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FOREWORD BY THE CHAIR

I am very pleased to present the annual report for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. I would also like to thank Councillor Tom Baker-Price for his work in chairing the Committee at the start of the municipal year. This report provides an account of the work that the Committee has undertaken during the last twelve months and highlights progress that has been made.

We received a number of informative presentations this year including on Economic Development, the Place Partnership and several updates from the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sustainability and Transformation team.

The Committee has continued to scrutinise the Council's budget through the Budget Scrutiny Working Group to examine and understand better the finances of the Council. The Performance Scrutiny Working Group has also carried out some valuable work. Both of these working groups have proved particularly useful in helping members to understand the council and its workings better and in so doing to make recommendations to Council which have proved helpful.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has worked to ensure that Council services are fit for purpose and enhance the wellbeing of our residents. It has also embarked on a number of Task Group and Short Sharp reviews. These have included one on civil contingencies and another on homelessness.

Our first joint scrutiny group with Bromsgrove on the Staff Survey was a successful project which all members felt was a worthwhile exercise in joint working between the two sets of councillors.

We have been kept updated on the West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee by Cllr Nina Wood-Ford, who has also reported back to the Committee on developments of the Health Overview and Scrutiny panel at the County Council.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all my fellow Committee Members for the hard work, support and enthusiasm that they have shown. I would particularly like to thank Councillor Gay Hopkins for her contributions and support over the years as Vice Chair of the Committee. I am also very appreciative of the hard work of Officers who support the work of the Committee, and would like to thank our lead support officers, Jess Bayley and Amanda Scarce, for the excellent work they have produced.



**Councillor Jane Potter,
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Redditch Borough Council**

INTRODUCTION

There is an annual requirement for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to produce a report outlining its work and achievements during the previous year. The report contains information about the reviews that have been undertaken by Task Groups, Short Sharp Review Groups, and the work of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel. The report also provides an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of joint scrutiny Committees to which Redditch Members have been appointed.

This year scrutiny Members have continued to undertake more detailed scrutiny of the Council's budget and service performance through the work of the Budget Scrutiny and Performance Scrutiny Working Groups. The outcomes of these groups' work are detailed in the report below.

This report has been produced by Senior Democratic Services Officer (Redditch) with help from the Democratic Services Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and the remaining eight Members.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF SCRUTINY

Members at Redditch Borough Council aim to ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny process complies with the four key principles of scrutiny identified by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS), the organisation set up to promote effective scrutiny in local government. The four key principles of effective scrutiny are:

- to provide a critical friend challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers;
- to enable the voice and concerns of the public and its communities to be heard;
- for scrutiny to be carried out by independent minded governors who lead and own the scrutiny process; and
- to drive improvement in public services.

MEMBERSHIP GALLERY

The following Councillors have served as members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee this year.



Councillor Jane Potter
Chair of the Committee



Councillor Gay Hopkins
Vice Chair



Councillor
Matthew Dormer



Councillor
Andy Fry



Councillor
Pattie Hill



Councillor
Gareth Prosser



Councillor
Paul Swansborough



Councillor
Jenny Wheeler



Councillor
Nina Wood-Ford

A SNAPSHOT OF REPORTS / PRESENTATIONS RECEIVED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

During the course of the year the Committee received a number of reports and presentations on a variety of subjects. Further details about the reasons why issues were selected for scrutiny and the outcomes of the scrutiny process are detailed below.

Seasonal Garden Waste Collection

In September the Head of Environmental Services presented a report outlining the Council's plans to introduce a garden waste collection service and Members were able to consider the proposals carrying out their pre-scrutiny function. The report set out details of the operation of the proposed new service including costs and projected revenue. Officers reported that Redditch had the lowest rate for composting in the county at 2.18% and that the introduction of a garden waste service should divert some waste away from the normal domestic collection. Provision of this service without significant capital outlay would be achieved by entering into an agreement with Bromsgrove District Council for their existing garden waste collection service covering Bromsgrove properties to be extended to Redditch.

Members explored a number of issues relating to the new service including likely levels of take up, options for extra brown bins to be provided, the proposed charging rates and other methods that could be used to counter the very low composting rates. At the end of the pre-scrutiny process Members endorsed the proposals in respect of this matter from officers, which were subsequently endorsed by the Executive Committee.

