

additional papers 1



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Mon 10 Mar
2025
6.30 pm



Oakenshaw Community Centre,
Castleditch Lane, Redditch, B98 7YB

**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
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Overview and Scrutiny

Monday, 10th March, 2025

6.30 pm

Oakenshaw Community Centre

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs:

Matthew Dormer
(Chair)
Craig Warhurst
(Vice-Chair)
William Boyd
Andrew Fry
Joanna Kane

Sachin Mathur
David Munro
Rita Rogers
Paul Wren

- 5. Future Cemetery Provision - Pre-Scrutiny (Pages 5 - 38)**
- 6. UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025-26 - Pre-Scrutiny (Pages 39 - 54)**
- 8. Council Plan - Pre-Scrutiny (Pages 55 - 70)**
- 11. Executive Committee Minutes and Scrutiny of the Executive Committee's Work Programme - Selecting Items for Scrutiny (Pages 71 - 78)**

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Future Cemetery Provision

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Harvey
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Simon Parry
Report Author	Job Title: Environmental Services Manager Contact email: doug.henderson@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 07483 151469
Wards Affected	Greenlands & Lakeside Ward & Winyates Ward
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priority	Parks and Open Spaces/Community Safety & Regeneration
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS**The Executive Committee RESOLVE that:-**

- 1) Land located at the current Abbey Cemetery site, as indicated in Figure 2 in Appendix 1, be utilised for earth burial provision for an interim period of up to 10 years commencing in January 2027.**
- 2) A review be commissioned of the potential to use the site indicated at Figure 3 of Appendix 1 for burial provision in the long-term.**

The Executive Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that:-

- 3) To begin a process of incorporating new burial provision within the new Borough of Redditch Local Plan.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Redditch Borough Council operates and manages three cemeteries, Plymouth Road, Edgioake Lane and Abbey Cemetery and St Stephen's, St Luke's and Feckenham closed church yards.
- 2.2 Plymouth Road is closed to new burials, Edgioake Lane Cemetery has approximately five years burial provision available at its current usage, and Abbey had approximately 2 years left. These figures are only

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indicative based on trends; however, they can change for a number of reasons; including continued increase in cremations versus burials and fluctuating local/county death rates.

- 2.3 Work had been undertaken in recent years to assess the suitability of several different sites across the Borough to provide additional burial capacity, included in various reports to Council.
- 2.4 In total 26 sites were originally reviewed across the Borough with The Council previously agreed upon the Ipsley Church lane site as the most favourable option. This was agreed at the meeting of the Executive in December 2021 and subsequently at Council in January 2022.
- 2.5 The appropriation of land off Ipsley Church Lane was agreed at the meeting of the Executive on 13th December 2022.
- 2.6 Following the elections in May 2024, a new Labour Administration took on the leadership of the council, and their manifesto included putting a hold on any further works on the Ipsley Church Lane site whilst a review of alternative sites was carried out.
- 2.7 In November 2024, a new site review was independently commissioned with CDS Consultants that provide expert advice within a range of topics including Cemetery Provision. CDS looked at 10 locations, comprising a total of 13 sites. These sites were assessed in accordance with a holistic site search criteria tailored to cemetery development to further interpret their suitability.
- 2.8 Of the original 13 sites, eight sites were found to be potentially suitable for cemetery development.
- 2.9 The results of the review produced a short list of the most viable sites.
 - 2.9.1 Proposed Site 2A – Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD. (South of Arrow Valley Country Park).
 - 2.9.2 Proposed Site 2B – Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD. (South of Arrow Valley Country Park).
 - 2.9.3 Proposed Site 5B – Ipsley Church Lane, Ipsley, B98 0TJ. (South of St Peters Church).
 - 2.9.4 Proposed Site 4 – Edgioake Cemetery, Astwood Bank, B96 6BG.
- 2.10 Further analysis reduced this list further. Site 2A is effectively too small and wooded which would only give up to 15 years burial space at best with significant woodland clearance required so has been discounted. The potential extension at Edgioake Cemetery has been discounted because the land in question is privately owned, and following some initial enquiries, the owner has no interest in selling.

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- 2.11 With only 2 years of full earth burial space left at Abbey Cemetery and the risk of Funeral Directors diverting business to Bromsgrove sites should Abbey close for burials the following additional option was tabled.

To reuse a section of land at the Abbey Cemetery that has previously been used for ashes scattering . This land identified has not been scattered on since mid-2024 and was only used sporadically before that. There are no laws that prohibit this , so the main challenge for the council will be around the communication used to raise this with the community.

- 2.12 Following this the planning team also tabled the idea that burial provision should be considered in the next round of local plans as more new houses come online.

- 2.13 This then led to the current set of recommendations outlined in this paper that gives a short-, medium-, and long-term strategy for burial provision in the local area.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The purpose of the consultant's (CDS) report was to review the risk analysis of the two resolutions for the future burial provision for Redditch Borough Council.
The Bromsgrove and Redditch area is reaching a capacity for new burial space, furthermore, as stated in the Redditch Local Plan, 1.7 hectares of land is required for burial provision.
Both options were assessed against burial information across the Bromsgrove and Redditch area, with local policy in mind. Furthermore, the risk for each option was assessed using Risk Register analysis. Figure 1 shows the location of both Resolution 1 at Abbey Cemetery, B97 6RR and Resolution 2 (Proposed Site 2B) at Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD.

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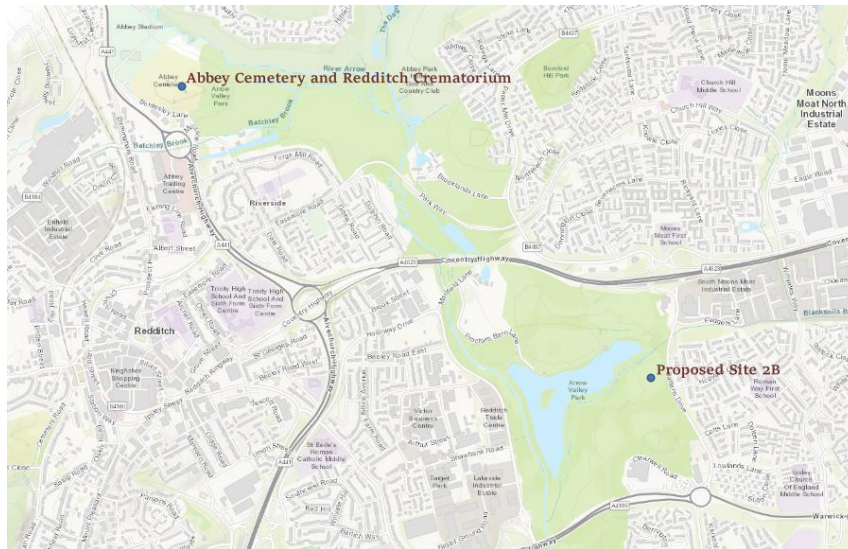


Figure 1. the location of Resolution 1 (Abbey Cemetery) and Resolution 2 (Proposed Cemetery) within the Redditch Area.

3.2 **Resolution 1** Abbey Cemetery and Redditch Crematorium, B97 6RR, has been proposed by Redditch Borough Council as an option for further burial accommodation. This would be achieved by repurposing existing space designation for ash scattering and using it to accommodate for full body interment .



The blue box to the left highlights the ashes scattering area being proposed for reuse as full burial, with the purple area denoting the remaining ashes scattering area.

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There is limited information on repurposing ash scattering land for burials. However, the reuse of graves is a similar topic, and it is understood from The Law Commission that a grave can be reused after 75 years of the original burial. This is of course permitting consent from the family of the deceased person, should there be an objection no reuse can occur for another 25 years.

It is therefore concluded that there is no current legislation stating that the repurposing of ash scattering land for burial use is not permitted. Furthermore, as this land is not including a physical burial or physical memorialisation, this topic can be taken lightly in comparison to burial re-use.

This resolution does however come with potential reputational risk due to the repurposing of up to 30% of the existing ashes scattering space that wraps round the back of the Crematorium for full earth burials. People may be upset at the idea so a clear well structure communication plan is needed with councillor support to mitigate the potential adverse reactions from some. It should also be noted that this resolution still leaves 3 acres of land for scattering with an open aspect looking over the hills behind the site.

With the land already within the boundary of the existing cemetery the costs will be for the ongoing installation of plinths, an opportunity to enhance roadways, paths, and landscaping to separate the new space from the rest of the ashes scattering area.

- 3.3 **Resolution 2.** The Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD was considered a suitable site for cemetery development following a site feasibility report undertaken by CDS. This site was referenced Proposed Site 2B alongside the total 13 sites assessed (of which eight were deemed suitable). The redline boundary of Proposed Site 2B is shown in Figure 3. The proposed site is approximately 6.2 acres. This would provide for an estimated 4,960 burials (excluding consideration for burial buffers and space for landscaping and potential infrastructure). The site is flat, open and has good transport links. Against the average of 71 new burials per annum, this would provide burial accommodation for a further 69 years. This is of course a high-level calculation based off estimates, which should be noted.

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Figure 3. The redline boundary of resolution 2 (Proposed site 2B)

As long as Resolution 1 is granted which will give 10 years additional full earth burials and gives enough time for the council to pursue a new site. As stated, the 2 main immediate concerns around Site 2b are any potential issues with geology & groundwater and from previous cases the potential impact Sport England could have due to the land having been used in the past for sport provision. There is a hope as this was only ever a temporary sport provision that this may not turn out to be a problem, but it is worth tackling it head on in the initial stages of the process.

Aside from this the land does currently hold 'Primarily Open Space' status within the existing Redditch Local plan that needs to be addressed.

At this early-stage initial funding will be utilised to investigate ground water and geology issues as this will dictate next steps.

Appendix 1 point 48 page 14 outlines a timeline.

- 3.4 **Recommendation 3** . Explore all feasible options for providing new burial space or funding the provision of new burial space though the policies and allocations in the new Borough of Redditch Local Plan, this

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will if successful attempt to keep pace with new housing stock and provide a long-term solution.

- 3.5 To conclude it essential that Resolution1 is agreed which will then give the council 10 additional years of burial provision . This then enables the council to progress resolution 2 which as proven by the process around Ipsley will take considerable time. This is because of items such as geology and hydrology work taking up to a year to assess , the overall planning process, consultations, council processes etc.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The funding for new burial provision is included within the medium-term financial plan for 2025/6.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Local Authorities Cemetery Order 1977 must be adhered to when identifying a new location for a cemetery.
- 5.2 As an authority we have no statutory duty to provide a cemetery however as a community resource to support the local population it could be argued there is a moral obligation. If no cemetery is provided, then people would have to travel further afield to find a location for a burial which could be of either a whole coffin or of a cremated remains casket.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**Relevant Council Priority**

- 6.1 This is aligned with the Parks & Green Spaces/Community Safety & Regeneration short and medium- long-term priorities within the Council Plan 2023 & 2024.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 As part of the environmental impact assessment to be carried out for the proposed burial site consideration should be given to the potential contamination of the soil and groundwater from the chemicals used in the embalming process. This will include options to mitigate any impact that is found a part of the assessment.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.3 A lack of cemetery provision within the Borough could lead to additional hardship for local families such as increased travel costs attending a

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site outside the Borough. This could further be difficult for the more vulnerable members of the Borough for whom traveling has to be by specialist arrangement.

A potential lack of cemetery provision could also lead to longer term health and social issues as families may struggle to grieve in the traditional way at a grave side.

