

Annual Report 2011/12

Chair's Foreword



**Chair of the Committee:
Councillor Phil Mould**

Once again Overview and Scrutiny has made real progress in Redditch this year. This is in no short measure due to our very capable Officers, Jess Bayley and Michael Craggs.

The areas of weakness that were identified in last year's annual report have all been improved on this year. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has become much more effective at pre-decision scrutiny and has been more inclusive when undertaking budget scrutiny during the year. As for petitions, which was also an area identified as in need of improvement, the Council's petitions scheme has been updated to provide the Committee with a more appropriate role.

Scrutiny is important, not only for holding the Executive Committee to account but also as a way to improve and develop policies. Through scrutiny Councillors can check what is working well as well as what is not working so well at both the Council and in the wider community.

I would like to thank all the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and of the four Task Groups that were launched this year for their hard work and commitment. I would also like to thank all the Officers who have provided evidence during the year. I recognise that it has been a difficult year for many Officers, at a time of transformation, so the fact that many Officers worked hard to produce detailed, professional reports in this environment was very much appreciated.

Councillor Phil Mould, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Contents

Introduction	Page 1
Four Key Principles of Scrutiny	Page 2
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
- Commissioning Body Role	Page 3
- Progress Since Last Year	Page 4
- Petitions	Page 4
- Changes to the Petitions Process	Page 7
- Pre-Decision Scrutiny	Page 8
- Monitoring Responses to Task Group Recommendations	Page 9
- Monitoring Responses – Committee Recommendations	page 16

Contents

- Portfolio Holder Annual Reports	Page 17
- Budget Scrutiny	Page 19
- Health Overview and Scrutiny	Page 20
Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel	
-Chair's Foreword	Page 21
- Background	Page 22
- Terms of Reference	Page 23
- Work Programme	Page 23
Task Groups	
-Task Groups – Introduction	Page 24
- Work Experience Opportunities	Page 26

Contents

- Increasing Rates of Recycling	Page 28
- Access for Disabled People	Page 30
- Promoting Sporting Participation	Page 32
- Youth Services Provision	Page 34
- Market Review	Page 36
Engaging the Community	
-Involving the Public and Press	Page 37
Scrutiny Training	
- Member Development and Training	Page 38
Performance	
- Outcome of Recommendations in 2011/12	Page 39

Contents

Conclusion

- Scrutiny in the Future

Page 40

Membership Gallery

Page 41

Expressions of Gratitude

Page 44

Overview and Scrutiny Contact Details

Page 45

**Annual Report
2011/12**

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Annual Report 2011/12

Introduction

There is an annual requirement for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to produce a report outlining its work and achievements during the previous year. The report also contains information about the reviews that have been undertaken by Task Groups, Short Sharp Review Groups, and the work of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel.





The Annual Report provides an opportunity for Members to consider future work programmes and to consider how the Overview and Scrutiny process could be further strengthened in future years.

It also reviews how successfully areas of weakness in the scrutiny process identified the previous year have been addressed, including more appropriate consideration of petitions and more effective pre-scrutiny of reports prior to consideration by the Executive Committee, and looks at how scrutiny of the budget has been made more inclusive. The report also monitors the recommendations that have been made by the Committee during the course of the year.

This report has been produced by Overview and Scrutiny Officers in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and the remaining ten Members.

Four Key Principles of Scrutiny

Members at Redditch Borough Council aim to ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny process complies with the four key principles of scrutiny identified by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS), the organisation set up to promote effective scrutiny in local government. The four key principles of effective scrutiny are:

-  to provide a critical friend challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers;
-  to enable the voice and concerns of the public and its communities;
-  for scrutiny to be carried out by independent minded governors who lead and own the scrutiny process; and
-  to drive improvement in public services.

These symbols will feature, where relevant, throughout the report to demonstrate how the Overview and Scrutiny process at Redditch Borough Council has complied with these four principles during the year 2009/10.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Membership 2011/12

Councillor Phil Mould (Chair)

Councillor Mark Shurmer (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Peter Anderson, Andrew Brazier, Simon Chalk, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Gay Hopkins, Alan Mason, Brenda Quinney, and Luke Stephens

Commissioning Body Role



The Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Redditch Borough Council is designed to act as a commissioning body. The Committee has the power to authorise policy reviews and to scrutinise issues of local interest in depth.

This year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has commissioned a number of strategic reviews that have been conducted by Task Groups.

