considered will take into account the affect of that risk upon the actual occupant.

## **6. Enforcement Options**

This policy is built around a process of escalation; therefore we will only prosecute in serious circumstances such as a deliberate, negligent or persistent breach of legal obligations. The following levels of enforcement actions are available: -

### **Stage 1 – Informal Action**

- **Prevention:** -We believe that the first step in enforcement is prevention, through raising awareness and promoting good practice. Methods of achieving this include the provision of advice and information at the earliest opportunity.

Redditch Borough Council holds a regular Landlord Forum and jointly produces a landlord newsletter with Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest District Councils. These are core means of advising landlords of their rights, responsibilities and legislative changes and also provides the Council with an insight into the housing market and landlords views so that services can be tailored to meet needs.

The offer of discretionary financial assistance (in certain circumstances) can also assist in avoiding enforcement action, details of which can be found within the Council's Housing Assistance Policy.

- **Advice and Guidance:** -Where appropriate we will seek to resolve situations without issuing formal notices or taking legal action. This will be used to reinforce advice and guidance where minor defects are identified but considered insufficient to warrant formal action. Examples of such may be where the consequences of non-compliance do not impose a significant risk to health and safety of the occupants or visitors, or where there is confidence that informal action will achieve compliance.

Information will be provided in a clear manner detailing any works that are required and over what timescale these should be completed. We will ensure that legal requirements are clearly distinguished from recommended works, where applicable. If a landlord or owner agrees to start work service of notice will be delayed unless the landlord or owner fails to carry out the works within a reasonable or agreed time.

- **Formal Letters:** -This course of action will be given prior to formal enforcement action taking place and will detail what works are required within the specified timescales. Follow-up visits will normally be made within an agreed time period to ensure the problems have been rectified.

This may follow an informal letter where there remains some confidence that compliance may be achieved prior to resorting to formal enforcement.

## Stage 2 – Formal Action

- **Formal notices:** -Where practicable, decisions to serve formal enforcement notices will be taken by the authorised officer in consultation with the Private Sector Housing Team Leader/Strategic Housing Manager. If it is necessary to serve a formal notice under the Housing Act 2004 a reasonable charge will be made to recover administrative and other expenses incurred in accordance with the Councils annual scale of fees and charges. The following formal notices are available to officers when dealing with substandard properties: -
  - (a) **Hazard Awareness Notice:** -This is an informal notice that ensures the relevant person(s) are aware of the hazards that are present within the property, these Notices are often used where the landlord/owner is currently or proposing to undertake works. The service of this notice does not prohibit the Local Authority from taking additional action if works are not carried out.
  - (b) **Improvement Notice:-** This notice is served where improvements to a property are considered essential and specifies the contraventions and details the works or actions required within a specified timescale. Where the Council determines that an Improvement Notice should be served in respect of a Category 1 Hazard (see section 5), it will require works to be undertaken to either remove the hazard entirely or reduce its effect.

If the Council determines that the hazard can only be reduced to a Category 2 hazard rather than it being removed, it will require works to be carried out as far as is reasonably practicable to reduce the likelihood of harm.

- (c) **Suspended Improvement Notice:** - The Local Authority has the power to consider serving a suspended Improvement Notice. The following is a list of situations in which it may be deemed appropriate to suspend such Notice: -
  - The need to obtain planning permission (or other appropriate consent) that is required prior to repairs and/or improvements being undertaken
  - Works which cannot properly be undertaken whilst the premises is occupied and which a notice can be deferred until such time as the premises falls vacant or temporary alternative accommodation can be provided
  - Personal circumstances of occupants, for example, temporary ill-health, which suggests that works should be deferred.

When deciding whether it is appropriate to suspend an Improvement Notice the Council will have regard to:

- The level of risk presented by the hazard(s)
- The turnover of tenants at the property
- The response of the landlord or owner
- Other relevant circumstances (e.g. if a vulnerable age group is involved)

Suspended Improvement Notices will be reviewed after a maximum of 12 months and then at regular intervals, but the suspension of a notice will not normally exceed 6 months.

- (d) **Prohibition Order:** - This is required where there is a significant risk to the health and safety of the occupant. It can be used in respect of either Category 1 or Category 2 hazards for prohibiting occupation of all or part of a dwelling. This action is likely to be used if repairs and/or improvements are deemed inappropriate on grounds of practicality or excessive cost. A Prohibition Order might be used to prohibit occupation or use of the whole or a part of a dwelling as a result of inadequate means of escape in the event of a fire.

The Council has the power to suspend a Prohibition Order once it has been served and will consider this course of action where it is reasonable to do so. A Suspended Prohibition Order will be reviewed after a maximum of 12 months and then at regular intervals, but suspension will not normally exceed 6 months.

- (e) **Emergency Remedial and Prohibition Action:** - There may be situations in which Emergency Remedial Action and Emergency Prohibition Orders are appropriate. However the Council must be satisfied of the following: -

- A Category 1 hazard exists,
- The hazard poses an imminent risk of serious harm to health or safety of the occupant, and that;
- Immediate action is necessary

If these conditions are met the Council may take appropriate emergency action. Emergency action might be appropriate where there is a imminent risk of electrocution, fire, explosion or collapse. The costs incurred for carrying out emergency remedial action including administrative charges are recoverable from the recipient.

- (f) **Demolition Order:** - The Housing Act 2004 retained the power to make a Demolition Order but amended Section 265 of the Housing Act 1985 to align it with the HHSRS and enforcement provisions. Demolition Orders are considered as part of the enforcement process when dealing with a Category 1 hazard (where they are judged the appropriate course of action). In determining whether to issue a Demolition Order the Council will take account of Government guidance and will consider all the circumstances of the case.

- (g) **Clearance Area:** - The Council can declare an area to be a 'Clearance Area' if it is satisfied that each of the premises in that area is affected by one or more Category 1 hazards (or that they are dangerous or harmful to the health and safety of inhabitants.) In determining whether to declare a Clearance Area the Council will act only in accordance with Section 289 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended), have regard to the relevant Government guidance on Clearance Areas and all the circumstances of the case.
- (h) **Statutory Nuisance Notices Served under the Environmental Protection Act 1990:** - It is anticipated that the vast majority of statutory nuisances will be eliminated using the enforcement provisions under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. However, where this is not possible consideration will be given to the service and enforcement of Section 80 abatement notices

### Stage 3 – Non-Compliance

The Council will initially look to the relevant responsible person(s) to resolve matters of concern. However where a Formal Notice has been served and the specified works have not been carried out in compliance with the notice, the Council has a variety of actions it may take to deal with non-compliance these are as follows: -

- **Work in Default:** -This will be considered where it is in the interests of the health and safety of the occupants. The works in default will be carried out only after the service of a Notice e.g. Improvement Notice and the costs recharged or placed as a land charge on the property.
- **Formal (simple)caution:** -This may be considered for less serious breaches of formal notices and statutory requirements. Under certain circumstances, a formal caution may be used as an alternative to prosecution and will usually be considered before making a decision to prosecute. The procedure adopted and the content of the caution will be in accordance with current LGR (Local Government Regulation) guidance and relevant Home Office Circular.

A formal caution is a serious matter and may influence the decision whether or not to prosecute, should another offence be committed. A formal caution will remain on record for a period of 3 years. The decision to offer a formal caution will be made by the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Private Sector Housing Team Leader and Strategic Housing Manager.

Cautions are intended to:-

- Deal quickly and simply with certain, less serious offences;
- Avoid unnecessary appearance in criminal courts;
- Reduce the chance of offenders re-offending.

Before issuing a caution the following matters will be taken into account when deciding whether a caution is appropriate:-

- There must be evidence of sufficient guilt;
- The offender must understand the significance of the formal caution and admit the offence by signing a declaration.
- The seriousness of the offence. A caution is not suitable for serious offences.

Where an individual chooses not to accept a formal caution the Council will automatically consider a prosecution. In instances where a caution is accepted the assessment of the premises will be reviewed and the inspection frequency may be increased as a result. The decision to issue a caution will be notified to all known interested bodies, including tenants, managers, freeholders, leaseholders and mortgagees.

- **Prosecution:** -The Council will use discretion in deciding whether to bring a prosecution and generally will only commence proceedings when it is considered to be in the public interest. Before deciding to prosecute there must be sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction, taking account of any defence that may be available. In certain circumstances prosecution without prior warning may take place. The officer will ensure that a decision to prosecute and the results of any legal proceedings will be notified to all known interested bodies, including tenants, managers, freeholders, leaseholders and mortgagees.

The decision to prosecute will be taken by the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Strategic Housing Manager with the support of the Council's Legal Officers.

## **7. Tenure**

The HHSRS applies equally to all tenures, therefore all enforcement options are available to the Council regardless of whether the premise in question is owner-occupied, privately rented or Registered Providers (RP) property. The Council considers that owner-occupiers are usually in a position to take informed decisions regarding the maintenance of their property, and are therefore able to prioritise finances accordingly. Where applicable they can then apply for Local Authority assistance towards the works. However, tenants, and particularly non-RP tenants, are not usually able to do so. For this reason the Council judges that it is appropriate for its powers to be applied accordingly to each tenure: -

- **Owner-Occupiers:** -The Council anticipates that Hazard Awareness Notices will be issued frequently and considers this to be an appropriate course of action. However, the use of Improvement Notices, Prohibition Orders and their emergency equivalents will be considered in the following circumstances: -
  - Vulnerable elderly people who are judged not-capable of making informed decisions about their own welfare

- Vulnerable individuals who require the intervention of the Council to ensure their welfare is best protected
- Hazards that might reasonably affect persons other than the occupants
- Serious risk of life-threatening harm such as electrocution or fire
- Any other exceptional case determined by the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Strategic Housing Manager.

Unless the hazard is deemed to pose an imminent risk of serious harm, the Council will contact the owner to explain the nature of the hazard and confirm the action intending to be taken. The Council will take account of any proposals or representations made by, or on behalf of the owner. The Council will take into account the opinion of the relevant Welfare Authority when considering both the vulnerability and capability of such persons and therefore what action will be taken (where necessary).

- **Social Landlords**

Registered Providers of Social Housing (RPs) exist to provide suitable and properly maintained accommodation for their tenants. They are managed by Boards (which typically include tenant representatives) their performance is also scrutinised by the Homes and Communities Agency and Tenant Services Authority. RPs normally manage and maintain their properties, have written arrangements for reporting repairs or problems and have set response times.

The Council will not normally take formal action against an RP unless it is satisfied that the problem in question has been properly reported to the RP has then failed to take appropriate action. If the Council determines that it is appropriate to take action it will then normally notify the RP that a complaint has been received and will seek the RP's comments and proposed action.

Only in cases where it has been deemed that an unsatisfactory response has been received will the Council take further action and review what enforcement options are available in order to determine the most appropriate course of action.

- **Private Landlords**

The Council will have regard to the principles of the Enforcement Concordat and relevant guidance from the Residential Property Tribunal decisions. Action will be taken in accordance with Section 6, where the Council will primarily look at informal action. Formal action will be initiated immediately if a hazard in question is judged by the Council:

- To pose an imminent risk of serious harm to any person, or
- The landlord concerned has failed to comply with informal action on a previous occasion.

Where the informal approach is judged appropriate the Council will contact the landlord, in writing (or his/her relevant agent) to confirm their involvement and request a joint visit. Following the inspection the Council

will confirm its findings from the site visit and specify what is required of the landlord to remedy the problem.

A Requisition for Information Notice may also be served at this point in order to establish all relevant information e.g. ownership and vested interests.

Landlords are expected to provide their agent(s) with sufficient authority to act on their behalf. Failure of an agent to respond to communication from the Council or take appropriate action may be treated as a failure by the landlord.

The Council will proceed with **formal action** if: -

- No response from the landlord/agent or,
- The response is deemed inadequate or,
- Works that were agreed, have not been carried out

The Council will take whichever of the various available enforcement actions it judges to be the most appropriate in accordance with this Policy.

## **8. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing**

A HMO is a building or part of a building occupied by more than one household as their only or main residence, and there is some sharing or lack of basic amenities. This includes houses containing bedsits, hostels, and shared properties. A full definition is given under Section 254 and Schedule 14 Housing Act 2004.

HMOs of three or more storeys, with five or more occupants require a licence. HMOs owned by Registered Providers of Social Housing (RPs), the Police, Health Authorities and certain other organisations are exempt, as are certain compliant buildings properly converted into flats.

Licences will be granted where the property is deemed suitable for occupation as an HMO provided the following criteria are fulfilled: -

- The property can be made suitable by the application of conditions,
- The management arrangements are satisfactory,
- The licensee and manager are fit and proper persons.

If the property is not assessed prior to the application, a member of the Private Sector Housing Team will normally visit within 12 months of the granting of an HMO licence. During this inspection a HHSRS assessment will be carried out and an assessment will be made to determine compliance with the licence conditions and management standards.

- **Offences relating to Licensable HMOs**



- **Revocation** - This action may be taken for the offence of operating an HMO without a licence or for failing to satisfy the conditions of the licence without reasonable excuse.

Where an HMO requiring a licence is operating without a licence, or the licence has been revoked but the revocation is not yet in force the local authority has a duty to make an Interim Management Order (IMO). This may be followed by a Final Management Order (FMO) for a further five years. The Council may opt to manage a HMO subject to management orders via in-house resources or appoint a preferred partner.

- **Rent Repayment Order** - Where a licence is required, and notice has not been received to notify the local authority the tenants or Council may make an application to the Residential Property Tribunal for a Rent Repayment Order. This requires the landlord to repay rent to the tenants for up to 12 months.

Whilst local authorities are responsible for implementing mandatory licensing of HMOs and assessing the fire safety risks in all dwellings under the HHSRS, the Fire Authority also have responsibilities under the Fire Safety Order 2005 for fire safety in common (shared) parts of HMOs. An agreement has therefore been drawn up between the Council and the Fire Authority for joint working to secure fire safety in HMOs.

The HMO Management Regulations apply to all HMOs, whether or not they require a licence. These require HMOs to be kept in a reasonable state of repair, all installations and appliances (including those for fire safety) to be in good working order and the common parts to be kept clean and in a reasonable state of decoration. The HHSRS applies to all dwellings, to which the previously mentioned enforcement action must be followed. Where there are issues relating to overcrowding within a HMO, an Overcrowding Notice may be served where no Interim Management Order or Final Management Order is in force on an un-licensable HMO.

## **9. Empty Homes**

In many cases the issues arising from homes that remain empty for an extended term are subject to specific legislative powers enforced by other sections within the Council and are subject to their respective enforcement policies. For example:

- **Planning** :- Unsightly land or property affecting the visual amenity of an area.
- **Building Control**:- Dangerous or dilapidated buildings.
- **Regulatory Services**:- Blocked or defective drainage, Vermin or accumulations of waste likely to attract or sustain vermin.

Private Sector Housing enforcement may take one or both of the following forms dependent on the circumstances of the case. Any action taken under

powers available to this service will be taken in accordance with the staged approach to enforcement detailed previously.

**a) Nuisance arising from the property**

An Abatement Notice may be served under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 section 80 to require the property owner to take steps to abate a nuisance arising from the property which is affecting a third party, such as causing dampness to an adjoining property. Where the need for remedial action is urgent and the abatement process will not remedy the defective state of the premises in a timely manner an expedited procedure by way of a Notice under the Building Act 1984 Section 76 will be considered.

Where the property is subject to or at risk from vandalism, arson or unauthorised access likely to have an effect on the neighbourhood the Council will consider service of Notice on the owner to secure the property against unauthorised access under Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 sections 29 or Building Act 1984 section 78. The council will seek to recover the costs associated with carrying out work in default work but may waive recovery if there are proven and valid extenuating circumstances to be considered.

**b) Reduction of Empty Homes**

In accordance with the Council's Empty Homes strategy the Private Sector Housing Team will seek to reduce the number of long-term empty residential dwellings ( empty for over 6 months) and bring these back into use. The council will seek to identify relevant parties and secure a voluntary resolution by the owner(s) to return the property to occupation by repair, improvement, sale or rent including the provision of advice and, where available, funding assistance. The use of formal action will only be considered where a voluntary solution cannot be secured.

There are three enforcement routes that may be used to help bring empty homes back into use which are as follows: -

- Empty Dwelling Management Order
- Enforced sale, and
- Compulsory purchase

When considering enforcement options for empty homes, each case will be assessed on its merits and will only be recommended for enforcement action where there are clear benefits to the neighbourhood or it could address a housing need.

**• Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO)**

Where a dwelling has been wholly unoccupied for a period of at least 6 months, the Council may apply to the Residential Property Tribunal for an interim EDMO where the following is satisfied: -

- There is no reasonable prospect that the dwelling will become occupied unless an interim EDMO is made, and
- The Council has made reasonable efforts to notify the proprietor of the dwelling and to ascertain what steps are being taken to occupy that dwelling.

The second stage of the process would be for the Council to seek a final EDMO provided that the relevant conditions have been met.

There are a number of situations where EDMO powers do not apply including for second homes, properties being sold or let, and properties going through probate.

It is important to note that the Council would only consider pursuing an EDMO in circumstances where every effort to work with the owner of the property to bring it back into occupation had proved to be unsuccessful. There would be significant financial implications for the Council and it is envisaged that circumstances where use of these powers would be suitable would arise only in very exceptional circumstances.

- **Enforced Sale**

The Law of Property Act 1925 gives Local Authorities the power to sell properties in order to recover a debt secured against that property. This power can be used where a debt has been incurred for example following works undertaken to an empty home in the owners default.

### **New Compulsory Purchase Order Policy**

Redditch Borough Council will take every step to assist owners of empty residential properties to bring the accommodation back into use. But there are some instances when it may be necessary to make a Compulsory Purchase Order, particularly where all reasonable attempts have been made with the owner to bring the empty home back into use.

This would be when properties are in a poor state repair, attract anti-social behaviour such as vandalism, squatting and graffiti, have a detrimental effect on the environment and cause complaints from other residents.

