

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 3rd February,
2022

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Debbie Chance (Chair), Councillor Jennifer Wheeler (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Karen Ashley, Michael Chalk, Brandon Clayton, Julian Grubb, Lucy Harrison, Luke Court and Anthony Lovell

Also Present:

Councillor Anthony Lovell – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change (via Microsoft Teams)

Officers:

Matthew Bough and Sue Hanley

Democratic Services Officers:

Jo Gresham

64. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received by Councillor Alex Fogg with Councillor Luke Court in attendance as named substitute.

65. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no Declarations of Interest nor of any Party Whip.

66. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 2nd December 2021, 13th December 2021 and 6th January 2022 were submitted for Member's' consideration.

Chair

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RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd December 2021, 13th December 2021 and 6th January 2022 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

67. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no public speakers registered on this occasion.

68. SUSTAINABLE WARMTH FUNDING - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Chair welcomed the Strategic Housing Manager, who was in attendance on Microsoft Teams, to the meeting. During the presentation of the Sustainable Warmth Funding report the following was highlighted for Members' attention:

- There were two components of the Sustainable Warmth funding. These were the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG1) and Local Authority Delivery (LAD3) phase 3. These components would run in parallel to the current LAD funding that was already in place to improve properties with the worst energy rating. The new allocation of funding would be utilised to improve those properties Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E, F or G. It was noted that EPC D properties could also be included. The HUG1 funding would be specifically used for those properties who were not on the mains gas supply. The total amount of funding was noted as follows:

	Capital	Administrative Allocation (Admin and Ancillary)
Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) Phase 1	£65,000 (£6,500)	£6,500 (£650)
Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Phase 3	£260,000 (£26,000)	£26,000 (£2600)

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Members were informed that the Administrative Allocation would be used to bring in additional resource to help with the project management and delivery of the programme.

- The criteria for recipients of the funding was outlined as part of the scheme. It was reported that households must be either privately owned or rented with an income of less than £30k per household. Other factors also formed part of the criteria, these included means tested benefits and food or fuel vouchers. In addition to this those who lived in Social Housing with poor energy efficiency ratings would also be eligible. It was noted that the Social Housing stock that could receive HUG1 funding was capped at 10% of the total number of homes and that LAD3 funding was capped at 10% of the total number of homes.
- The period of the grant was until March 2023 and all works must be delivered to Publicly Available Specification (PAS) 2035 using Trustmark accredited contractors.

During a detailed discussion Members queried how the funding would be publicised so that eligible households could apply. The Strategic Housing Manager reported that Act On Energy had been commissioned by the Midland Energy Hub (MEH) and would be the customer journey provider and would use their channels to promote the scheme. Alongside this, the Council would use their social media channels and other communication methods to further promote the scheme. It was also noted that officers had access to those properties with poor EPCs and would be able to utilise this information to identify eligible properties.

Members queried the allocation of £65k HUG1 funding. In the report it was stated that each eligible household could receive up to £15k per property which meant that, potentially, only 4 households could receive funding. Officers confirmed that this was due to the HUG1 funding is specifically for households that were not on the mains gas supply and noted that there was a smaller amount of these kinds of properties within the Borough.

Members were keen to understand what steps were to be taken to ensure that the funding would be allocated correctly, and the project managed efficiently. Officers reassured the Committee

that Trustmark accredited suppliers would be used to deliver the works, monthly reporting would be provided to MEH and that inspections would be carried out in order to ensure that the works had been carried out correctly.

It was clarified that the allocation of funding would be on a first come first basis and would be done quickly as the time frames for the allocation needed to be completed by the end of the financial year 2021-2022. Further funding was expected to be received in the future and this would mean that those households that did not receive funding during this allocation could still potentially receive funding in the future.

Councillor Anthony Lovell who was in attendance on Microsoft Teams as Portfolio Holder for Climate Change was invited to address the Committee. In doing so, Councillor Lovell stated that he thought that this was an excellent initiative for Redditch particularly in light of the current fuel poverty concerns.

At the end of the debate the Committee

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Capital and Revenue Budgets (Housing and General Fund) are increased to receive Redditch Borough Council's Sustainable Warmth scheme allocation of £357,500.**
- 2) Delegated authority is granted to the Head of Community & Housing Services and Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services in consultation with Portfolio Holders for Housing and Climate Change to administer the funding received in line with the grant conditions.**

69. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME - SELECTING ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY

The Committee was presented with Executive Committee minutes from the meeting held on 11th January 2022 and the latest version of the Executive Work Programme, as published on 1st February

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2022. During consideration of this item, it was highlighted that two new items appeared on the Executive Work programme. These were as follows:

- Declaration of Land Surplus to Requirement at Lodge Road/Union Street, Smallwood and Available for Disposal
- Homelessness Prevention Grant 2023/24

Members requested that these items be added to the Committee's Work Programme for pre-scrutiny. During the discussion of the Declaration of Land Surplus to Requirement at Lodge Road/Union Street, Smallwood and Available for Disposal, Members felt that this could be part of a wider discussion regarding the Council assets and requested that an item be placed on the Committee's Work Programme. Officers present undertook to work with the relevant officers in order to bring this item forward for consideration by the Committee at a future meeting.

The Democratic Services Officer present undertook to update the Committee's Work Programme accordingly.

RESOLVED that

The Executive Committee Minutes and Work Programme be noted.

70. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme as part of the previous item.

RESOLVED that

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme be noted.

71. TASK GROUP REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

Councillor Salman Akbar presented the Topic Proposal document in respect of Road Safety and Speeding. In doing so it was reported to Members that 1460 people had been killed on roads in the UK in

2020 and 22,069 people had been left with life changing injuries during the same period as a result of collisions on Britain's roads.

It was reported that as elected Members a large proportion of the queries and requests from residents was concerning speeding on roads within the Borough. Therefore, were the task group approved Members would be able to investigate an issue that communities really cared about.

Members were in agreement that this was a very important area to investigate, and it was hoped that the task group could make some recommendations to implement important changes in Redditch in respect of speeding and road safety.

RESOLVED that

The Road Safety and Speeding Task Group be established.

72. TASK GROUPS, SHORT SHARP REVIEWS AND WORKING GROUPS - UPDATE REPORTS

a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Jenny Wheeler

Councillor Wheeler updated the Committee in respect of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group and in doing so informed Members that the last meeting was held on 12th January 2022. At this meeting the following items were considered:

- Fees and Charges
- Housing Rent Account Rent Setting
- Council Tax Base 2022/2023
- Financial Outturn 2020/2021

The next meeting of the Budget Scrutiny working Group was due to take place on the February 7th, 2022.

b) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Jenny Wheeler

the last meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Working Group took place on 18th January 2022 when Members considered a report regarding the Energy Advice Service and received a detailed presentation from Judith Chadwick from North Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership and Worcestershire County Council in respect of Skills Development.

RESOLVED that

The Task Groups, Short Sharp Reviews and Working Groups Update Reports be noted.

73. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS

Councillor Chalk updated the Committee in respect of the External Scrutiny Bodies and in doing so informed Members that at the last meeting of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) there had been an update on Air Quality in the areas covered by the WMCA. It was questioned whether detailed data was available regarding Air Quality in the Borough was available. It was reported by the Deputy Chief Executive that this data would be collected by Worcestershire Regulatory Services who monitored the air Quality levels within Redditch.

Members were advised that the minutes of the meeting were available online if Members were interested in further details of the items discussed at the External Scrutiny Bodies meetings.

RESOLVED that

The External Scrutiny Bodies Update Reports be noted.

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RESOLVED that

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The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.14 pm