

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor Craig Warhurst (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Brandon Clayton, Gemma Monaco and Ashley Monk

Officers:

Neil Batt, Jess Bayley-Hill, Amanda Delahunty, Rachel Egan, Jonathan Elger, Georgina Harris, John Leach, Helen Mole, Katie Sharp-Fisher and Judith Willis

Democratic Services Officers:

Eve Davies

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor Wanda King.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader asked Members to note that at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8th June 2026, Members had pre-scrutinised the following items:

- Minute Item no. 7 - Shared Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2031
- Minute Item no. 14 - Quarter 4 Update and 2026/27 Housing Improvement Plan
- Minute Item no. 13 - Q4 2025-26 Housing Performance incorporating Tenant Satisfaction Measures Results
- Minute Item no. 17 - Construction of Redditch Innovation Centre

Following their discussions, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had endorsed the recommendations contained within the reports.

Chair

In addition, amendments to the recommendations for the 'Construction of Redditch Innovation Centre' report had been proposed which were contained within the 'Additional Papers 2' pack.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, the Leader thanked the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their hard work in pre-scrutinising the reports prior to the Executive Committee's consideration.

4. MINUTES / REFERRALS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE PANELS ETC.

There were no minutes or referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any of the Executive Advisory Panels on this occasion.

5. SHAREHOLDERS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

The Principal Democratic Services Officer presented the Shareholders Committee Annual Report 2025/26.

The Committee was advised that it was a constitutional requirement for the Shareholders Committee, as a sub-committee of Executive Committee, to produce an annual report.

It was noted that a draft version of the report had been considered at a meeting of the Shareholders Committee in April 2026. Feedback had been provided at that meeting, with Members requesting additional information on work delivered by Rubicon Leisure during the previous year in line with the business plan, as well as the inclusion of further images. These amendments had been incorporated into the final version of the report presented.

The Principal Democratic Services Officer explained that, subject to any comments from the Committee, the report would be presented at the next Council meeting by the former Chair of the Shareholders Committee, Councillor Sharon Harvey.

In considering the report, a query was raised regarding the historical structure of the Shareholders Committee, which had previously been a cross-party Committee reporting to Council. Members were advised that, following a review of the governance structure and the seeking of external legal advice, it had been determined that the Shareholders Committee should operate as a sub-committee of the Executive Committee in line with best practice. Reassurance was provided that Group Leaders would

continue to be invited to attend Shareholders Committee meetings and participate in debates if they so wished.

RECOMMENDED that

the Shareholders Committee Annual Report 2025/26 be noted.

6. APPOINTMENTS TO THE SHAREHOLDERS COMMITTEE 2026/27

The Principal Democratic Services Officer presented a report on appointments to the Shareholders Committee 2026/27.

The Committee was advised that, as the Shareholders Committee was a sub-committee of the Executive Committee, it was their responsibility to appoint Members to serve on the Committee, including the appointment of a Chair and Vice-Chair. Only members of the Executive Committee could be appointed.

RESOLVED that

1) The following Councillors be appointed to serve on the Shareholders Committee during the 2026/27 municipal year:

- **Councillor Brandon Clayton**
- **Councillor Matthew Dormer**
- **Councillor Gemma Monaco**
- **Councillor Ashley Monk**
- **Councillor Craig Warhurst**

2) Councillor Matthew Dormer be appointed as the Chair of the Shareholders Committee in the 2026/27 municipal year; and

3) Councillor Gemma Monaco be appointed as the Vice Chair of the Shareholders Committee in the 2026/27 municipal year.

7. SHARED HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2026-2031

The Housing Development and Strategy Manager presented a report on the Shared Homelessness Strategy for 2026-2031.

It was highlighted that an earlier version of the Action Plan had been included in the report in error. Members were advised that the correct version of the Action Plan was also contained within the

report and it was clarified which version they were being asked to approve.

The Committee was informed that Redditch Borough Council had worked in partnership with Bromsgrove District Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Wyre Forest District Council to develop the strategy. It was noted that the Homelessness Act 2002 required all housing authorities to have a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy in place, based on a review of all forms of homelessness within their area.

Members were advised that a consultation had been undertaken and that the responses received had been considered and incorporated where appropriate.

In relation to measurable outcomes, the Committee was informed that the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government had provided the required metrics for the Local Outcomes Framework. The core outcome measures were outlined as:

- The rate of households with children in temporary accommodation (per 1,000 households)
- The number of families in Bed & Breakfast accommodation for over six weeks
- The percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved
- The number of people sleeping rough on a single night
- The number of people sleeping rough over the month who were long-term rough sleepers

The financial implications of the strategy were outlined and it was explained that the new Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant would provide funding to support delivery. The Committee was advised that a separate report had already been presented to Members detailing spending priorities for the subsequent three years.

It was reiterated that the Council had a statutory duty under the Homelessness Act 2002 to produce a homelessness strategy, alongside compliance with the Homelessness Reduction Act, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the Renters Right Act 2025.

In considering the context of Local Government Reorganisation, Members were reassured that the strategy had been developed to be adaptable for incorporation into either one or two unitary

authorities, pending the development of a new single strategy based on a fresh homelessness review as required by the Homelessness Code of Guidance.

An Equality Impact Assessment had been completed, which demonstrated a positive outcome, and it was reported that officers would continue to monitor impacts to ensure no adverse effects arose.

Members were advised that failure to approve the strategy would result in the Council not being legally compliant and could lead to potential increased use of bed and breakfast accommodation, higher levels of rough sleeping within the Borough, and negative impacts on physical and mental health, educational attainment and residents' ability to work.

RECOMMENDED that

The Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 be approved.

8. QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Performance and Improvement Manager presented a report on Quarter Four performance.

The Committee was informed that a stable position had been reported for the quarter. The key highlights were outlined, including that one hundred per cent of major planning applications had been determined, there had been improvements in housing pressures and fly-tipping response rates had remained operationally stable. Areas identified for continued focus included recycling rates and complaints.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance welcomed the progress made and advised that, moving forward, there would be a greater focus on driving improvement in Council Tax collection and Business Rates. Concerns were raised that, whilst fly-tipping incidents had increased, enforcement activity had decreased, and it was noted that further work was required in relation to enforcement action.

In considering the report, Members also noted that it contained a typographical error, which referred to the previous Portfolio Holder as having been consulted.

RESOLVED that

The overview of Quarter 4 performance for the period January to March 2026 against the Council Plan priorities be noted.

9. ENFORCEMENT AND CIVIL PENALTIES NOTICES POLICY

The Private Sector Housing Manager presented a report on the Enforcement and Civil Penalty Notice Policy.

The Committee was advised that the aim of the policy was to improve housing standards across the Borough by establishing a proportionate and robust approach. It was noted that the policy applied solely to private sector housing and did not extend to housing stock owned by Redditch Borough Council.

Members were informed that the policy aligned with national best practice to ensure consistency with other local authorities across England and covered areas including housing standards, landlord behaviour, illegal eviction and harassment and the regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation. In line with the Regulator's expectations, the policy took into account risk, harm and tenant vulnerability, as well as evidential standards. The objective was to ensure consistency in officer decision-making, improve housing standards across the Borough and reduce health and safety risks, whilst ensuring that any enforcement action taken was legally robust and defensible.

Following presentation of the report, Members discussed a number of matters in detail:

- Members welcomed the use of civil penalties outlined in the policy.
- Queries were raised regarding capacity and resources for the collection of fines, including whether additional support would be required from the Finance Team. Officers advised that civil penalty processes were already established, as fines had been collected for a number of years, and that the policy extended the scope for issuing penalties. It was confirmed that legislation was in place to address unpaid fines through escalation procedures. Officers clarified that no additional resources were anticipated to be required.
- A typographical error relating to the named Portfolio Holder within the report was identified and noted for correction.
- Concerns were raised regarding the potential impact on the private rented sector, including whether the policy might

discourage landlords and increase pressure on Council housing stock. Officers advised that this concern had been raised with central Government and reassured Members that enforcement would not be targeted at minor infractions, but rather at landlords who persistently failed to comply with legislation and placed tenants at risk.

- Members expressed concern that the service should not be perceived as being driven by income generation through fines. Officers confirmed that no targets would be set and that the Council would not be financially disadvantaged if no fines were issued. It was reiterated that the purpose of the policy was to ensure landlord compliance and to protect tenants. The Chief Executive added that the intention was to raise housing standards while supporting responsible landlords.
- The process for identifying non-compliant landlords. Officers advised that a national landlord database was being introduced, alongside proactive annual inspections, intelligence gathering and external referrals to identify landlords who were not registered. It was noted that it would be important to promote available support so that residents were aware of how to seek assistance where required.
- Members queried the level of funding expected from central Government. Officers explained that New Burdens Funding had been provided to support preparation for the new legislation, including computer system updates, staff training and administrative changes. It remained unclear whether any further funding would be made available; however, officers advised that income from civil penalties was expected to offset additional costs. It was further noted that, once teams were fully trained, no further funding would be required unless there was a significant and unanticipated increase in workload.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Private Sector Housing Enforcement and Civil Penalty Policy be approved and delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director Community & Housing Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to update the Policy in line with any legislative or government guidance updates.**

RECOMMENDED that

2) The Scheme of Delegations be amended to incorporate: -

- a. Enforcement powers under the Renters Rights Act 2025 in accordance with the wording set out in Appendix 2**
- b. Enforcement powers under the Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Sector (England) Regulations 2020 and under Section 126 and Schedule 9 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 as set out in Appendix 3**

10. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION SERVICE DELIVERY

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund Manager presented a report on Economic Development and Regeneration Service Delivery.

The Executive Committee was informed that business support and employment initiatives had previously been funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). However, the Council had received its final allocation for 2025/26 and no replacement funding had been forthcoming, resulting in a lack of external funding for economic development activities.

It was reported that the Council held an earmarked reserve for Economic Growth, with a balance of £841,000 as at 31st March 2026. Of this, £300,000 had already been allocated within the budget to continue delivery of the Innovation Lighthouse business support programme, leaving a balance of £541,000 available which could be used to support the continuation of business support and Youth Hub activity in Redditch.

Given the absence of replacement UKSPF funding, officers had been engaging with Worcestershire County Council and the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) to explore options for the continued delivery of services.

Members were advised that officers were of the view that the proposed use of earmarked reserves to fund economic development and regeneration activity through Worcestershire Growth Hub and the Redditch Youth Hub represented good value for money. It was also noted that discussions with WLEP in relation to the Betaden programme were ongoing and subject to negotiation.

Following presentation of the report, Members had detailed discussion on a number of points:

- It was queried how many businesses had accessed the Betaden programme. Officers advised that six businesses had used the service over the previous three years, with five of those businesses registering for the Incubate programme.
- Members questioned whether there were projections for the number of young people who would be supported by the Youth Hub. Officers reported that 493 young people had been supported since its launch in April 2024 and that numbers were expected to increase, particularly as an outreach programme was to be funded. It was noted that youth unemployment was rising, and additional resources were therefore being recommended. Discussion also took place regarding targeting support, with clarification that this related to the level of intervention required to support individuals into employment. Officers would ensure that the intended level of support would be clearly defined within funding agreements and reported back to Members.
- Members welcomed that the funding would be utilised within the Borough to support local residents.

RESOLVED that

1) Earmarked reserves be released to fund economic development and regeneration activities as follows:

- a. Worcestershire Growth Hub - £140,000**
- b. Redditch Youth Hub - £120,000**

2) Up to £70,000 of earmarked reserves be released to fund the Betaden programme with authority to agree the final contribution and associated outputs delegated to the Assistant Director for Regeneration and Property Services following consultation with the Leader of the Council.

11. HOUSING TENANT ENGAGEMENT POLICY

The Neighbourhood and Tenancy Manager presented a report on the Housing Tenant Engagement Policy.

The Committee was advised that the policy was intended for tenants and leaseholders of Redditch Borough Council. It was reported that a restructure within the Housing Team had taken place in the previous year, resulting in the establishment of a Tenant Experience Team. This team would work collaboratively with the wider housing service to facilitate constructive engagement, provide information to tenants and liaise with the Regulator of Social Housing.

Members were informed that the aim of the policy was to increase tenant engagement. This would include enabling tenants to review policies, contribute to the development of strategies, consider the outcomes of significant complaints and participate in meetings. The approach sought to maximise opportunities for tenants to engage with the housing service, with proactive feedback being gathered to inform service improvement.

A focus on transparency and accountability was highlighted. It was noted that, whilst the Council already undertook a range of engagement activities, these had largely been ad hoc. The introduction of the policy would support a more structured approach and enable improved data collection regarding engagement activity and outcomes.

The Committee was informed that the policy represented a starting point for the development of a broader engagement strategy, which engaged tenants would help to shape. It was noted that tenant engagement was a regulatory requirement; however, the Council was also committed to this approach as a means of driving service improvement and positive change.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Local Services commented that the policy represented a positive step forward in strengthening tenant engagement.

The Chair requested that officers ensure efforts were made to engage with a representative cross-section of residents from across the Borough.

RECOMMENDED that

1) The Tenant Engagement Policy be approved and delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director Community & Housing Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to update the Policy in line with any recommendations arising from consultation with tenants and legislative or government guidance updates.

12. ANNUAL HOUSING COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT

The Neighbourhood and Tenancy Manager presented the Annual Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.

Members' attention was drawn to the self-assessment form submitted to the Housing Ombudsman, which was used to assess the Council's progress. It was explained that approval was being sought to amend the Complaints Policy in response to feedback received from the Housing Ombudsman.

The Committee was advised that all local authorities registered as providers of social housing were required to be members of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme and to maintain robust complaints handling systems. The Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report was a mandatory requirement to demonstrate compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. Officers emphasised the importance of being open and transparent with both tenants and the Housing Ombudsman, providing an honest self-assessment to ensure fairness, consistency and the appropriate handling of complaints.

Members were informed that officers were continually reviewing practices and embedding learning from complaint outcomes to improve service delivery. It was acknowledged that, where issues arose, these would be addressed to prevent recurrence. The Neighbourhood and Tenancy Manager noted that complaints could be viewed positively as they provided valuable feedback to inform service improvements.

The report outlined the number of complaints received during 2025/26 and provided a breakdown of these cases. It was noted that response times had improved, although further improvement was required. The report also detailed the learning outcomes from serious complaints and it was emphasised that complaints handling should operate in conjunction with tenant engagement activity.

Following presentation of the report, Members discussed a number of points:

- Concerns were raised regarding increases in several key complaint indicators, including Stage One complaints received, complaints escalated to Stage Two, Stage One complaints upheld and Housing Ombudsman requests. Officers advised that improvements had been made to the Council's website to support residents in submitting complaints and additional information on the complaints process was being included in correspondence. It was clarified that these changes had made it easier for tenants to raise complaints. It was also noted that there was now a

clearer understanding of the distinction between service requests and formal complaints.

- A query was raised regarding benchmarking with other local authorities. Members requested information on the national median for Stage One complaints. Officers advised that this information would be provided following the meeting.
- The nature of complaints received was discussed. Members were informed that the highest proportion of complaints related to repairs and maintenance, followed by issues concerning anti-social behaviour and nuisance.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Annual Housing Complaints and Service Improvement Report be approved;**
- 2) The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self Assessment be approved; and**
- 3) The Housing Complaints Policy be approved and;**

NOTED that

- 4) The reports referred to at resolutions 1 to 3 above, be published on the Council's website.**

13. QUARTER 4 2025/2026 HOUSING PERFORMANCE INCORPORATING TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES RESULTS

The Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services presented a report on Quarter Four 2025/2026 Housing Performance incorporating Tenant Satisfaction Measures Results.

The Committee was informed that the Regulator of Social Housing had established the 'Tenant Satisfaction Measures' (TSM) which placed a responsibility on all social housing landlords in England to return performance information so that each provider could be assessed for how well they were providing good quality homes and services.

It was reported that performance during Quarter Four had been positive although a number of key areas remained below target. The highest volume of complaints continued to relate to repairs and maintenance. While performance in this area was improving, it remained below the required target at 77 per cent, Members were advised that proposals were in place to address this.

Key statistics were highlighted, including safety compliance, with fire safety checks at 88 per cent. In relation to anti-social behaviour, it was reported that there had been an increase in hate-related crime; however, this was attributed to improved reporting as such incidents had historically not been recorded.

The TSM demonstrated year-on-year improvement, which was reflected in increased tenant confidence.

A Member raised a query regarding gas safety checks, noting that the report referred to 134 tenanted properties where the gas supply had been capped. Officers explained that this figure included a combination of void properties, properties where tenants had refused access for gas safety inspections and properties where tenants had chosen not to have a gas supply.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Council's Quarter 4 2025/6 Housing Performance in respect of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (Landlord) be noted; and**
- 2) The results of the Tenant Participation Surveys covering 2025/6 be noted.**

14. Q4 UPDATE AND 2026/27 HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services presented the Quarter 4 Update and 2026/27 Housing Improvement Plan report.

The Committee was reminded that, following an inspection in July 2025, the Regulator of Social Housing had identified that Redditch Borough Council required significant improvements in several areas, including repairs, maintenance, fire safety, tenant engagement and stock condition surveys.

The report demonstrated the progress made since that judgement, with eighteen actions having been completed. It was noted that work had also been undertaken in collaboration with the Regulator across the consumer standards, with relevant actions having now been completed.

Members were informed that the introduction of a tenant portal was intended to support residents by providing access to self-service options. It was also noted that the Housing Annual Report for 2026/27 would be shared with tenants and leaseholders by the end of July.

The Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services acknowledged that the formatting of the Housing Improvement Plan (HIP) had been difficult to read due to the small font size and advised that this would be improved in future reports.

The revised HIP aimed to improve gap analysis and ensure that the Council could respond in a flexible and effective manner to ongoing and emerging priorities.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Housing Improvement Plan Quarter 4 2025/26 Update, which includes actions to address areas for improvement, confirmed as part of the Regulator of Social Housing inspection process, be noted.**
- 2) The 2026/27 Housing Improvement Plan, which includes actions to address areas for improvement identified across the Consumer Standards be approved.**
- 3) Delegation be given to the Assistant Director Environment & Housing Property and Assistant Director Community & Housing, following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder, to revise the 2026/27 Housing Improvement Plan, in response to requirements raised by the Regulator for Social Housing, as part of their Provider Improvement Process, and in response to legislative changes.**

15. MINUTES

The Chair explained that there was a typographical error in the minutes from the Executive Committee meeting which took place on 2nd March 2026. Under 'Council Tax Resolutions 2026/27' item the minute should have stated recommended rather than resolved.

RESOLVED that

Subject to the amendment detailed in the preamble above, the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 2nd March 2026 and 21st April 2026 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

16. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that

Under S100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting

for the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 of the said act, as amended.

- **Minute Item No. 17 – Construction of Redditch Innovation Centre**

17. CONSTRUCTION OF REDDITCH INNOVATION CENTRE

The Regeneration Project Manager presented a report on the Construction of Redditch Innovation Centre.

In relation to timescales, it was reported that construction was due to commence in Summer 2026 and that there was an anticipated seventy-week construction period with building works due to be completed by the end of 2027.

Speller-Metcalf had been appointed to work alongside the Design team to complete the stage four designs for the Innovation Centre. Members were informed that extensive value engineering had been undertaken.

The Chair informed Members that recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been proposed at a meeting held on 8th June 2026. Details of the recommendations were tabled at this meeting.

Following presentation of the report, Members had detailed discussion and commented on several points:

- The impact any delays to the approval of the recommendations would have on the project.
- Members expressed that they would like to see the project progressed quickly.
- Members asked whether a number of contractors had been contacted for quotations.
- Members expressed that they were pleased with the service from Spellar-Metcalf and that they employed local residents.
- It was confirmed that the risk register was currently being updated and that Members would be given sight of the updated document.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1. The Council utilise all available underspend from within the Town Deal programme for construction of the Innovation Centre.**
- 2. The Council accept the £2,425,000 Enterprise Zone funding from Birmingham City Council for the construction of the Innovation Centre and incorporate it into the Council's Capital Programme.**
- 3. Subject to the agreement of recommendations 1 and 2, authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Regeneration & Property Services, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, and following consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to enter into the necessary contracts and legal agreements required to implement the recommendations within this report.**

(During the consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

- 18. TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROCUREMENT SERVICES PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING AND WHICH THE CHAIR, BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, CONSIDERS TO BE OF SO URGENT A NATURE THAT IT CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING**

There was no urgent business for discussion at the meeting.

The Meeting commenced at 6.31 pm
and closed at 8.00 pm