



# Executive Committee

Tue 13 May  
2025  
6.30 pm

Oakenshaw Community  
Centre, Castleditch  
Lane, B98 7YB



If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact  
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## ***GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS***

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Please note that this is a public meeting.

If you have any questions regarding the agenda or attached papers, please do not hesitate to contact the officer named above.

### **Notes:**

Although this is a public meeting, there are circumstances when Council might have to move into closed session to consider exempt or confidential information. For agenda items that are exempt, the public are excluded.

# Executive

Tuesday, 13th May, 2025

6.30 pm

Oakenshaw Community Centre

## Agenda

### Membership:

Cllrs:

Sharon Harvey  
(Chair)  
Juliet Barker Smith  
Bill Hartnett  
Wanda King

Jen Snape  
Jane Spilsbury  
Monica Stringfellow  
Ian Woodall

### 1. Apologies

### 2. Declarations of Interest

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and / or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.

### 3. Leader's Announcements

### 4. Minutes (Pages 5 - 18)

### 5. Redditch Local Plan (Pages 19 - 64)

This report is due to be pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee scheduled to take place on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025. Any recommendations arising from that meeting will be published in a supplementary pack for the consideration of the Executive Committee.

### 6. Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Pages 65 - 80)

### 7. Minutes / Referrals - Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels etc.

To receive and consider any outstanding minutes or referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels etc. since the last meeting of the Executive Committee, other than as detailed in the items above.

### 8. To consider any urgent business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting

## 9. Exclusion of the press and public

Should it be necessary, in the opinion of the Chief Executive, during the course of the meeting to consider excluding the public from the meeting on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged, it may be necessary to move the following resolution:

“That, under S.100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs (to be specified) of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act”.

The relevant paragraph is as follows:

Subject to the “public interest” test, information relating to:

- Para 3 – financial or business affairs;

and may need to be considered as ‘exempt’.

## 10. DMIC (Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre) Additional Design Costs (AHR Architects Contract Variation) (Pages 81 - 88)

This report is due to be pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee scheduled to take place on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025. Any recommendations arising from that meeting will be published in a supplementary pack for the consideration of the Executive Committee.



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### MINUTES

#### Present:

Councillor Joe Baker (Chair), Councillor Sharon Harvey (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Juliet Barker Smith, Bill Hartnett, Wanda King, Jen Snape, Jane Spilsbury, Monica Stringfellow and Ian Woodall

#### Officers:

Peter Carpenter, Rachel Egan, Rebecca Green, Georgina Harris, Doug Henderson, Helen Mole, Simon Parry and Guy Revans

#### Democratic Services Officers:

Jo Gresham

#### 88. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence from Members on this occasion.

#### 89. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### 90. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader highlighted that, following consultation with Midlands Net Zero Hub as consortium lead for the Warm Homes Local Grant, Redditch Borough Council were looking to re-evaluate the delivery of the Warm Homes Local Grant in Redditch. The report at item seven of the agenda (Minute No 94) was therefore withdrawn and was not debated at this meeting. It was noted that it would be bought back to a future meeting of the Executive Committee for consideration.

The Leader advised that at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025, Members pre-scrutinised Future Cemetery Provision, UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Chair

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2025/26 and the Redditch Council Plan scheduled for consideration at the Executive Committee meeting.

Members were advised that at the end of their discussions, the Committee endorsed the recommendations in the reports but did not propose any further recommendations.

Prior to the Executive Committee meeting, the Budget Scrutiny Working Group had pre-scrutinised the Quarter Three Revenue and Performance Monitoring 2024/25 and the Finance Recovery Programme Report. Again, the Group did not propose any recommendations on these items for the Executive Committee's consideration.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, the Leader thanked Members of both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Budget Scrutiny Working Group for their hard work in pre-scrutinising these reports.

## 91. MINUTES

### **RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.**

## 92. FUTURE CEMETERY PROVISION

The Environmental Services Manager presented the Future Cemetery Provision report for the consideration of the Executive Committee.

In doing so it was reported that, following the elections in May 2024, Members requested that Officers identified potential alternatives for burial provision within the Borough. This was undertaken and a potential new site for burial provision was identified on Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD.

If this site was to be investigated further, it would still result in the need for further burial provision whilst the investigation took place. It was therefore proposed within the report that a site within the Abbey Cemetery and Redditch Crematorium, previously used for

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scattering of ashes, be repurposed to provide ten years of further burial provision.

A further proposal contained within the report was that burial provision be considered as part of the development of the Redditch Local Plan which was currently underway.

Members thanked Officers for their hard work in respect of this sensitive matter. It was acknowledged that the use of the previous scattering area at the Abbey Cemetery and Redditch Crematorium could be upsetting for those who had used this area previously. However, it was confirmed that there would be detailed searches of records and communications provided to those residents who had used this site previously. These communications would be made through social media, websites, and notices posted at the location to inform people of the proposed future use. Residents would be listened to and reassured that this would be an open and transparent process throughout. An appropriate memorial could also be considered at this location if required in the future.

Members were pleased that future burial provision would be included as part of the development of the Local Plan as it was just as important as the provision of schools and health care when developing the local area. This would hopefully provide a long-term solution for the future.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

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

## **RESOLVED that**

- 1) the Land located at the current Abbey Cemetery site, used previously as an ashes scattering area be utilised for earth burial provision for an interim period of up to ten years commencing in January 2027.**
- 2) A review be commissioned of the potential to use the site at Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD for burial provision in the long-term.**

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## 93. DATA STRATEGY (INCL DATA STANDARDS POLICY)

The Business Improvement Manager – Business Transformation presented the Data Strategy (including Data Standards Policy) for Members' consideration.

In doing so, it was highlighted that the Data Standards Policy would provide a foundation and guidance to help safeguard the Council's data assets. This was essential in order to maintain consistency, quality and compliance within legal and regulatory requirements. In addition, it would provide a framework in which to adhere to data security measures, collaboration across services resulting in greater trust and transparency amongst stakeholders.

Members were advised of the governance structure contained within the Data Standards Policy and it was reported that there was a Systems and Data (SAD) Governance Board along with a SAD Governance Group which reported to the Board. There were several projects due to be undertaken which included Systems Procurement, Data Standards and Data Stewards projects.

A group of fourth tier managers within the organisation had carried out an assessment of the Council's Data Maturity against a Local Government Association (LGA) Assessment Tool. The results of this assessment had indicated that the Council currently had a Data Maturity score of 2.7 which equated to Level Three within the LGA's scoring matrix. This meant that Redditch Borough Council was 'developing' its 'capacity and capabilities in terms of data'. It was noted that although this was satisfactory in terms of where the Council should be at the start of this process it eventually needed to be at Level Four. This would require a review of six or seven systems across the organisation which focussed on key identifier fields across all Council data systems, for example Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN), address, postcode, name and customer ID.

An outline of the Data Standards, Data Stewards and Systems Procurement projects were provided to Members along with the timelines of these projects. This would not be an easy task and would take at least two years to complete. However, the result would be that the Council could collect, use and appropriately share accurate data providing a standard to support a 'single source of truth' or 'golden record' for Council customers.

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It was reported that an estimated £10,000 per system was needed to start to address data cleansing issues within core Systems, which held almost 90 per cent of Council data.

Following the presentation of the report, Members expressed that they were pleased that this policy had been developed and that it was important that the Council held accurate records for its residents.

Members were also pleased that the Council had assessed itself realistically in terms of where they currently were in terms of Data Maturity and queried how the levels would be monitored. Officers stated that this information would be included in the Quarterly reports considered regularly by Members.

In terms of Local Government reorganisation, it was noted that this project was very timely as whatever the outcome was for Local Authorities in the future it would be necessary for all Councils to have accurate data. It was noted that some neighbouring Authorities had the same systems as Redditch Borough Council so it would be possible to integrate with other Councils as necessary.

## **RESOLVED that**

**that the proposed Data Standards Policy be agreed and the guidance policy be implemented for all employees.**

### **94. WARM HOMES LOCAL GRANTS FUNDING AND RESOURCES**

As detailed in the preamble above (Minute No 90), the Warm Homes Local Grants Funding and Resources report was not debated at this meeting and would be considered at a future meeting of the Executive Committee.

### **95. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND 2025/26**

The UK Prosperity Fund Manager presented the UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025 – 2026 for Members' consideration.

In doing so it was highlighted that there had been a one-year extension of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for the financial year 2025 – 2026 at a reduced rate of funding. This had resulted in Redditch Borough Council being allocated £818,536.

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It was reported that there had been some further changes in the UKSPF for this financial year, in that the list of fifty plus interventions had been replaced with five themes and twelve sub-themes.

The Investment Plan for the funding had been aligned with the priorities outlined by Members and included support for communities and the Voluntary Sector, improvement of the Town Centre, Parks and Green Spaces and the Cost of Living. Furthermore, there had been consultation with the Redditch Town Deal Board who also supported the priority of investment in upskilling, youth unemployment and support for local businesses as key priorities. Members were pleased that this support had been provided.

It was noted that one of the proposed recommendations contained within the report would also allow any funds that had not been spent as per the Investment Plan to be reallocated following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Governance. This would ensure that all available monies were spent within the deadline, providing the best outcome for Redditch and its residents.

Members welcomed this report and felt that the investment would help those communities and groups that needed it most. It was further noted that the support was welcomed for those young people who were not in employment, education or training (NEET) particularly as many of these young people were care-leavers. Members queried how this support would be provided, and it was reported that Worcestershire County Council would provide this service through the Redditch Youth Hub, who already had strong support of this client group.

## **RESOLVED that**

- 1) The Investment Plan be 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.**

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## 96. REDDITCH COUNCIL PLAN

The Policy Manager presented the Redditch Council Plan for the consideration of the Executive Committee.

This Plan had been developed with the Executive alongside Officers and the Local Government Association (LGA) who had assisted at the beginning of the process. It was proposed that there would be an implementation plan that sat alongside the Council Plan. It was anticipated that the Council Plan would be reviewed annually and key objectives and outcomes measured as part of the Quarterly monitoring reporting regime.

Members were further advised on the potential impact on this Plan as a result of the proposed Local Government reorganisation. Therefore, there would need to be amendments made as necessary, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Governance.

The Leader sincerely thanked the Policy Manager and the Corporate Leadership Team for their work on such a positive process which had resulted in a comprehensive new Council Plan, that provided new initiatives and improvements for Redditch and its residents for the future.

There were some comments from Members in respect of the Plan. Some Members requested that further information regarding the cultural activities within the Borough be included in order to demonstrate the rich cultural events on offer for residents.

Members also requested that any comments on the design, such as layout, photographs and colour palette of the proposed Council Plan document, be provided to the Policy Manager following the meeting.

It was queried how the new Council Plan would be disseminated. Members were advised that once it was approved communications would be released using the Council's usual channels such as social media.

### **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) The Council Plan be approved.**

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- 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 a result of the Local Government reorganisation.**

## **97. MEMBERS WARD BUDGET SCHEME**

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer presented the Members' Ward Budget Scheme for the consideration of the Executive Committee.

Members were informed that the proposal for the pilot scheme was that each Councillor would receive £2,000 for the 2025 - 2026 financial year, and the following two financial years. As a result of the new Local Government reorganisation proposal, it was likely that this would be a one-time scheme.

Members could recommend allocating funds to projects and / or services within their ward and across wider communities across the Borough. Members could also join with other Members to "pool" their Ward Funds for specific Council wide projects and initiatives to make the overall sums greater.

It was highlighted that the required forms to be completed were contained within the report and that a clear statement would be required as to how the funds would be spent. In order to ensure a robust process was followed it would be necessary for Members to declare any Pecuniary Interests and any Other Disclosable Interests as part of the application stage. If necessary, Legal advice could be sought to provide any clarification in this matter.