Economic Development

In December the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) gave a presentation on the economic outlook for Redditch and the various options to promote growth and economic prosperity that were being pursued by NWEDR on behalf of the Council. Members learnt that the economy in Redditch is linked to that of Birmingham and challenges include providing more job opportunities in the Borough for skilled workers, improving the image of Redditch as an employment area and being able to re-develop existing industrial sites to attract new employers.

Members were interested to hear more about the links of the Council with the two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPS - Greater Birmingham and Solihull and Worcestershire) and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and what could be done through membership of these organisations to enhance the economic offer either through grant funding or opportunities to promote the area. Two projects being actively pursued were the option for Redditch to become a Business Improvement District and use funds raised from this for local projects, and the One Public Estate project, which would see the Council collaborate with other local public sector land owners to improve the town centre.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sustainability and Transformation Plan

In 2017/18 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee continued to receive updates in respect of progress with the delivery of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP). This had first been identified as a suitable topic for scrutiny at an Overview and Scrutiny training session in 2016 and

representatives of Worcestershire Health and Care Trust and Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust (WAHT) had attended meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide Members with an update on the requirements for the plans and areas of local interest.

In July 2017 the Committee received an update on the STP which highlighted the progress that had been made with completing the plan and consulting with local stakeholders about implementation. A further update was subsequently provided in January 2018 when Members learned that the STP had now formed the basis of a formal partnership in the local area. Key staff had been recruited to co-ordinate communications as well as project delivery. Specific initiatives had also been established, including work on a Local Maternity Systems Plan.

Members learned that Neighbourhood Teams had been appointed across Herefordshire and Worcestershire to help address local health issues in line with the STP's objectives. This includes two Neighbourhood Teams in Redditch and Members are keen to invite representatives of these local teams to attend future meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss the impact of the STP.

Due to the significance of health services to all residents the Committee extended an invitation to every Member to attend meetings when these presentations were delivered. A further update on the Herefordshire and Worcestershire STP is scheduled for the consideration of the Committee later in 2018.

Committee level Budget Scrutiny

Despite the work of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group Members agreed that, to ensure transparency, a number of key budget items should continue to be considered at meetings of the parent Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Primarily this was conducted via the pre-scrutiny process, whereby Members considered reports on various aspects of the Council's budget prior to a decision being taken by the Executive Committee. The following items were considered in this manner:

- Fees and Charges 2018/19
- Housing Revenue Account 2018/19
- Medium Term Financial Plan 2018/19 – 2021/22
- Local Discretionary Relief Scheme

A number of recommendations were proposed through the pre-scrutiny process and the majority of these were approved.

Place Partnership

During the year the Committee received a presentation from the Managing Director of the Place Partnership. This presentation focused on the work of the partnership and the services that it provided on behalf of the Council. Members learned about the origins of the Place Partnership and the progress that had been achieved in delivering services in recent years. The Committee was also advised that the partnership had started to achieve savings for partners in the second full year of its operation.

Members were informed about a number of high profile projects that the partnership had been involved in delivering in the local area. This included Hindlip Park and Evesham

Fire Station. Members were interested to note that the partnership had been involved in work on the One Public Estate initiative, which will have implications for regeneration in Redditch town centre. It should be noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is scheduled to pre-scrutinise a report in respect of the One Public Estate at a meeting on 1st March after this report will have been published.

Redditch Local Strategic Partnership

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an annual update in respect of the work of the Redditch Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in June 2017. Members learned that the Redditch Partnership Executive Group (RPEG) was supported by the work of various theme groups; the Redditch Community Wellbeing Trust, the Positive Activities Sub-Group and the Economic Development Theme Group. The Committee was also informed that the partnership had four key priorities; health inequalities, education attainment, the Redditch economy and leading transformational change of public services in the local area.

Members welcomed news that a local directory of services was in the process of being developed which would help to signpost interested parties to appropriate service providers in the local area. This directory would be accessible through the Council's website and available for external organisations to utilise.