The council will make sure that the new cemetery will provide the opportunity and capability to offer a number of alternative styles of burial as well as a greater range of memorial styles to provide greater emphasis on creativity, in addition areas for specific faith groups will be facilitated to include significant provision for the Muslim community, something which in a dwindling space at Abbey we have been unable to enhance for some years.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The authority may be at reputational risk if a new cemetery site is not provided as this could lead to the private sector opening a facility (subject to the standard planning approval process). This might lead to higher fees and charges being charged than would otherwise been the case if the authority had provided the service.
- 7.2 The authority may be at financial risk should a competing facility be opened within the Borough by the private sector. If this were to happen then the income levels projected in future plans will drop.
- 7.3 The authority may put other council owned cemeteries under pressure should Abbey close to further full earth burials and an alternative site is not secured.
- 7.4 Resolution 1 comes with reputational risk from the repurposing existing ashes scattering ground for full earth burials due to upset from the public.
- 7.5 Resolution 2 comes with the risk of failing to secure planning permission and the requirement to find yet another potential parcel of land .

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – A Risk and Options appraisal report for a new Cemetery
– Author CDS.

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Executive Committee
2025

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Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Harvey	24 th Feb 2025
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Simon Parry	20 th Feb 2025
Financial Services	Pete Carpenter	20 th Feb 2025
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings	20 th Feb 2025
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matthew Eccles	19 th Feb 2025

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A Risk and Options Appraisal Report for a New Cemetery.

Redditch Borough Council

Date: February 2025

**The CDS Group, Building 51, Wrest Park, Silsoe, Bedfordshire, MK45 4HS
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T: 01525 864387**



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1 Introduction

- 1 The purpose of this report is to review the risk analysis of two options for the future burial provision for Redditch Borough Council.
- 2 The Bromsgrove and Redditch area is reaching a capacity for new burial space, furthermore, as stated in the Redditch Local Plan, 1.7 hectares of land is required for burial provision¹.

1.1 Options

- 3 There are two potential options this report will consider for Redditch Borough Council. These options include:
 - **Option 1** - Repurpose an area of existing ashes scattering ground at Abbey Cemetery, B97 6RR.
 - **Option 2** – Next Steps for the proposed site 2B: Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD. (South of Arrow Valley Country Park).
- 4 Both options will be assessed against burial information across the Bromsgrove and Redditch area, with local policy in mind. Furthermore, the risk for each option will be assessed using Risk Register analysis. Figure 1 shows the location of both Option 1 at Abbey Cemetery, B97 6RR and Option 2 (Proposed Site 2B) at Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD.

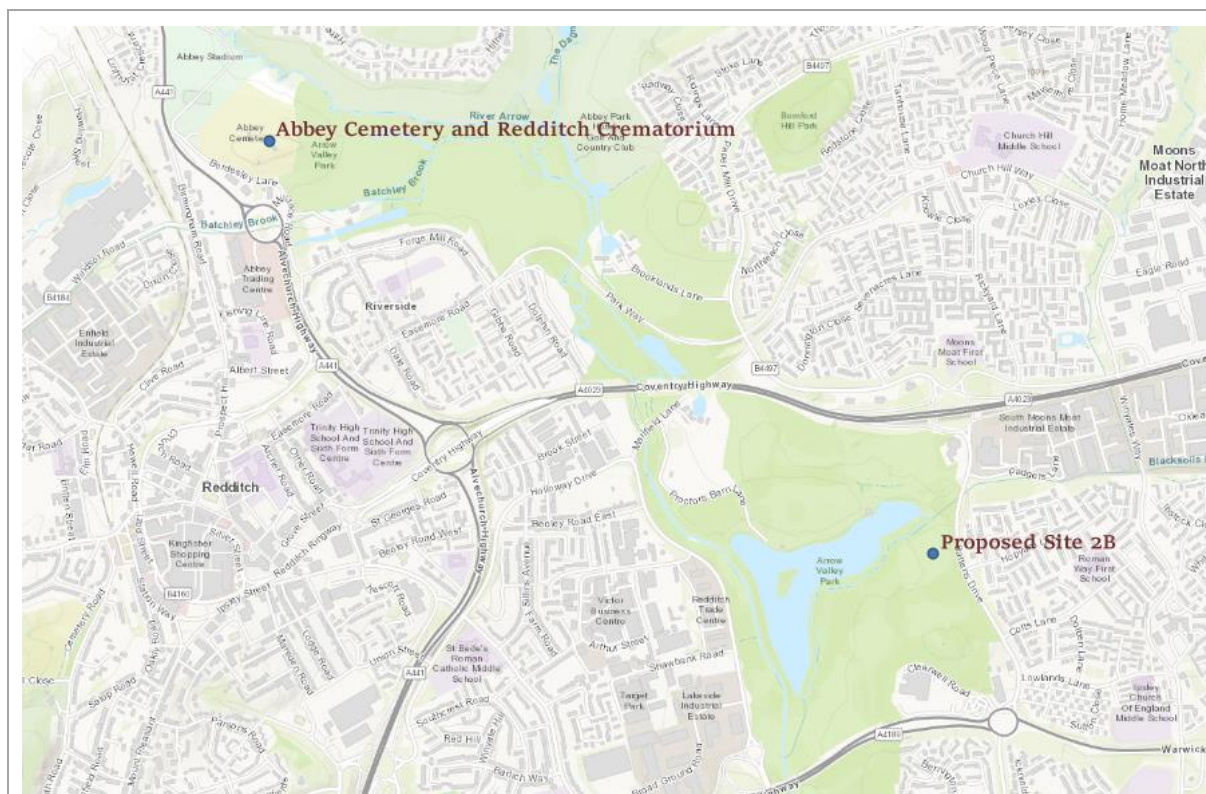


Figure 1. The Location of Option 1 (Abbey Cemetery) and Option 2 (Proposed Cemetery) Within the Redditch Area.

¹ Redditch Borough Council (2017). Available from: [Adopted Borough Of Redditch Local Plan No4 2011 2030](#)

2 Background

2.1 Population Demographics

- 5 The number of individuals living across Bromsgrove and Redditch has shown to have increased (Redditch by 3.4%² and Bromsgrove by 5.9%³) between the 2011 and 2021 Census. Additionally, both areas have been projected a growing and also aging population between 2018 and 2040, this has been presented in Table 1.
- 6 Both an increasing and aging population will produce a strain on current burial provision in the area.

Table 1. Population Projections and Aging Population of Bromsgrove and Redditch (2018-2040).

	2018	2040
Bromsgrove All Persons	98,662	115,103
Bromsgrove 65+	22,168	29,827
% 65+ within Whole Population of Bromsgrove	22.47%	25.91%
Redditch All Persons	84,989	85,819
Redditch 65+	15,450	19,147
% 65+ within Whole Population of Redditch	18.18%	22.31%

2.1.1 Muslim Population

- 7 The percentage of individuals practicing the Muslim faith has been presented in Table 2. This has been accounted for within demographic analysis as all Muslim deaths result in burials, therefore it is important that there is burial space accounting for this religious requirement. Table 2 demonstrates that the Muslim population is increasing across the Bromsgrove and Redditch areas as well as more broadly across the West Midlands.

Table 2. Muslim Individuals Across Bromsgrove and Redditch (2011-2021).

	2011	2021
Bromsgrove Muslim Population %	0.5	0.9
Redditch Muslim Population %	3.4	4.2
West Midlands Muslim Population %	6.7	9.6

2.2 Existing Cemeteries

- 8 The burial numbers from the last five years have been presented in Table 3. The average number of multi-faith new coffin graves (burials) from 2020 to 2024 has been calculated as 71 per annum. This equates to approximately 1-2 burials per week.

² ONS (2023). Available from: [How life has changed in Redditch: Census 2021](#)

³ ONS (2023). Available from: [How life has changed in Bromsgrove: Census 2021](#)

Table 3. Burials Per Annum Across the Bromsgrove and Redditch Area (2020-2024).

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
New Coffin Grave (Multi-faith)	77	86	61	70	65
Reopen Coffin Burial (Multi-faith)	69	64	65	70	60
New Coffin Grave (Muslim faith)	17	9	8	12	13
Reopen Coffin Burial (Muslim faith)	0	0	0	0	0

- 9 Further to this, Table 4 presents the list of cemeteries within the Bromsgrove and Redditch area, including whether there is accommodation for new burials and whether the cemeteries can accommodate for Muslim burials.

Table 4. New Burial Provision within Bromsgrove and Redditch Cemeteries.

Cemetery	Accommodating for New Burials?	Muslim Burial Provision?	Notes
Bromsgrove New Cemetery, Church Road, Bromsgrove B61 8QH	No	No	No new graves are available.
North Bromsgrove Cemetery, Barley Mow Lane, Catshill, Bromsgrove B61 0LU	Yes	Yes	The newest of cemeteries under Bromsgrove and Redditch Council, enough space remaining for many years currently with the authority owning the land next door and beyond. This Cemetery also holds a Muslim burial section.
Bromsgrove Old Cemetery, Church Lane, Bromsgrove B61 8QH	No	No	No new graves are available.
Abbey Cemetery and Redditch Crematorium, Bordesley La, Redditch B97 6RR	Yes	Not Currently	Approximately 50 full grave spaces left. Work currently underway to source room for a further 15 Muslim burials.
Plymouth Road Cemetery, Plymouth Road, Redditch, B97 4PX	No	No	Plymouth Road is closed, and no new graves are available.
Edgioake Cemetery, Edgioake Lane, Redditch, B96 6BG	Yes	No	sufficient room for roughly 50 grave spaces.

- 10 There are a recorded 100 new grave plots remaining between Abbey Cemetery and Edgioake Cemetery. Moreover, from satellite imagery screening, there appears to be approximately 1 acre of free space remaining at North Bromsgrove Cemetery. CDS assume that there is space for approximately 800 burials per acre. Therefore, there is a calculated total of 900 burial spaces remaining.
- 11 From the average of 71 burials per annum across Bromsgrove and Redditch areas (in Table 3), this leaves approximately 12 years remaining of burial space.
- 12 From the published minutes of the Redditch Borough Council Executive Committee meeting (2021) regarding new cemetery provision, it was stated that deciding to not provide new provision would impact in the region of 100 families each year ⁴.

⁴ Redditch Borough Council (2021). Available from: [Issue - items at meetings - New Cemetery Provision](#)

3 Option 1 - Repurpose an area of existing ashes scattering ground at Abbey Cemetery

3.1 Background and Location

- 13 Abbey Cemetery and Redditch Crematorium, B97 6RR, has been proposed by Redditch Borough Council as an option for further burial accommodation. This would be achieved by repurposing existing space designation for ash scattering and using it to accommodate for full body interment.
- 14 The redline boundary of Abbey Cemetery (Option 1) can be seen in Figure 2, the satellite imagery shows that there is potential space for burials to the eastern area of the site, the purple polygon represents this remaining space. The yellow polygon shows the proposed area for burials and the blue polygon represents this space following a 30% contingency for hard infrastructure, tree protection orders, among others. It is understood that without repurposing the area for ash scattering, there are approximately 50 new burial plots left.



Figure 2. The Redline Boundary of Option 1 (Abbey Cemetery)

3.2 Burial Provision

- 15 From satellite imagery, it appears as if there is approximately 0.9 acres of land remaining for use (the yellow polygon in Figure 2). It is unclear how much of this land has been reserved for future burials (although as stated it has been provided that there are approximately 50 new burial plots remaining) and how much is currently used for ash scattering. However, applying a 30% contingency to the 0.9 acres (to allow for infrastructure, root protection areas etc.) leaves 0.63 acres. This provides an estimated 504 burials. Against the average of 71 new burials per annum,

this would provide burial accommodation for a further estimated 7 years which would help alleviate the burden of burial capacity across the Bromsgrove and Redditch area in the short term.

- 16 Table 5 shows the new burials for multi faith and Muslim faith alongside the numbers of new and re-open loose burials (scattered cremated remains within a plot) of the last five years. There is evidently a greater need for burial accommodation over ash scattering. This is likely because individuals will prefer to keep the ashes of the deceased to scatter in a preferred place with sentimental value.

Table 5. Selected Burials Per Annum at Abbey Cemetery (2020-2024).

