

**Redditch Borough Council**  
**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**Annual Report 2022 – 2023**



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## CHAIR'S FOREWORD

I would like to extend my thanks to the Democratic Services Officers Jo Gresham, Jess Bayley-Hill and Mateusz Sliwinski, who have been very helpful and supportive to the Committee during the year.

It has been a very busy year for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with nine meetings having taken place at the Town Hall between May and the end of December, with a further three meetings scheduled during February and March.

I would like to thank all Members of the Committee for their contributions and participation, and in particular extend my thanks to Councillor Joanna Kane, who is the Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny and the Chair of both the Performance Scrutiny and Budget Scrutiny Working Groups. I would also like to extend my thanks to Councillor Michael Chalk for his regular written reports and updates from the meetings he attends as the Council's representative on the Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny.

Although the Committee have not completed any Task and Finish Group reviews, the Committee have several which have been agreed, scoped and ready to be launched.

The Committee have both taken an overview of and scrutinised a wide range of topics including: - Town Investment Plan Business Case, Levelling Up Fund Bid 2, Future Use Of Town Hall And Customer Access, Leisure Strategy, Council Plan, Town Hall Hub, Asset Disposal Strategy, HR and Organisational Development / Workforce Strategy / People Strategy, Climate Change / Carbon Reduction Strategy, and support provided by the Council to residents of Redditch in respect of the rise in the cost of living.

During Committee meetings, Members have asked detailed questions of senior officers and portfolio holders including the Leader of the Council. This has supplemented information received in the reports, led to constructive debates, and enabled Members to come to informed decisions.

The Committee have regularly made comments and recommendations to the Executive Committee.

I am pleased to report that at several meetings during the year members of the public have requested and addressed the Committee, speaking on items on the agenda.



Councillor Bill Hartnett  
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## **INTRODUCTION**

This report outlines the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Redditch Borough Council during 2022 – 2023.

## **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 of 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 delivered 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 on the Council's information management system and the Council's scrutiny scoping form at Appendix A.

## MEMBERSHIP

The Committee appoints individual Members to oversee the work of Overview and Scrutiny. Membership of the Committee for 2022/23 is as follows:



Cllr Bill Hartnett (Chair)



Cllr Joanna Kane (Vice-Chair)



Cllr Salman Akbar



Cllr Imran Altaf



Cllr Michael Chalk



Cllr Brandon Clayton



Cllr Sid Khan



Cllr Timothy Pearman



Cllr Gareth Prosser  
May 2022 - October 2022



Cllr Tom Baker-Price  
October 2022 –present

## ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES DURING 2022-23

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee held a scrutiny training and work programme planning session in June 2022 at the start of the municipal year. This session was held online and provided an opportunity for both existing and new Members of the Committee to understand the importance of the scrutiny process at the Council and the function of the Committee. During the training session, areas of interest were identified by Members for potential Overview items that could be considered during the municipal year 2022/2023. These Overview items are subjects for discussion at a single meeting of the Committee and are of particular interest to residents within the Borough. In addition to this the following were identified by Members:

- Items for pre-scrutiny, identified from the Executive Committee's Work Programme.
- Subjects considered suitable for further scrutiny through a Task Group investigation.

### *Covid-19 And Remote Meetings*

In May 2021 the Government removed the temporary legislation that allowed local authorities to hold public meetings virtually. This meant that Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings were once again held in person after May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Meetings continue to be live streamed if there is significant local interest in the items being considered at Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings. Meetings of scrutiny Task Groups and Working Groups continue to be held remotely, since these meetings are private and not live streamed.

### *The Death of Queen Elizabeth II*

Following the death of Queen Elizabeth II, it was agreed by Members that, as a mark of respect, Committee meetings due to be held during the mourning period would be postponed. This resulted in the postponement of the following meetings:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022 (rearranged to 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022)
- Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel – 21<sup>st</sup> September 2022 (rearranged to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022)

This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the 2022-2023 municipal year. Further information on the agendas and minutes from these meetings can be found using the link below:

[Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meetings - 2022-2023](#)

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.