- 1 The Council will use compulsory purchase powers under Section 17 of the Housing Act 1985, subject to Secretary of State approval, to acquire the property and to either retain it within the Council's housing stock or sell at auction with a condition of the sale being the property will be restored and returned to use as a dwelling
- 2 The use of compulsory purchase powers will only be used when other approaches have not been successful. However, the threat of a compulsory purchase acts as an effective tool to encourage owners of empty homes to take action.
- 3 The use of the Compulsory Purchase process enables the Council to acquire the property and then auction it on the open market. The Council will attach

conditions to the sale to ensure that the property is brought to a decent homes standard within specified timescales.

4 Properties selected for compulsory purchase action must meet at least **three** of the conditions listed below:

- Be empty for more than five years;
- Cause a detrimental environment effect;
- Be subject to enforcement action by other Council Teams or Departments;
- Affect the stability of adjoining properties;
- Result in legal proceedings being taken against the Council.

5 Having met these conditions, the following additional criteria may also prioritise those that are pursued with most urgency:

- Squatted properties;
- Properties causing a nuisance to neighbours;
- Properties identified by the police as causing particular problems in terms of crime;

## **10. Power to charge for Enforcement Action**

The Local Authority has the power under Section 49 of the Housing Act 2004 to make a reasonable charge as a means of recovering certain administrative and other expenses incurred in serving an Improvement Notice, Hazard Awareness Notice, Prohibition Order, Emergency Prohibition, Demolition Order or taking Emergency Remedial Action. The charge is based on reasonable costs associated with time spent gaining entry, visiting and inspecting the premises along with the administration costs for producing such Notices and Orders and is set annually in the Council's Scale of fees and charges. The Council may however waive or adjust the sum if there are proven and valid extenuating circumstances to consider and is at the discretion of the Head of Community Services.

Contractor and other service costs such as testing of electrical or gas installations incurred in carrying out Work in Default or Remedial Action will be charged separately the sum of which will be recoverable through a local land charge.

## **11. Risks**

There are risks associated with undertaking enforcement action particularly in relation to the potential costs of enforcement and undertaking works in default. Equally there are risks associated with not taking enforcement action where the Council has identified a Category 1 Hazard but without justifying it's decision has decided not to pursue any enforcement action.

## **12. Review**

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and, in any event, at least every two years.

## **13. Contact**

Private Sector Housing Team  
Leisure, Environment & Community Services Directorate  
Redditch Borough Council  
Walter Stranz Square  
Redditch  
Worcestershire B98 8AH  
01527 64252  
E.Mail:- PSHT@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk



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**CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT -  
QUARTER 3, PERIOD ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2011**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Michael Braley, Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes – At Portfolio Holders’ meeting
Relevant Head of Service	Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

This report also provides Members with an opportunity to review the Council’s performance for quarter 3 of the 2011/12 financial year and to comment upon it.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Executive Committee is asked to RESOLVE**

**that the update on key performance indicators for the period ending 31st December 2011 be considered and commented upon.**

**3. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

3.1 Poor financial performance will be detrimental to any Council assessment and overall performance. Specific financial indicators included in the 2011/12 set for quarter 3 are listed below:

- Time taken to process housing benefit / council tax benefit new claims and change events;
- Percentage of invoices paid by the Council within 30 days of receipt or within the agreed payment terms;

**Legal Implications**

3.2 The Government announced that the former National Indicator set was to be reduced. At present there is no legal requirement for the local authority to produce specific performance data.

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- 3.3 As the Council progresses with the transformation programme, Members and Senior Management Team may wish to challenge data requirements placed upon the Council by external organisations if it is felt that they do not contribute to the purposes of the organisation.

**Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.4 The current reduced number of indicators allows officers to focus on the areas that are of greatest importance and still require management for the remainder of the financial year.
- 3.5 The corporate performance report compares the year to date outturn with the same period last year and shows those indicators from the Council Plan which were agreed by CMT for corporate reporting for quarter 3 and quarter 4, 2011/12 and whether they have improved, declined or remained static in performance.
- a) In total, data has been provided for 18 indicators for quarter 3. Of these, 8 have improved in performance and 10 have declined compared with the same period last year.
  - b) Of those indicators which have declined, there is one which may require further analysis (see section 3.5d).
  - c) This report shows that of the 17 indicators reported this quarter, 44.4% have improved when compared to the same period last year (April to December). By way of example:
    - i) The time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events has continued to demonstrate a positive direction of travel as the length of time to process the claims has reduced by 3.7 days when compared to the same period last year, falling from 12.30 days to 8.60 days;
    - ii) The amount of time lost to the organisation due to sickness absence has reduced from 7.84 days to 6.69 days. It is hoped that the current review of the sickness absence policy will result in continued improvement in this indicator;
    - iii) There has been a 13.78kg reduction (per household) in the amount of residual household waste collected. Falling from 432.49 kg, April – December in 2010/11 to 418.17kg for the same period in 2011/12;
    - iv) There continues to be a reduction in the amount of rent owing from Council tenants, falling from 3.63% of the rent roll for April – December in 2010/11 to 2.81% for the same period in 2011/12.



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- d) There are two indicators highlighted as showing relative concern:
- i) The number of households requiring temporary accommodation in the period April to December has increased from 9 households in 2010/11 to 11 households in 2011/12. Although the current quarter comparatively shows a small increase, there is concern this will continue with an upward trend due to changes in affordability and housing benefit entitlement. Some reasons for this are: there are fewer private properties available for rent as some private landlords have been forced to sell properties, and due to changes in housing benefit (which is now paid directly to the applicant and not the landlord); fewer private landlords are prepared to rent to people in receipt of benefits due to fear of non-payment.
  - ii) The number of invoices paid by the Council within 30 days of receipt has remained relatively static for the last 7 quarters with the average percentage of invoices being paid at 92.36% (this does not include disputed invoices). To address this matter, a message has been placed on Oracle reminding managers of their responsibility to return invoices in a timely manner. This will also be discussed the Managers Forum. A new automated ordering system which will reduce the length of time between receipt and payment of invoices is currently being rolled out. It is anticipated the roll out will be complete by the end of March 2012.
- 3.6 To maintain data quality, the Council uses an electronic data collection (EDC) spread sheet. This shows current and historic performance against selected performance indicators.
- 3.7 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 2011/12 performance indicators agreed for by CMT for corporate reporting in quarter 3. These indicators have been extracted from the Council Plan. The performance data contained in the attached report relates directly to the Council's priorities and objectives.
- 3.8 The performance indicator set includes one 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 3, 2011/12 shows a decrease in the amount of time lost due to sickness absence compared to the same period last year (April – December).

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- 3.9 There are a total of 2 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.

### **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.10 Customer service performance indicators included for 2011/12:  
a) Percentage of complaints handled within the agreed time frames.  
Performance for this indicator can be found in Appendix 1.
- 3.11 Enhanced performance will assist to improve customer satisfaction.
- 3.12 Information contained in the attached appendix will be communicated to both internal and external customers via the intranet/Internet following approval at committee.

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

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

## **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Quarter 3, 2011/12 Corporate Performance Report, period ending 31 December 2011

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The details to support the information provided within this report are held by the Policy Team and on the Electronic Data Collection (EDC) system.

### **AUTHORS OF REPORT**

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## Redditch Borough Council Corporate Performance Report Quarter 3, 2011/12 - Period Ending December 2011

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 3 (October - December) 2011/12 and where there is comparative data available; the data relates to a year to date (April - December) comparison.

	Finance & Corporate Resources (FR)		Leisure, Environmental & Community Services (LEC)		Area 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 3 where comparative data is available	3		9		0		0		6		18	
Total number of indicators showing improvement compared to the same period last year	2	66.7%	4	44.4%	NO COMPARABLE DATA AVAILABLE FOR THESE P'I'S		NO OUTTURNS EXPECTED THIS QUARTER	2	33.3%	8	44.4%	
Total number of indicators showing a decline compared to the same period last year	1	33.3%	5	55.6%				4	66.7%	10	55.6%	
Total number of indicators showing no change compared to the same period last year	0	0.0%	0	0.0%				0	0.0%	0	0.0%	

### Key Findings for Quarter 3

This report shows that of the 18 indicators reported this quarter, 44.4% 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 continues to improve, as the length of time to process the claims has reduced from 12.3 days to 8.6 days. Likewise, there has been a reduction of 13.78kgs of residual waste per household when compared to the same period last year. However there are also indicators which are of some concern, for example the amount of households requiring temporary accommodation has increased due to the difficulty in preventing them from becoming homeless.

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

<u>Key to Terms and Symbols</u>	
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 ☹☺	To be confirmed TBC
No data available for the period #	Worcestershire Viewpoint Survey (WVP)
Not applicable for this indicator/period NA	Customer Service Centre CSC
Data is provisional *	West Midlands WM

**Redditch Borough Council Corporate Performance Report**  
**Quarter 3, 2011/12 - Period Ending December 2011**

**Finance and Corporate Resources**

Indicator Description	Current			History - Year End (where available)		Comments
	1 Apr 2010 - 31 Dec 2010	1 Apr 2011 - 31 Dec 2011	Direction of Travel (where applicable)	2009/10	2010/11	
Time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events ( <b>days</b> )	<b>12.30</b>	<b>8.60</b>	☺	13.40	11.35	Faster decision making on claims due to Officers deciding more claims while customer is present, also more automation of Department of Works and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs data. In addition fewer new claims have been made.
% of invoices paid by the Council within 30 days of receipt	<b>92.52%</b>	<b>92.28%</b>	☹	93.55%	92.39%	Slight increase in processing time (this does not include disputed invoices). As officers have been failing to sign invoices and return in a timely manner to accounts payable, a corporate message was recently sent out in Oracle to encourage officers to return invoices within 4 days. This matter will also be discussed at a forthcoming Managers Forum. A new automated ordering system which will reduce the length of time between receipt and payment of invoices is currently being rolled out. It is anticipated the role out will be complete by the end of March 2012.
Number of working days / shifts lost to the local authority due to sickness absence per FTE (full time equivalent) staff members ( <b>days</b> )	<b>7.84</b>	<b>6.69</b>	☺	9.02	10.16	Whilst there has been an increase in sickness from the last quarter (2.70 days in Q3, 2.12 days in Q2), there has been a decrease in sickness compared with the same period last year. The review of the Sickness Absence policy is currently an HR priority and upon implementation we would expect to see an improvement in future figures.
% of complaints handled within the agreed time frames	<b>82.76%</b>	<b>71.62%</b>	Contextual	NA	81.25%	2 complex cases still open. The number of complaints has increased in comparison to the same time last year as expected as we encourage staff to record feedback. However, this is a drop in the percentage of complaints dealt with within agreed timescales compared with the same period last year and Heads of Service are reminded to ensure timescales are met.

**Redditch Borough Council Corporate Performance Report**  
**Quarter 3, 2011/12 - Period Ending December 2011**

**Leisure, Environmental and Community Services**

Indicator Description	Current			History - Year End (where available)		Comments
	1 Apr 2010 - 31 Dec 2010	1 Apr 2011 - 31 Dec 2011	Direction of Travel (where applicable)	2009/10	2010/11	
Number of affordable homes delivered	79	18	Contextual	111	100	One mortgage rescue unit delivered; converted from market to rent. No schemes on site but large scheme in pipeline which may come forward in this financial year (Marfield Farm at Church Hill). Low completion level.
Number of British Crime Survey comparator crimes reported	2,426	2,595	☹	3,469	3,241	The total of 799 BCS comparator crimes in Q3 is lower than Q2 (by 74 offences). However, Q3 offending this year is slightly higher than that of Q3 last year 2010/11 (up 2%), and the year to date total number of BCS crimes is up 7% on the 2010/11 figure. Despite these increases performance is now in line with peers, ranking 9th out of 15 most similar areas - suggesting that other similar areas of the country are seeing greater increases in crime.
Number of people using the Dial-A-Ride service	26,002	25,497	☹	32,865	35,196	There has been a decrease in passenger numbers in quarter 3 (505 passengers) as to two vehicles were in the garage for major repairs, although this did not have an adverse effect on the number of people who were refused the service. However there has been an increase of 555 passengers when comparing December 2010 with December 2011. One vehicle remains off the road as it is uneconomical to repair. Two new vehicles have been ordered and it is expected that they will be in service during April. New promotional material has recently been distributed and it is hoped this will increase the usage of both Shopmobility and Dial-A-Ride.
Number of people using the Shopmobility service	12,279	12,942	☺	19,238	16,252	There continues to be a steady increase in customers using the Shopmobility service. Compared to the same year to date figures there has been an increase of 663 users. New promotional material has recently been distributed and it is hoped this will increase the usage of both Shopmobility and Dial-A-Ride.
Visitors to the Palace Theatre	44,183	41,222	☹	44,857	53,015	Exceeded box office cash record for the panto and usage is up compared to the same quarter for last year (Q3, 2010/11 12,142 and Q3, 2011/12 13,813). The overall short fall is due to reduced attendance at Society Theatre hire performances, however the management team are confident that attendance will meet in-service target of 53,015 by the year end. Within the theatres benchmarking group, audience figures are significantly down across all theatres but the Palace is remaining relatively stable whilst reducing running costs.

Data correct as at Monday 5 March 2012 at 12:40pm

**Redditch Borough Council Corporate Performance Report**  
**Quarter 3, 2011/12 - Period Ending December 2011**

**Leisure, Environmental and Community Services (cont.)**

Indicator Description	Current			History - Year End (where available)		Comments
	1 Apr 2010 - 31 Dec 2010	1 Apr 2011 - 31 Dec 2011	Direction of Travel (where applicable)	2009/10	2010/11	
Visitors to leisure centres	419,252	432,533	☺	565,157	569,187	There has been an increase of 13,281 compared with the same period last year. This has been due to increase in attendances at dual use sites; there has been higher usage in Arrow Vale's i-gym, Kingsley Squash Courts and some relocations from Abbey Stadium.
Visitors to Museum and Bordesley Abbey Visitors Centre	18,989	19,293	☺	15,068	21,347	Slight increase, due to additional attendance at the annual Christmas Fair.
Household waste collection (kg per head)	83.58	83.78	☹	86.59	90.19	Very minor change compared to the same period last year, slight improvement on previous quarter (Q2, 100.72kgs and Q3, 91.49kgs).
Residual waste per household (kgs)	432.49	418.71	☺	574.94	569.17	Improvement on previous quarter, and a reduction of 13.78kgs per household when compared to the same period last year.
% of household waste re-used, recycled or composted	27.79%	27.64%	☹	28.30%	28.73%*	Minimal decrease on the same period last year, however there is a small improvement of 0.5% when comparing Q3, 2010/11 with Q3, 2011/12.

**Redditch Borough Council Corporate Performance Report**  
**Quarter 3, 2011/12 - Period Ending December 2011**

**Planning and Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services**

Indicator Description	Current		Direction of Travel (where applicable)	History - Year End (where available)		Comments
	1 Apr 2010 - 31 Dec 2010	1 Apr 2011 - 31 Dec 2011		2009/10	2010/11	
Number of households living in temporary accommodation (Snapshot)	9	11	☹	7	3	Use of temporary accommodation has increased as prevention is becoming more difficult due to lack of properties in private sector and affordability due to changes to housing benefit entitlement.
Average time taken to re-let local authority housing (days)	18.10	20.93	☹	22.92	19.55	The void performance continues to be well within the service target (25 days), although with the transformation work commencing in housing our performance has not been as good as in quarter 2 due to officers working with the transformation team. Extra support has been put in place to ensure the team performance is not disrupted in future quarters.
Rent arrears as a percentage of rent roll	3.63%	2.81%	☺	3.57%	2.65%	Our performance in comparison to the previous two year's is continually improving. In 2009/10 the year to date arrears were £831,640 (4.34%) and in 2010/11 they were £720,328 (3.63%). This has been achieved by amending our working practices to put more emphasis on preventing arrears.
Processing of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	80.00%	75.00%	☹	100%	76.92%	5 major applications determined this quarter, which is the most we have dealt with in one quarter in the last 12 months. Out of the five applications, 1 was determined out of time giving us a performance rate of 80% for quarter 3 (the same as Q3 in 2010/11). The reason for this late decision was due to the section 106 agreement.
Processing of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	100%	96.50%	☹	95.24%	100%	3 applications were determined out of time this quarter, which is the lowest performance level for this category. Two of the applications that were out of time had to be reported to committee.
Processing of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	95.49%	97.18%	☺	98.16%	95.40%	Although 3 applications have been determined out of time, which is the lowest performance level since the first quarter last year, when compared to the same period last year there has been a slight improvement.





**EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**APRIL – DECEMBER (QUARTER 3) - FINANCE MONITORING REPORT 2011/12**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Michael Braley, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Teresa Kristunas, Head of Finance and Resources
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

This report details the Council's financial position for the period April to December 2011 (Quarter 3 – 2011/12).

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

**the current financial position on Revenue and Capital be noted as detailed in the report.**

**3. KEY ISSUES**

3.1 This report provides details of the financial information across the Council. The aim is to ensure Officers and Members can make informed and considered judgement of the overall position of the Council.

**Financial Implications**

3.2 A separate finance report for each department plus a council summary is shown on the following pages.

3.3 The Council set a balanced budget in February 2011 for the financial year 2011/12. Within the budget were included savings of £927,000 which were not fully identified. These included savings relating to shared services, Transformation, vacancies with the Council and changes to Terms and Conditions.

**EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE**

13th March 2012

**Revenue Budget summary Quarter3 (April –December) 2011/12 –  
Overall Council**

- 3.4 The current financial position for services delivered within the Borough is detailed in the table below.
- 3.5 Internal recharges have not been included in these figures to allow comparison from budget to actual.

