

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2018 – 2019

Scrutiny
Making a difference



REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

*making
a
difference*

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

CONTENTS

TITLE	PAGE NO.
CHAIR'S FOREWORD	3
INTRODUCTION	4
THE ROLE OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY	4
MEMBERSHIP	5
ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES DURING 2018/19	6
CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY PANEL	14
TASK GROUPS AND SHORT SHARP REVIEWS	15
WORKING GROUPS	16
EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES	18
CONCLUSION	19
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PRIORITISATION TOOL APPENDIX A	20
SCRUTINY PROPOSAL FORM – APPENDIX B	21

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

Over the last year it has been a privilege and a pleasure to be the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It has been an especially good year as most of the recommendations and suggestions given to the Executive Committee have been cross-party. This is significant in a number of different ways; the importance of cross-party decision-making when representing the community as a whole, decisions taken by the Executive Committee that have followed our recommendations have had added strength due to cross-party approval, and finally it shows that by working together in partnership we can move things forward as a Council.

It is noted that there have been no specific Task Groups or Short Sharp reviews established during the year, though the scrutiny of support for care leavers was completed in this municipal year. However, we have had in-depth group discussions at meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Frequently we discussed individual items put forward by the whole Committee and raised issues that mattered to the community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee who have contributed their time and energy to make this a successful year for Overview and Scrutiny.



**Councillor Joe Baker, Chair of
the Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

This report outlines the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Redditch Borough Council during 2018 – 2019.

THE ROLE OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The role of overview and scrutiny is an important one in the Council's governance structure, in providing challenge and driving improvement. It is often referred to as the "critical friend" of the Council and can review any issues of concern or real interest to local residents.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a number of roles within the Council. These include:

- Holding the Executive Committee to account by thoroughly scrutinising their decisions to ensure that the Council continues to provide the best services possible for Redditch residents. As part of this role, the Committee has the power to 'call-in' decisions made by the Executive Committee and to request that the Executive Committee review the original decisions, taking into account the issues raised by the Committee.
- Acting as a 'critical friend' to the Executive Committee by reviewing Council policies and strategies, making recommendations where appropriate.
- Performance and financial monitoring, to ensure the Council's services are sustainable and to the highest possible standard.
- Commissioning reviews of services/topics that impact on the Council or on the lives of Redditch residents.
- Pre-scrutiny of items prior to a decision being made by the Executive Committee.
- Setting up Task Groups to focus on specific subjects and recommend ways to improve existing practices within the Council and community as a whole. A flow chart on how to consider potential scrutiny reviews can be found at Appendix A and the Council's scoping form at Appendix B.

MEMBERSHIP

The Committee appoints individual Members to oversee the work of Overview and Scrutiny. Membership of the Committee for 2018/2019 is as follows:



Cllr Joe Baker (Chair)



Cllr Debbie Chance (Vice Chair)



Cllr Joanne Beecham
(From August 2018)



Cllr Michael Chalk



Cllr Andy Fry



Cllr Pattie Hill



Cllr Anthony Lovell



Cllr Gemma Monaco



Cllr Mike Rouse
(From May to July 18)



Cllr Jennifer Wheeler

ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES DURING 2018/19

Non-Executive Members attended Overview and Scrutiny training in June 2018 and during this session the Councillors identified priority issues to add to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work programme.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitors the impact of all of its recommendations that have been endorsed by the Executive Committee. A tracking report is presented to the Committee during the year stating progress made to date. Further information about the issues discussed by the Committee during the year and Members' findings are detailed below.

HOUSING BENEFITS PRESENTATION – 31 MAY 2018

The Committee received a presentation detailing the impact of changes to welfare support. The presentation made reference to the Benefit Cap, the Spare Room Subsidy, Discretionary Housing Payments, the Council Tax Support Scheme, the Hardship Scheme, Universal Credit, the Essential Living Fund and the work of the Financial Independence Team.