There are eleven members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee meets approximately every three weeks, convening a week before the meeting of the Executive Committee. This provides Members with an opportunity to pre-scrutinise the work of the Executive and to ensure that decision-making processes remain transparent and accountable.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Progress Since Last Year



In 2010/11 Members identified a number of areas of scrutiny which needed to be improved in Redditch. This included the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's approach to considering petitions; improvements that could be made to introduce more constructive pre-scrutiny; and ensuring that budget scrutiny became more inclusive at the Council. In 2011/12 progress has been made in relation to each of these areas of scrutiny as detailed over the following pages.

Petitions



A number of petitions were received by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a variety of subjects during the year. This included petitions on the following subjects:

a) The location of the taxi rank on Unicorn Hill (24th May 2011):

The Committee received a petition, signed by 13 residents and business representatives, regarding the location of the taxi rank on Unicorn Hill. In particular, concerns were expressed about the impact of the taxi rank location on local businesses, particularly in relation to delivery points and customer access to retail units located on the street. The Committee referred the petition to the Council's Licensing Committee which made a decision on the matter in July 2011.

The petition was re-submitted for the Committee's consideration in November 2011. However, as this matter had already been the subject of formal discussions in recent months the petition was rejected.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Redditch War Memorial



Redditch war memorial was the subject of a petition in 2011.

The war memorial in the town centre is situated near St Stephens Church in Redditch Town Centre. This picture depicts the Service of Dedication that took place on Sunday 2nd April 1922 when the memorial was unveiled by Viscount Windsor of Hewell Grange.

© AiR Partnership website.



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Petitions



b) Petition on the War Memorial (18th October 2011)

A petition, signed by 169 local residents, was also received on the subject of the war memorial in Redditch town centre. Residents were particularly concerned about anti-social behaviour close to the memorial. To address this problem the Committee recommended that a number of actions be taken to deter inappropriate behaviour in the vicinity of the war memorial. A report, outlining the action that has been taken by the Council to address this issue is due to be considered by the Committee on 17th April 2012.

c) Petition on Sexual Health Information Services (29th November 2011)

The Committee received a petition, signed by 159 local residents, on the subject of the Time 4 U Sexual Health Service for young people. There were concerns amongst residents that this service would be removed, reducing access for young people to independent sexual health services. The petition was eventually noted by the Committee, as the matter was also due to be considered in more detail by Worcestershire County Council.

d) Petition on Short Stay Parking (24th January 2012)

The petition on short stay parking in Redditch town centre was originally received on 29th November 2011. Consideration of the subject was postponed until January 2012 to provide relevant public agencies with an opportunity to meet to discuss the subject. Following discussions of the petition it was proposed that relevant Officers from both Redditch Borough Council and Worcestershire County Council should meet with the lead petitioners to discuss the matter in further detail.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Petitions



e) Save Brockhill Green Belt – Petition Review (8th November 2011)
The Committee also received a request from local residents to review a decision that had been made by full Council in September 2011 on a petition calling to save Brockhill green belt. However, in advance of the Committee's consideration of this matter a decision was taken by the petitioners to withdraw their request for a review.

Changes to the Council's Petitions Process



The majority of the petitions received by the Committee required Councillors to review the procedure that had been followed by Officers and relevant partner agencies in relation to the subject of the petition. Increasingly the Councillors found this process frustrating as the Committee lacked the power to make decisions or to take constructive action in response to the petitions.

These problems with the Council's petitions process were recognised during the year. On 16th January 2012 the Council's Petitions Scheme was altered. As a consequence the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is no longer required to consider petitions where the number of signatures does not meet the Council's threshold for consideration by full Council. In future the Committee will only be required to consider two forms of petition. This will include requests from petitioners to review a decision on a petition made by full Council and consideration of petitions requesting the attendance of a senior Officer or elected Councillor to give evidence at a public meeting. This second category will only apply in cases where the petition has secured 1,000 or more signatures.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Pre-Decision Scrutiny



In 2011/12 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was much more selective when identifying topics for pre-decision scrutiny than during the previous year. This process of pre-decision scrutiny has also been more constructive than in previous years as on each occasion when pre-decision scrutiny was undertaken recommendations were made to the Executive Committee. By February 2012 every recommendation made by Councillors following pre-decision scrutiny had been approved by the Council's Executive Committee.

