



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

No Direct Ward Relevance

6th November 2012

APPENDIX 1

PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORTS: QUESTIONS AND SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION WITH COUNCILLOR DEBBIE TAYLOR, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The following questions have been suggested by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These questions will be posed to Councillor Debbie Taylor, Portfolio Holder for Local Environment and Health at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on Tuesday 6th November 2012.

1) Please could you outline what you consider to be:

a) The successes within the remit of your Portfolio?

The following areas have been successes:

- i) Joint procurement of two new refuse vehicles with Bromsgrove District Council.
- ii) Achieving gold in the 2012 Britain in Bloom competition. Staff worked hard to deliver a successful display despite the poor weather conditions.
- iii) Green flag awards for the parks in Redditch.
- iv) Progress had been made in relation to addressing climate change.
- v) Allotment occupancy rates have increased. Allotments provide people with an affordable source of food at a time when food is expensive.

b) Areas of concern within the remit of your Portfolio?

Funding cuts

As all Members will be aware over the last two years Redditch BC has seen a reduction in its Central Govt grant funding. So far these cuts have been absorbed and the public have seen no reduction in the services that directly impact on them e.g. Waste, Landscape, Street Cleansing, Parks, etc. However, the economic situation nationally is still not good and it is very likely that the government will impose further cuts to council funding and therefore authority will have to make further cuts.

Whilst we anticipate that the transformation process will help us deal with the known reductions in funding to maintain services by looking at more efficient and effective methods of service delivery, the unknown nature regarding size and scale of any other cuts that may be required are a real worry with regard to how they might impact on service delivery.

Green Deal

Will the Green Deal deliver what is needed with regard to improving energy efficiency and contribute to reductions in climate change impacts?

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The Government has launched the Green Deal. However, information is coming out slowly from government regarding the details, which means that we still have a limited understanding of how this will impact on the Council, partners and our residents.

How this will actually work in terms of how the Council and its partners will be involved in delivery, funding, etc. is being worked up in partnership with the County Council and other district Councils. The key unknown and risk is what the take up will be from residents for what effectively will be a loan to improve the energy efficiency of homes (that will be attached to a property rather than an individual) and paid back via the fuel bill, is a major unknown.

The Hospital remains an area of concern with the possible downgrading of the Alexandra Hospital. The campaign has been good at raising awareness. The options remain to be announced. Once they have been announced a response will be provided.

(Within your answer please could you refer to the impact of recent budget cuts on resurfacing of footpaths in the Borough).

Answer:

- a) The majority of footpaths in Redditch are maintained by Worcestershire County Council.
- b) There are no immediate areas of concern relating to the footpaths in MSP, as Officers have focussed on the main two areas and resolved the issues that lead to the budget bid being submitted. Officers will continue to monitor the situation and should any future issues present themselves, this will be addressed through the normal Council procedures/policies.

2) **Why has there been an under spend on the budget for the Solar PV project? What will the surplus funds remaining be spent on?**

Answer:

Although we are still negotiating the final invoices, subject to the successful completion of the final installation in October 2012, there will be an underspend of the total £275,000 HRA budget allocated for installation of solar PV panels on sheltered housing sites of around **£90,000**. The reason for the underspend was that a number of prospective housing sites were simply unsuitable for the installation of PV panels, for example having north facing roofs, or being heavily shaded by oak trees, e.g. at the Evesham Road site. A full report on the outcomes of the PV panels including which sites were included will come through to the Climate Change Advisory Panel in due course and monitoring of payback times and performance will also be included on the agenda on a regular basis.

Officers advise that the surplus funds would ideally be used on other renewable systems, although a full investigation into this has yet to begin. Mainly the hold up is due to a delay in the Government's announcement of the new Renewable Heat Incentive (similar to the feed in tariff scheme for electricity, but for heating). Once this is announced, we will be able to work

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out whether or not there is a sensible business case to invest in renewable heating on our housing sites e.g. to supplement the costs of install a biomass boiler at one of the larger sheltered housing sites when it's communal gas boiler is due for replacement.

- 3) **The written report for your portfolio stated that “progress has been made on the transfer of assets under Section 106 agreement at Brockhill. The initial transfer of two areas that contain the majority of POS and drainage features will lead to the ‘unlocking’ of other transfer funds How long will it take to transfer these assets?**

Answer:

Last week the Council completed the transfer of Area 1 (the main area of open space at Brockhill)) from Persimmon. This means we can now liaise with the County Council as the Highway authority and Severn Trent Water to get the associated roads and sewers adopted by them.