Members learned that following a number of welfare changes at a national level there had been some development in terms of the support available to those in receipt of housing benefit. For example, the introduction of the spare room subsidy, impacted on the amount of housing benefit available to some applicants. At Redditch Borough Council those struggling financially could access alternative means of support if housing benefit was unable to cover all of their expenses, for example support from the Essential Living Fund.

The Private Sector Housing Team was invited to attend a future Committee meeting to give a further update.

REDDITCH PARTNERSHIP - MONITORING UPDATE REPORT – 5 JULY 2018

A report was received on the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and work of the Redditch Partnership. This update was provided to the Committee on an annual basis in response to a recommendation from a 2010 Task Group which considered the work of the Redditch Partnership.

In the course of the presentation, Members were advised that health inequalities, educational attainment levels, raising the expectations of young people, the economy in Redditch and transformational change of services were key priorities for the partnership. The Redditch Partnership was also leading on a piece of work to review mental health needs in the Borough.

REDI CENTRE LEASE ARRANGEMENT - PRE DECISION SCRUTINY 5 JULY 2018

The Committee received a report detailing the proposal to grant a twelve year lease to Redditch Youth and Community Enterprise (RYCE) for the use of the REDI Centre.

During consideration of this report Members learned that RYCE had been using the REDI centre since 2014 under a meanwhile lease arrangement. It was also noted that RYCE had since applied for big lottery funding to be spent on the building but this would be contingent upon securing a long-term lease. On balance Members concluded that it would be appropriate to grant a twelve year lease to RYCE for use of the building, subject to the lottery funding being approved.

PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - REDDITCH TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION 9 AUGUST 2018

The Committee was presented with a report in relation to the regeneration of Redditch town centre. This followed on from the Committee's consideration of proposals in respect of the One Public Estate in the previous municipal year. A regeneration prospectus had been drafted and this contained a number of proposals relating to Redditch Town Centre. This included a proposal to introduce a public sector hub on the site of the current Town Hall.

SAFEGUARDING AND EARLY HELP - WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL 6 SEPTEMBER 2018

Representatives from Early Help and Commissioning for Worcestershire County Council presented a report in respect of Safeguarding and Early Help services. During the delivery of this presentation it was noted that Worcestershire Children's Services had been the subject of a full Safeguarding Inspection undertaken in October, 2018 by Ofsted, and subsequently had been subject to regular monitoring visits in order to assess progress.

A summary of the inspections was highlighted in the report together with areas for improvement. These outlined some of the significant challenges faced in the services provided to children and young people in Worcestershire, particularly those who were looked after. The Committee acknowledged that further work was required to ensure that the voice of the child was heard and services were making a difference to their lives. Members were also keen to ensure that services continued to improve, building on the lessons learned from the inspection.

Members questioned how Worcestershire County Council would ensure that children and young people were kept safe from harm. Officers advised that regular feedback from children and young people and quarterly reports were shared across Children's Services and there was good engagement with children and young people through welfare interviews.

Due to the importance of safeguarding matters every Member was invited to attend this meeting, as it was recognised that this was important in relation to their roles as corporate parents.

PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - DRAFT COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME AND WIDER SUPPORT FRAMEWORK – 6 SEPT 2018

The Committee received a report in relation to the Draft Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) and Wider Support Framework. The Executive Director of Finance and Resources provided information on the work undertaken by the Customer Access and Financial Support Service to date in respect of the redesign of the CTSS for implementation by 1st April 2019. The report also set out proposals for public consultation in relation to the potential to introduce income bands for the CTSS.

Following discussions about the report the Committee recommended that the Council undertake a formal consultation with the major preceptors and the public on the proposed redesign of a revised scheme to take place for eight weeks from 1st October, 2018. This was subsequently agreed by the Executive Committee and the consultation process did take place. However, a decision was eventually taken by Council to not introduce income banding at this time.

PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - LEISURE SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 6 SEPTEMBER 2018

A report was presented to the Committee in relation to the Leisure and Cultural Services – Local Authority Trading Company Business Case (LATC), prior to the introduction of Rubicon Leisure Ltd. The Executive Director of Finance and Resources provided an overview and highlighted the key areas.

Members were advised on the progress that was being made following approval in March, 2018, to set up a not for profit, Teckal compliant, Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) to operate a number of the Council's Leisure and Cultural Services subject to the approval of the final business plan.

The Committee was informed about the services that would be provided by the new company. Some services would remain within the Council's jurisdiction, in line with best practice across the country. The Council would be the only shareholder in the new company and Members would be included in the decision making process. In order to achieve this it was proposed that a new Shareholders' Committee be established.

PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - HOUSING / HRA OVERVIEW AND RECOVERY PLAN – 6 SEPTEMBER 2018 / FEBRUARY 2019

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Housing / HRA Overview and Recovery Plan. During the presentation of the report the key findings arising from a recent review of Housing Services were highlighted for Members' consideration. The Committee was informed about the steps that were already being taken to address the issues that had been identified in the department. An action plan was also presented for Members' consideration which highlighted the timeframes for addressing key areas.

In February 2019, a further update was provided to the Committee outlining the progress that had been achieved to date. Members welcomed the hard work of officers to address various problems and invited the Executive Committee to formally thank staff.

HEREFORD AND WORCESTERSHIRE SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFORMATION PARTNERSHIP UPDATE - 18 OCTOBER 2018

Representatives from the Worcestershire Health and Care Trust and Worcestershire County Council provided an update in respect of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP). This followed discussion of the STP at meetings of the Committee in previous years and those attending outlined the work of the various STP Workstreams.

The Committee was informed that the STP Programme Committee had agreed on its top priorities which were to address health and well-being; care and quality and finance and efficiency.

As this subject had been discussed on a number of occasions by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and significant progress had been achieved, Members discussed whether it was necessary to continue to debate this matter. However, due to the importance of health services to the people of Redditch the Committee concluded that a further update on the Herefordshire and Worcestershire STP should be provided at a future meeting.

EMERGENCY PLANNING (CIVIL CONTINGENCIES) ANNUAL UPDATE 18 OCTOBER 2018

The North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager provided an update on the Council's Civil Contingencies arrangements. This report had been requested in a Short Sharp Review of Civil Contingencies completed in 2017.

Members were advised that in 2018 there had been two incidents which required an internal and multi-agency debrief session to be commissioned. Training was being planned for Duty Incident Response Officers to enable them to fulfil their jobs effectively. A further update will be provided to the Committee in 2019/20.

PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - COUNCIL HOUSING GROWTH PROGRAMME 18 OCTOBER 2018

The Committee received a report in relation to the Council Housing Growth Programme, which was launched in 2017. Officers from the Private Sector Housing Team provided information on the proposed development sites. A number of options to increase the Council's housing stock were outlined for Members' consideration, which included the potential to construct new Council houses.

Members expressed the view that the Housing Growth Programme was beneficial, as work on this programme would help the Council to address the housing needs of residents living in the Borough.

Following consideration of the subject Members endorsed the recommendations in the report which were then considered and approved by the Executive Committee.

PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN 18 OCTOBER 2018

The Chief Executive presented the Corporate Peer Challenge, which had been conducted by representatives of other local authorities and the Local Government Association and covered both Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Councils. Members were advised that similar exercises had been undertaken by other local authorities and they were designed to help Councils improve services moving forward.

Members were advised that the challenge focused on five key areas including, financial sustainability, priority setting, capacity to deliver, political and managerial leadership and governance and decision making. There had been a number of recommendations arising from this report; the majority of which Officers were suggesting should be acted on. However, Officers suggested that there would not be sufficient benefit in terms of moving on the Corporate Peer Challenge suggestion to move to a single workforce at this stage.