The decision to schedule Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings a week before meetings of the Executive Committee contributed to this improvement to pre-decision scrutiny. By contrast to 2010/11 the Committee was able to access finalised reports and could therefore make recommendations on the basis of all relevant evidence pertaining to the subject matter.

The following subjects were pre-scrutinised by the Committee during the year:

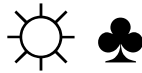
- Staff Volunteering Policy (16th August 2011);
- Gritting and Snow Clearance Report (8th November 2011);
- Housing Revenue Account Review (14th February 2012); and
- Street Naming and Numbering Policy (14th February 2012).

The Committee has requested an opportunity to consider two further reports detailed on the Council's Forward Plan for pre-decision scrutiny. The reports are:

- Housing Allocations Policy Review; and
- Highway Impact Assessment Monitoring Report.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monitoring Responses to Task Group Recommendations



The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of approved scrutiny recommendations. During the course of 2011/12 the Committee monitored implementation of recommendations that had been made by six separate Task Groups between 2005 and 2010.

a) Third Sector Funding (24th May 2011)

The majority of the Third Sector Funding group's recommendations had been implemented by May 2011. The group had proposed that the Shopping, Investing and Giving (SIG) model of grant funding should be introduced by the Council. This would involve a mixture of commissioning or shopping for services from the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS); investing in the skills base of the VCS; and giving grants to VCS organisations meeting specific funding criteria.

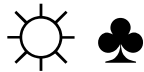
The Investing and Giving processes have already been implemented. However, the Committee learned that the shopping element of this funding process would take longer to implement due to the complexity of the process and the significant investment required. It was anticipated, however, that this part of the SIG funding process would be fully operational by 2012/13.

b) Council Flat Communal Cleaning (16th August 2011)

Following the review of the Council's communal cleaning process in Council flats a new cleaning contract had been issued to an external contractor, Maid Marions. The

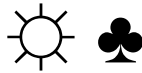
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monitoring Responses to Task Group Recommendations – Council Flat Communal Cleaning



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monitoring Responses to Task Group Recommendations



fees charged for the cleaning service had remained relatively stable and a monitoring process had been introduced to enable the Council to monitor delivery of cleaning work within the flats.

As requested by Councillors new lighting had been introduced at the three storey flats located in Stratton House, Batchley. Similarly, as suggested by the group the contractor was required to utilise graffiti wipes on appropriate surfaces.

c) Local Strategic Partnership (8th November 2011)

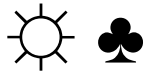
The majority of the Local Strategic Partnership Task Group's recommendations had been implemented by November 2011. However, no action had been taken to convene a "We are Redditch" meeting in 2011 as no changes had been made to the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy that would have required this type of consultation event. As requested by Councillors the first monitoring report, outlining the partnership's performance in relation to the Sustainable Community Strategy, was also received by the Committee in November 2011.

d) Preventing Homelessness – Housing Trailblazers (29th November 2011)

A number of changes had been introduced to improve homelessness prevention services at Redditch Borough Council following a scrutiny review in 2006. These changes were recognised as good practice by the Department of Communities and

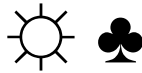
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monitoring Responses to Task Group Recommendations – External Refurbishment of Housing Stock



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monitoring Responses to Task Group Recommendations



Local Government, which had awarded funding to the Council. This funding had successfully been utilised to deliver the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer Scheme which had had a beneficial impact on rates of homelessness in the Borough.

e) External Refurbishment of Housing Stock

A number of update reports were considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the External Refurbishment of Housing Stock Short, Sharp Review. The Executive Committee had requested in January 2011 that further exploratory work be undertaken by Officers in relation to three of the group's recommendations before a decision could be taken on those recommendations.

Officers initially presented a number of suggestions on this subject to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May 2011. Further information was requested in relation to the costs involved in delivering the proposed actions and the timeframes for delivering actions in the Council's capital programme, which were provided for Members' consideration in August 2011.