Leisure Service Provision – Pre-Scrutiny

Following scrutiny of leisure services by a short sharp review group in 2015 and pre-scrutiny of the Council Plan and Leisure intervention work earlier in 2017 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to pre-scrutinise proposals in respect of the future delivery of Leisure and Cultural Services in October 2017. A presentation, setting out the background to an independent review of the Council's leisure and cultural services, was delivered for Members' consideration. As much of the information was commercially sensitive the Committee did need to consider many details in exempt session.

Various different options were discussed in respect of the most appropriate approach for the Council to adopt in future to deliver Leisure and Cultural Services. This included considering the potential for services to continue to be delivered in house, to be delivered by an external trust, which had been the option favoured by the scrutiny short sharp review group in 2015, to be outsourced to a private company or to be delivered by a new local authority trading company (LATC). Based on the information provided the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that the Council should progress with the LATC model. This model was endorsed by the Executive Committee in October 2017. It should be noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is scheduled to pre-scrutinise the business case for the Leisure and Cultural Services LATC at a meeting on 1st March 2018 after this report will have been published.

Recommendation Tracking

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an update on progress that had been received in respect of scrutiny recommendations in June 2017. It is anticipated that a further update monitoring progress with implementation of approved scrutiny recommendations will be presented for Members' consideration at the first meeting of the Committee in 2018/19.

CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY

Membership: Councillors Matthew Dormer (Chair), Pattie Hill, Gareth Prosser, Paul Swansborough and Nina Wood-Ford.

The Police and Justice Act 2006 required every local authority in England and Wales from April 2009 to have a designated Committee with responsibility for scrutinising the work of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CRDP), often referred to as a Community Safety Partnership. Under this legislation Scrutiny Committees are only permitted to hold the partnership as a whole to account not individual partner organisations. The Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel, established in 2010 as a Sub-Committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, has been allocated responsibility for scrutinising the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership, which covers the Redditch area.

The first meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel in 2017/18 took place on 27th September 2017. During this meeting Members received an update on the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership in the preceding six months. Particular attention was given to issues surrounding anti-social behavior (ASB) in the Borough and an analysis of the areas where this was the most prevalent. Members also received a presentation about preventing violent extremism and the duties placed on local authorities in this regard under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

The Panel is due to meet again in March 2018.

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Councillor Nina Wood-Ford was the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) in 2017/18. District and Borough Councils are invited to appoint representatives to the HOSC to ensure that the interests of the district in relation to health are taken into account. Councillor Wood-Ford provides regular updates on the work of HOSC for the consideration of the Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She can also report any items suggested for the consideration of HOSC on behalf of Redditch Members.

During the year Councillor Wood-Ford has advised the Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the outcomes of discussions of the following topics at meetings of HOSC:

- Access to primary care including treatment from GPs and alternative options such use of pharmacists and upskilling of nursing staff.
- Changes to commissioning policies affecting hip and knee replacement surgery across Worcestershire.
- The Care Quality Commission rating of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust as being inadequate (July 2017) and the subsequent review by the Care Quality Commission in January 2018;
- Discussions with the newly appointed Chairman and Chief Executive of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust;
- Transport issues and the provision of bus services between Worcester Royal Infirmary and Redditch;

- Additional funding of £29m to be spent improving Worcester Royal Infirmary and some of the specific projects that this would fund; and
- The rate of nursing vacancies affecting health services in Worcestershire.

WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

For the municipal year 2017/18 Councillor Nina Wood-Ford was appointed as the Redditch Borough Council representative on the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee which had been established in 2016/17.

Councillor Wood-Ford has reported that the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee has discussed the following topics at recent meetings:

- A report on data from the authority's performance dashboard and performance trends. Subjects such as air quality in the region and the new data protection regulations due to come into force in 2018 had also been discussed alongside issues relating to economic growth.
- Plans to increase the number of apprenticeships within the region from approximately 42,000 at present to 84,000 by 2030.
- That the WMCA had been given permission to recruit new staff to support the authority's Committees and that it was anticipated that this would have a positive impact on the capacity of bodies such as the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- That the Mental Health Task and Finish review, to which Councillor Wood-Ford had been appointed, was progressing well and investigating the potential for Housing First to be introduced across parts of the region. Officers assured Members that the Council was working closely with the WMCA in respect of Housing First as it was recognised that this had been highlighted in both the Mental Health Task Group and Homelessness Short Sharp Review Group's findings.
- That the Land Commission Task and Finish Group had identified challenges with meeting housing targets and had been investigating the potential for alternative providers to help supply social housing in the region. Modular homes had been raised as a possible option as part of these discussions.
- That the Skills and Productivity Task and Finish Group had been investigating skills pathways as well as how the region compared to other parts of the country.