Members considered the proposals contained within the report in detail. Some concerns were raised that some of the recommendations, particularly in respect of the political and decision making process, were more applicable to Bromsgrove District Council than to Redditch Borough Council. When this matter was considered by the Executive Committee the concerns of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were noted, though the Executive Committee endorsed the report in full.

SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES IN REDDITCH UPDATE - 6 DECEMBER 2018

Representatives of Worcestershire County Council and the Worcestershire Health and Care Trust attended a meeting of the Committee at the request of Members to discuss sexual health services provided in Redditch. Written responses were provided to a series of questions.

During consideration of this item particular reference was made to the challenges in terms of services engaging with representatives of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. The Chair explained that there was a Redditch LGBT community group and it was noted that services could potentially work with this group to engage with the LGBT community. Reference was also made to the services provided to young people and it was suggested that the opening hours should be reviewed to align more closely with the needs of adolescents. The Committee also suggested that the Council could help to raise awareness of the white ribbon campaign in respect of domestic violence.

HOMELESSNESS POLICY (HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION ACT) 6 DECEMBER 2018

Representatives of the Private Sector Housing Team were invited to present a report outlining the key features of the Council's Homelessness Policy and the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the impact that this had had on Council services. The report had been requested by Members during the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme planning session in June 2018.

Officers reported that the Homelessness Reduction Act profoundly altered the ways in which local authorities and their clients worked together to try and resolve housing issues. The Act recognised that there was a shortage of social housing and that by clients and the Councils working together there was a much better chance of preventing homelessness. The legislation placed a greater emphasis on preventing homelessness.

Members were advised that there were challenges and risks going forward which were identified as follows:

- the additional administrative requirements associated with the legislation could lead to backlogs in casework and lengthen waiting times for appointments;
- accommodation options had not increased to cater for the greater focus on prevention and relief so the increase in duties had not been accompanied by an increase in resources; and
- recruitment issues could impact on provision of the service - high turnover rates of temporary staff could be particularly challenging with a national shortage of experienced staff driving up the rates of pay.

One of the key challenges that local authorities were facing was the availability of experienced and trained staff to work in Housing Services. As part of the review Members were advised that the number of staff and the specialisms required were being assessed.

REVIEW OF THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS POLICY - PRE-SCRUTINY – 6 DECEMBER 2018

The Head of Community Services provided Members with an overview of the draft policy and Councillor guidance notes in respect of the Councillor Community Grants Scheme. In November, 2018, full Council had agreed to change the way in which the Council allocated grant funding to Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations in Redditch. From April 2019, all Members would have a budget of £5,000 from which they could provide funding to VCS groups.

The Committee was provided with full details in respect of the revised scheme. Members were advised that training would be provided to all Councillors which would be mandatory. In addition, guidance notes would be provided to all Members explaining the full process. The scheme would be piloted for one year with it being evaluated during the year.

The Committee recommended that the Council should retain the £20,000, due to be cut from the grants budget, to invest in town wide issues and issues of importance to Redditch. However, this proposal was rejected by the Executive Committee on 11th December, 2018.

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2019/20 TO 2022/23 - PRE-SCRUTINY 3 JANUARY 2019 / 20TH FEBRUARY 2019

The Committee was provided with an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2019/20 – 2022/23. The report outlined the issues faced by the Council in achieving a balanced budget and the action that was being taken to address this.

A number of key issues were highlighted including that unavoidable costs would not be included in the budget moving forward. A significant level of savings had been achieved, due to receiving additional income in some places, such as from a new contract for the Lifeline service. There were some unavoidable pressures which would need to be met and some budget bids had been submitted. However, the government had confirmed that the negative support grant, by which the Council would have had to pay funding back to the Government, would not need to be paid in 2019/20.

Members also pre-scrutinised the Executive Committee's proposed budget at a meeting on 20th February 2019. During that meeting Members were advised that the budget had been balanced for 2019/20. However, there remained considerable uncertainty about the budget position moving forward in relation to matters such as the New Homes Bonus and the negative support grant.