Implementation of the group's full set of proposals took place in January 2012, a year after the review had concluded. The Committee learned that the majority of recommendations had been implemented, though in some cases plans were in place to deliver suggestions in 2012.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monitoring Responses to Task Group Recommendations



f) Communications (6th March 2012)

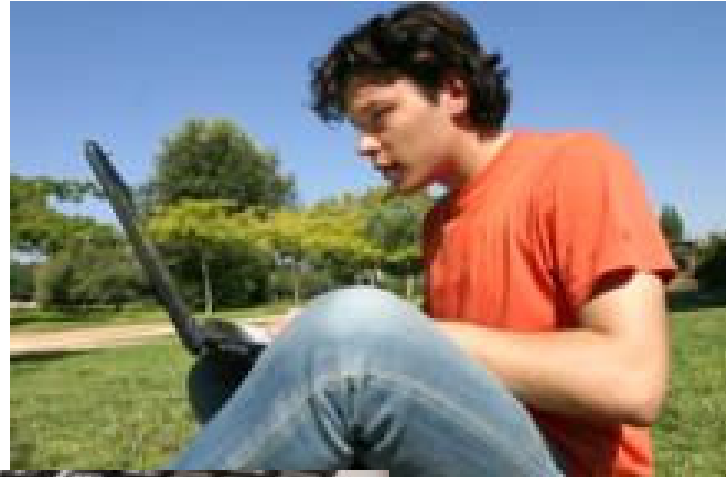
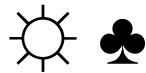
A number of changes had been made to the Council's Communications Team since the Communications Task and Finish review concluded in 2008. Many of the actions proposed by the group had been addressed and further progress had been made to improve communications at the Council. This included publishing three editions of Redditch Matters a year, producing at least five press releases each week, and working closely with senior Officers and Portfolio Holders to ensure that the Council's corporate messages were promoted. The local BBC radio station had commended the service as the best Council media team in Worcestershire. However, the team did not remain complacent and would be producing a joint media protocol, joint branding and a joint Communications Strategy with Bromsgrove District Council.

g) Gritting Short, Sharp Review (6th March 2012)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomed a positive response from Worcestershire County Council to the Gritting Short, Sharp Review Group's final report. Members were advised that progress had been made since 2010/11 to improve gritting and snow clearance services in Redditch. Worcestershire County Council had also made a financial contribution to additional snow clearing equipment which could be used in the Borough.

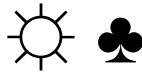
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Monitoring Responses
to Task Group
Recommendations –
Communications
Review**



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monitoring Responses - Committee Recommendations



This year a monitoring report framework was also introduced to enable Councillors to track the implementation of recommendations that had been made by the parent Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The majority of these recommendations were made in 2011/12 as a result of pre-decision scrutiny or following receipt of a petition by the Committee.

The first of these tracking reports was received by the Committee on 14th February 2012 and covered the period 24th May 2011 – 1st January 2012. Councillors were advised that during this period 20 recommendations had been made by the Committee, of which 16 recommendations had been approved by the Executive Committee, one recommendation had been rejected and three remained to be considered by the Executive Committee.

A further monitoring report, detailing the outcome of recommendations proposed in the second half of the year, is due to be received by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2012. Approved recommendations will continue to be monitored until action has been taken to implement the proposals.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Portfolio Holder Annual Reports



The Portfolio Holders Annual Report process has again been an integral part of Overview and Scrutiny in Redditch. For the fifth year running, the six Portfolio Holders have each been invited to appear before the Committee to discuss their performance in the previous twelve months.

The Portfolio Holder Annual Report process for 2011/12 has been very similar to that of the previous year. The Annual Report is effectively delivered in two stages. Firstly, the Committee receives a written report which comprehensively details the performance of the services within the Portfolio Holder's remit during the previous year. This enables Members to propose a number of informed questions for the Portfolio Holder to address when they appear before the Committee in person.

This year it was agreed that the Committee would pose no more than six questions for any Portfolio Holder's consideration. This was introduced to give each Portfolio Holder an opportunity to provide a more detailed response to each question. It has also helped to ensure that the Committee holds the Portfolio Holder to account by focusing their questions on the most salient aspects of the written report.

Moving forward, the Committee will continue evaluating the Portfolio Holder Annual Report process to ensure it remains a robust element of Overview and Scrutiny in Redditch.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Portfolio Holder Annual Reports



Councillor Jinny Pearce, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development and Transport, delivered her Annual Report for the consideration of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2012. Seated at the table during the course of this presentation are (from left to right) Sue Horrobin (Waste Management Manager), Councillor Jinny Pearce and Ruth Bamford, Head of Planning and Regeneration.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Budget scrutiny



The Overview and Scrutiny Committee enjoyed another successful year in terms of budget scrutiny. The Committee's participation in a budget setting session was a key component of this, with Members receiving a presentation on all of the budget bids that had been submitted for 2012/13 at a session that was open for all elected Councillors to attend. Members had the opportunity to seek further information about any of the bids and about how these bids had been prioritised by senior officers.