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
New Coffin Grave (Multi-faith)	32	22	27	26	37
New Coffin Grave (Muslim)	11	3	5	8	8
New Purchased Loose Burial	1	1	3	1	0
Re-Open Loose Burial	2	5	8	2	5
Exhumation of Ashes	1	1	2	0	2

3.3 Limitations of Repurposing

- 17 There is limited information on repurposing ash scattering land for burials. However, the reuse of graves is a similar topic and it is understood from The Law Commission that a grave can be reused after 75 years of the original burial⁵. This is of course permitting consent from the family of the deceased person, should there be an objection no reuse can occur for another 25 years.
- 18 It is therefore concluded that there is no current legislation stating that the repurposing of ash scattering land for burial use is not permitted. Furthermore, as this land is not including a physical burial or physical memorialisation, this topic can be taken lightly in comparison to burial re-use.

3.3.1 Public Objection

- 19 It can therefore be suggested that there is reasoning to repurpose ash scattering land for full body interment. However, there may be objection from the public regarding the existing scattered ashes in the memorial garden of Abbey Cemetery. But as there was no original burial (full body interment or ash interment), it would not be possible for any retrieval in exhumation.
- 20 During any grave reuse process, families of the buried must be consulted regarding any changes to the use of the burial ground, land management is therefore dependant on open communication⁶. Although repurposing ash scattering land is a different situation, it is still regarding the repurpose to burial accommodation and surrounds a sensitivity of the deceased. A long-term approach of communications would be necessary.

3.3.2 Loss of Revenue on Memorialisation

- 21 Should the area of memorialisation and ash scattering be repurposed for burials then there would be a loss in revenue for the service of scattering ash remains. This is a charge of £111.00 (Scattering Cremated Remains in Grave or in rose/memorial garden (Roll Back Turf) 18 years and over) as per

⁵ The Law Commission (2024). Available from: <https://lawcom.gov.uk/law-commission-considers-changes-to-update-centuries-old-burial-laws/>

⁶ FOIL (2024). Available from: <https://www.foil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Burial-Laws.pdf>

the Redditch Borough Council⁷. However, should this be repurposed for burials, the cost of a ‘full earth burial’ (18 years and over) is £802.00.

3.4 Capital Expenditure

- 22 Based on The CDS Group (CDS) experience and previous projects, the estimated cost for the necessary infrastructure improvements to repurpose the existing ash scattering ground at Abbey Cemetery is anticipated to be approximately £250,000. This estimate accounts for the key elements required to prepare the site for full-body interment, including internal roadway modifications, minor landscaping enhancements, and biodiversity improvements.
- 23 The primary scope of capital expenditure (CAPEX) includes:
- **Internal Roadway Development (£250k Allocation):**
 - Construction or reinforcement of internal access roads to ensure ease of movement for funeral services and visitors.
 - Potential resurfacing or widening of existing paths to accommodate increased footfall and vehicle access.
 - **Site Preparation:**
 - No releveling required, minimizing groundwork costs.
 - Clearance and preparation of designated burial sections to ensure optimal land utilization.
 - **Drainage Considerations:**
 - As no major drainage works are required, only minor adjustments may be necessary to ensure adequate surface water management and prevent localised flooding.
 - **Landscaping and Biodiversity Enhancements:**
 - Minor landscaping to integrate the new burial ground seamlessly within the existing cemetery layout.
 - Planting of native species and biodiversity improvements to enhance ecological value and maintain a respectful, natural setting.
- 24 Given the estimated 7-year burial capacity provided by the repurposed area, this investment ensures the sustainable use of available land while balancing financial feasibility and long-term cemetery management goals. Future considerations may include incremental improvements based on public feedback and operational needs.
- 25 It should be noted that this is an estimate at this stage without a detailed design, and actual costs could be higher depending on various factors such as unforeseen ground conditions, additional infrastructure requirements, or regulatory considerations. Therefore, a contingency of 20-25% is recommended at this stage to account for potential cost variations. Additionally, we advise the council to undertake a **Certificate of Lawfulness** planning application once a concept design has been developed to ensure that the proposed plans align with extant permissions and legal requirements.

⁷ Redditch Borough Council (2024). Available from: [Redditch-Fees-Charges 2024-Apr](#)

4 Option 2 - Next Steps for the Proposed Site 2B: Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD. (South of Arrow Valley Country Park).

4.1 Background and Location

- 26 The Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD was considered a suitable site for cemetery development following a site feasibility report undertaken by CDS.
- 27 This site was referenced Proposed Site 2B alongside the total 13 sites assessed (of which eight were deemed suitable). The redline boundary of Proposed Site 2B is shown in Figure 3.
- 28 Furthermore, the site's location in relation to local amenities has been presented in Figure 4, the proposed cemetery location is situated within open space, south of the Arrow Valley Country Park along the B4497.



Figure 3. The Redline Boundary of Option 2 (Proposed Site 2B).

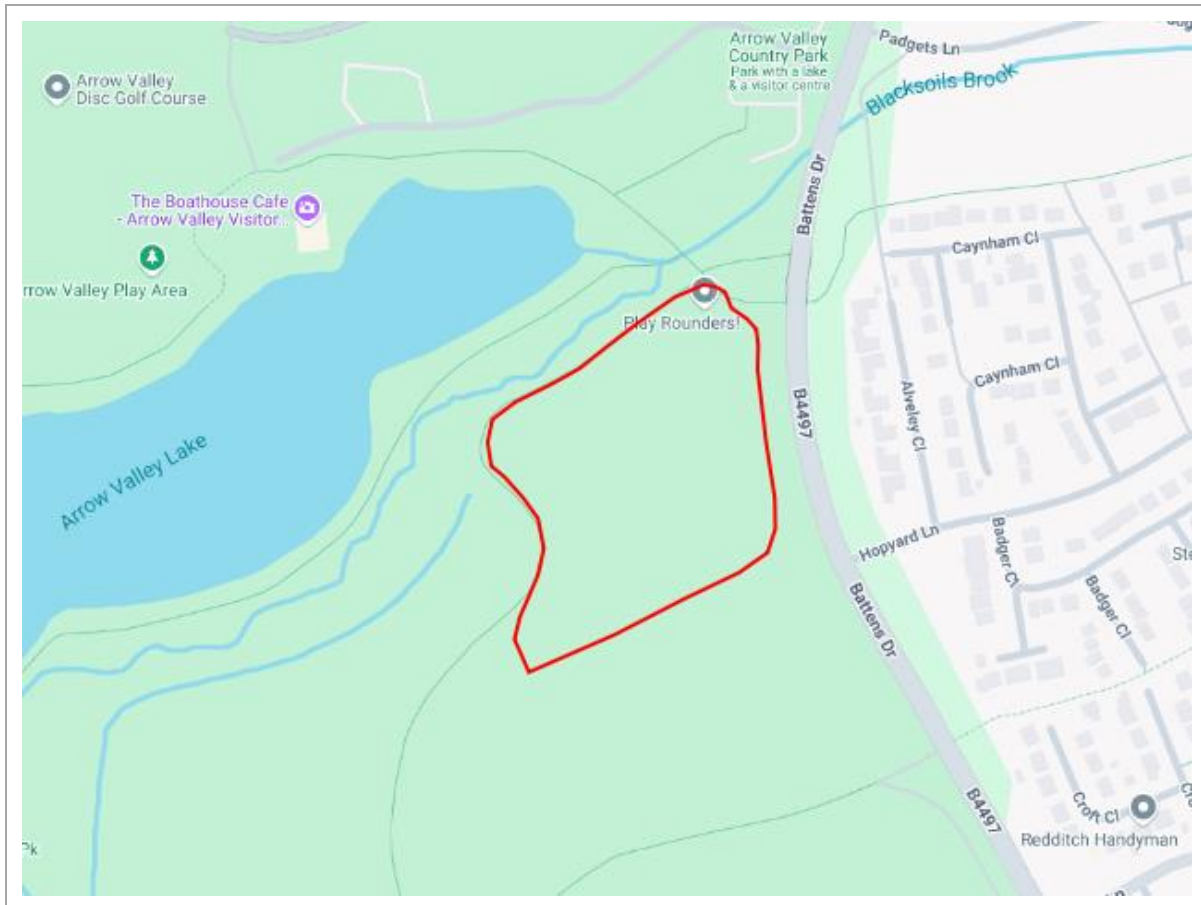


Figure 4. The Redline Boundary of Option 2 (Proposed Site 2B) Alongside the Local Amenities.

4.2 Burial Provision

- 29 The proposed site is approximately 6.2 acres. This would provide for an estimated 4,960 burials (excluding consideration for burial buffers and space for landscaping and potential infrastructure).
- 30 Against the average of 71 new burials per annum, this would provide burial accommodation for a further 69 years. This is of course a high-level calculation based off estimates, which should be noted.

4.3 Feasibility and Potential Constraints

- 31 The site feasibility report originally completed by CDS for potential burial provision across the Bromsgrove and Redditch areas assessed Proposed Site 2B. The key concerns found with the site include:
- Local Policy – The site is designated as Primarily Open Space as per the Redditch Local Plan policies map.
 - Vehicular Access - There is an existing entrance to the east of the site along the B4497 although it is currently warded off with bollards and overgrown. It would therefore need clearing up. The entrance is on a bend but the road is 40 mph and visibility splays are over 120 metres, therefore it is acceptable. Reconfiguring of the road to allow for smooth entry and exit of the site is likely.
 - Geology – There is an absence of superficial soils in the south-eastern half of the site, with deposits of Alluvium in the northwestern half. Alluvium is granular in nature and highly

permeable. The bedrock is of the Mercia Mudstone Group however which is impermeable in nature lowering the risk.

- Hydrogeology - The superficial aquifer is Secondary A and the bedrock aquifer is Secondary B.
- Groundwater Monitoring - To the north of the site there are reported groundwater strikes with groundwater encountered <1.00m depth below ground level.
- Ecology - There are areas of dense woodland surrounding the site and Arrow Valley Lake, further mitigation could be required as both are likely to provide habitats for a number of species.

4.3.1 Policy

32 There are no past or present planning applications that are impacting the site. The site is not constrained by any major local planning policy. However, as per the Redditch Local Plan policies map, the site is in a designated Primary Open Space.

33 Policy 13 'Primarily Open Space' of the Redditch Local Plan states:

"Open space will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced to improve quality, value, multifunctionality and accessibility. In order to maintain the levels of open space provision in the Borough, proposals which would result in the total or partial loss of Primarily Open Space will not normally be granted planning permission unless it can be demonstrated that the need for development outweighs the value of the land as an open area"

34 Additionally:

"Proposals for development on Primarily Open Space land that contribute to both the Green Infrastructure Network in the Borough and the nature and purpose of the open space may be deemed acceptable by the Borough Council."

35 This demonstrates that a cemetery development would not be impacting Primary Open Space as a cemetery is green and would be protecting the 'Green Infrastructure Network' and enhancing the open space by serving the community.

4.3.2 Environment Agency – Geology and Groundwater

36 As previously stated, there are concerns regarding the geology and groundwater at the site. The geology comprises of either absent superficial deposits or highly granular superficial deposits such as alluvium. The bedrock is a more impermeable group of Mercia Mudstone however. Despite this, it is likely the Environment Agency may object to development of a cemetery at this site, due to risk of burial pollutants encountering groundwater.

37 This objection is more likely due to the previous records of boreholes accounting shallow groundwater at depths less than 1m below the surface.

38 Further investigative works such as a Tier 2 will be required to determine the suitability for a cemetery.

4.3.3 Sport England – Playing Field

39 Upon further investigation this site appears to be listed by Sport England data as a grass pitch. However, satellite imagery suggests this site has not been used as such since 2013 as there are no evident markings of a pitch or playing field following this date. Figure 5 demonstrates the changes in satellite imagery from 2013 (left) to 2025 (right).