The Committee concurred that additional income was needed to help balance the Council's budget in future years. With this in mind Members proposed that the Council should investigate the potential to introduce charges for Council events, such as Morton Stanley Festival and a review should be undertaken of the Council's assets in order to maximise income. Members also raised concerns about some aspects of the Council's proposed budget, including the introduction of the Redditch Community Lottery. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's proposals were noted by the Executive Committee at a meeting on 25th February, when Members were also advised that action was already being taken to review the potential to secure further income from use of the Council's assets and from Council events.

DEVELOPMENT PARTNER TO PROGRESS THE POSSIBLE REDEVELOPMENT OF WINYATES AND / OR MATCHBOROUGH DISTRICT CENTRES AND SURROUNDING AREAS - PRE-SCRUTINY – 3 JANUARY 2019

The Interim Head of the North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) presented the report in respect of the redevelopment of Winyates and Matchborough District Centres and surrounding areas. The report outlined the initial proposals for the redevelopment of Winyates and Matchborough District Centres. Due to the relevance of these proposals to the local community Members had agreed in 2017/18 that all reviews focusing on the redevelopment of the district centres should be subject to detailed scrutiny.

The Committee recommended that assurances be given that no Council housing stock or business unit assets should be lost from the redevelopment of the Winyates and Matchborough District Centres. The Executive Committee determined that assurance should be provided that there would be no net loss of Council houses as a result of the redevelopment.

WASTE COLLECTION FROM HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION - 3 JANUARY 2019

The Head of Environmental Services provided Members with information in respect of waste collection services for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Members had requested an update in respect of this matter during the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Planning event in June 2018, in light of relevant licensing changes which were due to come into force on 1st October 2018. The changes meant that landlords needed to provide facilities for storing and disposing of household waste, recycling and garden waste. The changes also extended the description of HMOs to include properties which were less than three stories high. The Head of Environmental Services provided Members with details around the legal implications of the changes and the impact of failure by the licence holder to comply with the scheme.

Background information was provided in respect of HMOs and the important role that they played within the housing sector. Members were advised that the Environmental Services team was working closely with the Private Sector Housing Team to ensure that all future licenses granted for HMOs included a written statement that ensured waste was sufficiently catered for as part of their conditions. The team also carried out inspections before granting any licence with the specifics of those conditions being reiterated.

CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY PANEL

Local authorities are required to have a Committee designated with responsibility to review the work of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and this Committee must meet at least once a year to discuss the work of the partnership. In Redditch this role is undertaken by the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel, which is a permanent sub-committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Panel holds the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership to account for its work in Redditch.

A meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel took place in September 2018. During the meeting Members received an update on the work of the partnership in the Borough in the preceding 12 months, received an update on child sexual exploitation and the action that had been taken by the partnership to address this problem and considered information about rates of anti-social behaviour in the Borough and the work of the partnership to address this.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee in September 2018 Members considered a report in respect of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 and the action proposed by Officers to address the provisions in this legislation. Under this legislation Councils could take measures such as introducing Public Safety Protection Orders (PSPOs) and it had been proposed that power should be delegated to Officers to fulfil these duties. Due to the significance of these measures to community safety, Members agreed that Officers should report on a six month basis to the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel about the implementation of these powers.

In 2017 Members agreed that two meetings of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel should take place due to the importance of the issue to the Borough. However, the second meeting of the panel that was due to take place in March 2019 was cancelled due to a lack of business. It is anticipated that the first update in respect of PSPOs and other new powers set out in the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 will be provided at the next meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel in September 2019.

TASK GROUPS AND SHORT SHARP REVIEWS

Task Groups are established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to conduct an in-depth review of any service, policy or issue that affects the Borough. The work carried out by Task Groups in 2018/19 is summarised below.