Service Head	Budget 2011/12 £'000	Budget April - December £'000	Actual spend April – December £'000	Variance to date April - December £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Environmental Services	3,393	2,762	2,644	(118)	(106)
Community Services	1,991	1,484	1,463	(31)	(35)
Regulatory Services	1,322	997	1,002	5	-
Leisure & Cultural Services	3,393	2,491	3,435	70	42
Planning & Regeneration	2,029	1,515	1,422	(96)	(110)
Customer Services	921	682	657	(25)	(25)
Finance & Resources	5,780	3,991	4,042	98	(9)
Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	1,314	995	932	(63)	(59)
Policy, Performance & Partnerships	589	453	399	(54)	(64)
Business Transformation	883	694	695	1	-
Head of Housing Services	1,053	790	731	(58)	-
Corporate Services	327	245	190	(55)	(63)
<b>SERVICE TOTAL</b>	<b>22,995</b>	<b>17,099</b>	<b>17,612</b>	<b>(326)</b>	<b>(429)</b>
<b>OTHER SAVINGS</b>					<b>(37)</b>
<b>TRANSFER FROM HRA</b>					<b>(300)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>(766)</b>

**EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE**

13th March 2012

**Financial Commentary**

- 3.6 Owing to the additional number of staff who are now entitled to claim essential car user allowance together with the increase in the HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) mileage rate, there is a projected saving of £8,000 to be delivered against the anticipated saving of £115,000.
- 3.7 Other main variances on both anticipated savings and current underspends include:
- a) An additional £14,000 New Homes Bonus than budgeted;
  - b) External Funding to Waste collection of £101,000;
  - c) Various savings from Vacant Posts;
  - d) There is a £66,000 saving from the cost of Internal Audit following its transfer to WETT. This is now reflected in the Audit budget;
  - e) The Head of Environmental Services has identified a further £37,000 of savings which have been removed from his budgets, these are shown in the table above;
  - f) An amount of £300,000 has also been identified that is due to be paid from the HRA to the General Fund.
- 3.8 The Finance Team is working with Service Managers to identify further savings and underspends to deliver the required savings whilst ensuring that the quality of service delivered to the community is not affected.

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA)**

- 3.9 There is a predicted saving of £42,000 on the HRA at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, this is against a budget of £22 million. Any savings will be returned to balances at the end of the financial year.
- 3.10 The savings relate to the Home Support Service and other general expenses.

**EXECUTIVE  
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**Capital Budget summary Quarter 3 (April - December) 2011/12 –  
Overall Council**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Budget 2011/12 £'000</b>	<b>Actual spend April – December £'000</b>	<b>Balance To 31st March 2011 £'000</b>
<b>Business Transformation</b>	163	137	26
<b>Environmental Services</b>	3,542	1,524	2,018
<b>Planning &amp; Regeneration</b>	47	25	22
<b>Regulatory Services</b>	152	47	105
<b>Community Services</b>	1,301	503	798
<b>Leisure &amp; Cultural Services</b>	6,765	6,690	75
<b>Finance &amp; Resources</b>	773	105	669
<b>Head of Policy, Performance &amp; Partnerships</b>	180	180	-
<b>Housing Services (inc HRA)</b>	7,642	4,613	3,029
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,565</b>	<b>13824</b>	<b>6,742</b>

**Financial Commentary:**

- The major variances are due to the fact some capital projects have not yet been started during 2012.
- The Abbey Stadium Project completed January 2012.
- Finance Officers are working with Heads of Service to establish the timetable for major projects.

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**Treasury Management**

- 3.11 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy has been developed in accordance with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance Prudential Indicators and is used to manage risks arising from financial instruments. Additionally treasury management practices are followed on a day to day basis.

**Credit Risk**

- 3.12 Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions, as well as credit exposures to the Council's customers. Credit risk is minimised by use of a specified list of investment counterparty criteria and by limiting the amount invested with each institution. The Council receives credit rating details from its Treasury Management Advisers on a daily basis and any counterparty falling below the criteria is removed from the list.
- 3.13 At 30th September 2011, short-term investments comprise:

	30 June 2011 £000	30 September 2011 £000	31 December 2011 £000
Deposits with Banks/Building Societies	10,500	15,800	18,500

**Income from investments**

- 3.14 An investment income target of £132,000 has been set for 2011/12 using a projected rate of return of 0.75% - 1.50%. During the past financial year, bank base rates have remained at 0.50% and current indications are projecting minimal upward movement for the short-term.
- 3.15 In the 9 months to 31<sup>st</sup> December, the Council earned income from investments of £81,000. An additional £62,000 is expected when a number of investments mature in the final quarter, exceeding total budgeted income by £11,000.

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**General Fund Balances**

- 3.16 The General Fund Balance as at the 31st March 2011 is £1,564,495; the budget set in February 2011 included an estimated use of balance of £494,956. Further balances this year may be used if the savings included in the budget are not fully met.

**Legal Implications**

- 3.17 No Legal implications have been identified.

**Service/Operational Implications**

- 3.18 Sound performance management and data quality are keys to achieving improved scores in the use of resources judgement. This performance report supports that aim.

**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.19 Performance Improvement is a Council Objective.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

Risk considerations are covered within the report.

**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1	-	Environmental Services
Appendix 2	-	Community Services
Appendix 3	-	Regulatory Services
Appendix 4	-	Leisure & Cultural Services
Appendix 5	-	Planning & Regeneration
Appendix 6	-	Customer Services
Appendix 7	-	Finance & Resources
Appendix 8	-	Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services
Appendix 9	-	Policy, Performance & Partnerships
Appendix 10	-	Business Transformation
Appendix 11	-	Housing Services
Appendix 12	-	Corporate Services

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

**EXECUTIVE  
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**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head of Environment**

	<b>Revised Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Profiled YTD Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Actual 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Variance to date 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn Variance 2011/12 £000</b>
Environmental Services	500	371	365	(6)	500	0
Env. Services Man. (Depot)	509	380	373	(7)	509	0
Highways & Drainage	433	335	332	(3)	428	(5)
Manager Bereavement Services	(265)	(114)	(114)	-	(265)	0
Manager Lands. & Cleansing	30	129	140	11	30	0
Manager Supplies And Transport	102	77	69	(8)	102	0
Manager Waste Collection	1,171	877	774	(104)	1,070	(101)
Manager Waste Management	913	707	705	(2)	913	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,393</b>	<b>2,762</b>	<b>2,644</b>	<b>(118)</b>	<b>3,287</b>	<b>(106)</b>

There is an £10,000 underachievement of Income on Car Parking from the part time pay and display car parks at the Town Hall and Trafford park. This has been offset by a £15K salary saving on Drainage. A grant for £100,000 has been received from WCC relating to the Waste minimisation/tonnage reduction agreement between the County Council and the District Councils which was not budgeted for this grant covers the years 2010/11 and 2011/12.

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head of Environment****Capital**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget £'000</b>	<b>YTD Actuals £'000</b>	<b>Commitments £'000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments £'000</b>	<b>Balance £'000</b>
Improved Parking Scheme	261	170	46	216	45
Vehicle Purchase - Cleansing	571	0	413	413	158
L'Scape Imp Programme	145	114	25	139	6
Recycling Project	90	0	-	-	90
Town Centre Landscape Scheme	465	10	5	15	450
Park Infrastructure	30	0	0	0	30
Liveability	4	0	2	2	2
Est Enhancement-Lodgepark	384	257	12	269	115
Est Enhancement-Woodrow	59	31	0	31	28
Est. Enhancement-Winyates	238	134	-	134	103
Brockhill Community Woodlands	5	0	0	0	5
L'Scaping Astwood Bank	4	0	3	3	1
Oakenshaw Spinney	8	6	-	6	2
Oakenshaw Woods	7	1	1	2	5
Greenlands Pub Open Space	7	2	-	2	5
Wirehill Woods	12	0	0	0	12
Crematorium Enhancement	758	0	0	0	758
Drainage Works Cemetery	14	3	6	9	5

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head of Environment**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget £'000</b>	<b>YTD Actuals £'000</b>	<b>Commitmen ts £'000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitmen ts £'000</b>	<b>Balance £'000</b>
Culvert & Ditch Pitcheroak Woods	40	0	0	0	40
Church Green (Tc) Enhancements	0	14	0	14	(14)
C'Hill Brook Culvert & F/Bridge	20	0	0	0	20
Foxlydiate Crescent Lighting	25	0	0	0	25
C'Hill Brook Footpath Imps	20	0	0	0	20
Flood Alleviation	44	0	0	0	44
Batchley Brook	0	(25)	0	(25)	25
Crossgate Depot Imps 2010	80	3	0	3	77
Crematorium Extension	35	2	10	12	23
Land Drain Works - Old Forge Dr	216	195	84	279	(62)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,542</b>	<b>917</b>	<b>607</b>	<b>1,524</b>	<b>2,018</b>

Town Centre – this project is being reviewed as to how it is best utilised.

Estate Enhancements – these works are not finished yet as we have been delayed by legal issues surrounding the bi stores in Winyates.

Wirehill Woods – this project is still being reviewed as to how it will be spent.

Crematorium Enhancement – this work will commence shortly

Crematorium extension - this has now received planning approval and should take place in the near future



**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April- December 2011/12 Head of Community Service**

<b>Service Head</b>	<b>Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Profiled YTD Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Variance to date 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn Variance 2011/12 £000</b>
Community Services	1,644	1,223	1,188	(35)	1,153	(35)
Control Centre Manager	293	220	235	15	293	0
Manager Care & Repair	54	41	40	(1)	54	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,991</b>	<b>1,484</b>	<b>1,463</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>(35)</b>

The savings relate to salary savings from maternity leave and a part time vacant post, there is also £5,000 additional income which was not included in the budget.

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April- December 2011/12 Head of Community Service****Capital**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget £'000</b>	<b>YTD Actuals £'000</b>	<b>Commitments £'000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments £'000</b>	<b>Balance £'000</b>
P/S Hsg Computer System	10	0	0	0	10
Small Area Improvements	100	48	-	48	52
Strat Hsg Research & Dev	90	76	0	76	14
Cctv/Lifeline Ss	34	20	12	31	3
Home Repairs Grant(Over 60'S)	228	0	39	39	189
Disabled Facilities Grant	798	278	0	278	520
Hmo Grants	26	30	0	30	(4)
Micro Gen Tech	2	1	0	1	1
Interim Man Orders	9	0	0	0	9
Private Sector Stock Survey	4	0	0	0	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,301</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>798</b>

There has been a reduction in the number of applications for Disabled Facilities grants, there are no current waiting lists. This is partly grant funded and partly funded from borrowing the savings relating to this will be a saving to the General Fund budget.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head of Regulatory**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Profiled YTD Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Variance to date 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn Variance 2011/12 £000</b>
Environmental Health	1,143	858	863	5	1,143	0
Manager Taxi Licensing	179	139	139	-	179	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,322</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>1,002</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1,322</b>	<b>0</b>

**There are no variances predicted on this budget.**

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head of Regulatory**

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**Capital**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget £'000</b>	<b>YTD Actuals £'000</b>	<b>Commitments £'000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments £'000</b>	<b>Balance £'000</b>
Contaminated Land(Bdc)	52	47	0	47	5
Regulatory Shared Services	100	0	0	0	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>105</b>



REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head of Leisure & Cultural**

	<b>Revised Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Profiled YTD Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Variance to date 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn Variance 2011/12 £000</b>
Business Development	27	1	9	8	37	10
Cultural Services	928	714	756	42	981	53
Leisure & Cultural Man	260	192	172	(20)	217	(43)
Parks & Green Spaces	919	666	672	6	925	6
Sports Services	1,259	918	952	34	1,275	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,393</b>	<b>2,491</b>	<b>2,561</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>3,435</b>	<b>42</b>

**The income on the Golf Course and Reddicard have not been achieved. There is also additional overspends on Community Centres and Forge Mill Museum, they have not achieved there target savings and income budgets. the Christmas Lights have cost an additional £10,000 due to the fact that the owners of the Kingfisher Centre have refused to contribute for 2010/11 and 2011/12, these savings have been offset by NNDR refunds at Arrow Valley Countryside Centre and the Golf Course as well as a saving following from the restructure of the Management in this service.**

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head of Leisure & Cultural**

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**Capital**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget £'000</b>	<b>YTD Actuals £'000</b>	<b>Commitments £'000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments £'000</b>	<b>Balance £'000</b>
Abbey Stadium Consultation	6,746	6,496	175	6,671	75
Bmx Track	0	0	0	0	0
South Street S106 Fund	19	18	1	19	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,765</b>	<b>6,514</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>6,690</b>	<b>75</b>

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head Of Planning & Regeneration**

	<b>Revised Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Profiled YTD Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Variance to date 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn Variance 2011/12 £000</b>
Building Control	310	233	233	-	310	0
Economic Development	202	152	140	(12)	190	(12)
Head Of Planning & Regeneration	43	32	35	3	43	0
Planning Policy	1,474	1,098	1,014	(84)	1,376	(98)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,029</b>	<b>1,515</b>	<b>1,422</b>	<b>(96)</b>	<b>1,919</b>	<b>(110)</b>

**There is a refund of NNDR on the Business Centres of £12,276.  
There is also salary savings of £63,000 and additional income in Planning Services.  
Additional resources will be required in next financial year to backfill for  
Transformation,**

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head Of Planning & Regeneration****Capital**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget £'000</b>	<b>YTD Actuals £'000</b>	<b>Commitments £'000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments £'000</b>	<b>Balance £'000</b>
Ibox Uniform Software	22	0	0	0	22
Train Station Project	25	25	0	25	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>22</b>

Work on Ibox system will commence shortly.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head of Customer Services**

	<b>Revised Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Profiled YTD Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Variance to date 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn Variance 2011/12 £000</b>
Customer Support Services	921	682	657	(25)	896	(25)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>921</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>(25)</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>(25)</b>

The savings relate a vacant post which is being deleted, £20K of this saving is required to implement a new queuing system during 2012/13.



**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head of Finance & Resources**

	<b>Revised Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Profiled YTD Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Variance to date 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn Variance 2011/12 £000</b>
Asset Maint	1,020	686	781	95	1,025	5
Audit Services	107	81	80	(1)	108	0
Benefits	1,319	950	956	6	1,319	0
Corporate Management	1,091	789	789	-	1,091	0
Council Tax	1,000	743	708	(35)	965	(34)
Financial Services	673	459	471	11	665	(8)
Head Of Finance & Resources	43	32	36	4	43	0
Human Resources	492	369	389	20	492	0
Procurement	78	59	58	-	78	0
Property Management	(43)	(177)	(179)	(2)	(15)	28
	<b>5,780</b>	<b>3,991</b>	<b>4,042</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>5,771</b>	<b>(9)</b>

**The savings in Council Tax relate to 2 vacant posts, there are also salary savings in Finance which relate to an officer being on Maternity leave. NNDR is now payable by RBC on the vacant unit in Threadneedle House which was not budgeted for there is also security costs for Crossgates Depot which are not budgeted for.**

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head of Finance & Resources****Capital**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget £'000</b>	<b>YTD Actuals £'000</b>	<b>Commitments £'000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments £'000</b>	<b>Balance £'000</b>
Benefits Replacement System	13	13	0	13	-
Energy Manage/Measure	25	0	0	0	25
Public Building	309	41	13	54	256
Energy Management System 2010	100	0	0	0	100
Hewell Rd Pool Works	210	0	0	0	210
Energy & Efficiency Installs	116	17	20	38	78
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>773</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>669</b>



**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head of Legal, Equal, & Democ**

	<b>Revised Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Profiled YTD Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Variance to date 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn Variance 2011/12 £000</b>
Civic Support	104	78	71	(7)	104	0
Democratic Services	569	416	390	(26)	543	(26)
Elections	246	205	205	-	246	0
Legal Services	395	296	266	(30)	362	(33)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,314</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>932</b>	<b>(63)</b>	<b>1,255</b>	<b>(59)</b>

**Legal Services**

The underspend relates to a combination of salary savings together with improved efficiencies in the procurement of books and publications.

**Democratic Services**

There is a small ongoing saving within the salary budget which will continue to the end of the financial year.

In addition there is the underspend relating to the savings realised from the Members' allowance budget. This is due to Members agreeing that the receipt of increased allowances was optional.



REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Policy Perf And Partnership**

<b>Service Head</b>	<b>Revised Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Profiled YTD Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Variance to date 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn Variance 2011/12 £000</b>
Communications	235	176	128	(48)	182	(53)
Policy Performance & Part.	214	172	176	4	214	0
Print & Reprographic Services	140	105	95	(10)	129	(11)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>(54)</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>(64)</b>

**The savings are a reduction in costs following the shared service**

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Policy Perf And Partnership**

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**Capital**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget £'000</b>	<b>YTD Actuals £'000</b>	<b>Commitments £'000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments £'000</b>	<b>Balance £'000</b>
Solar Panels	180	180	0	180	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>0</b>

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE****Appendix 10**

13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head of Business Transformation**

	<b>Revised Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Profiled YTD Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Variance to date 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projecte d Outturn 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn Variance 2011/12 £000</b>
Business Transformation	708	532	532	-	708	0
Head Of Business Transformatio	51	38	38	-	51	0
It Licences Direct Services	124	124	125	1	124	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>0</b>

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head of Business Transformation**

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**Capital**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget £'000</b>	<b>YTD Actual s £'000</b>	<b>Commitm ents £'000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitme nts £'000</b>	<b>Balance £'000</b>
Members lct Facilities	11	1	-	1	10
New Telephone System	90	90	0	90	-
It Replacement Programme	62	39	7	46	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>26</b>

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE  
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13th March 2012

**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head of Housing Services**

<b>Service Head</b>	<b>Revised Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Profiled YTD Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Variance to date 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn Variance 2011/12 £000</b>
Housing General Fund	1,053	790	731	(58)	1,024	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,053</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>(58)</b>	<b>1,024</b>	<b>-</b>

The variances on this service relate to a vacant post in Housing Capital, these savings are due to the HRA account not General Fund so not reflected in the outturn column

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**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Head of Housing Services****Capital**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget £'000</b>	<b>YTD Actuals £'000</b>	<b>Commitments £'000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments £'000</b>	<b>Balance £'000</b>
Catch Up Rep- Bath Replacemts	635	474	84	558	76
Design & Supervision	699	13	-	13	686
Catch Up Rep- Kitchen Upgrades	2,053	1274	38	1,312	741
Catch Up Repairs	748	649	5	654	94
Asbestos General	238	120	42	161	77
Housing Management It System	100	0.00	0.00	0.00	100
General Roofing	134	151	0.00	151	(16)
Rewiring	632	387	77	463	168
Upgrade Of Ch Systems	707	375	277	652	55
Window Replacements	120	55	0.00	55	64
Roof Works - C/Hill & Wood	97	18	33	50	47
Disabled Adaptations	674	358	20	377	296
Security Door Entry Scheme	170	41	3	44	126
Housing Stock Improvements	50	31	0.00	31	19
Solid Wall Insulation	300	-	0.00	0.00	300
Repairs To Sheltered Hsg Stock	166	51	-	51	115
Winslow Close Heating	120	40	0.00	40	80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,642</b>	<b>4,034</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>4,613</b>	<b>3029</b>



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**Budget Summary Quarter 3  
April – December 2011/12 – Ce Head Of Paid Service**

	<b>Revised Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Profiled YTD Budget 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Actual + Commitments 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Variance to date 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn 2011/12 £000</b>	<b>Projected Outturn Variance 2011/12 £000</b>
Ce Head Of Paid Service	327	245	190	(55)	264	(63)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>(55)</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>(63)</b>

The savings are a contribution from BDC of PA's time.