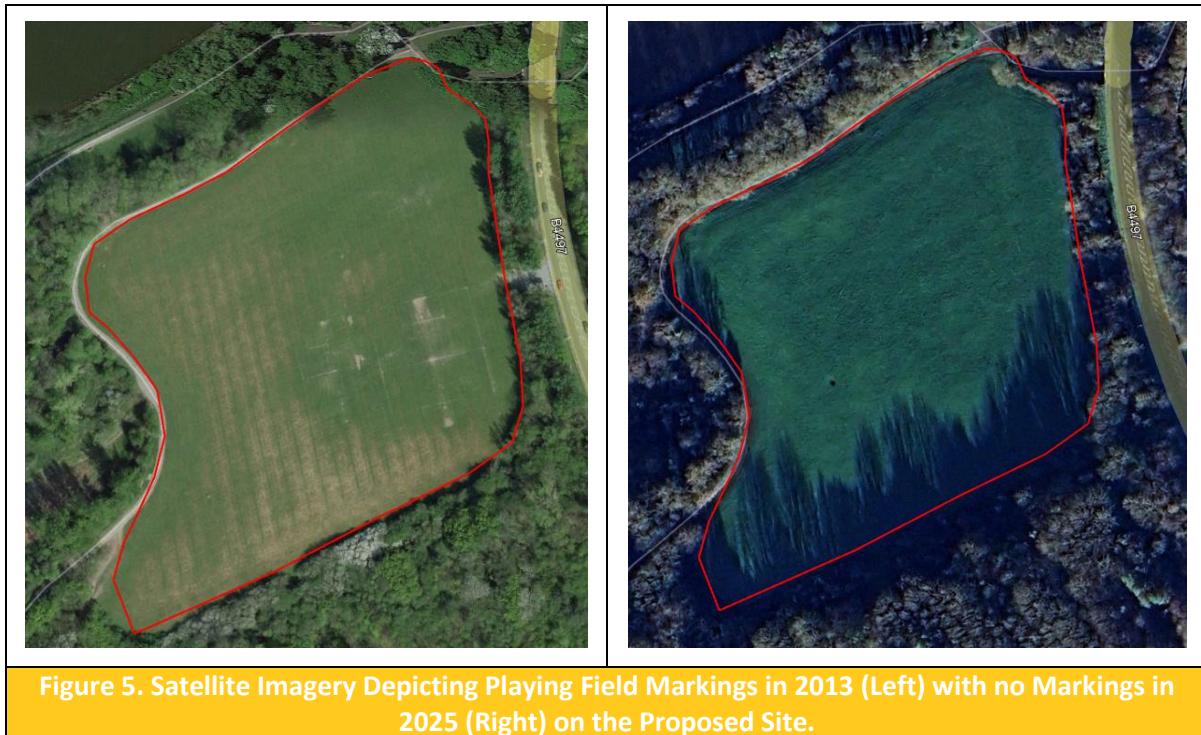


Figure 5. Satellite Imagery Depicting Playing Field Markings in 2013 (Left) with no Markings in 2025 (Right) on the Proposed Site.

40 It is therefore believed that the site is no longer used as a playing field or for sporting use of any kind. However, there is still likely to be objection from Sport England.

4.3.4 20/01774/FULL1 – Objection Example

41 The planning application for a cemetery at Orchard Fields, Bromley, SE20, 8BG is an example of a cemetery proposal objected to by Sport England due to an existing playing field on site. This playing field in question appears neglected (for several years) and is also on a private site, not accessible to the public.

42 The letter of objection, dated 25/08/2020 concludes that *“Sport England objects to the application because it is not considered to accord with any of the exceptions to Sport England’s playing fields policy or with Paragraph 97 of the NPPF.”*

43 Furthermore, Paragraph 97 in question, now Paragraph 104 in the latest edition of the National Planning Policy Framework⁸, states as such:

“Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.”*

44 There is strong reason to believe that Sport England will therefore object to a planning application that threatens the recorded playing field on the Proposed Site 2B, whether it is in use or not.

4.4 Public Objection

⁸ NPPF (2024). Available from: [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

45 Due to the site's location, south of the Arrow Valley Country Park, there is likely to be public objection. The site (as shown in Figures 3 and 4) is surrounded by public footpaths and the development of a cemetery may restrict the previous use that members of the public will have had with this site, such as dog walking and family games, among others.

4.5 Capital Expenditure and Timeline.

46 The estimated cost to achieve full planning permission for Proposed Site 2B is approximately £100,000, which includes professional fees and necessary planning assessments. The full site development cost is estimated between £1.25 million to £1.75 million, depending on the level of infrastructure and landscaping works required. Given the uncertainties at this stage, a contingency of 25% is recommended to account for potential unforeseen costs.

47 The primary costs involved in the development include:

- **Planning and Approval Costs (£100k at risk):**
 - Environmental Agency (EA) assessments to address groundwater and geological concerns.
 - Full planning application submission, including potential objections from Sport England and considerations for open space policy.
 - Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) compliance requirements and mitigation measures.
- **Site Development Costs (£1.25m - £1.75m):**
 - Groundworks and drainage to meet EA and planning standards.
 - Roadway and pathway construction for site access and visitor circulation.
 - Landscaping, biodiversity improvements, and buffer zones.
 - Additional infrastructure such as fencing, memorial areas, and service facilities.

48 Estimated Project Timeline:

- **Planning Application & Approvals (18-24 months):**
 - Completion of required environmental and technical assessments.
 - Consultation with key stakeholders, including EA, Sport England, and local authorities.
 - Submission and review of the full planning application.
- **Post-Planning Design & Procurement (6-12 months):**
 - Development of detailed design based on planning conditions.
 - Tendering and procurement of contractors for site development.
- **Construction & Site Development (6 months):**
 - Groundworks, drainage, and infrastructure implementation.
 - Final landscaping, biodiversity enhancements, and service installations.
- **Settlement & Establishment Period (6-12 months):**
 - Allowing for ground settlement and grass establishment post-construction before the site becomes operational.

49 The total estimated timeline from the initial planning stages to project completion is approximately 3.5 to 4 years. Due to the higher risks associated with securing planning permission compared to Abbey Cemetery, careful consideration of regulatory requirements and stakeholder engagement will be essential to progressing the project efficiently.

5 Risk Analysis

50 The risk for both options has been assessed via Risk Register analysis. These have been presented in Tables 6 and 7. Within the risk register assessment for each option, a list of risks will be assessed for the impact level and the probability level of each risk, these will both be scored on a scale of 1-5, 1 being low risk and 5 being high risk. The overall score is assessed against the Risk Matrix, seen in Figure 6.

RISK REGISTER SCALE

	5	5	10	15	20	25
PROBABILITY	4	4	8	12	16	20
	3	3	6	9	12	15
	2	2	4	6	8	10
	1	1	2	3	4	5
		1	2	3	4	5
		IMPACT				

Figure 6. The Risk Matrix.

Table 6. Risk Register Assessment for Option 1.

RISK DESCRIPTION	IMPACT DESCRIPTION	IMPACT LEVEL	PROBABILITY LEVEL	PRIORITY LEVEL	MITIGATION NOTES	OWNER
Planning Risks						
Environment Agency Objection	Due to the burial use the EA will need to be consulted. There is a low probability level due to the nature of the existing site (Abbey Cemetery) being a burial ground.	5	2	10	Further field investigative works to be completed at earliest opportunity.	Environmental Engineer / Planning Agent
Public objection	Risk moderate due to sensitivity of repurposing land. However, due to the current legislative permission to conduct re-burials and carry out exhumation, there is less of a legal concern but rather a moral objection.	3	5	15	Need to conduct comprehensive public consultation to ensure the public understand need for burial space.	Planning Agent / Council
Highways	Access is already established for the existing cemetery, therefore the risk is low.	3	1	3	Engage with a highways consultant at earliest convenience.	Planning Agent/ Traffic Consultant
Site Risks						
Attenuation Basin Requirement	Surface water issues could result in the requirement for an attenuation basin which could reduce burial space on site, due to the requirement for a 30m burial buffer around drainage features.	2	3	6	Liaise with a drainage engineer early on	Civil Engineer

Drainage Outfall	Need to ensure there is a drainage outfall and get permission from the LLFA and utility company (if required). There is a risk of not being able to contain consent if the current infrastructure is overstretched.	3	2	6	Liaise with a drainage engineer early on	Civil Engineer
Contamination	Could be made ground below the site which needs treating, risk highlighted due to surrounding roads but is low as the site is not in direct proximity.	3	2	6	A Tier 2 investigation would highlight the probability of this risk	Environmental Engineer
Earthworks	Moderate risk due to nearby road.	4	2	8	Any earthworks close to road, must consult with necessary stakeholders.	Civil Engineer
TPO's / tree felling licenses	To free up burial space, tree felling may be required, the risk is moderate due to multiple trees on site.	3	3	9	Arboricultural assessment required.	Arboricultural surveyor
Project Risks						
Budgets	Investment required to accommodate burial land, this is council owned land so the risk is low. The requirement for a full planning application and extensive programme increases risk of inflation and therefore increases probability.	5	2	10	Consistent cost plans against the business case must be undertaken. A balancing measure against a new out of borough site must be reviewed.	Council / Agent
Burial Space	Certain constraints could reduce the overall burial capacity, due to new EA guidance.	4	3	12	Need to undertake all necessary pre-application steps to mitigate and reduce risk.	Planning Agent / Design team

Average Risk	8.5
Total Risk	85

Table 7. Risk Register Assessment for Option 2.

RISK DESCRIPTION	IMPACT DESCRIPTION	IMPACT LEVEL	PROBABILITY LEVEL	PRIORITY LEVEL	MITIGATION NOTES	OWNER
Planning Risks						
Environment Agency Objection	Due to a change of use - the EA will need to be consulted, and a Tier 2 Groundwater assessment will need to be completed. Moderate probability level due to site having geology of moderate risk (absent and alluvium superficial deposits) and groundwater monitoring would be required due to the recorded shallow groundwater.	5	4	20	Tier 2 Groundwater Assessment to be completed at earliest opportunity.	Environmental Engineer / Planning Agent
Archaeology Risk	Due to change of use, we will have to liaise with the county archaeologist, they may request a geophysical survey which could result in further archaeological works required. Due to the intrusive nature of burials - sometimes archaeology can be prohibitive to development on areas of the site and can result in major costs for trial trenching. However, there are no mapped archaeological sites or listed buildings in the area making this low risk.	4	1	4	To conduct early discussions with County Archaeology	Planning Agent

Public objection	Risk moderate due to sensitivity of replacing open land within a park space, the risk is therefore moderate to high.	3	5	15	Need to conduct comprehensive public consultation to ensure the public understand need for burial space.	Planning Agent / Council
Sport England Objection	The risk is moderate to high due to the site being mapped as a grass pitch on the Sport England database. Satellite imagery shows this playing field to no longer be in use, Sport England will aim to protect open space for health and wellbeing.	5	4	20	To conduct early discussions with Sport England.	Planning Agent
Ecological risks	Possibility of having to do further surveys to attain planning permission, there is dense woodland and Arrow Valley Lake bordering the site. Both are likely to provide habitats for a number of species, this provides a moderate to high risk.	4	4	16	Conduct a PEA survey at the earliest opportunity.	Planning Agent / Ecologist
Biodiversity Net Gain	Required on all new sites - must achieve >10% net gain. There are no current conservation designations on site, there is a dense woodland bordering the site, risk would be moderate. If conditions are not met planning could be rejected.	5	3	15	Need to do an early screening analysis - landscape architect must work closely with an ecologist at the earliest opportunity.	Planning Agent / Ecologist / Landscape Architect
Highways	There is historic established access currently prevented via bollards. This could be made accessible and current visibility splays are clear which provides a low risk.	4	2	8	Engage with a highways consultant at earliest convenience to undertake assessment.	Planning Agent/ Traffic Consultant