The Committee continued to receive quarterly budget and performance monitoring reports from each of the Council's six directorates for its consideration, and reviewed the position of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2012-15. The Committee also considered a report which detailed the Council's fees and charges policies and further information about the Housing Revenue Account for the Council's housing stock.

It is very much expected that the Committee will continue to play an integral role in the Council's budget process during 2012/13 and beyond.



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Health Overview and Scrutiny



Redditch representative on the Worcestershire HOSC, Councillor Brenda Quinney

In May 2011, Councillor Brenda Quinney was appointed as the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC). District Councils are invited to appoint representatives to HOSC to ensure that the interests of the district in relation to health are taken into account. Representatives from district Councils must be members of a district Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Since her appointment, Councillor Quinney has provided the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with regular updates on the work of the HOSC. In particular, Members have been informed of the following issues:

- Proposals of the West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust as part of the Worcestershire Make Ready initiative to introduce a central ambulance hub within the county.
- The introduction of new processes at the Alexandra Hospital to improve the quality of care for elderly patients.
- The start of a review to identify the most appropriate location for a new Stroke Unit in Worcestershire.



Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

Chair's Foreword



**Chair of the Panel:
Councillor Bill Hartnett**

In its second year, the Panel has continued to make good progress in its core function of holding the Redditch Community Safety Partnership, the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, to account. This has been made possible through the development of robust processes to scrutinise the partnership, combined with Panel Members' unshakeable determination that Redditch remains a safe place to live.

The introduction of the Community Safety Partnership's bespoke Performance Management Framework has been a crucial factor in enabling the Panel to accurately assess the extent of crime in Redditch and to receive information on what projects and programmes are in place to reduce these levels of crime. We were also provided with a presentation from a member of the local police force on this matter.

Panel meetings have again been well attended by its core membership and co-opted member representatives. We are particularly grateful to members of the local media for regularly attending our meetings and in publicising what is being done to keep the Borough safe for its residents.

Moving forward, the Panel will need to adapt to new crime and disorder governance arrangements, most notably through the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners in place of Police Authorities in November 2012 and the creation of a merged North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership to cover Redditch, Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest, to ensure that it retains an important role in supporting community safety.

I would like to conclude by thanking fellow Members of the Panel for their attendance and support this year; and Officers for their hard work and professional advice.

Councillor Bill Hartnett, Chair of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel.

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

Background



Membership 2011/12

Councillor W Hartnett (Chair)

Councillors R Blake, A Clayton, R Hill, W King.

The Police and Justice Act 2006 required every local authority in England and Wales from April 2009 to have a designated Committee with the responsibility for scrutinising the work of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP). This legislation was designed to provide local Councillors with a more enhanced role in relation to the work of CDRPs. CDRPs are statutory bodies which have a significant remit covering: crime and disorder matters; anti-social behaviour and community safety.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered possible arrangements for scrutinising the Redditch Community Safety Partnership, the local CDRP, in 2009. The Committee agreed that it would not be appropriate for this work to be undertaken by them because the Committee's Work Programme was already extensive and would not provide Members with an opportunity to devote sufficient time and resources to crime and disorder scrutiny. The Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel was therefore established as a sub-committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and meets on a quarterly basis.

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

Terms of Reference



The Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel has a number of roles and responsibilities which include:

- commissioning policy reviews from Task Groups;
- scrutinising the performance of the partnership and recommending actions for improvement;
- acting as a critical friend to the partnership;
- identifying and promoting areas of good practice; and
- helping to promote examples of positive work undertaken by the Redditch Community Safety Partnership.

Work Programme



This year the Panel has considered the following items:

- the new Redditch Community Safety Partnership Framework;
- the Chair of Redditch Community Safety Partnership's Annual Report;
- a presentation on performance statistics in relation to community safety in the Borough;
- minutes from meetings of the Redditch Community Safety Partnership's Strategic Board.



Task Groups

Task Groups - Introduction



Task Group reviews are one of the most popular forms of scrutiny at Redditch Borough Council amongst elected members. These policy reviews provide elected Councillors with an opportunity to investigate topics in detail over a period of time and provide Scrutiny Members with an opportunity to make a positive contribution to service development at the Council.

This year four Task Group reviews were commissioned by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Each group was chaired by a member of the Committee and the reviews were undertaken in accordance with terms of reference provided by the Committee. A further review of Redditch market has also been approved by the Committee. This review will be launched in 2012/13.