WORKING GROUPS

This year working groups, informal sub-committees of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, have continued to review the Council's budget and service performance (as detailed on the Council's measures dashboard) respectively.

BUDGET SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

Membership: Councillors Jane Potter (Chair), Matthew Dormer, David Thain, Yvonne Smith and Jenny Wheeler.

The Budget Scrutiny Working Group was established in June 2016 to provide scrutiny Members with an opportunity to investigate budgetary matters in greater detail. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had taken a decision to introduce the working group in light of the challenging financial circumstances facing local government.

Meetings of the group were held every month in 2017/18. During these meetings Members considered a range of subjects including the following:

- The Council's Efficiency Statement and progress with the implementation of the aspirations detailed within this.
- Budget pressures for the Council and the action planned to achieve savings and / or generate further income for the Council.
- The Medium Term Financial plan. The group pre-scrutinised the content of the plan and raised a number of questions which helped to ensure that key details were addressed.
- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Again the group had pre-scrutinised the content of the HRA and had been keen to ensure that funding received by the Council through Right to Buy was reinvested in new properties.
- The Fees and Charges 2018/19. Members had pre-scrutinised the fees and charges and had raised a number of questions which addressed key issues that had been addressed before a final decision was taken by the Council.
- Council contracts, including the Council's contract procedure rules. These rules changed during the course of the year and Members welcomed amendments that strengthened these rules given the challenging financial circumstances facing local authorities.
- Quarterly Financial Monitoring Reports. The group scrutinised the figures provided in these reports and the trends these revealed in relation to the Council achieving savings.
- The Council's Housing Growth Programme and the potential benefits arising from this programme both in terms of housing provision to local residents and in respect of the Council's finances.

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

Membership: Councillors Matthew Dormer (Chair from September 2017), Natalie Brookes, David Thain, and Nina Wood-Ford. (Councillor Baker-Price was the Chair of this group up to September 2017).

Performance monitoring is a key aspect of good practice in the scrutiny process nationally. Redditch as the Council, in partnership with Bromsgrove District Council, has developed a bespoke approach to managing service performance. This involves focusing on performance measures for services, rather than targets, and progress in respect of these measures is logged on a corporate dashboard. The working group was established to monitor performance in relation to these measures on the dashboard as well as to identify any areas missing from the dashboard.

The group adopted a new approach to reviewing the dashboard this year. Members agreed to focus on the measures listed for each strategic purpose in turn and to identify any areas where further information might be helpful. In some cases Members identified examples of measures where the data had not been updated for some time and therefore the content was out of date. More commonly Officers were working to deadline to update the measures but there was a lag in the availability of data (for example in some cases the data is only available on a quarterly or an annual basis). The group has advised Officers on a number of occasions that where possible commentary should be provided to help clarify for the benefit of elected Members both trends for a particular measure as well as the reasons for any delays in providing further data

During the year Members considered a number of specific issues including the following:

- Provision of housing for care leavers and the extent to which measures could be introduced on the Council's dashboard to monitor provision of support to care leavers.
- Action that could be taken in relation to abandoned shopping trolleys and the extent to which that could be monitored through introducing relevant measures on the dashboard.
- The work of the Place teams and the measures adopted for these teams.
- Measures relating to rates of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime. Members learned that this data was obtained from partner organisations and there could be a lag in obtaining new information.
- Difficulties experienced by Members accessing the dashboard on their iPads. Members learned that visitor Wifi services had caused some difficulties, though there was also a password issue which was identified and resolved mid-year.
- The speed with which Members could navigate the dashboard on their iPads. A new tab was introduced during the year which enabled Members to negotiate the dashboard more quickly.
- Rent arrears and the action taken by the Council to improve collection rates.
- Measures relating to management of the Council's business centres and action that is being taken to encourage businesses to utilise available units.