Planning Consent	This application is not impacted by any conservation policy but there is the difficulty of geology and groundwater risk. If all necessary steps are taken and the need is strong to be placed on this site, then a consent could be granted but risk is moderate.	5	4	20	Need to undertake all necessary pre-application steps to mitigate and reduce risk.	Planning Agent
Site Risks						
Attenuation Basin Requirement	Surface water issues could result in the requirement for an attenuation basin which could reduce burial space on site, due to the requirement for a 30m burial buffer around drainage features.	2	3	6	Liaise with a drainage engineer early on	Civil Engineer
Drainage Outfall	Need to ensure there is a drainage outfall and get permission from the LLFA and utility company (if required). There is a risk of not being able to contain consent if the current infrastructure is overstretched.	3	2	6	Liaise with a drainage engineer early on	Civil Engineer
Contamination	Could be made ground below the site which needs treating, risk highlighted due to surrounding roads, but is low as the site is not in direct proximity.	3	2	6	The Tier 2 investigation will highlight the probability of this risk	Environmental Engineer
Earthworks	Moderate risk due to nearby road.	4	2	8	Any earthworks close to road, must consult with necessary stakeholders.	Civil Engineer
TPO's / tree felling licenses	To free up burial space, tree felling may be required, the risk is low with trees only bordering the site.	1	3	3	Arboricultural assessment required.	Arboricultural surveyor

Project Risks						
Budgets	Significant investment required for change of use to burial land, this is council-owned land so the risk is lower. The requirement for a full planning application and extensive programme increases risk of inflation and therefore increases probability.	5	3	15	Consistent cost plans against the business case must be undertaken. A balancing measure against a new out of borough site must be reviewed.	Council / Agent
Burial Space	Certain constraints could reduce the overall burial capacity, due to new EA guidance.	4	3	12	Need to undertake all necessary pre-application steps to mitigate and reduce risk.	Planning Agent / Design team
Average Risk				11.6		
Total Risk				174		

5.1 Summary

- 51 The risk register analysis shows both Option 1 and Option 2 to be of moderate risk during a planning application process. Option 2 does have a higher total risk of 174 with an average of 11.6, Option 1 in comparison has a risk total of 85 and an average risk of 8.5.
- 52 The key risks for Option 1 include the archaeological risk and public objection. The key risks for Option 2 include the potential objection from the Environment Agency and the risk of ecology, public objection, and Sport England objection regarding a lack of playing field facilities. Furthermore, as this development would require a change of use, unlike Option 1, there is a greater risk retrieving planning consent.
- 53 When considering burial capacity timeframes, Option 1 would be suitable for short-term alleviation by providing burial capacity for a further estimated 7 years, whereas burial space as a result of a full planning application for a change of use (such as Option 2) would future proof burial provision.
- 54 Of course, the budgeting outcomes do differ and CAPEX analysis shows Option 2 to have a predicted cost of £100,000 for a full planning application, followed by £1.25 million to £1.75 million for full site development. Whereas the cost for development for Option 1 is approximately £250,000.
- 55 It is recommended that the risk register analysis in Tables 6 and 7 are thoroughly considered to review an option moving forward. Option 1 is initially recommended as it would alleviate the burden of burial capacity in the short-term, but a further planning application for a cemetery is recommended in the long-term. CDS recommend that Redditch Borough Council begin considering the provision of a new cemetery as this type of development can take approximately four to five years from inception to operation.

6 Conclusion

- 56 The purpose of this report was to review the risk analysis of two options for the future burial provision for Redditch Borough Council. Option 1 being to repurpose an area of existing ash scattering land at Abbey Cemetery, and Option 2 being the next steps for the Proposed Site 2B cemetery development.
- 57 The demographic analysis of the Bromsgrove and Redditch area showed both an increasing and aging population which would provide a strain on current burial provision. Investigation into burial statistics in the area demonstrated the average number of multi-faith new coffin graves (burials) from 2020 to 2024 to be calculated as 71 per annum.
- 58 Moreover, of the existing cemeteries across the Bromsgrove and Redditch area, there are a recorded 100 new grave plots remaining between Abbey Cemetery and Edgioake Cemetery and from satellite imagery screening, there appears to be approximately 1 acre of free space remaining at North Bromsgrove Cemetery. This has been calculated to provide a predicted 12 years remaining of burial space. Therefore, an option providing the most burial provision is strongly advised.
- 59 Option 1 (repurposing at Abbey Cemetery) provides an estimated burial accommodation for a further 7 years (including a 30% contingency) and Option 2 provides an estimated burial accommodation for a further 69 years.
- 60 Regarding the possibility of repurposing ash scattering land (Option 1), there is limited information on this action across existing burial grounds. Public objection is a main concern due to the ethical issue of reusing a memorial space for burials, however its closest similarity of conducting new burials in the replacement of old existing burials, is permitted (under regulation). Moreover, there is no current legislation stating that the repurposing of ash scattering land for burial use is not permitted.
- 61 Option 1 is the Less costly of the two options as it is an existing burial ground and would be a case of road infrastructure to allow access. If the decision is to move forward with Option 1, obtaining a certificate of lawfulness is recommended once a concept design has been developed.
- 62 Option 2 is the more costly of the two as full planning application for change of use required. There is the potential for EA and Sport England concerns, due to the higher risks associated with securing planning permission compared to Abbey Cemetery, careful consideration of regulatory requirements and stakeholder engagement will be essential to progressing the project efficiently.
- 63 Redditch Borough Council should consider the CAPEX and risk register analysis for both options, with focus on Tables 6 and 7. Following an option choice, it is recommended that these potential objections are to be addressed and stakeholder engagement and relevant surveys should be instigated.
- 64 When regarding the remaining burial space across the Bromsgrove and Redditch area, Option 1 would be suitable for short-term alleviation by providing burial capacity for a further estimated 7 years. This allows Redditch Borough Council time to investigate developing future burial provision by a new planning application for a cemetery. CDS recommend that Redditch Borough Council begin considering the provision of a new cemetery as this type of development can take approximately four to five years from inception to operation.

7 Report Verification

Report Completed By: Jessica Cheal MSc, Graduate Planner

Report Sign Off: Ben Copeland BSc (Hons), Senior Planning Projects Manager

Date: 17/02/2025

Version Control: Version V1.5

Executive Committee
2025

11 March

UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025/26

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Joe Baker Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Governance
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes / No
Relevant Assistant Director	Rachel Egan Assistant Director Regeneration & Property
Report Author	Job Title: UK Shared Prosperity Fund Manager Contact email: Georgina.harris@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 534082
Wards Affected	No specific ward relevance
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	Run and Grow a Successful Business Aspiration, Work and Financial Independence Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS**The Executive Committee RESOLVE that:-**

- 1) The Investment Plan (Appendix 1) is approved; and**
- 2) Authority to vary the Investment Plan, in order to maximise the use of the grant be delegated to the Assistant Director Regeneration & Property following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Governance**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) was established in 2022 to replace the EU Structural Funds that the UK no longer has access to.
- 2.2 The initial UKSPF allocation was for the 3-year period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025. Redditch Borough Council received the following funding over the 3-year period:

Year	Capital	Revenue	Total
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2022/23	£108,500	£195,147	£303,647
2023/24	£298,550	£308,744	£607,294
2024/25	£468,250	£1,122,859	£1,591,109

- 2.3 The UKSPF focussed on the 3 investment priorities of Communities & Place, Supporting Local Business, and People & Skills. These investment priorities were sub-divided into more than 50 interventions which described the intentions of the investment priorities. The available funding increased significantly in 2024/25 due to funding from the European Social Fund for activity relating to People & Skills ending in March 2024. To access the funding, the Council was required to submit an investment plan to government in August 2022.
- 2.4 In the investment plan, the Communities & Place investment priority was allocated £928,541 which has been used to make improvements to the Town Centre, improvements to parks, and community safety measures. Funding was also made available to the voluntary and community sector to deliver cultural events, to support volunteering and to deliver advice and support to households vulnerable to fuel poverty.
- 2.5 The Supporting Local Business investment priority was allocated £859,856 which has been used to fund a suite of programmes designed to help businesses to start-up, grow and innovate in a sustainable way.
- 2.6 The People & Skills investment priority was allocated £613,571 which has been used to provide employability support to young people via Redditch Youth Hub and to support economically inactive people to progress towards employment. It has also been used to provide grants to businesses to upskill their workforce.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 In the October 2024 budget the Chancellor announced an extension to UKSPF. The budget confirmed that UKSPF will be continued at a reduced rate for a further year, a transitional arrangement allowing local authorities to invest in growth, in advance of wider funding reforms.
- 3.2 On 13 December 2024, the Government published the UKSPF allocations for 2025/26. Redditch Borough Council will receive the following funding:

Capital	Revenue	Total
£151,128	£667,408	£818,536

This represents a 49% reduction in the allocation from the previous year.

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- 3.3 Under the grant conditions, capital funding must be spent on capital expenditure; however, revenue funding can be spent on either revenue or capital.
- 3.4 The Government has also published a technical note updating the UKSPF prospectus. The fund is still structured around the 3 investment priorities of Communities & Place, Supporting Local Business and People & Skills and can support the same range of activities as in previous years. However, the list of interventions has been replaced with 5 themes and 12 sub-themes that reflect the Government's missions.
- 3.5 The sub-themes, and how they relate to the investment priorities, are as detailed below:

Investment Priority	Sub-theme
Communities & Place	Improve health & wellbeing
	Reduce crime & the fear of crime
	Bringing communities together, tackling homelessness
	Development of the visitor economy
	High streets and town centre improvements
Supporting Local Business	Advice & support to business
	Enterprise culture and start up support
	Business sites and premises
People & Skills	Supporting people to progress towards and into employment
	Support for young people who are or at risk of being NEET
	Essential skills (including numeracy, literacy, ESOL and digital)
	Employment related skills

- 3.6 As the existing investment plan covers the period up to 31 March 2025 it is necessary to prepare a new investment plan for the financial year 2025/26.
- 3.7 The Investment Plan (Appendix 1) is primarily based on delivering priorities in the local Labour manifesto that align with the UKSPF.

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- 3.8 When preparing the investment plan, the performance of the current UKSPF funded programmes and the lessons learned from their delivery have been taken into account. Consideration has been given to which activities are reliant on UKSPF funding and which are funded primarily through other sources. The findings from the recent Community Survey on budget priorities have also contributed to shaping the investment plan.
- 3.9 Initial consultation with the Redditch Town Deal Board, in its role as Local Partnership Group for the UKSPF, has highlighted youth unemployment and business support as key priorities. The draft investment plan will be considered by the board at their meeting on 6/3/25 and their formal response will be included in supplementary papers.
- 3.10 In the investment plan, following the deduction of 4% for management and administration, the net allocation is distributed among the three investment priorities as follows:

Investment Priority	% of Allocation	Amount
Communities & Place	33.4%	£261,933
Supporting Local Business	33.3%	£261,931
People & Skills	33.3%	£261,931

- 3.11 The Investment Plan allocates 100% of the UKSPF funds to be received in 2025/26 to projects. However, experience delivering the UKSPF programme to date suggests that there is a risk that some projects may not fully utilise their allocated funds potentially resulting in an underspend at the end of the programme. Any monies not spent by 31 March 2026 will have to be returned to Government.
- 3.12 In order to maximise the use of the grant, authority is sought to vary the investment plan to allow any underspend towards the end of the programme to be allocated to alternative projects.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation for 2025/26 has been included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- 4.2 The grant conditions allow 4% of the allocation to be used for management and administration of the fund.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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- 5.1 Delivery of the investment plan will require the Council to enter into contracts or other agreements with external organisations. The awarding of contracts or other agreements will be subject to the Council's procurement rules and subject to appropriate due diligence.
- 5.2 The Council will be required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to deliver the interventions included in the plan. Appropriate legal advice will be sought prior to entering any legal agreement.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**Relevant Council Priority**

- 6.1 The investment plan supports delivery of the Council's priorities Run and Grow as Successful Business; Aspirations, Work and Financial Independence; Living Independent, Active and Healthy Lives; and Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 The investment plan includes interventions that will improve green spaces, reduce energy use by residents and may support businesses to develop carbon reducing technologies and grow sustainably.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.3 Equality and diversity implications will be considered throughout the delivery of the plan.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The current investment plan expires on 31 March 2025. The Council is required to report to Government how it will spend its UKSPF allocation for 2025/26 by 1 May 2025. Failure to develop an investment plan for 2025/26 may delay receipt of the funding.
- 7.2 The Council will continue to implement appropriate programme and project management arrangements for the UKSPF allocation for Redditch in order to manage risks relating to the funding programme and to any projects for which it is directly responsible.
- 7.3 Any UKSPF monies that have not been spent by 31 March 2026 will have to be returned to government. Delivery of projects and the costs

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associated will be monitored throughout the programme to ensure maximum use of the grant. Any underspend that is identified will be allocated to alternative projects that will deliver the priorities in the Investment Plan.