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**BENEFITS SERVICES TRANSFORMATION AND WELFARE REFORM -  
QUARTERLY UPDATE  
OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2011**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Michael Braley, Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Teresa Kristunas, Head of Finance and Resources
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	No
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

To advise Members on the performance of the Benefits Service during the third quarter.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

**3. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

3.1 There are no specific financial implications.

**Legal Implications**

3.2 There are no specific legal implications.

**Service/Operational Implications**

3.3 The Benefits Service is undergoing transformation work to improve processes, service delivery and efficiency. There are major changes to the service resulting from the Welfare Reform Bill.

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**Transformation**

- 3.4 Work continues to develop Benefits Officers seeing personal callers to the Town Hall where benefit enquiries are resolved, where possible, with the customer present. Work to map current processes is also underway to help identify demand and best practice and influence any proposed shared service.
- 3.5 Claims and information originating from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) are a major source of work and can add delays into the process. Work is scheduled to start in early February 2012 to work with the DWP to identify the reasons for delay and to find improved work practices and data.
- 3.6 The Benefits Service is also looking at the award letters sent out to explain and confirm entitlement. Several members of the Benefits team have attended a customer centred writing course and customers have been asked what problems they find with the letters and how they could be improved.

**Welfare Reform bill**

- 3.7 The Welfare Reform bill proposes major changes to existing benefits and revised systems to simplify the process of claiming benefit and to encourage and reward employment. The bill has been amended by the Lords at Report stage and is back in the Commons. The debate about some of the more controversial proposals has led to delays with the bill which was originally planned to complete by the of January 2012 but the Government are still keeping to the original timetable for the changes and intend to pass the bill into legislation by April or May 2012.
- 3.8 The key change in the Welfare Reform Bill is the introduction of the Universal Credit, a means-tested credit for all working-age people up to the age they qualify for Pension Credit. It is intended to be much simpler than the current system. However the bill also contains proposals to reduce expenditure on Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit before the introduction of the Universal Credit.
- 3.9 There have been significant changes to Housing Benefit during the current year but the impact is likely to be felt in 2012 as nine months protection from some of the reductions was provided which will start to end from January 2012 onwards.
- 3.10 Although there are not any major changes planned for Housing Benefit in 2012/13 much of the year will be taken up with planning for the major changes that are due to be implemented from April 2013.

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Proposed changes from April 2013Size restrictions in social tenancies

- 3.11 New claims for Housing Benefit from tenants in the private sector are subject to restrictions in the amount payable based on household size rather than property size. Local Housing Allowance rates are used to decide the maximum payable in Housing Benefit.

They include a size criteria where:

- One bedroom is allowed for every adult, couple or person over 16
- One bedroom for any two children under 10
- One bedroom for any two children of the same sex aged less than 16

An extra bedroom is allowed for carers who are required to sleep over.

- 3.12 These same size criteria are proposed to be applied to working age claims for Housing Benefit from social tenancies from April 2013. The proposal is for a 14% reduction in Housing Benefit for one extra bedroom and a 25% reduction where there is more than one extra bedroom.

- 3.13 A detailed analysis undertaken on Council tenants has been undertaken. Approximately 560 claims currently would be subject to the restriction, leading to reductions in Housing Benefit totalling £6,500 each week. A summary of claims that have dependants and/or non-dependants has also been undertaken for Housing Associations and further work has been discussed with them.

- 3.14 An amendment was passed by the Lords to align the number of rooms allowed to an existing Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) definition – where one extra bedroom is allowed before a reduction. However this may cause problems with claims in the private sector and may be overturned in the Commons. The issue of foster children was also raised as they are not included in the Housing Benefit claim but will be affected by these changes. The Government propose to resolve this by awarding additional Discretionary Housing Payment grant to Local Authorities.

Council Tax Benefit replacement

- 3.15 The Government has decided that Council Tax Benefit (CTB) will not be part of the Universal Credit and will be replaced from April 2013 by local schemes, designed and administered by Local Authorities.

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- 3.16 A recent Government response to consultation on this matter state that the replacement schemes will no longer be considered a social security benefit but will be part of Council Tax. Funding will be reduced by 10% and pension age claims will be protected along with any other group the local authority has to help under their statutory duties. New schemes should also support people back into work and not hinder the in-work benefits of the Universal Credit.
- 3.17 An initial analysis of the caseload in Redditch showed that there were slightly more working age claims than pension age claims. By reducing expenditure by 10% and protecting only pension age claims the average CTB award for working age claims would have to be reduced from £16 per week to £13.
- 3.18 Further work is being undertaken to consider the impact of this proposal and the tight timescales involved as a local scheme has to be designed, agreed publicly consulted and IT systems changed by 31st January 2013.

Local Welfare Assistance Schemes

- 3.19 Discretionary Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants are to be replaced by local schemes administered by local authorities, probably upper tier with some of the fund distributed to local Housing services. The discretionary elements to be included are crisis loans and community care grants and these payments will normally be a one off grant rather than a loan to avoid the problems associated with recovering loans. The funds will not be ring fenced but the Government will write to each authority and explain what the funding is for.
- 3.20 These loans and grants help support some of the most vulnerable local people and the table below shows awards made since 2009.

	Awards and applications rounded to nearest ten	Crisis Loans	Community Care Grants	Totals
<b>2009/10</b>	Number of Applications received	5,230	670	5,900
	Number of Awards	3,940	270	4,210
	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£294,100</b>	<b>£106,400</b>	<b>£400,500</b>
<b>2010/11</b>	Number of Applications received	4,370	640	5010
	Number of Awards	3,280	290	1570
	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£255,600</b>	<b>£130,500</b>	<b>£386,100</b>
<b>Apr -Sept 2011/12</b>	Number of Applications received	1,820	290	2110
	Number of Awards	1,490	130	1,620
	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£99,800</b>	<b>£63,000</b>	<b>£162,800</b>

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Household benefit cap

- 3.21 One of the more controversial proposals is the introduction of an overall cap on the total amount of benefits that any one working age household can receive. The cap will be based on national median earnings after tax and National Insurance. In 2013 this is expected to be about £500 per week for couples and lone parents and £350 per week for single adults. War widows and any household where someone is entitled to Disability Living Allowance or Working Tax Credit will be exempt from the cap. Local authorities will apply the cap by reducing Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit. The Lords have passed an amendment to the bill that will exclude Child Benefit from counting towards the cap but the Government intends to overturn this change.

LHA increased by CPI

- 3.22 Since April 2008 the maximum amount payable for most Housing Benefit (HB) claims from the private sector has been set by Local Housing Allowance rates which are based on actual rents let each month. From April 2011 the rates have been based on the 30th percentile of available rents which is revised each month. However from April 2012 Local Housing Allowance rates will be frozen in preparation for the April 2013 change to an annual increase based on the lowest of either the 30th percentile of available rents as now or the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Discretionary Housing Payments

- 3.23 To help mitigate some of the expected problems caused by the changes to Housing Benefit the Government is increasing the Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) grant. From April 2012 Redditch will receive £47,732 in DHP grant and can spend up to £119,330 on these awards. The DHP policy was recently revised to allow for more flexible use of these funds and the Benefits and Housing Option services work together to decide the best use of these funds to prevent homelessness and manage the transfer to more affordable accommodation where possible.

Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS)

- 3.24 An earlier proposal to combine local authority, DWP and Tax Credits counter fraud teams into a single service from April 2013 have been postponed. Instead from April 2013 existing local authority counter fraud staff will continue to be based with local authorities rather than be transferred to DWP payroll but will work towards DWP priorities. From 2015 a review will be undertaken to decide the best way to deliver counter fraud activity in support of the Universal Credit, but a single DWP based service is still likely.

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Universal Credit

- 3.25 From 2013/14 Universal Credit will gradually replace:
- a) Income Support;
  - b) Income Based Jobseekers Allowance;
  - c) Income Based Employment Support Allowance;
  - d) Housing Benefit;
  - e) Working Tax Credit;
  - f) Child Tax Credit.
- 3.26 Working age claimants will get help with eligible rent through Universal Credit, rather than Housing Benefit.
- a) new claims for Housing Benefit from customers who are out of work will move to Universal Credit from October 2013;
  - b) new claims for Housing Benefit from customers who are working will move to Universal Credit from April 2014;
  - c) existing claimants will move from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit from October 2013 to October 2017.
- 3.27 Customers over the qualifying age for Pension Credit will get help with eligible rent through a new Pension Credit element called Housing Credit, rather than claim Housing Benefit.
- a) new customers over Pension Credit qualifying age will have to claim Pension Credit to access help with eligible rent from October 2014;
  - b) existing Housing Benefit customers over Pension Credit qualifying age (with or without Pension Credit) will be transferred to a modified Pension Credit, including Housing Credit, between October 2014 and October 2017;
  - c) new claims to Housing Benefit from people over Pension Credit qualifying age received up to October 2014 will be dealt with as now.
- 3.28 The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) are considering what support they can offer locally for Pension Credit customers claiming help with eligible rent.



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- 3.29 Claims for Universal Credit will be made by households rather than individuals and the amount awarded will depend on the income and circumstances of all the household members. It is also proposed to make payments monthly in arrears to the applicants to replicate how earnings are paid.
- 3.30 It is planned to have a maximum amount that is payable in Universal Credit, probably based on average earning levels. There will be a basic allowance with different rates for single people and couples, and lower rates for younger people.
- a) a disability;
  - b) caring responsibilities;
  - c) housing costs;
  - d) children;
  - e) childcare costs.
- 3.31 There will be greater expectations of people claiming Universal Credit to find employment, which the scheme calls conditionality. A 'Claimant Commitment' will be signed by everyone and will set out the conditions required to receive Universal Credit. People earning above a set amount and receiving Universal Credit will not have any conditionality imposed.
- 3.32 Those who are out of work or in work but earning below the set amount will have various conditions attached to their claim, such as having to spend a fixed number of hours looking for work and registering with agencies. Less strict conditions will apply for the first 13 weeks for people recently unemployed with a good work record and for those who have caring responsibilities. Separate rules are proposed for foster carers.
- 3.33 There will be tougher penalties for those who do not meet the "Claimant Commitment" and there is an option of a Mandatory Work Activity for jobseekers which would mean a full-time work placement for four weeks. If this work activity was not undertaken without a good cause a sanction would be imposed.

Disability Living Allowance

- 3.34 Disability Living Allowance is to be replaced by Personal Independence Payments which will be extra to the Universal Credit.

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Passported Benefits

- 3.35 At the moment being entitled to certain benefits, like Income Support, also gives entitlement to a range of other beneficial schemes such as free school meals and free prescriptions The Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) has been asked to provide an independent review of passported benefits and how they link to Universal Credit.

Future role of Local Authority

- 3.36 The future role of local authorities following the introduction of Universal Credit is still not clear. The initial proposals saw little scope for local involvement as a centralised administration was proposed. While the central administration is still proposed, mostly to keep costs down, the DWP seem to accept that some kind of local support will be required but remain determined to manage the migration to Universal Credit.
- 3.37 DWP expectations that 80% of Universal Credit applicants will do so remotely via a website maybe overly ambitious and this could lead to local support being necessary. The DWP have confirmed that delivery arrangements from 2017 onwards will involve as a core option a model based on local commissioning and delivery of face-to-face support for customers. This model seems to be encouraged in last years Open Public Services White Paper.

Claims Performance

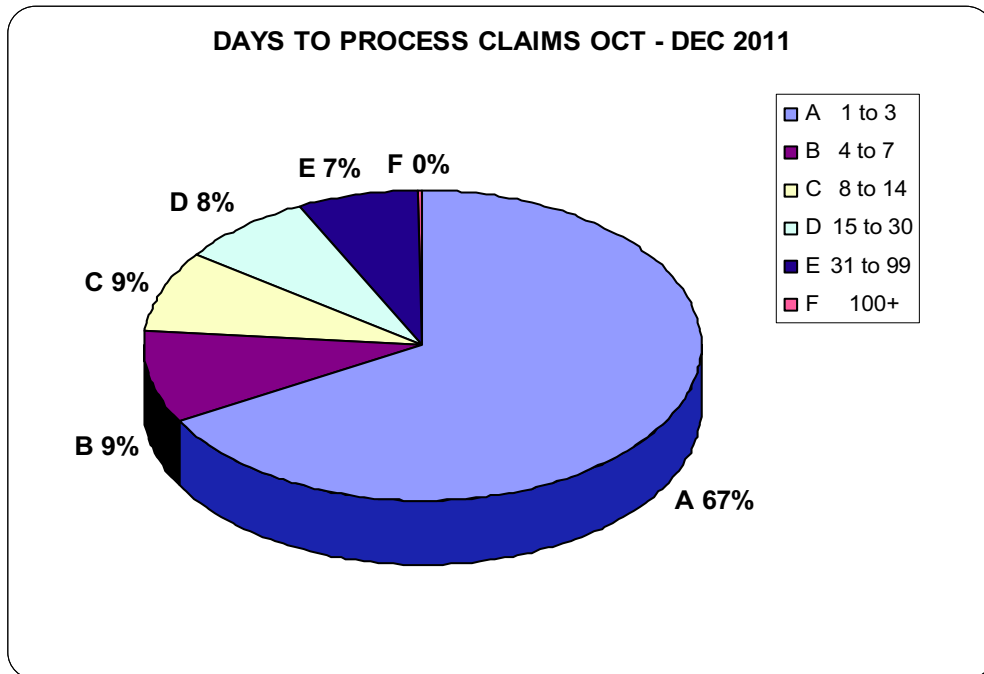
- 3.38 There is currently one National Indicator for the Benefits Service, Speed of Processing, which has recently changed from measuring the average time taken to process new claims and change events for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit claims, to separate indicators for new claims and change events. Performance against this indicator is shown below.

	<b>October</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>Quarter 3</b>
<b>New Claims</b>				
<b>Average days</b>	18	14	13	15
<b>No. of claims</b>	392	387	292	1071
<b>Changes</b>				
<b>Average days</b>	6	6	6	6
<b>No. of claims</b>	2752	2665	1956	7373
<b>Combined</b>	8	7	7	7

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3.39 In the third quarter 67% of claims (new and change events) were decided in three days or less, up from 50% in the first quarter.



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- 3.40 National data for the third quarter is not yet available but the table below shows local comparative data for the second quarter of 2011/12.

SPEED OF PROCESSING	ALL		ALL (Days)	
	New Claims	Change of circumstances	New Claims	Change of circumstances
<b>Q2 2011/12</b>				
Bromsgrove	673	3,471	15	8
Malvern Hills	648	3,968	25	8
<b>Redditch</b>	<b>1,267</b>	<b>7,271</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>
Worcester	1,352	7,808	23	8
Wychavon	1,054	5,653	23	8
Wyre Forest	1,183	9,042	29	8
Cannock Chase	1,696	8,666	8	3
East Staffordshire	1,280	5,775	29	13
Lichfield	1,030	5,125	27	10
Newcastle-under-Lyme	1,504	9,306	28	8
South Staffordshire	700	4,318	16	7
Stafford	1,233	6,199	19	10
Staffordshire Moorlands	580	3,031	22	10
Tamworth	1,044	4,673	30	11
North Warwickshire	676	4,299	20	9
Nuneaton and Bedworth	1,576	7,951	21	17
Rugby	1,152	6,897	17	8
Stratford-on-Avon	914	5,493	19	10
Warwick	1,012	8,632	22	11
Cheltenham	1,620	9,498	21	5
Cotswold	753	6,064	12	5
Gloucester	2,051	11,928	20	7
Stroud	907	6,528	20	13
Tewkesbury	837	3,333	44	26

Source: DWP SHBE extracts

- 3.41 The live caseload has remained static at around 8000-8100 claims in payment at any one time. The monthly Economic Summary for December 2011, compiled by Worcestershire County Council, reported that there were 2021 people unemployed in Redditch, slightly down from the last quarter. For the same period there were 1089 reported vacancies (up from last quarter). The highest rates of unemployment locally are Batchley and Brockhill (8.5%), Central (7.2%) and Greenlands (6.6 %).

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Income Maximisation

- 3.42 The Income Maximisation Officers have continued their partnership work, particularly with DIAL and Age UK, to jointly promote welfare benefits and reduce fuel poverty.
- 3.43 The Income Maximisation Officer role is also helping to support local people who have been affected by the changes in Housing Benefit rules. Work has been undertaken along with Housing Options staff to identify and contact individuals who may be facing additional problems paying their rent due to reductions in the amount of Housing Benefit awarded. Advice has been given on budgeting for these reductions and assistance given to find cheaper alternative accommodation. Where the short fall is not permanent, due to expected changes in circumstances or alternative accommodation has not yet been found, Discretionary Housing Payments have been made to help maintain tenancies and prevent homelessness. An open day was held on the 1st December where Benefits and Housing Options staff were available to answer questions on welfare reform and offer advice on finding accommodation.