Task Groups review subjects in detail and often scrutinise documentation, interview expert witnesses and undertake site visits to observe practices in action. These reviews provide non-executive Councillors, who have not been appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with an opportunity to participate in the scrutiny process.

Many of the Task Group reviews undertaken this year are scheduled to be completed in spring 2012. Each of the reviews currently remains on track to report by the deadlines set by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Task Groups



This year elected Members have participated in scrutiny in a variety of ways and gathered evidence from a many different sources . As part of this process the members of the Increasing Recycling Rates Short Sharp Review Group inspected a newly introduced recycling site adjacent to Lock Close and Cardy Close, Batchley, in January 2012.

Task Groups

Work Experience Opportunities: Completed May 2011



Councillor Peter Anderson (Chair).

Councillors Andrew Brazier (from January 2011) Andy Fry, William Norton (Until January 2011) and Mark Shurmer.

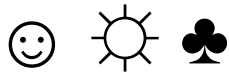
The Work Experience Opportunities Task Group review was completed in May 2011. The review was born out of concern that Redditch possessed a disproportionately high number of young people who were neither in education, employment, nor training (NEET). It was thought that by giving students greater opportunities to participate in work-related learning, young people would develop a clearer idea of what they wanted to do in future and could make themselves more employable in the process.

During the course of its investigations, the group became particularly impressed by the work of the Worcestershire Education Business Partnership to facilitate these placements. The partnership's work was greatly valued by the lead work experience teachers at each of the four high schools in Redditch. Upon learning that that funding for the Partnership was to be withdrawn, the group highlighted its excellent work in their final report and recommended that the Council support the partnership's continued function. This recommendation was endorsed by the Executive Committee.

All but one of the Group's other recommendations were also endorsed, including the proposal that work experience placements continue to be provided locally for students at Key Stage 4 following the Government's announced intention to remove this compulsory requirement.

Task Groups

**Work Experience
Review – Completed
May 2011**



Task Groups

Increasing Rates of Recycling: Completed 27th March 2012



**Councillor Gay Hopkins (Chair).
Councillors Peter Anderson, Andrew Fry, Roger Hill and Phil Mould.**

The Increasing Rates of Recycling Short, Sharp Review was launched in November 2011 in an attempt to arrest a recent slide in the Council's recycling rates. The review was completed in March 2012.

The group undertook a comprehensive review of recycling in the Borough, interviewing a number of Council Officers about existing practices for collecting procedures, and how recycling was being promoted in Redditch. Members also interviewed Councillor Anthony Blagg, County Council Portfolio Holder with responsibility for the Environment and Waste Management, for information on recycling across the county and invited his thoughts on how the process might be improved in Redditch.

Members of the group had the opportunity to see how the recycling process operated in practice. As part of this, a site visit to the EnviroSort Materials Reclamation Facility in Norton took place towards the start of the review to give elected Members a first hand perspective of how waste collected for recycling were processed. The group also went out on a tour of recycling sites that had recently been introduced as part of the *100% Project* to provide all residents in the Borough with a recycling collection service.

Task Groups

**Increasing Rates of Recycling:
Completed 27th
March 2012**



The group inspecting a newly introduced recycling site adjacent to Lock Close and Cardy Close, Batchley, in January 2012

Councillors Phil Mould, Peter Anderson, and Roger Hill during the group's visit to EnviroSort, Norton, in November 2011.



Task Groups

Access for Disabled People – Due to be completed 17th April 2012



Councillor Alan Mason (Chair)
Councillors Anita Clayton, Andy Fry, Bill Hartnett and Brenda Quinney

A review of access for people with disabilities to Redditch town centre was launched in September 2011. The review focused specifically on access for people with all types of disabilities to Redditch on public transport (buses) and by taxi as well as on provision of disabled parking spaces in the town centre.

The Councillors appointed to the group agreed to allocate responsibility for addressing particular objectives to individual members. This helped the group to progress through the review relatively quickly.

A variety of expert witnesses were consulted including: representatives of bus companies; representatives of local taxi firms; and Council Officers. Local residents were also consulted by the group. A number of residents completed a questionnaire, though residents were also consulted at meetings of the Redditch Access for Disabled Group and Redditch Older Peoples' Forum.

The review is on target to be completed by 17th April 2012. The group has agreed to present thirteen recommendations which will be designed to improve access arrangements for people with disabilities in Redditch in future years.