- 7.4 Delivery of the UKSPF investment plan will be included on the corporate risk register.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan 2025/26

UK Shared Prosperity Fund Prospectus

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK](#)

UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025/26 Technical Note

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025-26: Technical note - GOV.UK](#)

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Joe Baker Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Governance	24/2/25
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Rachel Egan Assistant Director Regeneration & Property	5/2/25
Financial Services	Debra Goodall Assistant Director Finance & Customer Service	12/2/25
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings Principal Solicitor	24/2/25
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	n/a	
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	n/a	

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UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan 2025/26

Redditch Borough Council has been allocated £818,536 of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for the period 2025/26. The funding will primarily be used to deliver missions in the local Labour manifesto which are informing the emerging Council Plan. The way in which the funding will be deployed to do this is detailed below.

Economy and Regeneration

The Council has an ambition to build a local economy fit for the future. To achieve this, we will support and encourage new businesses and support local independent businesses to grow and create employment.

Business start-up rates are higher in Redditch than the national, regional and county rates. The 3-year survival rate for new businesses also compares favourably with the regional and county rates but is slightly lower than the UK rate.¹ The current UKSPF funded start-up programme has experienced strong demand for pre-start support. Whilst this has not translated into new businesses starting up there is often a time lag between receiving support and starting a business. In the previous programme demand for support from early years businesses was low. Continuation of this programme will see it re-focussed to respond to the needs of new entrepreneurs.

Demand for grants to help established businesses to grow has been high. This support is usually taken up by micro businesses looking to make various investments including new equipment, improvements to premises and marketing. The provision of grants encourages small businesses to invest in their growth and realise their potential.

Whilst demand for grants is high, business owners often find identifying suitable funding and the process of applying for a grant challenging. Take up of business support programmes is lower in Redditch than other districts in the county. To ensure equitable access to business advice and grants for businesses in the borough it is necessary to provide specialist help to identify and apply for support.

We will:

¹ Source: ONS - Business Demography 2023 [Business demography, UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

- co-fund the delivery of the Enterprising Worcestershire start-up programme providing specialist support to help Redditch entrepreneurs to be enterprise ready. Match-funded grants will also be available to help businesses to start-up and become established.
- continue to offer match-funded grants to local, independent businesses to help them to invest in measures to help them to grow and create employment.
- continue to fund the Worcestershire Growth Hub to help businesses to identify, and apply for, national, regional and local programmes of support. Through the Growth Hub we will provide specialist advice and coaching on a range of key business topics to help businesses to grow and create employment.

One of the key objectives of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is to build pride in place. How people feel about where they live is often reflected in how they feel about their local town centre. Redditch town centre is the focus for retail and services for the whole of the borough. It is dominated by the Kingfisher Shopping Centre which serves as a draw for both residents and visitors from further afield. The Church Green, whilst in the heart of the town centre, is perceived as a secondary retail location. The conservation area, with its pleasant, outdoor environment, represents an opportunity to extend the town centre retail, hospitality and leisure offer and to enhance its appeal to residents and visitors alike.

We will:

- continue to improve the town centre public realm to create a welcoming environment.
- promote the town centre and its retail, hospitality and service offer.

One of the key regeneration projects is the development of an Innovation Centre. Productivity in Redditch, measured in GVA per hour, is lower than the UK average (£32.3 per hour compared to £39.7 per hour).² The figure has been stagnant over the past 6 years where the national average has been growing. The Council's commitment to build the centre is designed to address this

² Source: ONS Subregional Productivity June 2024 [Subregional productivity: labour productivity indices by local authority district - Office for National Statistics](#)

issue and help to build a local economy fit for the future. The centre will be the focus of support to help businesses to adopt innovative processes to improve their productivity.

We will:

- procure an organisation to deliver an impactful business innovation programme offering advice and grants to help entrepreneurs and existing businesses to develop innovative products and services and to help established businesses to adopt new processes. This programme will be aligned with the development of the Innovation Centre and will create an opportunity to identify and engage with potential occupiers.

The Council's regeneration plans focus on creating opportunities for good local jobs and investing in skills, in order to have a thriving borough where businesses want to invest and residents can access well paid employment.

Redditch has a relatively high economic activity rate with 84.5% of residents in employment, self-employment or actively looking for work.³ This is higher than the rate for the West Midlands (79.5%) and the national rate (78.4%). Reasons for economic inactivity include being a student, early retirement, caring responsibilities, health conditions and people whose circumstances discourage them from working. The unemployment rate in Redditch in December 2024 was 4%.⁴ Whilst higher than the rate for the County (3.2%), it is lower than for the West Midlands (5.6%) and for England (4.3%). A growing economy creates employment and demand for a skilled, readily available workforce. With 4% of the population seeking employment and 15.5% of the working age population economically inactive, it is necessary to ensure that any barriers to employment that these groups are experiencing are addressed.

Whilst unemployment rates are low, young people are much more likely to be unemployed than the general population. The December 2024 unemployment rate for 18-24 year olds was 6.7% compared with 4% for all working age residents. The rate is also

³ Source: ONS Local Authority Profile [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics](#)

⁴ Source: Worcestershire County Economic Summary [Worcestershire County Economic Summary](#)

higher than the rate for Worcestershire (4.9%) and England (5.6%).⁵ Statistics for young care leavers are even more concerning. Around 50% of care leavers are NEET (not in employment, education or training).⁶

Redditch residents are reasonably well qualified with a higher proportion of the population having qualifications at every level than the West Midlands and national average. For example, 48.7% of residents are qualified to RQF Level 4⁷ and above compared to 42.5% of the West Midlands and 47.3% of Great Britain.⁸ Despite these levels of educational attainment, employers frequently cite a lack of a skilled workforce as a barrier to growth. Consultation that took place in the development of the Worcestershire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) identified a lack of common skills, ie transferable skills such as communication, teamwork and organisation; technical skills and knowledge such as AI, cyber security, data analytics, CNC programming; and leadership and management skills. As the local economy grows and develops, it is essential that all sections of the community have the necessary skills to take advantage of new opportunities.

We will:

- deliver a programme of support, via the Family Hubs, to help people caring for young children to develop employability skills in preparation for returning to the jobs market. The programme will also assist participants to access funded childcare provision to enable them to re-enter the jobs market.
- procure delivery of a targeted employability support programme designed to assist the economically inactive, to move closer to the jobs market. The programme will complement existing, national provision including recently announced programmes such as Connect to Work and WorkWell. The programme will support those that are not able to access mainstream support due to their complex barriers to employment.
- continue to fund the Redditch Youth Hub, providing support to young people aged 16 to 24 years old who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). This programme provides wrap around support for education and career choices

⁵ Source: Worcestershire County Economic Summary [Worcestershire County Economic Summary](#)

⁶ Source: Worcestershire County Council

⁷ Regulated Qualifications Framework Level 4 is equivalent to a Higher National Certificate (HNC)

⁸ Source: ONS Local Authority Profile [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics](#)

and engages with employers to open up opportunities to young people. In the first 6 months of delivery, the Youth Hub has supported 158 young people.

- provide opportunities for residents in employment to upskill through the provision of fully funded training or grants to fund specialist courses.

Voluntary & Community Sector

The voluntary and community sector plays a major role in supporting the people of the borough. The Council recognises the benefits of volunteering for both the volunteers and those that they help. Volunteering builds community connections and helps volunteers develop valuable, transferable skills for the workplace.

We will:

- provide grants to voluntary and community organisations to build capacity and support opportunities to volunteer.
- provide fully funded training to upskill the sector covering key topics such as leadership & management and bid writing.

Health & Wellbeing

The health and fitness of the borough is vitally important for residents to lead independent and fulfilling lives. A positive leisure and cultural offer provides opportunities for communities to enjoy being active and involved.

We will:

- deliver a programme of improvements to parks and green spaces to enhance opportunities for residents to be active and to enjoy the natural environment.

Green Redditch 2030

Redditch Borough Council is committed to a Green Redditch in 2030. They are encouraging green policies across the council and the borough. A key objective is to help residents to find affordable solutions and products to reduce energy bills and save the environment.

We will:

- fund Act on Energy caseworkers to provide intensive support to households to adopt energy efficiency measures. The support will be focussed on those that are vulnerable to fuel poverty and will help them to reduce fuel bills, keep warmer and reduce CO2 emissions.

Expenditure

Priority	Project	Deliverer	Capital	Revenue	Total
Economy & Regeneration	Enterprising Worcestershire Specialist advice for pre-start businesses	Worcestershire County Council		£25,000	£25,000
	Business Grants Grant funding for new and existing businesses to support them to start-up and grow.	RBC	£32,000	£44,931	£76,931
	Growth Hub Business signposting and account management service helping enterprises to access support. Delivery of the specialist advisor programme providing coaching and advice covering key business topics such as marketing, growth planning and financial management.	Worcestershire Growth Hub		£60,000	£60,000
	Town Centre Improvements	RBC	£20,000	£21,933	£41,933

	Improvements to the town centre public realm and promotion of the town centre and its services				
	Business Innovation & Productivity Programme Specialist programme of support to help new and existing businesses to development new to market products or services or for existing businesses to adopt new processes	To be procured	£20,000	£80,000	£100,000
	Employability Support in Family Hubs Support to economically inactive people with caring responsibilities to move towards employment through the development of employability skills, job search support and accessing help with childcare.	RBC		£20,000	£20,000
	Employability Skills Programme Support for economically inactive people to move towards employment through the development of employability skills.	To be procured		£56,000	£56,000
	Redditch Youth Hub Bespoke advice to young people 16 – 24, including those who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET, to move into employment, education and training	Careers Worcestershire		£150,000	£150,000
	In-employment Training Provision of grants and fully funded training to upskill the workforce	To be procured		£35,931	£35,931
Voluntary & Community Sector	Voluntary & Community Sector Support	RBC		£90,000	£90,000

	Provision of grants and training to the voluntary sector to increase capacity and sustainability of organisations				
Health & Wellbeing	Parks & Green Spaces A programme of improvements to parks and green spaces	RBC	£80,000		£80,000
Green Redditch 2030	Community Caseworker Providing advice and support to households vulnerable to fuel poverty to take up energy efficiency measures	Act on Energy		£50,000	£50,000
	Management & Administration of UKSPF			£32,741	£32,741
Total			£152,000	£666,536	£818,536

Executive Committee
202511th March**Redditch Council Plan 2025/28**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Joe Baker
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Sue Hanley, Chief Executive
Report Author Rebecca Green	Job Title: Policy Manager Contact email: r.green@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881616
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	
Relevant Council Priority	All
Non-Key Decision	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS**Executive Committee RECOMMEND that:-**

1. **The Council Plan attached at Appendix 1 be approved.**
2. **Authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Governance in respect of any changes as result of the Local Government reorganisation.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Work to develop a new Council Plan began in 2024, with the new Executive Committee working closely with the Corporate Leadership Team and supported by the Local Government Association. Building on the election manifesto, sessions were undertaken to pull together the priorities, supported by data, evidence and service specific expertise and guidance.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The Council Plan and the priorities contained within it will help to set the direction for the Council and how it works with its partners. Service areas will be working towards these priorities, which will inform the development of service business plans. The Council Plan will be reviewed annually and supported by quarterly measures (where applicable) to ensure that the key objectives and projects are actioned. These will be included in a separate Implementation Plan to sit alongside the Council Plan, which will detail how the key objectives and projects will be monitored and progress reported.