During consideration of the Executive Committee's Work Programme, Members agreed to pre-scrutinise the following items:

- Redditch Town Investment Plan Business Cases
- Levelling Up Fund 2 Bid
- Future Us
- Leisure Strategy
- Climate Change/Carbon Reduction Strategy and Action Plan
- Voluntary Bodies Scheme
- Appropriation of Land off Ipsley Church Lane for Planning Purposes
- HR and Organisational Development / People Strategy

In addition to pre-scrutiny of the Executive Committee Work Programme items, the following items were included in the Committee's Work Programme and were considered at meetings throughout the municipal year:

- Support Provided by the Council to residents in respect of the cost of living
- Overview and Scrutiny Training Event – June 2022

Portfolio Holders for the relevant reports are invited to each meeting of the Committee in order to answer questions and to provide further information to the Executive Committee on the areas that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee raise at their meetings.

### **Recommendations to the Executive Committee**

During the municipal year 2022 the majority of the recommendations contained within Executive Committee reports were endorsed by the Committee. There were two instances when the recommendations made by the Committee were rejected by the Executive Committee. In respect of the additional recommendation made during consideration of the Leisure Strategy the Executive Committee amended its proposed recommendation to reflect the changes suggested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

As stated earlier in this report all of the minutes and agendas for these meetings can be accessed via this link below.

[Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meetings - 2022-2023](#)

Further information about the issues discussed by the Committee during the year and Members' findings are detailed below.

## **9<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

### Council Plan (Recovery and Restoration Plan)

During consideration of this report, it was noted that the current Council Plan was developed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and therefore a review of the priorities contained within the Plan was undertaken in 2021 and an Addendum produced, designed to sit alongside the Plan. This Addendum would provide an intermediary position prior to the review of the Council Plan due to take place in 2024.

During consideration of this report Members highlighted the following areas of interest:

- The procurement of an energy advice service
- Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)
- The allocation of Safer Streets Funding
- Redeployable Cameras
- Green Thread
- Face-to face interaction with officers within the Council
- Rough Sleepers
- Recruitment and Retention of staff

### Council Tax Support Scheme - Update - Pre-Scrutiny

This report provided information on the review of the current Council Tax Support scheme and the proposed consultation process for the 2023/2024 scheme. It was clarified that the consultation was a legal requirement under Section 1A (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and that this would be carried out later this year.

During consideration of this matter it was highlighted that along with the public that major precepting authorities must also be consulted with regarding review of the Council Tax Reduction scheme. As this was a very technical scheme, at this meeting Members were informed that the documentation would be vastly simplified in order for it to be more understandable to all residents and that the consultation would be carried out so that it could be accessed by as many residents as possible.



### Redditch Town Investment Plan Business Cases - Pre-Scrutiny

This was a detailed presentation for Members and the following areas were highlighted:

- Redditch Borough Council had submitted a bid to the Government in January 2021 and were awarded in excess of £15 million to spend on particular regeneration projects in the town centre.
- Three projects that had been approved were the Redditch Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre, Redditch Town Centre Public Realm and the Redevelopment of Redditch Library Site.
- The business cases included in the report provided more detailed information regarding the agreed projects and would inform the summary statements to the Government which were due to be submitted by 29th June 2022.
- The bid would continue to be worked on until submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities on 29th June 2022.

At this meeting, Members raised their concerns that there was little detail in the late reports; and highlighted that it was important to be able to see more detail when looking at significant amounts of funding.

Further detailed discussion followed regarding the positive impact the funding would have on the Town Centre and that it was important to get the business cases in by the required deadline, in order to ensure that all available monies would be able to be drawn down. Members were in agreement that this was an exciting and aspirational opportunity for Redditch Town Centre.

### Levelling Up Fund 2 Bid - Pre-Scrutiny

Included in this presentation of this report was further information on the Levelling Up Fund.

At this meeting Members were informed that the second round of Levelling Up funding focussed on the following three key themes:

- Transport
- Regeneration and Town Centre
- Culture and Heritage

Members were informed that the Regeneration and Town Centre theme provided the greatest chance of successfully bidding for funding and that Matchborough and

Winyates District Centres would be the focus of the proposal due to the significant amount of preparatory work that had already been undertaken.