Task Groups

**Access for Disabled
People –
Due to be completed
17th April 2012**



Task Groups

**Promoting Sporting
Participation:
Due to be completed
22nd May 2012**



**Councillor Luke Stephens (Chair).
Councillors David Bush, Simon Chalk, Adam Griffin, and Mark Shurmer**

The Promoting Sporting Participation Task Group review was launched in August 2011 in an attempt to use London's staging of the Olympic Games as a spring board to increase levels of sporting participation in Redditch. It had also been precipitated by concern that the number of people taking part in sport in Redditch had steadily declined in recent years.

The review has focused predominantly on how sporting provision in Redditch has been marketed and promoted, especially through websites and social networks. The group have met with providers of sport in the Borough to discuss how the activities can be better promoted to help increase participation rates.

The group has looked at how disabled sporting provision could be increased, as well as volunteering opportunities in sport. It has also met with Officers at a County level to discuss what is being done around the Olympics to boost participation.



The final report of the review is due to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22nd May 2012.

Task Groups

Promoting Sporting Participation



Sport Relief, Redditch

Task Groups

Youth Services Provision – Due to be completed 17th April 2012



Councillor Simon Chalk (Chair)

Councillors Rebecca Blake, Andrew Brazier, Gay Hopkins, Phil Mould and Luke Stephens

A review of the youth services delivered in Redditch was launched in July 2011. At the time that the review was launched the Councillors were concerned that there were limited opportunities available for young people to participate in positive youth activities. However, during the course of the review the Councillors have discovered that there are many services available but often youth activities are not effectively promoted to young people.

The review coincided with a wider review by Worcestershire County Council of youth service provision within the county. Following extensive consultation the County Council decided to introduce a commissioning framework for the delivery of youth services. As part of this process the County Councillors representing the local district will be tasked with commissioning youth services from local voluntary, public and private sector organisations.

Many of the actions that the group are proposing are designed to assist the Commissioning Group. The Councillors are aiming to contribute to an effective transition to the new framework to ensure that the youth activities that are delivered in Redditch in future years meet the needs of local young people.

Task Groups

**Youth Services
Provision –
Due to be completed
17th April 2012**

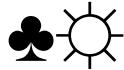


Members of the Youth Services Provision Task Group visited The Lounge in Alvechurch, Worcestershire in December 2011. Featured are (from left to right) Councillors Phil Mould, Gay Hopkins and Simon Chalk.

Task Groups

Market Review

**- Due to be launched
May 2012**



Councillors Quinney and Mason

In November 2011 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a request to review Redditch market. The Committee agreed that a review of Redditch market would make a valuable contribution to the local community. However, as a number of reviews were already being undertaken the launch of this review was postponed until May 2012.

The Committee agreed that preparatory work could usefully be undertaken prior to the start of the review. In this context Councillors Mason and Quinney were tasked with doing some initial research on the subject of the market. As part of this process they have interviewed relevant Council Officers and formulated a detailed plan of action for the review process.

The review will focus on the operational and management arrangements for the market, existing problems with the market and opportunities for development. As part of the review process representatives of the market will be consulted and the operation of successful markets in other parts of the country will be assessed with a view to identifying practices that could be applied in Redditch.

The review is due to conclude in January 2013.

Engaging the Community

Involving the Public and Press



The Committee has continued to engage the public and press in the Overview and Scrutiny process during 2011/12. A press tracker has been introduced which monitors coverage of the Committee in the local media. Up until the date of publication, the Committee and its work has been referred to in twenty-five articles in the local press during the course of the year, covering both the work of the four Task Groups and also the work of the parent Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This is in no small part due to the regular press attendance at meetings of the Committee. The articles have highlighted how the work of a non-executive body can have a real impact in the local community.

There has also been regular public participation in the Committee's work during the year. This has been most evident in the work of the Task Groups which have actively sought input from members of the public to inform their reviews.

The Committee has continued to welcome public participation at its meetings. This has been most evident when members of the public have been invited to present and speak to the petitions which the Committee has considered.



Scrutiny Training

Member Development and Training

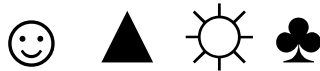


Councillors and Officers have attended the following scrutiny related training courses and conferences in 2011/12.