Executive Committee
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4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Finance and performance reporting are already aligned through the quarterly reports and the Council Plan, by setting out the priorities, objectives and projects, will help to structure the service business planning process and will underpin the medium-term financial planning.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**Council Priorities**

- 6.1 This Council Plan proposes three new Council Priorities, based on data, evidence and community engagement:
- Economy & Regeneration
 - Green, Clean & Safe Redditch
 - Community & Housing

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 The new Council Plan has 'Green, Clean & Safe Redditch' as one of the three priorities, and explicitly supports work around climate change through the identification of a key objective on renewable energy and key projects to work with the community on climate change, support the Warm Homes initiative and increasing the number of electric vehicle charging points.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.3 There are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report; however, the Council Plan highlights the importance of listening to communities and will empower officers to meet the needs of those communities, which could include specific issues relating to equality and diversity.
- 6.4 Specific Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) of projects detailed within the Council Plan will be undertaken as required.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 By publishing a Council Plan the strategic direction of the Council will be clear to employees and Members and as such will support the

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management of risks identified around robust decision making and the accuracy/effectiveness of performance data.

- 7.2 The annual review process will allow for any risks potentially arising from the local government reorganisation process to be addressed.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1- Redditch Council Plan 2025-28

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Joe Baker, Leader of the Council	26/02/25
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Sue Hanley, Chief Executive	18/02/2025
Financial Services	Peter Carpenter, Director of Resources/Deputy Chief Executive	20/02/2025
Legal Services	Claire Felton, Assistant Director of Legal Democratic and Procurement Services	13/02/2025
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Rebecca Green, Policy Manager	20/02/2025
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Judith Willis, Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services	13/02/2025

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Introduction- Cllr Joe Baker, Leader of the Council

This council plan is a fresh start for Redditch and since this administration was elected in May, we have started in the way we mean to go on. We have saved the library, and work has started to transform the Town Hall into a community hub for services, retaining the Council Chamber. But we now need to look forward. I am delighted to launch this plan, setting out the direction of the Council for the next 4 years, with communities' aspirations and needs at its heart.

Our council plan is based on our manifesto pledges, as well as feedback from our residents, communities, businesses, and, of course, the budget, to ensure we are working together to deliver the best for Redditch.

We have split the plan into three core priorities. Firstly, a strong focus on economic development. We want to provide job opportunities for residents, particularly our young people so they can choose to stay in their hometown. We will look to attract inward investment to achieve this, attracting new businesses to move Redditch and supporting existing businesses to grow and thrive.

Secondly, we want to create a clean, green, and safe Redditch that everyone can be proud of, starting with the basics: reducing litter-dropping and dog-fouling; increasing the renewable energy this Council uses, and working with communities on climate change. We want residents to see improvements straight away, but we will also continue to focus on delivering on **our** longer-term goals.

Our third priority is Community and Housing. We want to provide more homes for our residents to reduce the social housing waiting list and provide affordable rental properties. Above all, it is vital that homes are safe, warm and built to a high standard. We have listened. We know that damp and mould is a distinct priority to address, and we will be investing in additional resources to deal with this. We are very proud of our culture and heritage and the green and open spaces the Borough is so famous for. By improving walking and cycling routes, we can encourage our residents to use and enjoy the open spaces to improve their own health and well-being.

We are aspirational for Redditch to be:

- A happy and safe place to live, work and grow up through the provision of decent homes, crime prevention, reducing anti-social behaviour and improving community engagement
- A welcoming place for everyone, with something to offer all - children, young people, older people and families. A place where people take pride in our communities and heritage.
- A prosperous place where businesses thrive, so that everyone can achieve their hopes and aspirations for the future.
- A green and healthy place, preserving our open spaces and working in partnership to address health indicators such as levels of obesity, drug and alcohol addiction.

Underpinning this plan and our priorities is our commitment to our strategic planning and being a principles-driven organisation. By prioritising financial and organisational stability, recognising the importance of supported governance, focusing on our communities and delivering high-quality services we aim to meet our resident's needs whilst also being somewhere our employees can thrive. This plan will be used by our officers to structure and deliver business plans for their own service areas so that our ambitions and high aspirations for Redditch will become a reality throughout the Borough.

Rest assured, we will continue to listen to, and work for, our communities.

Our vision & priorities

•A Council which listens to and delivers quality services for our communities, residents and businesses

**Economy,
Regeneration
& Prosperity**

**Green, Clean
& Safe**

**Community
& Housing**

About Redditch Borough

Redditch Borough is located in North Worcestershire, approximately 15 miles south of Birmingham and covers an area of 5,435 hectares (13,430 acres). The Borough is situated at the outer edge of the Green Belt boundary for the West Midlands.

The Borough is split into the urban area of Redditch in the north, accounting for 50% of the area and 93% of the population; and the rural area to the south with 7% of the population. The rural area consists predominantly of Green Belt land, but also open countryside, as well as the villages of Astwood Bank and Feckenham.

Redditch Borough has many open spaces with a rich biodiversity; there are 6 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and 24 Special Wildlife Sites, plus numerous Local Nature Reserves.

Key demographic characteristics include:

- A population of 87,000 (2021 Census)
- Redditch has a young population with 19.3% aged 15 or under at the last Census (2021)
- The population are 82.4% white British, but it has diverse communities including 6.6% other white and 5.7% Asian/Asian British
- Life expectancy is 11.6 years lower for men and 10.4 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Redditch than in the least deprived areas
- Estimated levels of excess weight in adults (aged 18+) are higher than the England average
- The unemployment claimant count for Redditch was 4% in October 2024, rising to 6.5% for the 18–24-year-old cohort.

The borough also faces some challenges. Greenlands, Abbey, Church Hill and Winyates wards all include Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) ranking in the top 10% most deprived nationally (Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019). According to Government data, 11 LSOAs in the district have fuel poverty levels of 20% or higher (2024 release, 2022 data).

The percentage of students in Redditch achieving the English Baccalaureate at grade 4 (a standard pass) or above was 3rd lowest in the region at a district/borough level during academic year 2023/24 (Department for Education 2024).

Redditch is a vibrant manufacturing hub and a key driver of the regional economy, home to renowned household names such as GKN, Baylis & Harding, and Halfords. These industry leaders, alongside a rich industrial heritage and a skilled workforce, underpin the town's reputation for innovation and excellence. With a thriving local economy and a commitment to business growth, Redditch continues to attract investment and create opportunities for prosperity across the region. The Borough of Redditch is also identified within a national needs assessment called 'Pride in Place' (Royal Society of Arts Trade and Commerce Heritage Index 2020), placing 3rd in a league table of 10 councils (out of 157 in England) with the highest heritage potential.

Redditch Local Plan

The Redditch Local Plan is the most important planning document at the local level, as it provides a set of policies which will inform how development across the Borough will take shape.

A Local Plan guides decisions on future development proposals, addresses the needs and opportunities of the area, and ensures that protected areas remain free from inappropriate development. Topics that Local Plans cover include housing, employment, open spaces, heritage, climate change and infrastructure

The current Local Plan was adopted in 2017 sets out the state of Redditch as it was then and there was a vision and objectives that set out what Redditch aimed to be like by the end of the Plan period. The Council are about to embark on preparing a new Local Plan. This plan will be developed over the next few years, which, when adopted, will support the Council in delivering many of the key projects identified in this Council Plan.

Economy & Regeneration

We want a healthy and thriving economy, building on and celebrating the existing businesses within the borough. We will ensure that your council tax is used to provide the services you need and that the assets the Council has are used for the benefit of residents and communities. Having a clear and consistent economic strategy will enable us to shape both public and private investment in economic development and regeneration.

Regenerating the borough involves both where people live, and the opportunities they have available to them. It is vitally important to prioritise good local jobs and investing in skills in order to have a thriving borough where businesses want to invest, and our residents can access well paid employment opportunities.

Key objectives

- More high-quality local jobs
- Greater opportunities to develop new skills
- Increase footfall in the town centre
- Engage with communities to understand the needs of our district centres
- Support local independent businesses
- Support and encourage new start-up businesses
- Collaborate with partners to secure public and private investment
- Attract businesses to locate in Redditch

Key projects

- Regeneration of the Town Hall
- Redditch outdoor market
- Forge Mill Museum enhancements
- Innovation Centre
- Utilise land and assets for the benefit of residents
- Develop an approach to Community Wealth Building
- New Economic Development Strategy for Redditch

Green, Clean & Safe Redditch

We will support communities in reducing energy bills through exploring affordable green solutions. We will campaign for sustainable and comprehensive public transport and safer walking and cycling routes across the Borough. We will look to encourage green policies across the council and beyond.

We are committed to making Redditch a cleaner and safer place for our residents, whether that is by addressing litter and dog mess or the impact of fly-tipping and antisocial behaviour. We will work with the Police, partners and stakeholders to understand the impact of crime, raise awareness and explore preventative measures. We will make it easier and clearer for people to get rid of their unwanted items, particularly those people who might need assistance.

Key objectives

- Improve street cleanliness of our neighbourhoods and local environment
- Support voluntary groups litter picking in their communities
- Improve recycling rates
- Protect and enhance open spaces
- Enhancing biodiversity
- Work with partners to tackle ASB, Serious Violence, Burglary and Drugs Misuse as part of the statutory Community Safety Partnership
- Increase the amount of renewable energy generated by the Council
- Utilise brown field and industrial sites for development
- Ensure large developments provide better green space and invest in existing open spaces

Key projects

- Develop a programme to reduce fly-tipping
- Review options for disposal of bulky waste
- Develop a campaign to reduce littering and dog fouling in the Borough
- Implement a Neighbourhood Warden scheme
- Implement locally the Worcestershire Drug & Alcohol Strategy 22-27
- Implement food waste collection and improve quality of recycling
- Review future cemetery provision
- Work with the community on climate change
- Warm Homes programme
- Electric vehicle charging points
- Undertake an audit of biodiversity requirements and actions
- Ensure the protection and provision of open spaces through the Local Plan
- Identify land for development through the Local Plan

Community & Housing

We will work with partners across the county to deliver the Worcestershire Housing Strategy 2023-2040 and the Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy. We want to build more Council houses and will work with communities and partners to understand where and what we need, utilising modern and energy efficient building techniques. We will work to improve and upgrade our housing stock

The health and fitness of the borough is vitally important for people to lead independent and fulfilling lives. We will work with partners to help ensure that the health and wellbeing offer within the borough meets the needs of our residents. A positive leisure and cultural offer will provide opportunities for our communities to enjoy being active and involved, as well as having a positive impact on the mental wellbeing of local residents of all ages.

It is incredibly important for us to work with and support the local voluntary and community sector as they play a major role in supporting our communities, particularly in the cost-of-living crisis. We are also very proud of the dedicated volunteers who give their time for others. We are committed to our grants process and will make this focused on our local communities through involvement of elected members on the panel. We will work alongside the partners of the Cultural Compact for North East Worcestershire to deliver the Arts and Culture Strategy for the Borough, encouraging of the people of Redditch to become more creative and developing local creative talent and capacity building support for the local cultural sector.

Key objectives

- Build more Council houses
- Reduce the housing waiting list
- Reduce the number of families in temporary accommodation
- Ensure our housing stock is clean & safe to live in
- Improve time taken for repairs to be completed
- Work with partners to improve health and wellbeing
- Provide high quality play provision
- Promote the establishment of community fitness and mental health groups
- Provide more walking & cycling routes
- Maximise funding available to the sector
- Engagement with the voluntary sector
- Support the development of the local creative and cultural sectors
- Improve the Shopmobility scheme

Key projects

- Specific damp and mould resource
- Implementation of Total Mobile project
- Use stock condition data to create improvement programmes
- Buy back scheme
- Bringing empty houses back into use
- Support community allotments by implementing the Leisure Strategy
- Improvements to play area provision via clarifying prioritisation
- Address the provision of walking and cycling routes through the Local Plan
- Support the work of the Redditch District Collaborative
- Implement a Town Hall Community Hub
- Restore the elected member grant panel
- Develop an internal Bid Writer role
- Review how we support the 3rd sector
- Review Dial-a-Ride charges
- Support Reimagine Redditch
- Deliver the ReNEW Sharing Stories Shaping Futures campaign
- Work with the community to develop an engagement forum
- Develop a Youth Council for the Borough

Organisational Priorities

A fresh start for the Council and the Borough will see us continuing to focus on financial stability and transparency, making sure we have adequate funds going forward all while we work to meaningfully involve our residents, communities and businesses in decision making and project design and delivery. We will undertake a full review of council decision-making procedures and increase transparency through the live streaming of council meetings.

Key organisational priorities:

- **Financial Stability**
- **Organisational Stability**
- **Community Focus**
- **High Quality Services**
- **Supported Governance**
- **Principles Driven** (4 p's- Purpose; People; Pride; Performance)



- **Purpose:** Aligns all actions and decisions with the council's overarching strategic goals, ensuring every task contributes to the collective vision and priorities, whether at a corporate, departmental, team or personal level. It provides a sense of direction, helping staff understand how their roles directly impact the community and reason for their work.
- **People:** This principle showcases the importance of 'our people' as our greatest asset, valuing and empowering staff, as well as recognising other important people or stakeholders that impact our work, from members to communities and partners. This principle aims to create a thriving working environment, supporting our people and offering wellbeing initiatives, development opportunities, flexibility, policies, and frameworks that ultimately enhance morale, productivity and the happiness of our staff.
- **Pride:** Taking pride in our work and our community is a key building block in maintaining high standards and a sense of achievement for our employees. By celebrating our successes and learning from challenges, pride encourages ownership, passion, and integrity in our day-to-day work life.
- **Performance:** By setting clear goals, measuring outcomes, and striving for excellence, we can drive continuous improvement and ensure that our work leads to tangible benefits for the community. This allows us to recognise our successes, set future objectives and identify areas for growth and improvement.

Whilst each principle has its own meaning, they are designed to work in a unified way to ensure a good culture where our staff are dedicated to delivering outstanding public services.

Local Government Reorganisation

TBC...

Engagement, Partnership and Collaborative Working

Communities are at the heart of this plan, so meaningful engagement with our residents, tenants, businesses, community organisations and other stakeholders is vital to make many of our ambitions a reality. This could be through consultation events, surveys or forums; enabling people to have their say in a way that is both accessible and timely will ensure that local voices truly influence the services we provide and support the communities we serve.

For the Borough Council to effectively deliver its Council Plan, there is a need to work in partnership with other agencies across the different sectors. This means, instead of each organisation working separately in isolation, we will proactively support local agencies to come together and address issues in a more cohesive way for the benefit of local residents.

We will make use of all available opportunities for effective partnership working in Redditch, including through the relatively newly established and evolving Redditch District Collaborative. Redditch District Collaborative (RDC) originated in 2021. The Collaborative builds on the strong and effective working relationships between Redditch GP practices (Kingfisher and Nightingales PCNs), Redditch Borough Council, Worcestershire County Council, and Public Health. The purpose of RDC is to enable and facilitate strong collaborative working that brings about long-term, positive health and wellbeing outcomes for Redditch residents.

Other partnership activities include:

- Working to deliver the latest North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership Plan.
 - The North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership deliver a range of community safety initiatives and work with agencies and communities to achieve the Partnership's vision of keeping "North Worcestershire a safer place to live, work and visit"
- Supporting the Cultural Compact for North East Worcestershire, in order to increase active and creative behaviours and connectivity with open space.
 - A Culture Compact is a strong and sustained collaboration between strategic place-based partners which support co-design and deliver a vision for culture within a place. The partnership brings together local authorities, business, education providers, cultural and community leaders, driven by a shared ambition for culture and place, to co-design and deliver a vision for culture within North East Worcestershire.

Monitoring, Review & Reporting- our Measures, Projects & Progress

Progress will be monitored quarterly (where the data is available), allowing us to adjust, as needed, to keep the plan on track. Quarterly Monitoring Reports (Performance & Project Monitoring) and an Annual Review of the plan will be considered by the Executive, Overview and Scrutiny and the Corporate Leadership Team, with the updates being available to the public on the website.

In order to ensure we deliver the objectives and projects in this plan, we will develop an Implementation Plan to sit alongside it, helping the organisation to monitor our progress and to understand the difference that has been made within our communities. This plan will identify relevant and meaningful performance measures, projects to be monitored corporately and how annual progress will be reported.

Risk Management

The Council is committed to managing our risks effectively, efficiently, and proportionally, ensuring that risk management is fully embedded across the organisation. Corporate Risks are set out on a quarterly basis to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee. This Committee has an active “Risk Champion”.

Mitigations for the risks identified are set out in Audit Reports as well as departmental risks that link to these Corporate Risks. An Officer Risk Board continues to take place quarterly to embed processes and validate risks on the register, with each department having as representative. The Corporate Management Team are updated on risk management issues in their monthly “assurance” meeting. The Risk Level now stands at Moderate Assurance, as of May 2023.

Budget and Resources

Ensuring that we make the best use of our resources, capital and assets is essential in order to balance the books and provide our residents with value for money and confidence in the Council's ability to manage the budget. The priorities detailed within this plan will underpin our medium-term financial planning and financial management expertise informs all of our strategic decision making.

The 2025/6 to 2027/8 Medium Term Financial Plan was approved at Council on the 24th February 2025. That Budget can be summarised as follows:

Year	2025/6	2026/7	2027/8
	£000	£000	£000
Updated Totals	-30	435	345

Overall there is a net £30k surplus in 2025/26, rising to a deficit of £435k in 2026/27, before reducing to £345k in 2027/28. This is an overall call on general fund reserves of £750k.

Presently, the General Fund sits at a value of £7.312m (taking account of the Tranche 2 position) at the 31st March 2028. This sum is approximately 15% of gross expenditure which is well above the 5% benchmark quoted by the Government as being a minimum requirement. Earmarked Reserve balances which at the 31st March 2028 sit at a value of £14.868m.

Capital expenditure, including carry forward amounts are £51m of which £23m is Grant Funded.

* item has been selected for pre-scrutiny by main Committee
** item has been selected for pre-scrutiny by Budget Scrutiny Working Group

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME



1 April 2025 to 31 July 2025

(Published as at 3rd March 2025)

This Work Programme gives details of items on which key decisions are likely to be taken by the Borough Council's Executive Committee, or full Council, in the coming four months. "Key Decisions" are ones which are likely to:

- (i) result in the Council incurring expenditure, foregoing income or the making of savings in excess of £200,000 or which are otherwise significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (ii) be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in the area comprising two or more wards in the Borough;
- (iii) involve any proposal to cease to provide a Council service (other than a temporary cessation of service of not more than 6 months).

If you wish to make representations on the proposed decision you are encouraged to get in touch with the relevant report author as soon as possible before the proposed date of the decision. Contact details are provided. Alternatively, you may write to the Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Property Services, The Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH or e-mail: democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

The Executive Committee's meetings are normally held at 6.30pm on Tuesday evenings at the Town Hall. They are open to the public, except when confidential information is being discussed. If you wish to attend for a particular matter, it is advisable to check with the Democratic Services Team on (01527) 64252, ext: 3072 to make sure it is going ahead as planned. If you have any other queries, Democratic Services Officers will be happy to advise you. The full Council meets in accordance the Council's Calendar of Meetings. Meetings commence at 6.30pm.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Joe Baker - Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Governance
Councillor Sharon Harvey – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services
Councillor Juliet Barker Smith - Portfolio Holder for Leisure
Councillor Bill Hartnett - Portfolio Holder for Housing
Councillor Jen Snape – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change
Councillor Jane Spilsbury - Portfolio Holder for Performance
Councillor Monica Stringfellow - Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services
Councillor Ian Woodall - Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor Wanda King – Executive Member without Portfolio

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
*Council Plan Key: No	Council 19 May 2025		Report of the Chief Executive	Sue Hanley, Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3601
Redditch Local Plan Key: No	Executive 13 May 2025 Council 19 May 2025		Report of the Assistant Director of Planning and Leisure Services	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1325
*Fly Tipping & Bulky Waste Task Group - Final Report Key: No	Executive 10 Jun 2025		Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Mateusz Sliwinski, Democratic Services Officer
*Shareholders' Committee Annual Report Key: No	Executive 10 Jun 2025 Council 30 Jun 2025	This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session.	Report of the Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
*Housing Regulator Tenant Satisfaction Measures Key: No	Executive 10 Jun 2025		Report of the Assistant Director Environmental and Housing Property Services	Simon Parry, Assistant Director Environmental and Housing Property Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3201
*Housing Regulator Self-assessment Complaint Handling Code Key: No	Executive 10 Jun 2025		Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Matthew Bough, Acting Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3120
*Voluntary Sector Grants Scheme 2026/27 to 2029/30 Key: No	Executive 10 Jun 2025 Council 30 Jun 2025		Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Judith Willis, Assistant Director Community and Housing Services Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3348
**Financial Outturn Report and Quarter 4 Performance Monitoring Report 2024/25 Key: No	Executive 8 Jul 2025 Council September 2025		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
**Treasury Management Outturn Report 2024/2025 Key: No	Executive 8 Jul 2025 Council 15 Sep 2025		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
Medium Term Financial Plan Scene Setting Report 2026/2027 Key: No	Executive 2 Sep 2025 Council 15 Sep 2025		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
Quarter 1 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report Key: No	Executive 2 Sep 2025 Council 15 Sep 2025		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
*Redevelopment of The Anchorage, Smallwood Key: No	Executive 2 Sep 2025 Council 15 Sep 2025	This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session.	Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Amanda Delahunty, Acting Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1269

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Medium Term Financial Plan Tranche 1 Budget Report 2026/2027 Key: No	Executive 25 Nov 2025 Council 26 Jan 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
Quarter 2 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report Key: No	Executive 25 Nov 2025 Council 26 Jan 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
Treasury Management Half Yearly Report 2024/2025 Key: No	Executive 25 Nov 2025 Council 26 Jan 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
Council Tax Base Report 2026/27 Key: No	Executive 13 Jan 2026 Council 26 Jan 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Council Tax - Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums 2026/27 Key: No	Executive 13 Jan 2026 Council 26 Jan 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27 Key: No	Executive 13 Jan 2026 Council 26 Jan 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
Discretionary Council Tax Reduction Policy 2026/27 Key: No	Executive 13 Jan 2026 Council 26 Jan 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
Medium Term Financial Plan Tranche 1 Budget Report 2026/2027 Key: No	Executive 13 Jan 2026 Council 26 Jan 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and any additional information for noting	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Non Domestic Rates - Discretionary Rates Relief Policy 2026/27 Key: No	Executive 13 Jan 2026 Council 26 Jan 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
Medium Term Financial Plan Tranche 2 Budget Report 2026/2027 Key: No	Executive 9 Feb 2026 Council 23 Feb 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
Council Tax Resolution 2026/27 Key: No	Executive 23 Feb 2026 Council 23 Feb 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205
Quarter 3 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report Key: No	Executive 17 Mar 2026 Council 18 May 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1205

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