Members commented that this was an exciting prospect for the Borough and thanked all of the Officers involved in the preparation of the bid for the second phase of Levelling Up funding.

**7<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

#### Asset Rationalisation for Easemore Road - Pre-Decision-Scrutiny

This matter was considered by Members, and it was reported that following a recent detailed condition survey and report, it was envisioned that over the following 5 years a minimum sum of £340,000 needed to be spent on maintenance of Easemore Road. Members were informed that the tenants, mainly from Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations, would be displaced and that alternative properties had been located for all of the tenants.

During consideration of this item, Members discussed the importance of the community centre to local residents, and it was noted by some Members that a better solution might potentially be to sell part of the site and use that income to improve the existing building. However, it was thought by some Members that it would not be wise to postpone this due to significant repairs and problems with the building.

#### Future Use of the Town Hall and Customer Access - Pre-Decision-Scrutiny

This report was in respect of the future use of the Town Hall and closure of the cashier service. It was explained that the effects of the pandemic had led to fewer users accessing the Town Hall in person to make payments.

At this meeting it was explained that there would be a dedicated manned customer service desk opened and telephone and internet access; and that this would allow colleagues to assist the public to access alternative forms of payment while the transition was being undertaken.

It was highlighted that if the cashiers' area were to be sublet to public sector tenants, that revenue would be generated for the Council.

There were some queries as a result of this report including data collection, redundancies, parking for any new tenants in the Town Hall and the improvement of IT literacy for those residents who needed extra support.

At this meeting Members were pleased that there would be no redundancies. However, there were concerns raised with regard to the need for the continuation of some face to face interactions with residents.

### Overview and Scrutiny Training Event June 2022

Officers informed the Committee that the Overview & Scrutiny (O&S) Work Programme Planning Event was well attended, and all Non-Executive Members were invited. At this meeting, Officers reported that during the event a series of items were raised by Members to add to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

Members requested that a report regarding the Cost of Living Crisis be presented to the Committee later in the municipal year. This report was considered at a meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

## **21<sup>st</sup> July 2022**

### Pre-Decision Scrutiny - UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services presented a report on the subject of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The Committee was advised that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund formed part of the national Levelling Up scheme. It was explained to Members that the investment plan was a high level, strategic document and that the Council needed to demonstrate how the proposed use of the funding in the Borough matched key interventions that had been identified by the Government

During consideration of this report there were discussions regarding the surety of receiving the full funding of £2.5m, the length of time in which the UK Shared Prosperity Fund would be available, the challenges faced by the Council in terms of ensuring the sustainability of projects that received funding after the end of the three-year period; and the consequences arising should the Council fail to demonstrate that the targets for expenditure of the funding were being met.

## **5<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

### Nomination of the Community Centre at Easemore Road - Asset of Community Value - Pre-Scrutiny

The Nomination of the Community Centre at Easemore Road - Asset of Community Value was presented at this meeting for consideration by the Committee. It was confirmed to the Committee that included within the Localism Act 2011 was a 'Community Right to Bid' enabling communities the right to identify a building they believed to be of importance to their community.

An independent evaluation had highlighted that a Condition Survey carried out in November 2021 had identified costs of repairs and maintenance of £340,407 and that Community House had been valued between £1.2m and £1.5m which was deemed a sum well beyond RCNT's means.

Members were interested in the consultation process that had been undertaken with the tenants and it was explained that there had been contact made with the tenants prior to the previous report presented to the Executive Committee on 12th July 2022.

## **6<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

### Redditch Tip Library Development - Business Case

This report included the business case and summary documents due to be submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 15th October 2022.

The high level objectives of the Redditch Library Redevelopment were to improve connectivity between the Kingfisher Centre and the Conservation Area. The report also included plans in respect of the demolition of the current library building.