CARE LEAVERS SCRUTINY TASK GROUP

At the meeting of the Council on 29th January, 2018, it was agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, working with officers, should undertake a review and bring forward proposals to the Council to introduce any changes to either exempt or reduce the amount of Council Tax paid by care leavers for the age group of 18 to 25.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to launch a Short Sharp Review to investigate support for care leavers in Redditch, and in particular, the Council Tax Support available to care leavers. Members identified a lot of positive work carried out by multiple agencies in supporting care leavers as well as areas where improvements could be made.

At the end of the review, the Short Sharp Review group presented three recommendations, which proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme designed to support care leavers. The recommendations were approved by the Executive Committee in an amended form in August 2018.

In February 2019 the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2019/20 was debated at a meeting of full Council. Changes to the scheme to support care leavers, which built on the findings of the group, were agreed.

A detailed account of the group's findings can be viewed in their final report which can be accessed on the Council's website.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider a proposal to launch a Short Sharp Review of action that could be taken to prevent and reduce suicide rates in the Borough at a meeting on 21st March 2019. Should this be approved by the Committee the review will launch in the new municipal year.

WORKING GROUPS

In 2017 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish working groups that would focus on the Council's budget and the performance of Council services.

BUDGET SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP – CHAIR, COUNCILLOR JENNY WHEELER (UNTIL JANUARY 2019) AND COUNCILLOR ANDREW FRY FEBRUARY – APRIL 2019)

The Budget Scrutiny Working Group held a number of meetings in 2018/19. At the start of the year the Chair of the group agreed to schedule meetings of the group to consider items in accordance with the approach suggested by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS). This was designed to enable the group to comply with national best practice.

During the year the Budget Scrutiny Working Group considered the following matters:

- Proposals to introduce a Redditch Business Improvement District (BID) – The group supported this proposal as they concluded that a BID would enhance the economic vibrancy of the town centre.
- Fees and Charges – This year Members reflected back on the fees and charges report that had been agreed in January 2018 and based on this identified a number of areas where charges could be introduced or amended to meet the needs of the Council's customers. As part of this process the group recommended that Officers should investigate the potential to introduce special discount fees for frequent use of the Shopmobility Service. Members also pre-scrutinised the Fees and Charges report for 2019/20.
- Enterprise (Finance) System - The introduction of a new finance system has been reviewed in detail at meetings of the group. Members have been provided with regular updates on progress with the project and the group recommended that a briefing should be provided to all Members on the subject due to the financial implications for the Council. This took place on 19th March 2019.
- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2019/20 – Members pre-scrutinised the content of this report at a meeting in January 2019. The group welcomed news that the Council had balanced the HRA budget for 2019/20 and noted the challenges facing the Council in respect of the HRA moving forward.
- Members received an update in respect of the new Housing IT system that was due to be procured and welcomed news that this would replace a relatively old IT system that had been in use for many years.
- The group received an update on the work that had been undertaken in preparation for the return of Property Services to the Council from the Place Partnership Ltd. Members were pleased to learn that the transfer arrangements were progressing well.
- At every meeting of the group Members received a verbal update on the work of the Commercialism Board and progress in respect of the Council securing alternative sources of income.

- Members conducted a consultation exercise with members of the Redditch Community Panel about the Council's budget. Two of the questions included in a public survey circulated on the group's behalf focused on the Council's grants process and Redditch Community Lottery respectively. Members agreed to revisit the feedback received from the public in respect of this matter in the new municipal year when it was agreed that the grants process and lottery should be investigated in further detail. A third question from the group asked participants to highlight the services that they felt should be prioritised in the Council's budget. The group will revisit the top five priority areas in 2019/20 and their findings should inform any recommendations that will be made about the budget for 2020/21 onwards.