Overpayment recovery

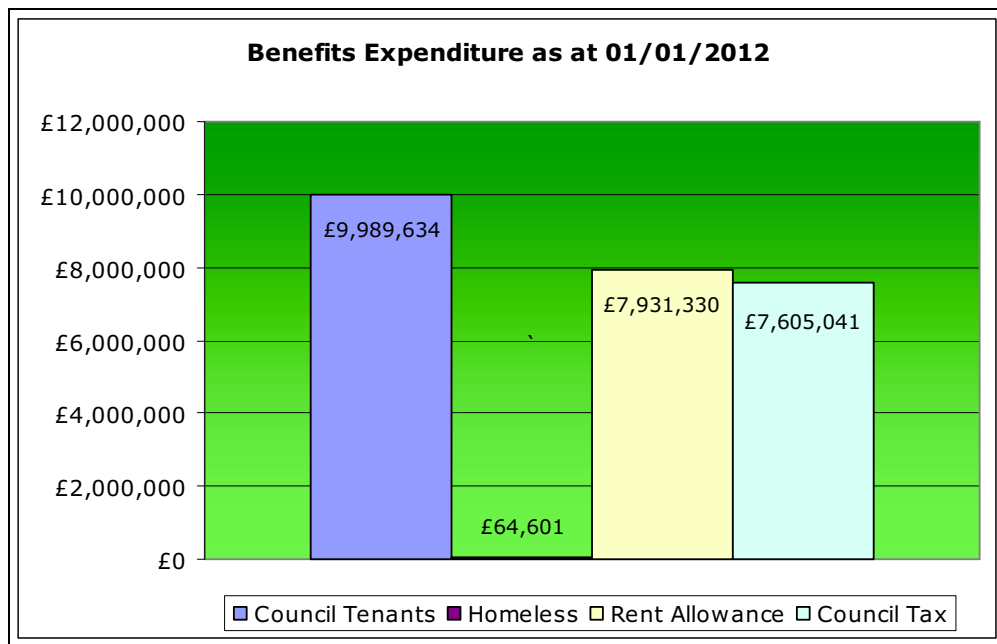
- 3.44 The amount of outstanding overpaid Housing Benefit at the beginning of the quarter was £1,260,110. A further £159,053 in overpaid Housing Benefit was identified in the quarter and £136,121 was recovered. The amount recovered during the quarter is equivalent to 86% of the amount identified in new overpayments or just less than 10% of the total amount outstanding.
- 3.45 The full cost of overpayments attributed to Local Authority error or delay can be fully met through subsidy as long as the overpayments are less than 0.48% of expenditure that attracts 100% subsidy. At the end of the third quarter expenditure attracting 100% subsidy was £23,934,869 and LA error or delay overpayments totalled £50,778 which is 0.21%. This will enable 100% subsidy to be paid, subject to an external audit.

Expenditure

- 3.46 Total expenditure at the end of the third quarter stood at £25,590,606, an increase of about £825,000 from the same period last year. This includes an increase of more than £700,000 on Council Tenancies, £10,000 more spent on homeless cases and £166,000 more on private tenancies. Council Tax Benefit expenditure is reduced by £51,000 from the previous year.

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Appeals

- 3.47 During the quarter there were sixteen requests that decisions on entitlement were looked at again and twelve of these were resolved within four weeks. Ten appeals were received where a request for an independent tribunal to look at the decision was made. Three of these requests were withdrawn and one was found to have no grounds for appeal. Six decisions were revised in favour of the applicant and seven were revised not in favour. One actual Tribunal case was heard during the quarter and the original decision that the tenancy was not of a commercial nature was upheld.

Counter Fraud work

- 3.48 In the quarter, 293 cases were reported where fraud was suspected: 78 from the public, 112 from data matching and 103 from other official sources. During the same period 11 Cautions and 1 Administrative Penalty were issued and 6 cases were successfully prosecuted. The table below shows comparative data on the number of Investigations, Cautions, Administrative Penalties, Successful Prosecutions for 2010/11.
- 3.49 During the quarter 92 home visits were undertaken to establish that the correct level of Benefit was being paid. The visits resulted in 54% of the claims staying the same, 14% increasing and 32% decreasing. The main reason for both increases and decreases was a change in household circumstances.

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District	Investigations	Cautions	Admin Penalties	Successful Prosecutions	%	All Sanctions	%
England	135,540	12,010	6,085	6,445	4.76	24,540	18.11
Bromsgrove	167	44	2	7	4.19	53	31.74
Malvern Hills	203	21	0	7	3.45	28	13.79
<b>Redditch</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>17.95</b>
Worcester City	495	22	15	8	1.62	45	9.09
Wychavon	307	34	8	7	2.28	49	15.96
Wyre Forest	247	12	23	14	5.67	49	19.84

**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

None specific.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

Without adequate performance monitoring arrangements there is a risk that improvements in the Benefits Service will not be achieved and that additional costs are incurred. In addition, without effective recovery procedures for overallowed Housing Benefit the Council will forego the ability to pursue debt recovery procedures with a consequential loss of income to the Council.

**5. APPENDICES**

None.

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Audit Commission re-inspection report.

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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**QUARTERLY MONITORING OF WRITE OFFS – 1ST APRIL – 31ST DEC  
2011**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Michael Braley, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	At portfolio Holder briefing
Relevant Head of Service	Teresa Kristunas, Head of Finance & Resources
Wards Affected	No Direct Ward relevance
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

Members are requested to consider the action taken by officers with respect to the write off of debts during the first three quarters of 2011/12 and to note the profile of outstanding debt.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS****2.1 The Executive is requested to RESOLVE that**

**subject to any comments, the contents of the report be noted.**

**3. KEY ISSUES**

3.1 During the last financial year members approved a revised Write Off Policy which changed the process for the reporting and approval process for the writing off of debts due to the Council. The revised Policy requires officers to report to members of the actual level of write offs and the profile of outstanding debt.

3.2 The current bad debts provisions are as follows:

	£
Council Tax	265,000
Housing Revenue Account	701,000
Sundry Debtors	<u>358,000</u>
Total	<u>1,324,000</u>

**Financial Implications**

3.3 The current bad debt provisions are adequate in relation to level of write offs and the level of outstanding debt.

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### **Legal Implications**

3.4 There are no legal implications identified.

### **Service/Operational Implications**

3.5 There are no direct implications identified.

### **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

3.6 There are no direct implications identified.

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

There are no risks identified.

## **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Write offs 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31st December 2011

Appendix 2 Aged Debt Profile for Sundry Debts and Former  
Tenant Arrears  
Council Tax Arrears and Business Rates Arrears  
as at 31st December 2011.

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There are no background papers with this report.

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**Write Offs of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates  
1st April – 31st December 2011**

<b>Council Tax</b>		<b>01/04/11 - 31/12/11</b>
CT - 01	Gone away	63,730.54
CT - 02	Deceased no funds in estate	5,987.08
CT - 03	Bankruptcy	25,254.67
CT - 04	Statue Barred	605.20
CT - 05	Remitted by Court	0.00
CT - 06	Uneconomical to pursue	8,695.13
CT - 07	Committal Sentence	0.00
CT - 08	Admin Order/IVA	261.37
CT - 09	Automatic w/o +1/-1p	-0.13
CT - 10	Balance under £5.00	185.23
CT - 11	Other	5,263.13
CT - 12	Credits - unable to refund	-20,078.83
	<b>Total</b>	<b>89,903.39</b>

<b>NDR</b>		<b>01/04/11 - 31/12/11</b>
NDR - 01	Gone away	8,954.64
NDR - 02	Encon	0.00
NDR - 03	Liquidation/Winding up	184,072.43
NDR - 04	Statue Barred	0.00
NDR - 05	Remitted by Court	0.00
NDR - 06	Uneconomical to pursue	79.90
NDR - 07	CVA	0.00
NDR - 08	Discretionary/Hardship	19,408.79
NDR - 09	Automatic w/o +1/-1p	0.00
NDR - 10	Ratepayer deceased	0.00
NDR - 11	Credits - unable to refund	-19,410.69
	<b>Total</b>	<b>193,105.07</b>

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COMMITTEE****Appendix 1**

13th March 2012

**Write Offs of Sundry Debts and Former Tenant Arrears (HRA)**  
**1st April – 31st December 2011**

<b>Sundry Debts</b>		<b>01/04/11 - 31/12/11</b>
SDR – 01	Gone away	34,343.93
SDR – 02	Encon	0
SDR – 03	Liquidation/Bankrupt	6,023.82
SDR – 04	Statue Barred	25,852.50
SDR – 05	Remitted by Court	0
SDR – 06	Uneconomical to pursue	87,342.00
SDR – 07	CVA	0
SDR – 08	Discretionary/Hardship	0
SDR – 09	Automatic w/o +1/-1p	0
SDR – 10	Ratepayer deceased	5,597.05
SDR – 11	Credits - unable to refund	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>159,159.30</b>

<b>Former Tenant Arrears</b>		<b>01/04/11 - 31/12/11</b>
FTA – 01	Gone away	37,414.17
FTA – 02	Encon	0
FTA – 03	Liquidation/Bankrupt	14,897.55
FTA – 04	Statue Barred	7,477.45
FTA – 05	Remitted by Court	0
FTA – 06	Uneconomical to pursue	77,300.25
FTA – 07	CVA	0
FTA – 08	Discretionary/Hardship	0
FTA – 09	Automatic w/o +1/-1p	0
FTA – 10	Ratepayer deceased	12,326.26
FTA – 11	Credits - unable to refund	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>149,415.68</b>

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****TITLE****COMMITTEE****Appendix 2**

13th March 2012

**Aged Debt profiles for Sundry Debts and Former Tenant Arrears  
- 1st April 2011 to 31st December 2011**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Sundry Debts</b>	<b>Former Tenant Arrears</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
0 - 3 months	1,344,947.94	39,137.76
3 - 6 months	153,494.84	33,018.89
6 - 12 months	281,785.99	50,369.96
12 - 24 months	242,377.34	67,805.08
24 months and over	672,140.84	222,558.14

**Council Tax Arrears****Council Tax**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Arrears Total as at 30/12/11</b>
<b>1993/94</b>	-291.77
<b>1994/95</b>	-359.74
<b>1995/96</b>	-374.03
<b>1996/97</b>	418.03
<b>1997/98</b>	1,112.41
<b>1998/99</b>	2,989.56
<b>1999/00</b>	8,370.62
<b>2000/01</b>	13,865.85
<b>2001/02</b>	25,772.50
<b>2002/03</b>	32,688.68
<b>2003/04</b>	47,537.00
<b>2004/05</b>	81,807.44
<b>2005/06</b>	108,223.08
<b>2006/07</b>	166,336.66
<b>2007/08</b>	211,340.22
<b>2008/09</b>	255,536.49
<b>2009/10</b>	306,166.59
<b>2010/11</b>	445,752.53
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,706,892.12</b>

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**TITLE  
COMMITTEE****Appendix 2****13th March 2012**

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**Business Rates Arrears**

<b>Business Rates</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Arrears Total as at 30/12/11</b>
<b>2000/01</b>	600.50
<b>2001/02</b>	2,222.72
<b>2002/03</b>	12,860.01
<b>2003/04</b>	13,725.66
<b>2004/05</b>	25,876.18
<b>2005/06</b>	27,836.18
<b>2006/07</b>	55,118.64
<b>2007/08</b>	138,632.28
<b>2008/09</b>	210,251.11
<b>2009/10</b>	120,050.53
<b>2010/11</b>	241,184.85
<b>Total</b>	<b>848,358.66</b>

**EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2012**MAKING EXPERIENCES COUNT - QUARTERLY CUSTOMER SERVICE  
REPORT**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Michael Braley – Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	√
Relevant Head of Service	Amanda de Warr – Head of Customer Services
Wards Affected	All Wards
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

This report provides Members with some key information in respect of customer service, including an update on progress against the Every Customer Every Time customer experience strategy and customer feedback data for the third quarter of 2011/12.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

**the update for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011 be noted.**

**3. KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 The report, attached at Appendix 1, sets out some information against our measures within the Customer Service Centres. These are to be used for information and are not targets. The report also sets out volumes of customer feedback, including Local Government Ombudsman complaints and information on how well we have handled these against our agreed timescales. There are no targets in respect of numbers of complaints and compliments as enforcing targets can lead to complaints not being recorded and compliments being solicited in order to meet targets which are have little meaning. Instead we will focus on learning from the feedback we receive.

**Financial Implications**

- 3.2 There are no direct financial implications.

**Legal Implications**

- 3.3 There are no specific legal issues arising from this report. Any legal issues arising from complaints are dealt with on a case by case basis.

**EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2012**Service/Operational Implications**

- 3.4 The Every Customer Every Time Customer Experience Strategy was launched in March 2011 and sets out our vision for excellent customer service provision and improve the customer experience when having contact with the Council.
- 3.5 Quarterly reporting is intended to ensure Members are aware of progress and updated in respect of customer feedback, especially complaints made in respect of service provision.
- 3.6 Good customer service improves value for money by reducing failure demand. Improvements to the way we handle complaints has resulted in less officer time spent chasing responses and re-investigating.

**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.7 It is important to monitor aspects of customer service to ensure that we are improving and developing. Customers need to know that we respond properly to complaints, act on the issues raised and report on them. Customer feedback is a valuable tool for understanding what is going well, and what not so well, within the organisation. These form vital information for all transformation reviews.
- 3.8 Measures provide us with useful information about what is happening in our organisation and help us to understand where changes may impact.
- 3.9 Although led by the Head of Customer Services, the customer experience strategy applies to all services and progress against the action plan involves offices from many services working together to the benefit of customers.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 It is important to analyse the Council's complaints or compliments and for the Council to identify whether there are any trends which need to be addressed and any lessons learned in order to improve the Council performance and service to the Customer. The Customer Service Centre data is important for monitoring service delivery and identifying areas for change or improvement.
- 4.2 Failure to monitor actions in respect of the customer experience strategy could result in failure to progress.



**EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE**

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2012

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5. **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - **Making Experiences Count, Quarterly Customer Service Report Quarter 3**

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The details to support the information provided within this report are held by Head of Customer Services

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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**EVERY CUSTOMER, EVERY TIME -  
“Everybody Matters”**

**Making Experiences Count  
Quarterly Customer Service Report**

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**1<sup>st</sup> October – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011**

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

making  
a  
difference

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

## Introduction

This report aims to provide Members with some of the key customer service information for the organisation, including:-

- analysis of the complaints and compliments received during this quarter and any other relevant feedback;
- Customer Service Centre management information, including transactional statistics;
- customer satisfaction; and
- progress highlights in respect of the Customer Experience Strategy;

## Customer Feedback Analysis

### Compliment and Complaints Received

The following table sets out the numbers of complaints and compliments received during the second quarter of 2011/12

Dept	Compliments	Complaints	Complaint target met	Complaint Justified	Complaint not justified
Business Transformation	0	0	0	0	0
Community Services	5	6	5	2	4
Customer Services	7	3	3	1	2
Environmental Services	13	4	4	4	0
Housing	6	20	14	11	9
Leisure and Culture	3	4	4	0	4
Planning and Regeneration	0	3	2	0	3
Policy, Performance And Partnerships	0	0	0	0	0
Resources	1	7	4 1 still open	5	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>36 (1 still open)</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>

## APPENDIX 1

These compare with the following statistics from last year and the last two quarters:

	Total complaints	Dealt with in target time	Justified
All 2010/11	80	65	20
Q1 and Q2 2011/12	101	72	46

### What did we learn from the Complaints received?

The majority of complaints received this quarter had several factors in common which were:

- not keeping the customer informed;
- giving customers the wrong information
- delays in dealing with their complaint
- not treating the customer with respect

### Time taken to respond to complaints

We aim to respond to customer complaints within 15 working days. 76.5% were dealt with within that timeframe. Where it has taken us longer to respond than expected, customers were informed that there would be a delay in all cases.

Complaints Received	Number handled within target	1-2 days after target	3- 10 days after target	11- 21 After target
47	36	3	6	2
Reason		This is due to users not entering the correct date when closing cases.	Complex and varied investigations- Rent arrears, Tenancy, Repairs, Benefits, Council Tax	Complex and varied investigations- Homelessness, Planning Objection

### Details of justified complaints and actions taken

It is important that we understand the scope of complaints received and what action was taken to address the issue. The following table provides some detail on each justified complaint.

Service	Nature of Complaint	Action Taken/Improvement Action
Dial a Ride	Customer rang into Dial A Ride on 64910 and had a 40 min wait and was in the queue. She was advised next in queue the phone was answered then cut off and went dead.	Apology given. Investigation could not find any reason for this happening but it may have been due to telephone lines being tested.

## APPENDIX 1

	Customer complained about the behaviour of a member of staff. She has stated that the (volunteer's) behaviour has become increasingly aggressive and feels that it unsettles her and other customers.	Apology given. Measures put in place to minimise contact the volunteer has with customers and a review of volunteers will be undertaken.
<b>Customer Services</b>	Customer unhappy about failure of report it tool online to prompt action in respect of missed bin and subsequent failure to respond to his email sent to OSS.	Apology given as email was not logged and acted on however the report it tool did work as bin was requested.
<b>Landscaping</b>	Customer wrote to report that trees bordering his road had died since last year and he is directly affected by loss as they are at rear of property. Believe there is evidence to suggest tampering to deliberately cause harm to the trees.	Apology given as Officers did not spot the holes during their inspection. There is no evidence as to who caused the holes and why.
	State of woodland area in Park after the coppicing that has been undertaken and no consultation/no advance notice of works. Customer also wants to complain about response from staff.	Apology given as original response did not deal with all of the customers issues. However many of the issues raised were not found to be justified
<b>Waste</b>	Customer complained that the bin men empty her bin and leave it much further down the road outside no. 30. Also she had to report the green bin had gone missing immediately after it had been emptied. She was assured that this would be monitored.	Apology given and collection to be monitored
	Customer rang to say his bin is regularly missed and despite many previous requests was missed again this week. He is fed up that we chase him for his council tax but cannot manage to empty his bin.	Apology given and collection to be monitored

## APPENDIX 1

<b>Housing</b>	Customer wrote to complain about the way her former tenancy arrears were handled.	Apology given. This complaints dates back to 2007 and improvements have been made to this process since then.
	Customer unhappy about her place on the housing list despite evidence given of medical needs.	Apology given about the time it has taken to assess and customer placed on gold band status.
	Customer unhappy about the delay in getting back to him about his request for a garage.	Apology given for not responding and advice given.
	Customer not happy about repairs to her ceiling which have caused further damage and the numerous calls she has made to the Council with no response.	Apology given. Remedial works have been arranged.
	Customer has ongoing problem with mould and damp. Has asked several times for it to be repaired but has had no definite response.	Apology given. Messages were left for customer but his phone did not recognise the Council number so he did not receive them. Repairs have been arranged.
	Customer has made several calls about the unsafe communal doors and is unhappy about the way she and her partner were spoken to about this matter.	Apology given for not returning calls. Repairs have been rectified.
	Customer not happy about ongoing repairs needed to his flat. He has reported these several times with no response.	Apology given, repairs have now been rectified.
	Customer reported subsidence at property but has not received any response since initial inspection.	Apology given and consultants have been instructed to carry out further inspection before repairs are carried out.
	Customer requested repair to light switch and lamp on landing. Advised that this would be reported and action expected in 5 working days. This did not happen.	Apology given, repairs have now been rectified.
	Customer unhappy about some repair issues that has been reported in July but still not resolved.	Apology given as some issues were not reported back to the Repair Team

## APPENDIX 1

	Customer unhappy about the lack of communication between contractors and gas company about the reconnection of his cooker.	Apology given as misleading information was given by contractor.
<b>Council Tax</b>	Customer unhappy about the rude and uncaring ways she was spoken to by a member of the Council Tax team.	Apology given and staff member reminded about the Council's policy for customer care
	Customer unhappy about the attitude of a council tax advisor who was rude and spoke down to her.	Apology given and staff member reminded about the Council's policy for customer care
	Customer unhappy about the mistakes that have been made with her bill.	Apology given and customer asked to provide new information.
	Customer unhappy about the ways she was spoken to when querying her bill.	Apology given.
<b>Benefits</b>	Customer unhappy about mis-calculations of benefits.	Apology given and refund issued.