At this meeting some Members expressed considerable concern regarding the plans for the project which resulted in a robust debate amongst Members regarding risk, archives from the current library, the timeline of projects, the lease on the library building and the procurement of contractors.

### Town Hall Hub

During consideration of the Town Hall Hub report Officers reported that the cost of the refurbishment project would be £5.2m and would be funded by capital receipts and the sale of Council assets which had been valued by Savills as between £3.45m and £5.65m.

Some Members felt that establishing a Community Hub within the Town Centre was a great opportunity to create a vibrant workplace alongside wider financial and social benefits. However, at this meeting, concerns were raised by some Members regarding the costs of the demolition of the current library combined with the costs of the Town Hall Hub and whether this was good value for money for residents.

## **20<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

### Leisure Strategy - Pre-Decision Scrutiny

The Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services together with the Cultural Services and Parks Manager and, the Development Services Manager provided a detailed presentation on the Leisure and Culture Strategy.

The strategy comprised of several different parts, including the main Leisure and Cultural Strategy and two other strategies which underpinned this document, including the Arts and Culture Strategy and the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy. Two further leisure strategies were due to be presented for the consideration of the Executive Committee in 2023 on the subjects of built facilities strategy and playing pitches strategy. The Leisure and Culture Strategy covered a wide range of topics including arts, heritage, physical activity and sport, events, parks, open space facilities, venues, sites and services.

### Asset Disposal Strategy - Pre-Scrutiny

At this meeting, the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services presented a report on the proposed implementation of an Asset Disposal Strategy and explained that the Council held a comprehensive asset register which provided a valuation of those assets in monetary and service delivery terms.

It was reported to Members that the Council had a duty to ensure that its fixed assets were reviewed on a continual basis to ensure that they remained fit for their strategic purpose, complied with legislative and regulatory requirements, and did not lose value.

### Climate Change/Carbon Reduction Strategy and Action Plan- Pre-Scrutiny

The Vice-Chair welcomed the Net Zero Projects Manager from the Midlands Net Zero Hub to the meeting who provided a detailed presentation regarding the Redditch Borough Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy and Action Plan.

The Carbon Reduction Strategy and Action Plan covered exclusively the carbon dioxide emissions of the Council and would need to be reviewed annually and progress against targets monitored twice a year.

Members were informed during consideration of this item that a Climate Change Officer would be appointed and that there would be a further resource requirement as the Strategy was implemented.

#### Voluntary Bodies Scheme Pre-Decision Scrutiny

This report was considered by the Committee at its meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

At this meeting options for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Grants Scheme for the next three years, after the current scheme expired in March 2023, were outlined for Members' consideration. It was reported that VCS groups respondents had expressed a preference for option 2 to be adopted by the Council.

There was detailed discussion regarding the concessionary rents during consideration of this item and the impact of this on smaller, locally based community and voluntary groups in Redditch. However, Officers reminded the Committee that there was currently no concessionary rents scheme offered by the Council.

### **1<sup>st</sup> December 2022**

#### Cost of Living

This matter was considered via a report and presentation which the Committee received at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022. The report detailed all of the initiatives that the Council was providing to residents in relation to the cost of living situation. Specifically, Members considered what financial support was being made available by the Council for residents impacted by the cost of living crisis and how the support provided by the Council was communicated to eligible residents.

At the meeting, Members had the opportunity to provide feedback and suggest improvements, and a recommendation was made to the Executive Committee regarding seeking external grant funding to enable a borough-wide campaign to subsidise the insulation of poorly insulated dwellings in the private sector.

## HR and Organisational Development / People Strategy / Workforce Strategy - Pre-Decision Scrutiny

This report was pre-scrutinised at the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023 where it reported that the key aim of the Council's Workforce Strategy 2022-2026 was to have a workforce that was fit for the future and able to deliver the Council Plan and Strategic priorities whilst promoting the wellbeing of the workforce.

Three key themes of the Strategy were outlined as follows:

- Workforce Planning and Talent Management
- Engagement
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

The Committee was informed that action plans would be devised and implemented during the course of this Workforce Strategy to ensure that the aims of the new strategy were being implemented in practice.