We will then concentrate on the remaining but smaller areas of open space on the development to resolve outstanding issues which include drainage problems and encroachment by local residents, so that those areas can be adopted. Some roads and sewers will remain unadopted until this is achieved.

We appreciate that residents and Members believe that progress has been slow, but unfortunately, for a variety of reasons this has proved to be a complex process which takes time to resolve.

- 4) **What progress has been made on transformation of the services within your remit and what impact are you anticipating transformation will have on those services?**

Answer:

Originally, a cross section of officers and operatives from the waste collection crews at both Council's were brought together to form a team to look at transformation. The intention for the transformation team was to focus on the Waste Management side of Environmental Services. It was planned that the route optimisation project would be included in the transformation programme in order to rationalise and improve the efficiency of the waste collection rounds in both Redditch and Bromsgrove. However, very quickly it became clear to the team that the waste services being provided by the department were only a small part of many intrinsically linked jobs and services that impact on the community. This led to the realisation that the scope of the transformation team needed to be expanded to include Street Cleansing and Landscape/Grounds Maintenance in order to look at and understand the 'bigger picture'. The team now intends to transform all Environmental Services together – with Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance joining the team in the near future.

The team has also adopted broader 'strategic' purposes rather than developing the operational purposes identified at the beginning of scoping. In doing so the team now have a much wider outlook on the services provided and the environments they manage. More importantly it has provided them with a broader outlook as to how they could interact with

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other services provided by the authorities and partners. To this end officers from Leisure Services, Housing and from the County Council and other partner organisations will be either asked to join the transformation team or be pulled in when their input is required.

The team have been looking at the types, frequencies and sources of demand; gathering and cleansing data to reflect true demand, identifying current service standards, identifying system conditions and good and bad practices. They have also been looking at reactive demand, value and failure demand, identifying proactive work types and synergies within services.

Route optimisation has been identified as the first priority and therefore the transformation team is being split to allow delivery of this key project that will realise efficiencies in the collection of waste across the Borough the other part of the team will concentrate the wider transformation of Environmental Services, including customer interaction and data capture.

At this stage it is not possible to say exactly how transformation will change the way that service are delivered but I would hope that they are more consistent, customer focused and efficient

5) How many trees is Redditch Borough Council due to plant in the next twelve months – two years?

Answer:

422 ordered by the in-house team;
420 confirmed to be donated by the Woodland Trust.

6) As Redditch Borough Council's representative on the Health and Wellbeing Board how do you report back to Council?

Answer:

I am a member of the Redditch Health and Well Being Group, which is a sub-group of the Redditch Partnership. The Chair of this Group, Hilary Sharpe (Public Health), who chairs the H&W Group meeting, reports back up to the Partnership Board which Councillors Bill Hartnett, Greg Chance and Carole Gandy all sit on so they would know what is happening through this mechanism. The minutes of each Partnership Board meeting are published on the RBC webpage (under the Partnership section) so Members can see updates on health that way. Councillor Hartnett as Chair of the Partnership also gives a yearly round up of Redditch Partnership activities at full Council so that all Councillors have some awareness of the Partnership's activities. In addition, the Council's Partnership Manager, Helen Broughton, attends this Committee every six months to provide an update on partnership activities, including the Health and Well Being Action Plan.

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- 7) **Which organisations have been identified to deliver healthy eating and cookery sessions?**

Answer:

Cooking skills, cooking facilities and the ability and confidence to prepare healthier foods are all barriers to healthy eating, particularly for those on low incomes. Through Clinical Commissioning Group funding a healthy Cookery project is being established. A programme of healthy eating and cooking training sessions are planned to train up local organisations across the Borough to deliver these sessions locally. This will include the Redditch Children's Centres, the Health Trainers, the Winning Winyates Project and voluntary organisations.

- 8) **LED lighting was introduced at the Palace Theatre relatively recently. What plans, if any, are there to extend the provision of LED lighting to other Council properties in order to reduce the Council's carbon footprint?**

Answer:

As it happens, the Council is about to install further LED lighting within the auditorium of the Palace Theatre, as the bulbs are now much more affordable and also have dimming versions, which were not available when the bar and corridor areas of the Palace were upgraded. The payback of the auditorium light bulbs is less than 2 years.

There is scope to undertake further works, for example in balcony and stairwell lights at some of our housing sites. However, a full piece of work needs to be undertaken on the existing projects to identify which forms of lighting upgrades are the most efficient/profitable to evidence further investments. All of the 'low hanging fruit' options have already been completed and paybacks are due to finish in September 2014. At this point, the revolving spend to save fund will be able to pay for further works without affecting existing budgets.

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NB Note draft revision /Update – Page 2. S

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL GUIDE TO / FOR PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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