In October 2017 the Member Support Steering Group noted that all Members would find the content of the measures dashboard helpful. However, many Members have not had the same experience accessing the dashboard as members of the Performance Scrutiny Working Group. For this reason members of the working group have been nominated to act as Member Champions in respect of the dashboard.

TASK GROUPS AND SHORT, SHARP REVIEWS

The final reports of all completed investigations can be found on the Council's website within the Overview and Scrutiny section.

HOMELESSNESS SHORT SHARP REVIEW

**Membership: Councillors Nina Wood-Ford (Chair), Natalie Brookes, Anita Clayton, Pattie Hill and Antonia Pulsford.
Completed September 2017**

In March 2017 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a proposal to undertake a scrutiny review of homelessness in the Borough. The request was made following a campaign in the local community which had been launched by the Council with the aim of raising awareness as to the situation of homeless people and the ways by which they can be assisted. This was set up as a "short sharp review". Following a delay for the local and general elections, the review commenced in June 2017.

The terms of reference were :-

- To review relevant Council policies and practices in respect of people experiencing or at risk of becoming homeless.
- To establish the current levels of homelessness in Redditch.
- To clarify the potential causes of homelessness.
- To analyse the potential impact of homelessness on a person's physical and mental health.
- To assess the existing support available to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- To scrutinise the potential impact of the new Homelessness Reduction Bill on homelessness levels.
- To review the findings of any scrutiny Task Groups that have investigated homelessness in other parts of the country and to identify any actions arising from these reports which could be replicated in Redditch.
- To investigate any opportunities for organisations to work in partnership to support to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- To identify any additional action that the Council could take to address homelessness in the Borough.

During the review the group gathered evidence from a range of sources. Interviews were held with Council Officers in the Housing Options team, Private Sector Housing and Customer Access and Financial Support team, the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Mark Shurmer, and external representatives from St Basils, Redditch Night Stop, the YMCA, the CAB – Bromsgrove and Redditch, Radiate Redditch and the St Stephen's Church Food Bank. Members also revisited the findings in respect of a review of homelessness that had been conducted by the Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2006.

The group established that there are many forms of homelessness; rough sleepers, sofa surfers, living in temporary accommodation, and people who, through no fault of their own, fall on hard times such as due to divorce, losing a job and problems within families and stepfamilies. Other causes can be alcohol and substance abuse and mental health problems. Whilst provision for young people was found to be in place in the Borough, the

review identified what seemed to be a gap for single people with no dependents aged over 35.

The review resulted in five recommendations, including that Redditch Borough Council should participate in a pilot scheme for a project called Housing First subject to funding being provided for this by the WMCA. Redditch was felt to be a good location for testing this scheme which aims to provide housing and support workers for homeless persons with complex needs. Substance abuse was also identified by the review as a significant issue for homeless persons and Members have requested that the local charity providing support for addicts (Swanswell) be invited to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to talk about their work in the Borough.

As part of the review amendments to the Councils Housing Allocations Policy were considered and discussed; Members recommended that the changes to the policy should be approved.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TASK GROUP

Membership: Councillors Nina Wood-Ford (Chair), Andrew Fry, Gay Hopkins, David Thain and Jenny Wheeler
Completed: March 2017.

Although the group completed its initial remit and reported back with recommendations in March 2017, some further work was carried out over the summer of 2017. Specifically the group met again to consider issues around PSHE (Personal Social and Health Education in schools and the link between such lessons being provided to children and whether this in turn impacts positively on mental health outcomes.

Members were keen to explore this issue further and were disappointed that none of the schools they contacted responded to the questionnaire that was sent out.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has previously agreed that the group should reconvene in due course to consider the impact of their recommendations. At the time of writing a date for a meeting of the group to be arranged remained to be confirmed.

CIVIL CONTINGENCIES SHORT SHARP REVIEW

Membership: Councillors Gareth Prosser (Chair), Matthew Dormer and Yvonne Smith
Due to complete: March 2018.

In July 2017 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to set up a short sharp review to look at civil contingencies and emergency planning. The review was proposed a month after the fire that occurred at Grenfell Tower in London which unfortunately resulted in significant loss of life. The fire and the approach adopted by organisations in the aftermath of the fire had implications from an emergency planning perspective and highlighted the need for local authorities to have robust plans in place for dealing with emergency situations.