As part of the discussion the following areas were raised remote working, hot desking policy and key performance indicators (KPIs) that were being developed in relation to the strategy and associated action plans.

## Revisiting Items Identified at the Overview And Scrutiny Training Event held on 6th June 2022

Consideration of this item was a follow up to the previously considered item on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022. At this meeting Members were asked to decide which of the outstanding items they wished to add to the work programme for the rest of the municipal year.

Members were asked to prioritise the task and finish review they wished to undertake in the first instance, as there was limited Officer resource and time left in the municipal year to undertake a substantive task and finish group review. It was agreed that a Task and Finish Group review of bulky waste collections should be prioritised by the Committee in the first instance and that it was possible to tie this topic together with the issue of fly tipping. Time and resource permitting, the Committee could then investigate launching the other task groups which were previously agreed by the Committee – Health Inequalities within the BME Committee Task Group and the Road Safety and Speeding Task Group.

## Council Motion - Bulky Waste Collection

At this meeting Members were reminded of the original motion in relation to bulky waste proposed at the full Council meeting on 14th November 2022 as follows:

*“Council is concerned about the cost-of-living crisis having a new impact on fly tipping, with the cost of bulky waste collection becoming a disincentive for many residents. Council asks the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to set up a Task and Finish review, to consider the costs, consequences and benefits of a pre-booked, free household bulky waste collection service for those Redditch residents who are low paid, elderly, disabled or in receipt of benefits, which will enable Members to consider options and determine what action, if any, to take.”*

The Council had a duty to provide bulky waste collections for domestic properties, although it was entitled to charge for the collection of some waste dependent on criteria.

It was agreed by Members and Officers that linking the issues of fly tipping and bulky waste collections in one task group review was a sensible proposal. And therefore, a scoping document for the task group would be submitted for approval by the Committee at a meeting later in the municipal year in advance of the launch of the Task Group.

#### Road Safety Task Group

As a result of the previous item in this report it was agreed that the Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Collection Task Group be launched in the first instance, and the decision on the launch and membership of the Road Safety and Speeding Task Group be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee.

## **8th December 2022**

### Pre-Decision Scrutiny - Appropriation Of Land Off Ipsley Church Lane For Planning Purposes

At this meeting, the Bereavement Services Manager presented a report on the appropriation of Land off Ipsley Church and explained that the report before the Committee detailed the planning designations of open space and primarily open space used within the change of use application.

The Bereavement Services Manager clarified the steps that the Council had taken so far in order to lawfully proceed with the process of appropriation proposal and that the Council also had to consider any objections to the proposed appropriation.

The details of the objections received were summarised and were categorised into 14 categories, with categories 2-14 having been dealt with via the planning application of 13th October 2021. The loss of recreational space was the outstanding



objection that had to be considered in the appropriation process and 60 objections were recorded in this category. However, the Committee were informed that if appropriation was to be approved for this land, it would still be classed as open space under the legislation

During consideration of this item biodiversity and environmental implications of the proposed appropriation were discussed and that a commitment to enhance biodiversity on the site and the wider local area had been made via the planning process; and that there were conditions attached to the planning permission for the land off Ipsley Church Lane to the effect of enhancing biodiversity.

It was also raised at this meeting that since all of the objections had not been made available to Members, they were unable to scrutinise the report sufficiently. However, it was argued that the objections received had been sufficiently summarised in the report and by Officers during the course of the meeting to enable Members to scrutinise the matter.

## **Crime And Disorder Scrutiny Panel – 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022**

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

At the meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022, Members received an update on the work of the Partnership in the Borough in the preceding 12 months. This included an update on new funding to tackle fly-tipping on private land that had been implemented since the last meeting of the panel. In addition to this, information was provided in respect of tools and powers used to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour and the work undertaken by the Community Safety Team in order to carry out one of the responsibilities of the NWCSP, which was to reduce the fear of crime and raise awareness.

There was also a discussion regarding local initiatives, particularly with young people including the Empowering Young People Project, Volunteer it Yourself (VIY), Launch of the W.I.S.E Youth Centre, Community Safety Enhanced Youth Support Workers, The Respect Programme, and the Virtual Decisions Knife Crime Project.