### **“You said – we listened” – what did we change as a result of complaints?**

We aim to use complaints as a mechanism for making improvements to our services and changes have been made as result of complaints in the following services:-

**Landscaping** – training was given to staff on responding to all issues in customer's letters;

**Dial a ride**- a review of the volunteer list is to take place;

**Housing Repairs** – are reviewing systems for getting back to customers.

### **Number of complaint escalated to Head of Customer Services**

There was one complaint escalated to the Head of Customer Services, for further investigation or action.

This related to **Landscaping** – the customer was concerned that he was not consulted about coppicing work undertaken at the local wood and that when he contacted the Council his issues were not responded to. After investigation the Head of Customer Services felt this complaint was not partly justified as some of the issues were not dealt with in the response from the Council. However many of the issues were found not to be justified and that we could not meet the customers' expectations.



## APPENDIX 1

**What did we learn from the compliments received?**

From the range of compliments received it is apparent that customers appreciate when we take the time to listen to their concerns and take prompt action. Here are some of the compliments we have received.

Team	Compliment Details
Customer Services	Customer called to say thank you and compliment us on the service she has received the last few occasions she has called us. Jo Frost dealt with her today but she thinks that the CSA's are generally great, very efficient and quick and on this occasion the drain people were out within 2 hours to fix the drain. She said customer services do a great job with their honesty, friendliness and accuracy.
Engineering and Landscaping	Customer wrote to say thank you for making a wonderful job of the garages at the side of his house. The difference is amazing so tidy and clean and most of all open.
Landscaping	Customer phoned in to say thank you very much for arranging and carrying out the tree works.
Refuse	Thanks to the waste collection service for providing an assisted collection over the last few years for his mother, who has now moved house.
Street Cleaning	Customer phoned to say a big thank you to the Council and the work men that have just come out to clean the pathway and the car park – they have done a lovely job thank you!
Housing – Home Support	Just a little note with a great big thank you for the care and support they gave to my Dad and myself. It was very much appreciated. Thank you so much for everything.
Leisure - Theatre	Could you please pass on to the Theatre Staff, our thanks for the support that was given to us all by your team. As always you make us feel that we are the most important people in the world when it is our show week and you and your staff are always so welcoming and helpful and are always ready to guide us through problems.
Resources- Income Team	Letter from customer to Income Team, thanking Mandi generally and stating how helpful she was at a trying time.

### Local Government Ombudsman Complaints

There were 2 LGO complaints received during this period.

**Complaint 1**- Related to Housing/Landscaping and was responded to in 23 days. The LGO agreed a local settlement of a letter of apology from the Council about the way a letter was worded.

**Complaint 2** – Related to Housing Repair and was responded to in 28 days. The LGO decided to close the case as the Council had already taken action to provide a satisfactory remedy for the customer.

### Customer feedback in respect of complaint handling

Since April 2011 we have been asking customers for feedback on how their complaint was handled. The response to this tells us 69% of customers that responded are satisfied with way we are handling their complaint even when we can't give them the outcome they want. From their comments it is clear that customers are most unhappy about the number of times they have to contact the Council to get a response to their issues and the time this takes.

### Customer Service Centre Information

The section aims to give members useful information in respect of the service provided at the Customer Service Centres (CSC) and One Stop Shops (OSS). The CSC's and OSS's provide facilities for the majority of customer enquiries made face to face, and the telephone enquiries for many of the key frontline service. The Customer Services Team also deal with email enquiries received to the Hub email address.

The purpose of the Customer Services team is **to help resolve customer's problems or requests**. We use measures rather than targets to assess what is happening in the service and this section includes some of the headlines.

Through transformation we are learning that for some services it is more cost effective and efficient, for both the organisation and the customer, if the enquiries are dealt with by a specialist member of staff. In respect of revenues and benefits this has resulted in less enquiries being dealt with by the CSC team, although the CSC staff are still involved in filtering enquiries, capturing customer information and then allocating the enquiry to the correct officer for resolution. Some CSC staff have increased their knowledge to enable them to deal with Council Tax enquiries to resolution. There are also a number of customer service staff involved in systems thinking reviews and therefore helping to establish new ways of working.

### Customer numbers

The following table shows the numbers of customer enquiries dealt with by the Customer Service Team:

	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter
Face to face enquiries	20,955	17,724	15,840
Telephone enquiries	19,333	19,261	16,946
Email enquiries	725	469	882
Payments	32,454	31,958	30,383
<b>Total customer contacts</b>	<b>73,467</b>	<b>69,412</b>	<b>64,051</b>

## APPENDIX 1

**Waiting Times**

Our average waiting times for seeing or speaking to a member of staff who could help the customer (not including payments) were:

	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter
Face to Face	33 seconds	5 minutes 28 seconds	3 minutes 35 seconds
Telephones	1 minute 30 seconds	1 minute 7 seconds	1 minute 8 seconds
Email	We always respond to emails within 1 working day of receipt.		

We are now seeing a fairly consistent service in respect of answering the telephones but this is not the full picture as in fact 71% of all calls answered were answered in less than 8 seconds. Only 13% of callers waited longer than two minutes. Given the resources available and the unpredictability of incoming calls, and the fact that we avoid the use of automated system to answer calls this is a very good level of service.

Our priority is to ensure each customer receives the best possible service and that we resolve their issue. This means that at times others may have to wait a little longer and queues do develop at peak times. As previously reported the waiting times and management of the queues is closely monitored. We have monitored events closely and customers are rarely waiting more than a few minutes and customer satisfaction is high. We manage the queues and look out for visitors when we know they are expected to be able to fast track them

We are looking at options for remodeling the public area which would relieve the pressure on the space just inside the main doors but there will be costs associated to this.

**Failure and Value demand**

Failure demand is customer contact that is a result of the organisation not doing something, or not doing something right.

For the purposes of transformation it is necessary to establish the rate of failure demand within a service. As the CSC's deals with customer demand for a range of services we record failure demand across those services, so this is not a reflection on the CSC, but for the organisation as a whole.

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2011/12 the CSC recorded an average of 34% failure demand. This is reasonable consistent with previous months, although we know from looking at some services more closely through transformation that failure demand is very variable in each service and also dependent on what is happening within the service at the time.

**APPENDIX 1**

A study of value and failure during this period shows the variation of value and failure demand in the following services.

Service	Value	Failure
Housing Repairs	64%	36%
Environmental Services	77%	23%
Council Tax	84%	16%
Benefits	55%	45%
Blue Badge	70%	30%

**Cost of service**

The average transactions costs based on the total cost of the service for 2010/11 were:

Face to Face	Telephones	Payments
£2.80	£3.29	£0.98

**Customer Satisfaction**

Our purpose is to help resolve customers problems and requests, but many of these problems or requests are handed over to someone else within the organisation to resolve. So during this quarter we implemented a scheme to try to establish how well the organisation (or a part of it) responded to customers problems.

During this November we called 23 customers, who had made contact with us with issues relating to Environmental Services, a little time after they had initially contacted us to find out whether their issue had been resolved to their satisfaction. We received the following responses to our questions:

How was your enquiry handled by the customer services adviser?

Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
0	0	1	5	17

Was your enquiry resolved to your satisfaction by the council?

Yes	No
14	8

If not why not?

1. Ongoing situation – more investigation required
2. Bins delivered but then had problems with bins being collected/emptied
3. Smaller grey bin arrived – very dirty

**APPENDIX 1**

4. Ongoing issue, signs erected and there is still only 1 bin, but there are 4 entry and exit. 1 exit point 2 bins close together. Signage looks unprofessional
5. Trees have not been cut back, no one has contacted to say what is happening
6. Although someone has returned feel it has been left in a poor state
7. Not heard from anyone
8. Rubbish is still there, its an ongoing problem- area used as a dumping ground

3 Call Back's were referred to Environmental Services for action and 1 New job was raised

All call back satisfaction checklists have been passed to Environmental Services Managers and the information will be used to help inform transformation in that service.

### Strategy Action Plan Progress

Work has been progressing well across the organisation in respect of meeting the aims set out in the Every Customer, Every Time Customer Experience Strategy.

This quarter's headlines are.....



Customer Call backs introduced, to establish whether we have resolved customer enquiries.



Mystery Shopping exercise started using Customer Focus Group staff from across Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council to establish the quality of response to customer enquiries by email or letter.



Customer Focused Writing Skills training provide to around 30 staff



Ongoing changes to Benefits and Council Tax service to provide enhanced face to face service, resulting in greater resolution and reduction in failure demand.



Implemented 'Tell us Once' service in conjunction with registrars service for the reporting of bereavements once and updating all relevant council records.



Implemented 'star' system on web pages to gather feedback on the usefulness of content.

Amanda de Warr  
Head of Customer Services



**EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE**

13th March 2012

**SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE and HEALTH FOR PERIOD  
ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2011**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Michael Braley, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management.
Portfolio Holder Consulted	At Portfolio Holder briefing
Relevant Head of Service	Teresa Kristunas, Head of Finance and Resources
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	Not Applicable
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

To report to Executive Committee on Redditch Borough Council's performance for the period 1st October – 31st December 2011 in relation to sickness absence.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that**

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

**3. KEY ISSUES**

Analysis of the monthly statistics - 1st October – 31st December 2011

- 3.1 Sickness Absence has remained **GREEN** for the period 1st October – 31st December 2011 **with the projected out-turn figure for the year being 7.24 days per full-time equivalent** against a year-end target of 8.75.
- 3.2 The comparable data for the period October – December 2010/2011, was a projected figure of 9.65 days per FTE. Therefore a **decrease** in the projected out-turn figure for the year **of 2.41 days** per FTE compared to last year.
- 3.3 Short-term sickness absence increased significantly in November, but decreased in December. As at 31st December, short term sickness represents 52% of the overall sickness figure for the year to date.
- 3.4 Long-term sickness absence during December was the highest month to date during this report year, however remained lower in the two previous months, and as at 31st December 2011, represents 48% of the overall sickness figure for the year to date.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

13th March 2012

- 3.5 The number of long-term sickness cases increased from 11 at the end of the last quarter to 23 by the 31st December 2011. HR is actively managing these cases, in conjunction with line management, and occupational health.

### Sickness by area

- 3.6 Housing Services is the only service whose projected out-turn figure for the year-end per FTE is currently above the 8.75 days per FTE corporate target set for Redditch Borough Council
- 3.7 Housing Services current year-end projection per FTE is 12.16 days, this is an increase since the last quarter, where the year-end projection per FTE was 10.5 days per FTE.
- 3.8 The remaining services within Redditch Borough Council are all projected to fall below the target of 8.75 days per FTE.
- 3.9 Comparative Data

### Local

	<b>Redditch Borough Council</b>	<b>Bromsgrove District Council</b>	<b>Worcestershire County Council (excluding schools)</b>
Q3 Actual per FTE (3 months)	2.35	2.12	2.86
Year to date per FTE (cumulative 9 month total)	5.42	6.27	6.98
2011/12 Year-end prediction (based on cumulative performance to date)	7.24 (against a target of 8.75 days)	8.36 (against a target of 8.75 days per FTE)	9.31 (against a target of 7 days per FTE)

### National

<b>Average number of days per employee</b>	<b>Redditch Borough Council</b>	<b>Public Sector</b>	<b>Non-Profit Sector</b>	<b>Private Services</b>	<b>Private Sector (manufacturing)</b>
2010	9.02 (2009/10)	9.6	8.3	6.6	6.9
2011	10.16 (2010/11)	9.1	8.8	7.1	5.7
2011/12 year-end prediction	7.24	Not known	Not known	Not known	Not known

The above national comparative data was taken from the CIPD's Absence Management Annual Survey 2011.



# **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**13th March 2012**

## Actions to reduce sickness

- 3.10 A Sickness working group, consisting of Heads of Service and representatives from HR, has been set up across both Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils with the aim of reviewing the level of sickness absence across both authorities to monitor levels of absence, determine 'hotspots' and to ensure that current sickness policies are being actively adhered to, as well as ensuring appropriate support is given to managers and employees to effectively manage sickness absence, which includes reviewing management training where appropriate.
- 3.11 All long-term sickness cases continue to be managed with input from line managers/head of services, Union representatives, HR and Occupational Health.
- 3.12 Continued and further actions to support the reduction of sickness absence include:
- a) Review of the Sickness Absence Policy as part of the wider harmonisation project with input from Heads of Service, line managers and Union representatives. (The current RBC policy is attached to this report as Appendix 2).
  - b) Heads of Service will continue to receive a monthly sickness report for their service area.
  - c) The Self-service Kiosk is currently being set up within the HR database system: Chris 21 database, which will enable managers to access 'live time' information on the sickness absence levels, frequency and trends of their team members.
  - d) Review of Occupational Health provision across both Councils. Currently out to advert to recruit to a full time post shared with BDC for an Occupational Health Advisor for the HR & OD Service.
  - e) Reports on Sickness levels will be provided to the Health & Safety Committee.
  - f) A revised sickness absence report will be developed for the 2011/12 Year-end report, which amongst other things will include more comparative data, frequent absences by reason as well as highlighting the further mechanisms which will address these.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

13th March 2012

### Work Related

- 3.13 There were **no reportable** work-related injuries at Redditch Borough Council in the third quarter of 2011/12.

### Health and Wellbeing

- 3.14 There is nothing further to report at this time.

### Financial Implications

- 3.15 There were no financial implications identified.

### Legal Implications

- 3.16 There were no legal implications identified.

### Service/Operational Implications

- 3.17 The level of sickness absence can impact on service delivery if action is not taken to manage absences.

### Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.18 There are no customer, equalities and diversity implications.

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

There is a risk that without active sickness management the number of days lost due to sickness would be significant and impact on service delivery.

## **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Sickness Figures year to date 30th September 2011.  
Appendix 2 - Sickness Absence Policy RBC.

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

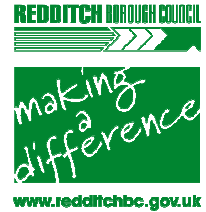
CIPD – Absence Management – Annual Survey 2011.

## **AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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## Sickness Absence Policy

### 1. Introduction

This Policy of the Council is to maintain minimum levels of absence. Good attendance is key in providing high quality services.

The policy is intended to maintain consistency across the organisation when dealing with absence.

This document provides a statement of principles for managing sickness absence.

The provisions of this policy are applicable to all employees of Redditch Borough Council.

### 2. Equalities Statement

This policy is intended to operate within the Council's commitment to equalities and diversity including:

- Equal treatment regardless of race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, with reasonable adjustments where necessary in line with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Working to eliminate **unlawful** discrimination.
- **Promoting equal opportunities**
- Promoting community cohesion, **including good relations between people from different racial groups.**
- Providing reasonable access to interpretation or support on request.
- Responding to the needs of all, and working to engage all sections of the community.

This policy will be assessed as part of a rolling programme of reviews to ensure that it does not have a detrimental or disproportionate effect on any group.

Any concerns that the policy is operating in a way that could be construed as discriminatory should be passed to the responsible Manager and will be dealt with as part of the official Complaints Procedure, in line with the Council's Equality Schemes.

### 3. **Responsibilities**

***It is the responsibility of the line manager to:***

- Ensure that all employees understand the procedures to be followed.
- Ensure the fair and consistent application of the sickness absence policy.
- Ensure that each of the stages and the time limits defined within this policy are adhered to.
- To manage sickness absence within their team.
- To train and share information regarding managing absence to their staff.
- To deal promptly and fairly with persistent absence.
- To deal promptly and fairly with long term absence.
- To liaise with the Occupational Health Adviser.
- To liaise with Human Resources.
- To liaise with Senior Management.
- To maintain contact with staff whilst absent from work.
- To conduct return to work interviews.
- To monitor individual employees' sickness absence.
- To respect the confidentiality of absence information.

***It is the responsibility of the individual employee to:***

- Advise and update their line manager of sickness absence in accordance with this policy.
- Attend all meetings as detailed within this policy.
- To familiarise themselves with the Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure.
- To notify their Manager of their absence on the first day.
- To maintain contact with their Manager whilst absent from work.
- To participate in a return to work interview upon their return.

***It is the responsibility of the Human Resources Department to:***

- Advise and support line managers in a consistent and timely way, in cases where further action by the line manager may be required.
- Provide specialist advice and training to managers/supervisors to assist them to manage sickness absence.
- Produce timely and accurate statistics on sickness absence, identifying trends where possible.

- Advise line managers and employees on the policy & procedure and how it should be applied, which includes the provision of template letters.
- Provide line managers with advice on the application of the Disability Discrimination Act, any other relevant legislation and its relevance within this policy.
- To produce a Managing Sickness Policy.
- To produce regular reports updating Managers, staff and elected Members.
- To work with Managers in providing support and specialist advice.
- To provide clear and concise advice and support.
- To liaise with Managers and Occupational Health Adviser.