- Overview and Scrutiny Briefing - delivered by Officers (24th May 2011) – attended by Councillors Fry, Hartnett, Hopkins, Mason, Mould and Shurmer.
- Overview and Scrutiny Training – delivered by Frances Taylor, Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) (13th June 2011) – attended by Councillors Braley, Bush, M Chalk, S Chalk, A Clayton, Fry, Hartnett, Hill, Hopkins, R King, Mason, Shurmer, Stephens and (Mr) D Taylor.
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Introductory Training – delivered by Officers (23rd June 2011) – attended by Councillor S Chalk and Stephens.
- West Midlands Scrutiny Network, University of Birmingham, (16th June 2011, 17th November 2011 and 8th March 2012) – attended by Councillor Mould.
- CfPS Parliamentary Seminar Series, Local Government House, London
-(14th February 2012) – Councillor Stephens.
-(20th March 2012) - Councillor Mould.

Performance

Outcome of Recommendations 2011/12



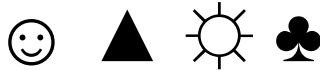
During the course of the 2011/12 year (up to and including its meeting on 14th February 2012), the Overview and Scrutiny Committee made thirty-six recommendations to the Executive Committee. Thirty recommendations were approved and six declined.

Three reviews are due to be completed in March and April 2012. In total these reviews are proposing thirty recommendations. The Executive Committee's response to these recommendations will be detailed in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation tracking report, which is due to be considered by the Committee in June 2012.



Conclusion

Scrutiny in the future



This year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has undertaken some thorough reviews and has made a significant number of recommendations. The Committee is becoming more effective at: policy reviews and contributing to policy development; holding partners to account; and undertaking pre-decision scrutiny. However, the Committee recognises that there are still areas of scrutiny that could be developed and improved.

During the coming year, Members and Officers have identified that the following areas need to be addressed in the Overview and Scrutiny process in 2012/13.

- There should be greater selectivity in identifying topics for policy review, to ensure that there is both Member and Officer capacity to participate in reviews and that the reviews address the key concerns of the local community.
- The written report template for the Portfolio Holder Annual Report should be simplified to ensure that the content is clear and that preparation of the report is not overly time consuming.

The Committee is aware that from 1st April 2012 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be supported by a shared Democratic Service for Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council. Three Officers in this services will assume the lead for supporting Overview and Scrutiny at both Councils. This may have implications for scrutiny in Redditch in future years.

Membership Gallery

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee



**Councillor Phil Mould, Chair of
the Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**



**Councillor Mark Shurmer,
Vice-Chair of the Overview and
Scrutiny Committee**

Membership Gallery



**Councillor Peter
Anderson**



**Councillor Andrew
Brazier**



**Councillor Simon
Chalk**



**Councillor Andy
Fry**



**Councillor Bill
Hartnett**

Membership Gallery



**Councillor Gay
Hopkins**



**Councillor Alan
Mason**



**Councillor Brenda
Quinney**



**Councillor Luke
Stephens**

Expressions of Gratitude

Expert Witnesses

A number of Officers have been particularly supportive of the Overview and Scrutiny process in 2011/12. Although it is not possible to acknowledge all Officers in this report the following individuals deserve recognition for their outstanding contributions to the scrutiny process this year.

Anne Marie Darroch (Communications Manager)

Rebecca Dunne (Policy Manager)

John Godwin (Head of Leisure and Cultural Services)

Lyndsey Hadley (Policy Officer)

Sue Horrobin (Waste Management Manager)

Bev Houghton (Community Safety Manager)

Guy Revans (Head of Environmental Services)

Denise Sunman (Committee Services Officer)

Liz Tompkin (Head of Housing)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would also like to thank the Council's Print Unit for all their hard work and support during the year.

Local Press

The Committee would like to thank Ms Harriet Ernstsons from the Redditch Standard for attending a number of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the year and for helping to raise the public profile of scrutiny activities.

Overview and Scrutiny Contact Details

For additional copies of this report, or to find out more about Overview and Scrutiny at Redditch Borough Council please contact:

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jess.bayley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk 01527 64252 (ext.3268)

Michael Craggs, Democratic Services Officer
michael.craggs@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk 01527 64252 (ext.3267)

Further information about the Overview and Scrutiny process at Redditch Borough Council can also be found on the Council's dedicated web pages. To access these web pages please use the web address attached here and then follow the links:

<http://redditch.whub.org.uk/cms/council-and-democracy/councillors-and-committees/overview-and-scrutiny.aspx>

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