The Community Safety Partnership Manager presents the updates, and the information was always well received by Members, who were grateful for such detailed updates from Officers.

## **TASK GROUPS AND SHORT SHARP REVIEWS**

Task Groups were established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to conduct an in-depth review of any service, policy or issue that affected the Borough. During this municipal year there were 2 Task Groups proposed and agreed by Members of the Committee. There was also 1 task group proposed in the 2021/22 municipal year but this had not been launched yet.

### **Road Safety**

The Committee agreed to establish this Task Group at its meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022, whereby the draft scoping document for the Task Group was also considered.

On 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022, the Committee agreed to prioritise the undertaking of the Bulky Waste and Fly Tipping Task and Finish review in the 2022-23 municipal year. It was suggested that the Road Safety and Speeding Task Group would be launched following the completion of this review.

### **Health Inequalities within the BME Communities in Redditch**

The Committee agreed to launch this Task Group at its meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022, whereby the scope and objectives of the investigation were also agreed.

On 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022, the Committee agreed to prioritise the undertaking of Bulky Waste and Fly Tipping Task and Finish review in the 2022-23 municipal year. It was agreed that the Health Inequalities within the BME Communities in Redditch Task Group would be launched following the completion of this review.

### **Bulky Waste and Fly Tipping**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to prioritise undertaking a Task and Finish review of this matter during the remainder of the 2022/23 municipal year. This decision was made following on from a Full Council resolution of 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022, whereby the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to set up a Task and Finish review to consider the costs, consequences and benefits of a pre-booked, free household bulky waste collection service for those Redditch residents who were low paid, elderly, disabled or in receipt of benefits.

It was agreed that before embarking on the Task Group review, a presentation on bulky waste collections and fly tipping would be considered by the Committee at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023. This would enable Members to better understand the Council's current position on these issues. It was envisaged that meetings of this

task group would commence, once the membership and scope of the Task and Finish review was agreed by the Committee.

## **WORKING GROUPS**

The Council has two permanent scrutiny working groups, the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, and the Performance Scrutiny Working Group.

### **Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Joanna Kane**

The Budget Scrutiny Working Group held 7 meetings on Microsoft Teams in 2022-2023 recognising the importance of regular scrutiny of the Council's Budget.

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

- Financial and Performance Monitoring
- Medium Term Financial Plan – Tranche 1
- Fees and Charges
- Financial Outturn
- Housing Revenue Account
- Council Tax Base
- Finance Recovery report

### **Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Joanna Kane**

The Performance Scrutiny Working Group met several times throughout the municipal year 2022-2023 and with more regularity than the during the previous year.

- Landscaping and Tree Maintenance
- The new Corporate Dashboard
- Energy Advice Services
- Skills in Redditch
- Housing (including Voids)

It was hoped that the regularity of these meetings would continue into the next municipal year, providing Members with a more in-depth knowledge of performance across the Council.

## **EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES**

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

The Committee had 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 provided written updates about the work of the Committee and highlighted the following points:

- Skills Budget
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

### Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) – Council Representative, Councillor Michael Chalk.

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

- Integrated Cares Systems
- Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust including patient flow and bed shortages

The written updates from Councillor Chalk provided useful information of the scrutiny work being undertaken by other authorities across the local area and the Committee were grateful of the time taken by Councillor Chalk in providing these updates.

## CONCLUSION

A significant amount of pre-scrutiny work has been carried out by the Committee throughout the year and as you can see from the report there were fewer Overview items considered by the Committee. The Committee, however, have carried out some constructive scrutiny throughout this municipal year and have considered issues that really mattered to the residents of Redditch.

**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>

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

## **APPENDIX A**

**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			
Key Objectives  Please keep to SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)			
How long do you think is needed to complete this exercise? (Where possible please estimate the number of weeks, months and meetings required)			

**Please return this form to: Jo Gresham, Democratic Services Officer, Redditch Borough Council, Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH**

**Email: [joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)**