***It is the responsibility of the Director to:***

- Attend training on the principles and implementation of this policy as required.
- Ensure that each of the stages and the time limits defined within this policy are adhered to.
- Ensure the fair and consistent application of the Grievance Procedure.
- To ensure that absence is considered regularly at a Directorate and corporate Management Team level.
- To take action where pockets of high absence are identified, including reallocation of resources if needed.
- Consider termination of contracts in line with Managing Sickness Policy in appropriate circumstances.
- To monitor Managers' ability to manage sickness.

***It is the responsibility of the Occupational Health Advisor to:***

- Provide confidential advice and support service to Employees.
- Provide confidential advice and support service to Managers.
- Carry out sickness absence assessment at the request of Managers.
- Liaise with Medical Adviser and organise appropriate referrals.
- Provide assessments for redeployment purpose.
- Provide clear and concise advice in relation to health issues.
- Provide support for return to work if appropriate.

#### **4. Main Policy Procedures**

The management of sickness is a Management responsibility. The Human Resources team and the Occupational Health Adviser are available to provide specialist advice and support and to ensure all employees are treated fairly and consistently across the organisation.

The policy operates within the Council's agreed Equal Opportunities policy and managers will take account of the Disability Discrimination Act when applying the sickness procedure which accompanies this policy.

This procedure covers the following:

#### **Definitions of absence**

#### **Reporting procedures for absence**

Stage One – Return to Work

#### **Managing persistent short term absence**

Stage Two – Welfare / Attendance Review

Stage Three – Formal Review

Stage Four – Final Review

Stage Five – Dismissal Decision

#### **Managing long term absence**

When there is a foreseeable end date

When there is no foreseeable end date

Maintaining contact

A period of 1-7 calendar days is considered to be a “**short term**” period of absence. Such absences may be regarded as persistent (see below) when they occur on 3 occasions in a 12 month period or 7 working days during a 12 month period.

## **5. Reporting Procedures**

### **First Day of Absence**

The employee should inform their line manager if at all possible, or a colleague if the manager is not available, within one hour of normal start time that they are unable to attend work. (This may be earlier if required – the manager will inform staff if this is the case). Employees should state:

- the **reason** for absence and
- where possible their likely **return date**
- any **outstanding work** etc that needs to be dealt with urgently.

The member of staff taking the call from the absent employee should ensure that the Payroll Team are notified of the absence by completing Absence Statement section A and forwarding the top section of the form to Payroll Team, Town Hall. (Copies available from Human Resources).



## 5.2 Fourth Working Day of Absence

If still absent after four working days, the employee must contact their line manager to inform them of their continuing absence and likely return date.

## 5.3 8<sup>th</sup> Day of Absence Onwards

Employees do not need a Doctor's note for any absence of less than 8 days, therefore it maybe that they will not have visited their doctor before the 8th day.

Any absence of 8 days or more must be covered by a Doctor's certificate. The 8 days includes weekends, bank holidays and non rostered work days. All absence should be covered by a valid note (including non working days) which should be submitted from the date of expiry of the previous certificate.

When returning to work a Doctor's certificate is required indicating an employee is fit for work from the date stated. If an employee returns to work when a Doctor's note states they are unfit they may not be covered for insurance purposes.

## 6. Returning to Work - (Stage one)

On return from sickness absence the line manager should complete section B of the Absence Statement. This form is used for recording purposes, and the Service Manager should keep a copy in a secure file. The copy should be sent to the Payroll Team, Town Hall.

### **Return to Work Interviews**

When the employee returns from a period of sick leave the line manager is to conduct a return to work interview within 2 days whenever possible.

### **Interview Checklist**

- The Manager to invite the employee to attend, and arrange for a private venue
- Discuss the cause of absence
- The Manager to indicate the Council's interest in the welfare of the individual
- Both to discuss the individual's attendance record
- Manager to explain the sickness absence policy and procedures

- Manager to explain the role in managing sickness absence
- To offer an additional support that may be helpful
- To catch up on any work or issues during the absence

This is all contained in the “Return to Work” form, which the Service Manager keeps in their Absence Record files.

## 7. **Welfare and Attendance Review - (Stage two)**

Return to work interviews will form the first stage in addressing persistent absence (see above). However, after the “trigger point” of 3 absence separate periods of in 12 months or a total of 7 working days (or equivalent for part timers) in a 12 month period, the line manager should invite the employee to attend a Welfare and Attendance Review (including the Service Manager if appropriate) (see "questions" below for discussion of disability related absence).

This will give the employee the opportunity to be fully consulted about his or her absence and attendance record. (Full details of the employee’s sickness absence record should be given to them seven days in advance of the interview - print outs can be obtained from Human Resources.)

### **Interview Checklist**

- ✓ Manager to invite the employee to attend, and arrange for a private venue
- ✓ Manager to provide full details of the employee’s absence record to them in advance
- ✓ The Manager should explain that they are making a written record of the interview (using the standard format), a copy of which will be provided to them
- ✓ The employee must be made aware that the interview is not part of the disciplinary process, although the seriousness should be stressed
- ✓ The interview should allow the employee the opportunity to explain the reasons for absence and explore any underlying reasons
- ✓ The manager should check that the employee receives all support necessary to ensure attendance at work
- ✓ The manager and the employee should establish if medical assistance is required via referral to Occupational Health
- ✓ If the manager has concerns about the legitimacy or extent of the sickness the employee may be requested to submit a Doctor's Certificate for any future sickness absence on the first day of absence (the Council will have to pay for this).
- ✓ The manager should set a reasonable time for the employee’s attendance to be assessed.
- ✓ The manager should explain the next stages should the employee fail to reach an acceptable standard of attendance

## 8. Formal Absence Review - (Stage three)

If there are 2 more absences in the following 3 months after the Welfare and Attendance review, or more than 3 working days lost then the issue should now be referred to the Service Manager for a Formal Review (if they are not already dealing with it).

### **Interview Checklist**

- ✓ Manager to invite the employee to attend, and arrange for a private venue
- ✓ Manager to provide full details of the employee's absence record to them in advance
- ✓ **If the employee has not yet been referred to the Occupational Health Advisor, the Manager should do so using the Occupational Health Referral Form prior to the meeting**
- ✓ Manager to make sure an Human Resources Adviser is attending
- ✓ The Manager should explain that they are making a written record of the interview (using the standard format), a copy of which will be provided to them
- ✓ The interview should allow the employee the opportunity to explain the reasons for absence and explore any underlying reasons
- ✓ Manager to check if the absence is caused by training needs or other work based issues
- ✓ Discuss referral to Occupational Health Advisor and possibility of redeployment
- ✓ If the manager has concerns about the legitimacy or extent of the sickness the employee may be requested to submit a Doctors Certificate for any future sickness absence on the first day of absence (the Council will have to pay for this).
- ✓ The manager should set a reasonable time for the employee's attendance to be assessed and set date for meeting to review progress – no more than 3 months from that interview.
- ✓ Employee will be issued with a formal instruction stating the attendance improvement needed and the timescale and warned that failure to meet the targets could lead to dismissal (to be followed up in writing)

**IF** target attendance levels are met then the manager should carry out the review meeting following the same checklist, and setting another target/timescale for continued improvement. This cycle will continue until absence reaches acceptable levels.

**IF** target attendance levels are not met then the case will progress to the next level, Final Review, Stage 4.

**IF** there are work-related issues then the Occupational Health Advisor will give advice on suitability for redeployment on medical grounds. This will be arranged by the HR Advisor for the Directorate.

## 9. **Final Review - (Stage four)**

If improvement targets are still not met and redeployment is not seen as a suitable solution, then the Director will meet with the employee and Human Resources.

### **Interview Checklist**

- ✓ Director to summarise the advice received by the Council's Medical Adviser
- ✓ Discuss the effect of past and likely future absences on the job and on the employee's capability to do the job
- ✓ Discuss the availability of suitable alternative work.
- ✓ The employee will have the chance to state their views.
- ✓ The meeting will be adjourned and Director will make a decision. A decision to dismiss the employee will be confirmed in writing.

### **Appeal Against Dismissal**

The employee will have the right to appeal against their dismissal in accordance with the Appeals procedure outlined in the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

## 10. **Managing Long Term Absence**

If the employee is absent for a month and there is no likelihood of return the line manager must complete an Occupational Health referral form and notify the employee of this.

### **10.1 When there is a foreseeable end date**

If the employee is likely to return in the foreseeable future the line manager should ensure that they maintain contact with the employee until they return to work. (see maintaining contact page below). Once the employee returns to work the line manager should follow the return to work process

### **10.2 When there is no foreseeable end date**

The Occupational Health Advisor will contact the employee and the line manager and decide if a referral to the Medical Advisor is necessary.

**IF** there is no referral to the Medical Advisor then the Occupational Health Advisor will set a date to review the decision to refer.

**IF** Medical Advice is required the Occupational Health Adviser will arrange this and inform both the Line Manager and the Human Resources Adviser.

The Occupational Health Advisor will advise the Service Manager and the Human Resources Manager on the options available:

### **Wait and See**

The reality is that certain conditions are likely to take a long time to be resolved, but there will be a resolution that can allow the employee to stay in work. If this seems possible within a reasonable time scale, or if the medical condition is developing towards this, then it may be best to continue to monitor rather than taking definitive action.

### **Ill Health Retirement**

Where the employee may be permanently unfit to work, the Occupational Health Adviser seeks a view from an independent Medical Advisor who has not previously assessed the employee. Human Resources Adviser prepares documents. The employee has the right of appeal under the pension scheme rules to another Medical Advisor, if they are not classified as permanently unfit to work.

### **Redeployment**

Where the employee may be suitable for alternative work the Service Manager will receive advice from Occupational Health Adviser on medical issues and Human Resources Adviser on employment issues.

### **Termination on Grounds if Incapacity**

If there is no prospect of a return to acceptable levels of attendance but Ill Health retirement is not an option the Director (with an Human Resources Adviser) will meet with the employee and explain that their employment is being terminated, explaining why Ill Health retirement is not an option. If it is not possible to meet the employee (for medical reasons) the employee should be informed in writing. The right of appeal under the pensions scheme, the impact on frozen pensions benefits, and payment during notice, as well as the arrangements for collecting personal belongings and informing colleagues should also be discussed. Notice will be given which will be paid at normal rates (not sick pay).

The Service Manager, in conjunction with their Human Resources Adviser, will decide the appropriate course of action. This should be confirmed by the Director prior to informing the employee, as only the Director has authority to terminate employment. Employees have right of representation at any meetings.

## **11. Maintaining contact**

It is important for Line Managers to maintain regular contact with employees either by telephone or prior agreements of the employee for a home visit. This demonstrates both a caring employer and a commitment to employee welfare. The Line Manager should work with the employee to agree a strategy for the employee to return to work.

### **Maintaining Contact Checklist**

- ✓ Manager to contact the employee when the first and subsequent **sick notes are received**
- ✓ Manager to maintain contact at **regular intervals** (e.g. fortnightly) throughout including home visits if appropriate
- ✓ The Manager should check that the employee receives all support necessary to ensure attendance at work
- ✓ The Manager should establish reason for absence and likely duration and advise on the procedures which follow
- ✓ The Manager should address any needs or concerns of the employee
- ✓ The Manager should identify any assistance needed for the employee to return to work e.g. phased return to work on a part time basis

If employee is not available e.g. in hospital, contact should be maintained with relatives. If employee is rejecting contact, obtain advice from Human Resources.

### **SIGNPOSTS**

All the forms and letters referred to in this procedure are available on the intranet or from Human Resources

Disciplinary Policy ("Setting the Standards") and the guide for managers on Disciplinary Procedure ("Meeting the Standards") are available on the staff intranet or from Human Resources

See the annual Training Programme (published every March) by Human Resources for courses open to all staff

List of open learning resources (videos, CD Roms etc.) on the intranet or from Human Resources, extension 3663

## **12. COMMON QUESTIONS**

### **ARE EMPLOYEES ENTITLED TO UNION REPRESENTATION?**

Although it is not a right of the employee to have union representation at every stage any reasonable requests will be granted as long as this does not significantly delay the process.

### **DOES HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPACT ON SICKNESS?**

Yes the work environment can contribute to or cause ill health.

Employers are required by law to make "Suitable and Sufficient" assessment of the risks to health and safety, these are key in preventing illness which in turn help reduce sickness absence levels.

Special consideration should be made for young people, pregnant women, over 50s and staff with disabilities.

Failure to have up to date Risk Assessments could leave Redditch Borough Council and managers open to further action

### **DO WE HAVE TO DO ANYTHING UNDER THE DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION?**

Sickness data comes under the Data Protection Acts' definition of "sensitive personal data".

Absence records should be treated as confidential and kept in secure cabinets. Managers and staff should respect the confidentiality of this data.

Redditch Borough Council's procedure needs to be implemented in line with the Data Protection Legislation.

### **WHAT IF I AN EMPLOYEE FALLS SICK AT WORK?**

The employee should notify their manager if they are feeling unwell. It is their responsibility to authorise the employee to go home. If the employee is absent the following day then the following day will count as their first day of absence.

Redditch Borough Council strives to be a caring employer therefore the manager should ensure the employee is able to return home safely and organise transport if necessary.

### **WHAT IF AN EMPLOYEE HAS A DISABILITY?**

In managing poor attendance disability related illness will be discounted for the purpose of triggering further action (although the absence will be recorded in the normal manner). The Manager and Occupational Health Adviser are to work with the employee to enable them to work effectively and support their regular attendance at work. Managers can refer to the Occupational Health Advisor using a referral form.

### **WHAT IF AN EMPLOYEE IS PREGNANT?**

All pregnancy related absence will be recorded in the normal manner and return to work interviews recorded. If there is any absence from work on or after the 6<sup>th</sup> week before the Expected week of childbirth, because of pregnancy related illness, maternity leave and pay will commence on the Sunday following the first day of illness.

### **WHAT IF AN EMPLOYEE HAS AN ACCIDENT OR INJURIES AT WORK?**

If an employee has an accident at work they must report this immediately to their line manager. The line manager is required to complete an accident report with the employee. If an absence goes beyond 3 days the Safety Advisor needs to be informed immediately in order to notify the Health and Safety Executive. If the accident results in

an absence from work this will be managed as part of the normal sickness procedure

#### **ARE THERE ANY EMPLOYEE SUPPORT INITIATIVES AVAILABLE?**

There are a number of initiatives available which are designed to improve the health of employees at work and to support employees who are absent. These include:

- Healthy lifestyle
- Vision screening
- Blood pressure checks
- Screening for COSHH requirements
- Basic counselling
- Manual handling training
- Stress survival training

#### **WHAT IF AN EMPLOYEE REFUSES TO SEE THE MEDICAL ADVISOR?**

Employees are expected to undergo reasonable examinations if they are absent etc. If they refuse, then the Council is entitled to make decisions on capability with the evidence they already have about the employee's ability to work.

#### **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

If an employee is absent from work without good cause or fails to produce a self-certificate or Doctor's Certificate for any sickness absence, he/she will be considered to be absent without authorization and will not be paid for that period. When the employee returns to work, the Line Manager will interview him/her to ascertain the reason for their absence. If the employee is able to establish a good cause for their absence, and with the agreement of the relevant Head of Service, the Manager may agree to consider the absence as flexi time or special leave.

***FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS POLICY, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER.***

***NOTE: RBC reserve the right to vary the content of this document with consultation where appropriate.***





# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Phil Mould (Chair), Councillor Mark Shurmer (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Peter Anderson, Andrew Brazier, Simon Chalk, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Gay Hopkins and Brenda Quinney

### Also present:

A Scarce

### Officers:

S Hanley, T Kristunas, S Morgan and S Skinner.

### Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers:

J Bayley and M Craggs

### 164. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Mason and Stephens.

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

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

### 166. MINUTES

The Committee was advised that a number of minor textual amendments needed to be made which did not otherwise affect the record of the meeting. These amendments would be made to the final version of the minutes.

### RESOLVED that

subject to making a number of minor amendments the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday, 24th January 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

.....  
Chair

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

## 167. FEES AND CHARGES 2012/13

The Committee considered the proposed fees and charges for 2012/13 for the Council's chargeable services. Reference was also made to the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 31st January 2012 which detailed the Committee's decisions regarding fees and charges.

Officers had increased many of the fees and charges by 2.5 per cent, though there had been some variances. In particular, a number of fees were set at a statutory level. Attempts had been made, where possible, to round up the fees charged for particular services, though this had not always been considered appropriate.

There were a number of licensing fees which had not been increased when compared to the previous year. A decision had been made to retain the same fees to ensure that, as legally required, the Council did not generate a profit from these charges.

The Committee suggested that clarification should be provided with regards to the timeframes for charging new fees for the Council's allotments. Residents would be interested to learn that these fees were set a year in advance as it would help allotment holders to calculate the charges they would need to pay.

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

## 168. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2012/13

The Committee received the Housing Revenue Account Initial Estimates for 2012/13. Reference was also made to the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 31st January 2012, which detailed the Committee's recommendations on the subject.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Initial Estimates were designed to set the budget for the HRA for the following year. In previous years the Council had paid £6.8 million to the government due to the local authority being in a negative subsidy position. This housing subsidy process would cease in March 2012 and the Council would no longer need to make these payments.

The process for rent setting had also been reviewed in the report. Local authorities were increasingly being urged to secure rent

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

convergence with the social housing sector by 2015/16. As part of this process similar rents would be charged for similar properties. The rents charged by the Council were due to increase by seven per cent in line with government guidelines and the average rent would be increasing from £72.82 to £79.90 on a 48 week basis.

There were concerns amongst Members that some tenants would struggle to pay these increased rents. However, Officers advised that significant adjustments would need to be made to the figures if the rents were to be increased at a lower rate.

An assumption had been made that there would be a limited increase in the number of residents who would request to purchase their Council house under the Right to Buy scheme. In recent years the number of properties sold to tenants under Right to Buy had stabilised at an average of five properties per annum. In the current economic environment many tenants were struggling to obtain mortgages and it was anticipated that this would continue to be a problem for the foreseeable future.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the draft 2012/13 Estimates for the Housing Revenue Account, attached to the report at Appendix 1, be approved;**
- 2) the actual average rent increase for 2012/13 be 7 %;**
- 3) £2 million be transferred to a reserve as a Revenue Contribution to Capital to fund the future Capital Programme; and**

## **RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

### **169. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT REPORT - UPDATE ON FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS**

Members received a report on the Housing Revenue Account review for pre-scrutiny.