The review started to meet and gather evidence from September 2017 and the final report is due to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 1st March 2018.

The terms of reference for this review were:

- 1) To review how the Council complied with legislative requirements and the Council's procedures to keep relevant risks under review.
- 2) To scrutinise the plan(s) used by the Council in discharging its duty and to assess whether the Council ensures they are credible, relevant and effective during a crisis.
- 3) To ensure the Council is prepared and able to provide emergency advice.
- 4) To invite partner category 1 responders to comment on the Council's emergency plan to ensure best practice, prevent duplication and ensure residents receive an integrated response.
- 5) To seek best practice from the experiences of other local authorities nationally by reviewing relevant cases.

Through a combination of interviews and written feedback, the review received feedback from Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, West Mercia Police, West Midlands Ambulance Services NHS Foundation Trust, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust and Worcestershire County Council. The senior officers at the Council with responsibility for Emergency Planning were interviewed, together with the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager. The review also considered the legislative framework as set out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the arrangements in place in Worcestershire for multi-agency working to respond to civil emergencies and the local arrangements whereby support for emergency planning is provided through a shared service for the three North Worcestershire Authorities hosted by Wyre Forest District Council.

Overall the group was satisfied that the Council is well prepared to respond to any emergency situations the might unfortunately occur. At the time of writing this report the group are proposing to put forward two recommendations, that the Council's emergency plan should be reviewed on an annual basis, and that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should receive an annual update in respect of the Council's emergency planning arrangements. The Executive Committee will consider the group's report and findings on 6th March 2018.

JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INVESTIGATIONS

STAFF SURVEY JOINT SCRUTINY TASK GROUP

Review Host: Bromsgrove District Council

Redditch Borough Council representatives: Councillors Tom Baker-Price, Jane Potter (Vice Chair) and Jenny Wheeler.

Bromsgrove District Council representatives: Councillors Steve Colella (Chair), Caroline Spencer and Shirley Webb.

Completed: October 2017

As set out in the 2016/2017 annual report, Members agreed in October 2016 to set up a joint scrutiny task group with Members of Bromsgrove District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Board, to consider the outcomes of the Councils' staff surveys conducted in 2013 and 2016. This joint approach was considered appropriate in light of the fact that many staff work in services shared across the two Councils. This was the first Joint Task Group involving these two authorities only.

Concerns arising from the poor staff response rate to the two surveys inspired this review. The Task Group was allocated the following terms of reference:-

- To consider how to increase the response rates in future.
- To consider the merits of the questions both in terms of desired outputs and number of questions.
- To establish reasons for the low response rates.
- To benchmark the survey with other similar organisations
- To make recommendations to the Bromsgrove Overview and Scrutiny Board and Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Over a series of meetings between November 2016 and June 2017 the Task Group carried out a detailed review of the outcome of the staff surveys and the measures being put in place by officers to address the poor response rate and associated issues. Interviews took place with senior officers including the Head of Business Transformation, and Organisational Development, the Human Resources and Development Manager and the Chief Executive.

The final recommendations from the Task Group were considered at the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26th October 2017. The Task Group made four recommendations namely:

- 1) That a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny function be appointed to the role of Leader Councillor for Supporting Staff;
- 2) That a quarterly update on the Programme Board's Action Plan be received by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- 3) That the Performance Scrutiny (RBC) and Measures Dashboard (BDS) Working Groups' terms of reference be updated to include an area covering performance management processes, performance targets and objective setting across both authorities;

- 4) That the Lead Councillor for Supporting Staff and the relevant Portfolio Holder from each Council assist in the formulation of all future staff surveys and attend staff briefings.

The first 3 recommendations were adopted and the fourth one was recommended to the Executive. However, after debating the issue at its meeting on 31st October 2017 the Executive decided not to adopt recommendation 4.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CONTACT DETAILS

For additional copies of this report, or to find out more about Overview and Scrutiny at Redditch Borough Council, please contact:

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Further Information

Further information about the Overview and Scrutiny process at Redditch Borough Council can also be found on the Council's dedicated web pages. To access these web pages please use the web address attached here:

<http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/council/the-council/overview-and-scrutiny.aspx>