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

The group has an important role in scrutinising the delivery of the Council's priorities. The group agreed Members would monitor performance of services in relation to the strategic purposes. Each Member was allocated responsibility for taking a lead on monitoring the Council's performance in relation to a single strategic purpose. Members agreed that, due to the significant number of changes being made to leisure services, resulting in the recent introduction of Rubicon Leisure Ltd, that the strategic purpose "good things to do, so and visit" would be monitored by the whole group.

The Group met three times in 2018/19. During one of these meetings training was provided in respect of the Council's measures dashboard and an invitation was extended to all Members to attend.

At a meeting in February 2019 the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee raised concerns about the number of meetings held in 2018/19 of the Performance Scrutiny Working Group. The Committee agreed that the group needed to meet more frequently in order to make an effective contribution to Council business. Therefore Members requested that the group should meet at least six times in 2019/20.

EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Council representative, Councillor Michael Chalk

The Committee received regular updates from Councillor Chalk, the Council's representative on the West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee. During the year Councillor Chalk frequently provided written updates about the work of the Committee and highlighted the following points:

- The “Local Industrial Strategy” and the links with the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).
- How Overview and Scrutiny could serve the WMCA by supporting and forming policies.
- The question and answer session for the WMCA Mayor in relation to housing, transport and air quality.
- The Transport group's report, and its focus on cycling, and new stations.
- The quorum for the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Unfortunately, Councillor Chalk reported that there had been some difficulties ensuring that a full quorum was present for all of the meetings and this highlighted the need for Members to attend or arrange a substitute where necessary.

Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) – Council Representative, Councillor Mike Rouse until July 2019 and then Councillor Michael Chalk.

The Committee received regular updates from Councillor Rouse and subsequently Councillor Chalk about the work of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC). Some of the issues highlighted during the year included:

- Winter pressures on hospitals and patient flow in and out of hospital.
- The ambulance divert pilot.
- An ongoing update in respect of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.
- The services provided at hospitals managed by the trust, particularly the Alexandra Hospital.

Further details are available at Worcestershire County Council website.

CONCLUSION

This has been a busy year for Overview and Scrutiny in Redditch. In particular Members have undertaken a significant amount of pre-scrutiny work and many of the Committee's recommendations have influenced the decisions reached by the Executive Committee and Council.

In 2019 the Government is due to publish new guidance in respect of Overview and Scrutiny. This should lead to changes at a local level, but whatever those changes may entail, Overview and Scrutiny will continue to have an important role to play in the local decision making process.

To ensure that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny process continues to meet the needs of Redditch residents whilst complying with legislative requirements, a scrutiny training session will be provided in the new municipal year. All non-Executive Members will be invited to attend.

