Overview and Scrutiny Training Session – 5th June 2023 – Redditch Borough Council

Doorstep Issues

Members were placed in groups for this interactive exercise. They were asked to reflect on key issues that had been raised by residents in their wards and whether they would be suitable for further scrutiny. Members attending were split into three groups to discuss their ideas. During the discussion the following topics were raised by each group:

Group 1

1. **Homelessness Support** – what support and service are available for those who are homeless within the Borough?
2. **Third Sector Support** – How are third sector organisations supported? What is information, funding is available for them? Does the Councill work with them effectively?
3. **Parking** – parking enforcement, provision within the Borough.
4. **Domestic Violence Support** – understanding what support and services were available to victims of domestic abuse and their families.
5. **Black Mould** – Understanding the extent of the issues of black mould within social housing in Redditch. What measures are taken by Housing teams to remedy the presence of black mould and the process and timeframes they are resolved.
6. **Repairs and Maintenance** – What is the process for reporting an issue to Repairs and Maintenance Team? How long does it take to resolve issues. What services are available?
7. **Customer Experience** – what is the customer experience when making complaints within the Council. Who do issues get reported to? Timelines of resolution of issues.
8. **Speeding** – How is the issue of speeding tackled within the Borough?
9. **Anti-Social Behaviour** – What measures are taken to tackle ASB within the Borough?
10. **Drugs** - What measures are taken to tackle drug activity within the Borough? Are there steps being taken to tackle County Lines drug activity?
11. **Nuisance Begging** – What measures are in place to tackle this issue and if there is a mechanism to provide support and understand those who needed further support.
12. **Drinking in Town** – what measures were in place to tackle drinking in the Town Centre, particularly around the Church Green area.
13. **Tree Maintenance** – what is the schedule for tree maintenance? Which trees can the Council remove, and which are protected?
14. **Culture and the Arts** -how does the Council work with local Arts and Culture Groups in a joined up way to ensure that events within the Borough are publicised effectively. What resources does the Council have in this area? Could the Council do more in order to promote the Arts and Culture Service on its website (including up to date information of groups on the Council website).

<u>Group 2</u>

1. **Roads** – Condition of roads, how issues with road safety and speeding can be tackled effectively by the Council working with partners (County Council, Police etc).
2. **Parking** - What can the Council do to alleviate parking issues for residents around Redditch Town Centre?
3. **Social housing repairs** – How can the Council improve its social housing stock repair turnaround times? How can resources be aligned more effectively so that urgent repairs are undertaken in a timely manner?
4. **Gardens in social housing** – How can the standard and upkeep of garden areas in council properties be improved?

<u>Group 3</u>

1. **Play Areas** – Is there a sufficient provision of suitable play areas in the Borough? How to address the lack of variety in terms of play equipment in the Borough catering to different age groups, e.g. 4-12 year-olds and older teenagers? Can the durability of play areas equipment be improved?
2. **Medication Provision in Worcestershire** – To resolve an inconsistency identified whereby some medicines are not available for free within Worcestershire that are free to residents in neighbouring/other counties.
3. **Mental Health - Third Sector Support** – How are third sector organisations providing mental health services supported? What is information, funding is available for them? Does the Councill work with them effectively?
4. **Empty Shops in Town Centre** – Looking at how empty units can be accommodated and whether initiatives can be implemented to encourage businesses and/or community organisations to move into empty units. How can the Council help to increase the shops offer in the Town Centre?
5. **Footpaths and pavements –** Addressing the poor condition of paving in certain areas of the Borough, which is a potential dangerous and an inconvenience for pedestrians.
6. **Keeping local areas clean and safe –** How to ensure neighbourhoods are kept clean and secure from Anti-Social Behaviour? How can community cohesion be strengthened and/or supported by the Council?
7. **Housing register waiting list** – How can the housing waiting list be reduced? How to better prioritise people with local connection? Exploring scope to increase the number of social housing properties in the Borough to accommodate the demand.
8. **Repairs and Maintenance (of Council properties)** – What is the process for reporting an issue to Repairs and Maintenance Team? How long does it take to resolve issues. What services are available? What is the policy regarding damage caused to Council properties, whether caused by tenants, the Repairs and Maintenance Team and the contractors?
9. **Mould and damp** – What is done to enforce standards in properties to prevent structural damp and mould issues (both social housing and private rented sector)? How effective is the Council at enforcement where poor standards are reported? Is there any advice support available to those residents who have black mould / condensation in properties as a result of lifestyle factors?

10. **Parking** – What can the Council do to alleviate parking issues for residents around Redditch Town Centre? Also parking enforcement provision within the Borough.
11. **Benefit and debt issues –** How to better support residents in dealing with these issues? What support can be provided/facilitated by the Council?
12. **Buses –** Liaison with Worcestershire County Council over maintenance of key bus lines that residents rely on for work commute. Looking at making the timetables more convenient particularly at peak times.
13. **Tree Maintenance -** what is the schedule for tree maintenance? Which trees can the Council remove, and which are protected?
14. **Fences –** Standard of fencing etc.

Methods of Scrutiny

Within the groups there followed a discussion regarding what would be the most appropriate method of scrutiny to look at the topics identified in further detail. The following options were provided to Members to choose from:

1. Overview
2. Task Group/ Short Sharp Review
3. Pre-scrutiny
4. Working Group

Group 1

Topic	Method of Scrutiny
Homelessness Support	Overview
Third Sector Support	Task Group
Parking	Overview
Domestic Violence Support	Task Group
Black Mould	Performance Scrutiny Working Group
Repairs and Maintenance	Short/Sharp Review or Performance Scrutiny Working Group
Customer Experience	Overview
Speeding	Overview (Task Group already agreed)
Anti-Social Behaviour	Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel
Drugs	Task Group
Nuisance Begging	Task Group
Drinking in Town	Task Group
Tree Maintenance	Performance Scrutiny Working Group
Culture and the Arts	Task Group

Group 2

Topic	Method of Scrutiny
Roads (road safety and speeding)	(Task Group already agreed)
Parking	Overview
Social housing repairs	Overview (to begin)
Gardens in social housing	Overview

Group 3

Topic	Method of Scrutiny
Play Areas	Overview (then potentially a Short Sharp Review)
Empty Shops in Town Centre	Task Group
Parking	Short Sharp Review
Buses	Overview (invite County Council Officers)
County Lines and ASB/Drugs	Overview (Police to be invited to deliver a presentation) / Crime and Disorder Panel
Mental Health – Third Sector Support	Overview. Any questions on County matters to refer to the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)
Footpaths and pavements	Performance Scrutiny Working Group
Bulky Waste and Fly Tipping	(Task Group already agreed)
Speeding	(Task Group already agreed)
Housing Register Waiting List	Short Sharp Review / Performance Scrutiny Working Group
Medication provision in Worcestershire	Refer to the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)
Tree Maintenance	Performance Scrutiny Working Group
Mould and damp	Overview or Task Group Review
Benefit and debt issues	Overview
Repairs and Maintenance	Short/Sharp Review or Performance Scrutiny Working Group
Fences	Performance Scrutiny Working Group

Members then provided feedback to the other groups on the issues identified and what their top three issues would be. These were as follows:

Group 1

1. Domestic Violence Support
2. Third Sector Support
3. Culture and the Arts

Group 2

1. Social Housing Repairs
2. Road Safety and Speeding
3. Gardens in Social Housing

Group 3

1. Empty Shops in the Town Centre
2. Play Areas
3. County Lines and Drug Use