Officers advised that the previous Housing Revenue Account subsidy system was due to be replaced with a new Council housing finance process, called self-financing. As part of this process a valuation had been made of each local authority's Council housing stock and assumptions had been made by the government

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

regarding each Council's income through rents and maintenance expenditure over the next 30 years.

The Council would need to pay the government £98.929 million for the local authority's housing stock by 28th March 2012, though money could be borrowed to cover these costs from the Public Works Loans Board. The local authority would be required to pay back the amount that had been borrowed over the next 30 years. Members agreed that Officers' proposal to pay back the amount that had been borrowed every five years after year 15 of the process would help to minimise the risks of this borrowing to the Council.

A draft Capital Programme for the following 30 years had also been provided for Members' consideration. Funds had been transferred from the current Major Repairs Reserve (MRR) to this Capital Programme. Members were advised that until year 11 surplus funds would not be available from the Capital Programme to repay the borrowing. However, in subsequent years significant funding would be available from the programme to contribute to repayments.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

**subject to the Council's approval of the budgetary implications,**

- 1) the 5 year Housing Capital Programme, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;**
- 2) the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources be authorised to acquire debt from the Public Works Loans Board up to the amount of the actual Debt Cap in line with the profile set out at Appendix 4 to the report;**
- 3) subject to Members' comments, the viability of the 30 year business case for the Housing Revenue Account, and the projected availability of resources within the Business Plan to undertake projects such as regeneration be noted;**
- 4) Officers be authorised to incur expenditure as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, up to the limit approved by the Council and for the purposes detailed in the report;**
- 5) the Council approve the financial / budgetary implications, as detailed in the report; and**

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

**170. STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING POLICY - PRE-SCRUTINY**

As requested the Committee received a report on the Street Naming and Numbering Policy for pre-scrutiny.

Members were advised that the revised Street Naming and Numbering Policy contained many of the points that had been detailed in the previous version of the policy. However, additional information had been added to the policy including information about the legislative framework and standards for road signage.

The Council was committed in the policy to prioritising any suggestions from Feckenham Parish Council for the parish as long as the proposals met the approved naming criteria. In cases where the Parish Council's suggestions did not correspond with this naming criteria authority to make a decision on the proposals would be delegated to the Director of Planning, Regeneration, Housing and Regulatory Services in conjunction with the Head of Business Transformation. This would require a further addition to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

Local Councillors would continue to be consulted with regards to the selection of street names for streets within their wards. These names could be selected from the Candidate List for Street Names provided in the policy, though consideration would also be given to additional names proposed by Members when appropriate.

Members suggested that the artist Norman Neasom should be added to the list of well-known local "characters" detailed in the Candidate List for Street Names. Officers were also asked to review a number of signs located in the Borough where spelling mistakes and incorrect ward references had been identified by Members.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the revised policy on Street Naming and Numbering, as attached to the report at Appendix 1 and 2, be approved and adopted;**

# **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Tuesday, 14th February, 2012

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- 2) **authority be delegated to the Head of Business Transformation to carry out all functions relating to the addressing process, as now detailed in the revised Policy;**
- 3) **the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be updated accordingly; and**

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

## **171. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2012/13 - 2014/15**

Members received the Medium Terms Financial Plan 2012/13 – 2014/15 for comment. Reference was also made to the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday 31st January 2012, when a decision had been made on this subject.

The Committee was advised that a number of assumptions had been made in the report. This included the assumption that approximately £600,000 worth of savings would be made by the Council through transformation and the shared services programme and that fees and charges would be increased by an average of 2.5 per cent. Assumptions had also had to be made with regards to the level of government grant that would be allocated to the Council.

A number of revenue and capital bids, as detailed in the report, had been approved by the Executive Committee on 31st January 2012. Two further revenue bids had been approved as high priorities during the meeting. This included the proposal from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the revenue bid for an Energy Advisor, jointly employed by Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council, to be supported as a high priority.

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

## **172. PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR SERVICES WITHIN THE REMIT OF THE PORTFOLIO FOR PLANNING, REGENERATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

The Committee proposed the following list of questions for the consideration of the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development and Local Transport:

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- 1) What is elected Members' involvement in the governance arrangements of the North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit?
- 2) What actions have been taken and what plans are in place to grow the night-time economy in Redditch?
- 3) How successful has the North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit been in creating new jobs in Redditch? What arrangements are in place to measure its effectiveness?
- 4) The written report for your portfolio, which was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14th February, stated that "Worcestershire County Council funding cuts to bus services managed well and impact minimised in Redditch" (p2)
  - a) In this context what is your view of the recent removal of the 57 and 58 bus services to the Alexandra Hospital?
  - b) What is being done to alleviate inconvenience to local residents?
- 5) To what extent is the Portfolio Holder involved in assessing new commercial planning applications that could help create new jobs in Redditch?
- 6) What plans are in place to continue and develop the *Organised Work Experience Awards* programme in Redditch?
- 7) What is being done to fill empty retail units and office spaces in the Borough?

## **RESOLVED that**

- 1) **the questions detailed in the preamble above be addressed by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development and Local Transport during her annual report to the Committee on Tuesday 6th March 2012; and**
- 2) **the report be noted.**

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## 173. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER - MID-YEAR REPORT 2011/12

The Committee received the first Overview and Scrutiny recommendation monitoring report for 2011/12. The report detailed the recommendations that had been made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 24th May 2011 – 1st January 2012 and outlined the response that had been received from the Executive Committee as well as actions that had been taken to date to implement the approved recommendations.

Officers advised that by 1st January 2012 the Committee had proposed 20 recommendations. A total of 16 recommendations had been approved by the Executive Committee, three recommendations remained to be considered and one recommendation had been rejected. The three recommendations that remained to be considered were due to be presented for the consideration of the Executive Committee in a report on the subject of the private sector home support service on 21st February 2012.

The Council had already taken action to implement many of the approved recommendations, as detailed in the report. Further information, with regards to gritting and snow clearance and the Redditch war memorial would also be provided for the Committee's consideration in March and April 2012.

A report, detailing responses to the Committee's recommendations between 1st January – 1st May 2012 would be received at the beginning of the following municipal year.

### **RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

## 174. ACTIONS LIST

### **RESOLVED that**

**the Committee's Actions List be noted.**

## 175. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting that took place on 31st January 2012 for comment and considered the contents of the latest edition of the Forward Plan.



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Members noted that a report on the subject of the Housing Allocations Policy review was scheduled to be presented for the Executive Committee's consideration in due course. Due to the significance of this policy to local tenants Members agreed that the report would be suitable for detailed pre-scrutiny.

## RESOLVED that

- 1) **the Housing Allocations Policy – Review be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for pre-scrutiny; and**
- 2) **the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday 31st January 2012 be noted.**

### 176. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

There were no draft scoping documents for consideration.

### 177. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

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

- a) Access for Disabled People – Chair, Councillor Alan Mason

Members were advised that the group had agreed an initial list of proposals during a meeting in January 2012. Officers had been consulted with regards to the financial and legal implications of each of the group's proposals. Based on the feedback received from Officers Members would be agreeing their final list of recommendations at the following meeting of the group.

- b) Improving Recycling – Chair, Councillor Gay Hopkins

Councillor Hopkins advised the Committee that the group was continuing to gather evidence. The majority of Members had accompanied staff undertaking green bin collections in the town. The group was considering options on how the Council could most effectively engage non-English speaking residents on recycling. These included plans for visiting local mosques to promote the value of recycling amongst the Islamic community in the Borough.

The group had discovered that the performance of the street sweeping teams in Redditch was excellent, though this

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performance was not reflected in the local authority's statistics for recycling. A letter was due to be sent to Worcestershire County Council to formally request that Redditch be prioritised for the recycling of mechanical sweeper arisings.

c) Promoting Sporting Participation – Chair, Councillor Luke Stephens

The group had convened a meeting to discuss the possibility of introducing a centralised sport website for Redditch. Relevant senior Officers representing Leisure Services and the Communications team were due to be interviewed to discuss this idea further.

d) Youth Services Provision – Chair, Councillor Simon Chalk

Councillor Chalk explained that the group had met on 26th January 2012 to agree a list of initial proposals. The Student Council, which had been consulted over these initial proposals, had been in favour of the majority of the group's suggestions. Officers had also been consulted regarding the financial and legal implications of the group's proposals. Based on the feedback received by Members the group would make a decision about their final list of recommendations.

**RESOLVED that**

**the update reports be noted.**

**178. HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Councillor Quinney provided an update on the work of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) as Redditch Borough Council's representative.

Members were advised that the HOSC had recently received information about the current performance of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust. The trust was performing well in relation to a number of targets, including the 18 week waiting times and in relation to MRSA infection rates. Changes were also occurring including the approval of a new radiotherapy centre, the opening of a new audiology centre, the provision of extra support to patients in the early stages of pregnancy and the launch of the Drive to Free Up, which aimed to help nurses cease spending time producing unnecessary paperwork. In addition a new contract had been awarded to the Working Well Centre to provide occupational health

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support the Hereford and Worcester Fire Service over the following three years.

A number of issues continued to be monitored by the HOSC. This included the proposed changes to ambulance services in the county and the review of the appropriate location for the Stroke Unit in Worcestershire. The HOSC would also be responding to the joint services review on an ongoing basis.

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

**179. REFERRALS**

There were no referrals.

**180. WORK PROGRAMME**

Members were advised that Councillor Luke Stephens had asked to present a report at the following meeting of the Committee detailing the outcomes of the Centre for Public Scrutiny's (CfPS) Parliamentary Seminar Series training and the implications, if any, for scrutiny in Redditch.

**RESOLVED that**

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

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and closed at 8.10 pm



## SHARED SERVICES BOARD

26th January 2012 at 5.30pm

### COMMITTEE ROOM 2, TOWN HALL, REDDITCH

**Present:** Councillors Carole Gandy (Chair), Michael Braley, Malcolm Hall and Bill Hartnett (Redditch Borough Council).

Councillors Margaret Sherrey, Mark Bullivant (substitute for Cllr Hollingworth), Steve Colella and Mike Webb (Bromsgrove District Council).

**Also in attendance:**

Cllr Kit Taylor (Observer, BDC)

**Officers:** Kevin Dicks, Sue Hanley, Helen Mole and Deb Poole.

**Notes:** Steve Skinner.

1. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Cllr Roger Hollingworth (BDC).

2. **MINUTES**

the minutes of the previous meeting of the Board held on 10th November 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

In response to a Member's query (Cllr Colella), Mr Dicks agreed to provide a summary of posts created / posts lost as previously provided to Cllr Hartnett.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

These notes are an open public record of proceedings of the Board.

[Meetings of the Board are not subject to statutory Access to Information requirements; but information relating to individual post holders and/or employee relations matters would nonetheless not be revealed to the press or public.]

**4. PROGRESS REPORT**

The Board considered the latest report on the progress of Shared Services.

The Chief Executive took Members through the report and provided updates and explanation of specific points of detail as they arose.

Key points noted were as follows:

a) Shared Services Proposals - Close of Consultation

Mr Dicks reported on the outcomes of the recent major consultation exercise on the latest round of Shared Services proposals, which had closed in December. A large number of comments had been received, as detailed separately in the Progress Report where significant.

He understood all Trade Union concerns now to have been met.

b) Transformation Programme

Ms Poole took Members through the Transformation item, during consideration of which Members considered to what extent Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils were sharing their experience of sharing services and transforming to date. Mr Dicks advised Members how the Councils were currently working together with Stoke City Council and the Vanguard Academy, and further networking with other local authorities.

Members acknowledged that most other Councils were not as advanced as Redditch and Bromsgrove in this respect, but were keen, as well as sharing current good practice, not to lose sight of their own agendas first.

Mr Dicks added that Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils had learnt from their experience so far how current interventions had sometimes tended to generate a 'silo mentality'. It had been learnt that reviews needed to be more cross-cutting between departments, other authorities and other agencies. This learning would strongly influence the next reviews.

He advised that the crucial thing was to take into account full circumstances every time and that key local partners were on board to participate in this. Previous target-driven activity had prompted a very different approach, which now had to be entirely rethought.

Members agreed that although the 'target mentality' had brought problems, some degree of measurement was still required to help Members keep track of progress and the benefits of shared services and transformation.

Mr Dicks responded that new measures being developed ought to be more effective than the previous indicators.

c) 'Live' Shared Services – Policy, Performance and Partnerships

Mr Dicks explained current arrangements and redistribution of responsibilities, following the departure of the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships.

This provided the opportunity for further realignments, which would be cost neutral to both Councils.

Further information would be provided to Members by the time of the next Board meeting.

d) 'Live' Shared Services – Internal Audit

Members queried the view that the Shared Internal Audit Service was now fully operational ('Green' in the traffic light system), a point picked up earlier by the Redditch Audit and Governance Committee.

It was **AGREED this service should be recategorised as 'Amber'**.

e) 'Live' Shared Services – Property Services

Members similarly queried whether the Shared Property Service presently warranted a 'Green' grading.

It was **AGREED this service should be recategorised as 'Amber'**.

f) Financial Reports

Whilst accepting that the information it contained was technically correct, Members considered the Summary Financial Position appendix a little hard to follow. They therefore asked for a review of the presentation of financial information before the next report.

It was **AGREED that**

**progress to date be noted, as detailed in the Progress report, subject to Members' comments and any specific further actions, as recorded above.**

5. **NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Board would be held on 8th March 2012 at the Bromsgrove DC Conference Room commencing at 5.30 pm, as previously scheduled.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.40 pm.





**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

13th March 2012

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

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Michael Braley, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

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

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that**

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

**3. UPDATES****A. ADVISORY PANELS**

	<b><u>Meeting :</u></b>	<b><u>Lead Members / Officers :</u></b> (Executive Members shown <u>underlined</u> )	<b><u>Position :</u></b> (Oral updates to be provided at the meeting by Lead Members or Officers, if no written update is available.)
1.	Climate Change Advisory Panel	Chair: <u>Cllr B Clayton</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr Hopkins  Kevin Dicks / Ceridwen John	Last meeting – 7th February 2012.
2.	Economic Advisory Panel	Chair: <u>Cllr Pearce</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr Bush  John Staniland / Georgina Harris	Next Meeting – 18th June 2012.

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3.	Housing Advisory Panel	Chair: <u>Cllr B Clayton</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr Brazier Liz Tompkin	Next meeting – 22nd March 2012.
4.	Planning Advisory Panel	Chair: <u>Cllr Pearce</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr R Hill John Staniland / Ruth Bamford	Next meeting – 20th March 2012

**B. OTHER MEETINGS**

5.	Constitutional Review Working Party	Chair: <u>Cllr Gandy</u> / Vice Chair: Cllr Braley Steve Skinner	Last meeting – 27th February 2012
6.	Member Support Steering Group	Chair: Cllr <u>Brunner</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr Braley Steve Skinner / Trish Buckley	Last meeting – 27th October 2011
7.	Grants Panel	Chair: Cllr <u>Chance</u> / Vice Chair: Cllr Braley Angie Heighway	Last meeting – 26th January 2012
8.	Procurement Group	Chair: Cllr <u>Braley</u> / Vice-Chair: Cllr Anderson Jayne Pickering / Teresa Kristunas	Last meeting – 8th September 2011.
9.	Independent Remuneration Panel	Chair: <u>Mr R Key</u> /  Sheena Jones (WDC) / Trish Buckley	Last meeting – 10th November 2011.

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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**22. APPENDICES**

None.

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

13th March 2012

**ACTION MONITORING**

<b>Portfolio Holder(s) / Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Action requested</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>27th January 2010</b>		
<b>Cllr Gandy / R Dunne</b>	<b>Single Equalities Scheme</b>  Members requested that a report/action plan be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee or Council detailing what the Council, as Community Leader, expected to receive in terms of education provision for the Borough and its children and young people.	Officers to update at future meeting. The LSP action plan in respect of this issue is under consideration at present. The Single Equalities Scheme itself is no longer extant.
<b>21st May 2011</b>		
<b>M Braley / T Kristunas</b>	<b>Review of Lease - 21 and 21a Salters Lane</b>  Officers to prepare a report on a policy regarding the granting of concessionary rents.	Policy to be submitted to meeting of the Committee on 3 April 2012.
<b>13th September 2011</b>		
<b>M Braley / T Kristunas</b>	<b>Review of Lease - Unit 1, Matchborough Centre</b>  Alongside consideration of the terms of the lease Members requested that a policy be developed to determine appropriate rents for voluntary sector organisations.	Policy to be submitted to meeting of the Committee on 3 April 2012.

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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<b>6th December 2011</b>		
<b>M Braley / T Kristunas</b>	<b>Sickness Absence Performance and Health</b>  Housing and Environmental services to have targets set to allow comparison with similar businesses in the private sector.	It is intended that targets will be set for Housing and Environmental Services for the coming financial year.
<b>20th February 2012</b>		
<b>M Braley / S Skinner</b>	<b>Independent Remuneration Panel for Worcestershire District Councils - Annual Report and Recommendations for 2012-13</b>  Member Support Steering Group to consider the apportionment of Special Responsibility Allowances to determine whether they are set at the appropriate levels and targeted at the appropriate posts.	
<b>21st February 2012</b>		
<b>B Clayton / M Braley / L Tompkin / T Kristunas</b>	<b>Housing Revenue Account - Outcome of Review</b>  Officers bring forward a report outlining the proposals for how this Council might build council houses on some of the land owned by the Council and already declared surplus.	

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<b>M Braley/ D Poole / J Knott</b>	<b>Street Naming Policy – Review</b>  Officers were asked to notify Ward Members of any post code changes made by Royal Mail within their Wards.	An ongoing request to Officers.
<b><u>Note:</u></b>	<i>No further debate should be held on the above matters or substantive decisions taken, without further report OR unless urgency requirements are met.</i>	Report period: 27/01/10 to 21/02/12





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