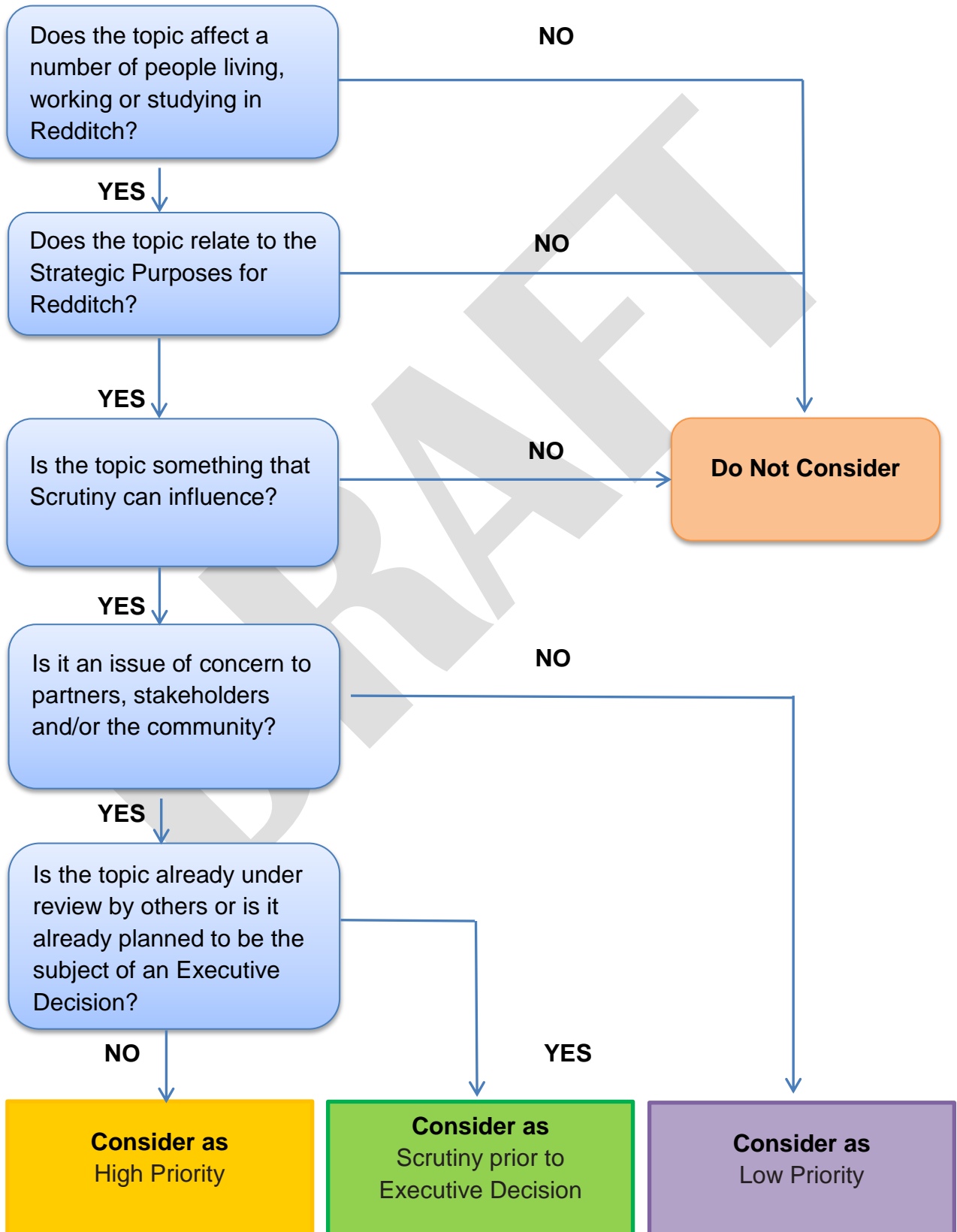
The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee express his thanks to all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, recognising in particular the valuable contribution made by Members through Task Group investigations and on the Budget and Performance Scrutiny Working Groups.

For any background information on the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committee in Redditch, please visit <https://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/council/the-council.aspx>

Democratic Services, Redditch Borough Council, Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH
Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3268 email: scrutiny@redditchbc.gov.uk

Overview and Scrutiny Prioritisation Tool

The Overview and Scrutiny Prioritisation Tool can help determine priorities for each topic and provide members with a structured method of creating a focussed work programme.



Scrutiny Proposal Form

(This form should be completed by sponsoring Member(s), Officers and / or members of the public when proposing an item for Scrutiny).

Note: The matters detailed below have not yet received any detailed consideration. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee reserves the right to reject suggestions for scrutiny that fall outside the Borough Council’s remit.

Proposer’s name and designation		Date of referral	
Proposed topic title			
Link to local priorities including the strategic purposes			
Background to the issue			
<p>Key Objectives</p> <p>Please keep to SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)</p>			
<p>How long do you think is needed to complete this exercise? (Where possible please estimate the number of weeks, months and meetings required)</p>			

Please return this form to: Jess Bayley, Louise Morris, Farzana Mughal or Amanda Scarce, Democratic Services Officers, Redditch Borough Council, Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH

Email: jess.bayley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
louise.morris@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
farzana.mughal@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
a.scarce@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk