Executive Committee

Tuesday, 8th September, 2026

MINUTES

Present:

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

Officers:

Eve Davies, Lyndsey Berry, Jonathan Elger, Claire Felton, Rob Foster, Helen Mole, Simon Parry, James Walton and Judith Willis

Democratic Services Officers:

Eve Davies

31. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Gemma Monaco.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

33. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements on this occasion.

34. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 28th July 2026 be approved.

35. REDDITCH TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

The Economic Growth Manager presented a report on the Redditch Town Centre Strategy.

The Committee was advised that the Strategy set out a clear vision and framework to guide the future development and management of Redditch Town Centre, helping to ensure that activity across the town centre was aligned around a shared set of principles.

Members were informed that the Strategy responded to the changing role of town centres and sought to enhance Redditch's appeal as a destination for residents, visitors and businesses. The Strategy aimed to strengthen the town centre's identity, culture and

heritage; support regeneration, business growth and a more diverse economy; adapt to changes in retail and the night-time economy; improve public spaces, movement and connectivity; and encourage collaboration, participation and community use.

The Committee noted that the Strategy would promote investment and partnership working and was intended to be a strategic document rather than a detailed delivery plan. It would also help to inform future projects and decision-making relating to the town centre.

Following the presentation of the report, Members had detailed discussion regarding the Strategy.

Members highlighted the opportunity to use the Innovation Centre and other developments to promote Redditch more effectively, increase footfall and attract external investment. It was noted that encouraging new businesses, including cafes, bars and restaurants, would help support both the daytime and evening economy. Members also commented on Redditch's connectivity to Birmingham and the potential to market the town as an attractive location for commuters, businesses and investors.

In response, the Committee was advised that officers were working with economic development colleagues and partners, including the Business Improvement District (BID) and the Kingfisher Shopping Centre, to develop a joined-up approach to inward investment and promotion. Feedback from stakeholder workshops had indicated that existing information needed to be communicated more effectively.

Members expressed that they were keen for the Council to learn from the experiences of other local authorities that had already undergone this process and received external funding. It was reported that the Strategy would bring together existing initiatives within a clear framework while retaining flexibility for future projects and opportunities.

Finally, Members acknowledged that there were ongoing challenges within the town centre and stressed the importance of continued efforts to drive improvement. It was recognised that, although the Council could not address every issue directly, it would continue to utilise its available powers where appropriate to support improvements and maintain standards.

RESOLVED that the Redditch Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan be approved.

36. HOUSING DECANT POLICY

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

Members were advised that the Policy set out how the Council would support tenants and leaseholders where it was necessary to move them into temporary accommodation. The Policy outlined the arrangements that would apply in different circumstances, including the Council's financial and legal obligations. It also detailed the compensation available to tenants who were permanently displaced as a result of demolition or major refurbishment works, referred to under home loss and disturbance payments.

The Committee was informed that decants were currently most commonly required on a short-term basis, for example following damp and mould issues, fire or flood incidents. The Policy had been developed to provide greater detail than was previously contained within the Housing Management Policy and reflected the increased requirements arising from Awaab's Law. The updates to legislation placed stricter expectations on landlords to address hazards within properties and, where necessary, to move tenants to alternative accommodation while works were undertaken.

The Leader advised Members that the report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the previous evening.

RESOLVED that

1) The Housing Decant Policy be approved.

2) Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services and Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to agree any revisions to the Housing Policies following the consultation and in line with any legislative or government guidance updates.

37. QUARTER 1 2026/27 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Business Improvement Manager presented the Quarter One 2026/27 Performance Report.

Members were informed that key performance highlights included the continued delivery of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) grants, with seventy-four per cent of funding either spent or committed. Strong performance had also been achieved within Planning, with one hundred per cent of major applications and

ninety-two point nine per cent of other applications determined within the relevant timescales, both exceeding Government targets.

The Committee was advised that Council Tax and Business Rates collection rates remained on target and that homelessness prevention activity had increased. It was reported that, despite an increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation, no families had been placed in bed and breakfast accommodation for longer than six weeks. Increased enforcement activity was also reported, while levels of fly-tipping had remained broadly stable. Updates were additionally provided in respect of Building Control performance and work being undertaken to address anti-social behaviour hotspots.

The Committee noted the positive overall performance position for Quarter One.

Following the presentation of the report, Members commented on the below points:

- Members expressed concerns regarding enforcement activity relating to fly-tipping as well as anti-social behaviour (ASB) and parking enforcement. It was acknowledged that Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) was responsible for dealing with some of these issues. The importance of ensuring adequate resources were available to address these problems was emphasised.
- The Committee discussed performance in Homelessness and Housing Solutions Services and noted that complaints performance was significantly below target. Officers recognised this and advised that this was in respect of homelessness complaints. Members were advised that recruitment and staffing challenges had contributed to capacity pressures, although action was being implemented to improve the service, including the recruitment of a Homelessness Manager. Members recognised the challenging nature of homelessness work and the difficult circumstances faced by both service users and staff. The importance of supporting and retaining staff within the service was highlighted.
- In respect of temporary accommodation, Members were informed that, whilst the Council was a lower achiever in respect of the number of households with children placed in temporary accommodation, the remaining homelessness

performance measures remained higher or comparable with neighbouring authorities.

- Concerns were raised regarding a reported increase in ASB incidents in the Winyates area. Members supported a multi-agency approach involving the Council, Police, Housing Services and other partners to address identified hotspots. The Committee was advised that a number of partnership initiatives were already underway in Winyates, including community walkabouts, consideration of CCTV and improvements to stairwells. Whilst incidents had increased, officers confirmed that the issue was being actively monitored and addressed.
- Members discussed fly-tipping trends and the importance of understanding the types of waste being illegally dumped in order to inform targeted interventions. Officers advised that data on locations and the nature of incidents was collected and shared with WRS to support enforcement activity and identify patterns.
- The Committee also discussed opportunities to reduce fly-tipping through greater promotion of the Council's bulky waste collection service and by publicising enforcement action as a deterrent. Members noted the importance of encouraging residents to dispose of waste responsibly while highlighting the consequences of fly-tipping.

RESOLVED that the overview of Quarter 1 performance for the period April to June 2026 against the Council Plan priorities be noted.

38. RBC EQUALITY STRATEGY 2026-2028 (INCLUDING ENGAGEMENT POLICY)

The Business Improvement Manager presented the RBC Equality Strategy 2026-2028 (including Engagement Policy) report.

Members were advised that the Strategy would be considered by Full Council for final approval. It was explained that the document did not introduce new initiatives but instead built on existing work already underway across the Council, applying a clear equality focus to service delivery and decision-making. The Strategy also aimed to ensure that communications and engagement activities were fair, accessible and effective for all residents.

The Committee was informed that the Strategy built on the progress achieved under the previous Equality Strategy, including the delivery of Council housing at Church Hill, improvements to the housing allocations system, the successful redevelopment of the Town Hall as a community hub and investment in skills and public spaces.

The Strategy was based around four equality objectives: continuing to deliver fair and accessible services; strengthening inclusive engagement and communication; improving understanding of communities and supporting inclusion; and supporting an inclusive and representative workforce.

The accompanying Engagement Policy set out how the Council would engage with residents, community groups and partners in an inclusive and meaningful manner, ensuring equality considerations were embedded at an early stage and that feedback was reported transparently.

Officers confirmed that the report would be amended to update the references to Local Government Reorganisation before submission to Full Council.

RECOMMENDED that the Equality Strategy 2026 – 2028 (including the Engagement Policy) be approved.

39. QUARTER 1 2026/27 HOUSING PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services presented the Quarter One 2026/27 Housing Performance and Improvement Plan Update.

Members were advised that the report provided an update on both housing performance during Quarter One and progress against the Housing Improvement Plan (HIP). It was explained that the Council had reviewed and expanded its performance indicators during the previous financial year to provide greater oversight of key strategic and operational areas, including rent collection, void properties, tenancy audits and tenant profiling, enabling services to be tailored more effectively to residents' needs.

The Committee was informed that positive performance had been recorded in a number of areas, including building safety compliance, gas safety, lift safety and electrical safety. Strong performance in relation to void properties was also reported, with the Council performing in the upper quartile when benchmarked

against neighbouring local authorities. Complaint handling performance remained positive overall within the Housing Service.

Members noted that staffing vacancies within the service had impacted performance during the quarter. However, a new Housing Property Services Manager and Business Support Manager had now been appointed, providing additional leadership and capacity within the service. The Committee was advised that repairs performance continued to improve and that the Total Mobile system was scheduled to go live on 13th October 2026.

Further updates were provided on fire safety improvement works, including progress on fire door replacement schemes following increased investment in the service. A second contractor had also been appointed to increase the capacity to bring void properties back into use. Rent arrears had been introduced as a new financial performance indicator and it was reported that actions were being taken to address responses to damp and mould cases.

In respect of the Housing Improvement Plan, the Committee was advised that thirty actions had been completed, forty-eight were on track to be completed and six were behind schedule, with the exceptions highlighted within the report.

After the presentation of the report, Members had detailed discussion and raised the following points:

- Members sought an update on progress against the regulatory judgement. Officers advised that the Housing Improvement Plan had been designed to address areas identified against the consumer standards. It was explained that progress was being closely monitored and, once the required improvements had been delivered, the Council would seek reinspection with the aim of achieving a C1 grading.
- It was confirmed that the inspection process applied not only to local authorities with housing stock but also to registered providers with more than 1,000 properties.
- Concerns were raised regarding rent arrears and the potential impact on both tenants and the Council if cases were not addressed promptly. Members emphasised the importance of early intervention to prevent arrears escalating and placing tenants at risk of financial hardship or eviction.
- In response to concerns regarding rent arrears, officers advised that performance had been affected by staffing

shortages, with a number of experienced staff leaving the service over a relatively short period. Members were informed that recruitment activity was underway, including interviews for Rent Officers, and that efforts had been made to improve the promotion of vacancies and attract candidates from a wider range of sectors. Officers highlighted that the Council remained a positive employer, offering agile working and other benefits, although recruitment within local government remained challenging.

- It was further noted that the tenancy sustainment service had been expanded to provide additional support to tenants, including assistance with accessing the correct benefits and identifying pathways into employment. Officers expressed confidence that these actions would help improve performance against the rent arrears target and advised that the Council was considering joining House Mark to enable benchmarking against other housing providers and identify further opportunities for service improvement. A comprehensive service review was also scheduled to commence in October 2026 to assess performance and explore additional improvements.
- Members discussed the high level of void rent loss and queried whether the target turnaround time was realistic. Officers explained that routine voids were performing well and achieving upper-quartile performance, while the longer turnaround times related primarily to more complex capital voids requiring extensive works and specialist contractor input.
- In relation to voids, the Committee was advised that contractor performance was being managed more robustly, additional capacity had been introduced and a review was underway to assess performance against sector benchmarks.
- Members expressed concern regarding the length of time some capital void properties remained empty and the associated loss of rental income. It was noted that, whilst many voids could be returned to use relatively quickly, the most complex cases often required extensive refurbishment works and presented significant challenges. Members suggested that these cases may require the procurement of additional specialist expertise and emphasised the importance of exploring all available options to bring properties back into use as quickly as possible. The

Committee highlighted that prolonged void periods were not sustainable and requested that a strong focus be maintained on reducing turnaround times, ensuring value for money and considering alternative approaches where refurbishment works were no longer economically viable.

RESOLVED that

1) The Council's Quarter 1 2026/27 Housing Performance be noted.

2) The Housing Improvement Plan Quarter 1 2026/27 Update be noted.

40. QUARTER 1 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2026/27

The Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer presented the Quarter One Financial Monitoring Report 2026/27.

Members were advised that, as at the end of June 2026, a projected revenue overspend of £0.738 million had been identified, as set out within the report. The Committee was informed that the report detailed the forecast variances across each service area.

In relation to the Capital Programme, it was reported that an expenditure of two million pounds had been incurred against an approved budget of twenty-nine million pounds.

The Committee was advised that a review of budget allocations across service areas was currently being undertaken and that many of the identified variances were expected to be addressed by Quarter Two. Members also noted that more detailed information regarding the Capital Programme would be provided in future monitoring reports, following completion of a wider review of the Capital Programme.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance acknowledged that a detailed review of budgets would be undertaken. He further commented that, whilst savings had been delivered, significant budget pressures remained, including those associated with the Innovation Centre and the Town Hall. The importance of closely scrutinising expenditure, understanding ongoing spending commitments and ensuring the delivery of a balanced budget was emphasised.

RESOLVED that

1) **The full year forecast revenue position for 2026/27 is an overspend of £0.738m which will be funded from the General Fund Balance at year end if the position remains as an overspend.**
2) **The 2026/27 actual capital position at Q1 is £2.011m against a total approved programme of £28.948m.**
3) **The Ward Budget allocation for 2026/27 of £54,000 had approved allocations at £11,490 as at 30th June 2026.**
4) **The General Fund Opening Balance of £9.986m, adjusted in year to £9.248m as a result of the overspend.**
5) **To note the forecast position in respect of the GF Earmarked Reserves is £20.957m and HRA Earmarked Reserves is £9.160m as at 30th June 2026.**
6) **To note the updated procurements position set out in Appendix A to the minutes, with any new items over £200k to be included on the forward plan.**

Appendix A - Procurement Pipeline

41. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27th July 2026.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27th July 2026 be noted.

42. 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, other than those already detailed.

43. 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 on this occasion.

The Meeting commenced at 6.01 pm
and closed at 6.54 pm