

APPENDIX 1: Overview and Scrutiny Training, Wednesday 29th May 2019

Outcome of the Exercises

During the Overview and Scrutiny training delivered on Wednesday 29th May 2019 Members participated in a number of group activities designed to enable them to suggest items for inclusion on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme in 2019/20. During these activities Members discussed the issues that had most frequently been raised with them over the last 12 months and their suitability for further scrutiny (new Members suggested the key issues that were raised whilst they were campaigning to be elected). This approach was adopted to enable Members to focus on issues of concern to the public, in line with best practice guidance for overview and scrutiny. Each of the issues raised by Members was considered alongside the Council's strategic purposes to enable Members to focus on matters in accordance with the Council's strategic vision.

All of the suggestions are listed below and have been listed in themes associated with the relevant strategic purpose. Where a number of Councillors raised the same issue the number of times that a topic was suggested has been highlighted and they have been grouped together to avoid duplication. To place this in context Members should note that eight Councillors representing Abbey, Batchley and Brockhill, Church Hill, Crabbs Cross, Greenlands and Winyates wards attended the training.

Keep My Place Safe and Looking Good

Topic 1: Anti-Social Behaviour (raised by 5 Councillors)

Additional details were provided by some Members regarding specific anti-social behaviour issues that had been raised by local residents. This included drug dealing, drug-taking, noise and bullying.

Topic 2: Parking (raised by 4 Councillors)

Additional details were provided by some Members regarding particular issues that had been reported in respect of parking including parking around the hospital, parking in the town centre, the availability of affordable parking in the town and at the hospital, the use of white lines and parking at Far Moor Lane, which was considered to be dangerous.

Topic 3: Local Environment (raised by 6 Councillors)

Particular issues highlighted by Members in respect of this matter included: overgrown shrubbery and trees, keeping places tidy, improving the condition of roads and footpaths, climate change and litter. Questions were raised about why the Council had to mow the wild flowers on the roundabouts and road verges in the Borough.

Scrutiny suggestion: Members suggested that it might be useful to launch a Task Group review focusing on the work of the Place Teams.

Topic 4: Speeding (raised by 1 Councillor)

No specific points were discussed in relation to this matter.

Topic 5: Pride in Their Area (raised by 1 Councillor)

No specific points were discussed in relation to this matter.

Help me be Financially Independent (Including Education and Skills)

Topic 6: Poverty (suggested by 1 Councillor)

Members noted during the training that it had recently been reported that a third of children in Redditch are living in poverty. There are particular problems with child poverty in Central and Greenlands wards.

Scrutiny suggestion: Members agreed that this might be a suitable topic for further scrutiny as the subject of a Task Group exercise. The review would need to take into account the following:

- Historical data in respect of poverty, including child poverty, and the extent to which poverty levels have changed over time.
- Consideration of local demographics.
- Identifying where children in poverty are likely to go to school.
- Consultation with relevant Officers and teams.
- Identifying action that could be taken to address the problem.

Topic 7: Education (suggested by 1 Councillor)

The Councillor suggested that a particular emphasis needed to be placed on helping residents to develop their skills.

Topic 8: Work and Training Opportunities for People with Disabilities (suggested by 1 Councillor)

The Councillor suggested that it was important to explore options available to those who develop a disability during their lifetime and who may need or want to change careers. An investigation of this subject could focus on training opportunities available to people with disabilities.

Help me Find Somewhere to Live in my Locality

Topic 9: Quality of Housing (suggested by 2 Councillors)

Additional details were provided by some Members regarding particular issues that had been raised by local residents including damp conditions in flats and poor quality housing.

Topic 10: Space within Houses (suggested by 2 Councillors)

Additional details were provided by Members which in both cases related to the need for families to move into larger properties to accommodate an increasing number of children within the family.

Topic 11: Affordable Housing (suggested by 1 Councillor)

This Councillor placed a particular emphasis on the high charges in the private rented sector.

Topic 12: Housing Developers

Reference was made to a particular housing developer which has built homes in the Borough and problems raised about these homes by local residents.

Help me Run a Successful Business

Topic 13: Town Centre Regeneration and the need for regeneration to take place (suggested by 2 Councillors)

Scrutiny suggestion: Members suggested that all reports coming forward over the next 18 months in respect of the ongoing redevelopment of Redditch town centre should be subject to pre-scrutiny.

Topic 14: Winyates Centre Redevelopment (suggested by 1 Councillor)

Scrutiny suggestion: Members suggested that all reports coming forward over the next 18 months in respect of the ongoing redevelopment of Winyates and Matchborough District Centres should be subject to pre-scrutiny.

Topic 15: Eastern Gateway (suggested by 1 Councillor)

Scrutiny Suggestion: Members discussed this idea and noted that on the one hand the Eastern Gateway development was not welcomed by some residents and causing some distress but on the other hand the development would support economic development in the area and provide job opportunities for Redditch residents. Concerns were raised that this subject could not be tackled alone by Redditch Borough Councillors as the development would also be taking place on land in Bromsgrove and Straford-on-Avon districts. It was similarly noted that planning permission had already been granted for the development which would make it difficult to halt progress with the development. However, Members suggested that Officers should be invited to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to explain the purpose of the Eastern Gateway and to justify the development.

Help me Live my Life Independently (Including Health and Activity)

Topic 16: Health Services (suggested by 2 Councillors)

Particular issues highlighted by Members in respect of this matter included the reduction in services available to access at the Alexandra Hospital, the need to keep local services open and local GP surgeries.

Topic 17: Mental Health Services (Including loneliness) (suggested by 2 Councillors)

Scrutiny Suggestion: Members suggested that the subject of mental health services for adults and the impact that loneliness can have on a person's mental wellbeing should be the subject of a Task Group exercise. This would take into account:

- The impact on single parents, the elderly and disabled people.
- Actions that could be taken by the Council and partner organisations to address the problem.
- Options for community engagement and horticultural activities, to address the needs of adults struggling with mental ill health and / or loneliness.
- Members agreed that the review should not explore the needs of young people as this was the subject of a separate review completed in recent years.

Topic 18: Transport and Bus Services (suggested by 2 Councillors)

No specific points were discussed in relation to this matter.