Any payments would be made electronically to recipients of the funding in order to provide a necessary audit trail. No cash transactions would be made for funding payments.

Members were advised that the funds needed to be spent within the financial year to which they were allocated. If it was unlikely that the funding would be spent during this period, Officers would need to be notified in December of the relevant financial year.

The scheme would be subject to the Quarterly Performance monitoring reports which were regularly considered by Members.

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Members commented that this was a positive scheme for the residents of Redditch and communities. Through the robust process proposed within the report there would be no opportunity for fraud or abuse.

It was noted that the pre-election period (purdah) for the Worcestershire County Council elections was due to start imminently. Therefore, no applications would be processed prior to these elections on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2025.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

**the Ward Budget Scheme be agreed.**

### **98. QUARTER 3 REVENUE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2024/25**

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer presented the Quarter Three Revenue and Performance Monitoring 2024/25.

It was reported that overall, the Council was currently forecasting a full year revenue overspend of £138,000 at Quarter Three, an improvement of £161,000 from Quarter Two.

Several further changes were also reported from Quarter Two to Quarter Three. These were as follows:

- An overspend in Environmental Services of £189,000 – this was largely due to an increase in Place Team spending.
- An overspend in Financial Services of £187,000 due to agency staff costs.
- An overspend in Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services of £119,000 – this was mainly due to the variances on Planning Applications income compared to budget.

On 31st December 2024, the Council had £13.5m short term investments held and no short-term borrowing.

In terms of the Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (DMIC) it was reported that the plans were now up and running and that a bid was underway to Birmingham City Council for the funding of £2.425m which had previously been allocated to Redditch Borough

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Council by the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) before being disbanded. This would help fund the DMIC project going forward.

Public Realm works were under construction and had been reported to Members previously, the Town Centre library would not now be relocated to the Town Hall Hub.

As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024, the Council held £14.868m of Earmarked Reserves and £7.475m in the General Fund.

The Housing Revenue Account looked to break even for the financial year. The capital work programme would be accelerated this year as there had been some delays experienced due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Council's Procurement Pipeline included details of contracts expected to be reprocured and new procurement projects expected to be undertaken in the future. There were twenty-three contracts valued between £50,000 and £200,000, ten valued at over £200,000 and ten contracts procured by Redditch on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council. These ten contracts were all related to ICT.

The Policy Manager presented the Performance Measures data for Quarter Three for Members' consideration. It was noted that this was a new way to present the data in a more user-friendly way. It would be used to assess performance and identify areas of improvement. The development of the Power BI dashboard was also underway, and Members would be able to access this via a dashboard in the future providing clear and accurate performance data.

Some measures included within the report were still under development, such as Private Housing and Freedom of Information and Subject Access Request measures due to projects currently underway in these areas. These would continue to be developed for future reports.

All measures were aligned with the Council Plan and linked into the priorities contained within it. Members were informed that the service measures had also been developed as part of the Service Business Planning Framework.

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Following consideration of the report Members reported that they were pleased with the outcome of the Finance and Performance monitoring for Quarter Three. The budget pressures that had previously been identified were more positive and the clarity around the allocation of the £2.425m funding allocation from the GBSLEP was welcomed.

It was also noted by the Committee that the more detailed data provided in the performance monitoring offered a more accurate picture of what was going on in the Borough. For example, Anti-Social Behaviour monitoring was included in the report. It seemed that there had been an increase of instances of ASB, however, this had not necessarily been the case. As a new system had been implemented part way through the year which had meant more accurate data had been captured than had been previously. It was noted that tenants who behaved in an anti-social manner were dealt with appropriately and in accordance with the Tenant's Handbook.

Members highlighted the improvement in Gas Safety and Fire Risk Assessments which were currently measured at one hundred per cent. It was hoped that these kinds of areas would continue to improve with the appointment of caretakers for the homes within the Council's management, allowing Tenancy Officers to carry out their roles more effectively.

There were several other areas to note where improvements had been made such as the Damp and Mould Policy recently approved by Members which included the recruitment of a dedicated team to tackle damp and mould issues. It was noted that the relevant Senior Management Team Officers had worked exceptionally hard over recent months to ensure that residents received the best service possible.

Members queried the dip in residents accessing energy advice during this period. The Policy Manager suggested that it could be a seasonal trend, however, they undertook to find out further information from the relevant Officers. It was also questioned how long it took to complete the Disabled Facilities Grant works for those residents who were eligible. Officers would request this information from the relevant service area and would report back to Members accordingly.

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Following the detailed consideration of this report, Members stated that it provided clear and transparent information and would provide a useful overview for residents within the Borough now and in the future.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the Balance Sheet Monitoring Position for Quarter Three be noted – which was the Treasury Monitoring Report and required to be reported to Council.**

**RESOLVED that**

- 2) The current Revenue overspend position of £138k and actions the Council were taking to mitigate this position be noted.**
- 3) The current Capital spending of £4.72m against a budget of £20.5m be noted.**
- 4) The HRA Position be noted.**
- 5) The updated procurements position with any new items over £200,000 to be included on the forward plan.**
- 6) The Quarter Three Performance data for the Period October to December 2024 be noted that this will change over the year to link into the new Administrations priorities.**
- 7) The Council submit a bid for £2.425m to Birmingham City Council for funding allocated to Redditch by Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership to support the Digital Manufacturing Innovation Centre.**

**99. FINANCE RECOVERY PROGRAMME REPORT**

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer presented the Finance Recovery Programme Report for the consideration of the Committee. Members were advised that a report much like this was considered at each Audit, Governance and Standards Committee meeting. It was important that the processes put in place following the issuing of the Section 24 Statement were also continued via this half yearly Finance Recovery Plan.

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It had been a significant year for the Finance Team. Including the delivery of the Council's Statement of Accounts, with the closure of the accounts for the financial years 2020 – 2021, 2021 – 2022 and 22 – 23 with a 'Disclaimer Opinion' being received and approved for these years. Draft Accounts for the 2023 – 2024 year had been available for public consultation since 17<sup>th</sup> January 2025. This consultation was due to close on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025. The Accounting Opinion could not be issued until the external auditors had been onboarded. However, it was noted that Officers and Members had all now completed the validation process in just four months, ahead of the six to twelve months projected by Ernst & Young. The key issue still to be resolved across the Country was reported as what were the implications and impact of so many "Disclaimer Opinions" on the sector and individual Councils.

The Committee was informed that the Key Deliverables achieved since the last meeting included the following:

- TechOne had been upgraded to version 24B in February 2025.
- The 2025/6 MTFP process has been completed in both Councils and the 2025/6 process started.
- More Budget Consultation had been addressed in Tranche 1 of the budget.
- Performance Indicators had been reviewed and updated following the Strategic Priority and Service Business Planning sessions.

Members thanked the Deputy Chief Executive and all of the Finance Team for their hard work in respect of this positive report which detailed the significant steps Officers had made during this period.

### **RESOLVED that**

- 1) **Progress made on the financial recovery be noted including:**
  - **Delivery of the Statutory Accounts**
  - **Delivery of Statutory Financial Returns**
  - **Improvements in the Control Environment**

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- 2) The work still under way to move back to a best practice operation and the associated timetable for completion of this work, as contained in this report, be noted.

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

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

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

There was no Urgent Business on this occasion.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm  
and closed at 7.57 pm

# Executive Committee Report 2025

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## Redditch Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation 2025

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Sharon Harvey
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Ruth Bamford
Report Author	Job Title: Ruari McKee Contact email: ruari.mckee@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: (01527) 881272
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	Yes Via Planning Advisory Panel
Relevant Council Priority	Economic Development Community and Housing
Non-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 **RECOMMEND** to Council that:-

- 1) The Council endorses Redditch Local Plan Issues and Options consultation document (Appendix A) for a six-week public consultation period.
- 2) That delegated authority is given to the Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Governance to make any minor technical corrections and editorial changes deemed necessary to aid the understanding of the documentation prior to final publishing.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a six-week Issues and Options consultation period for the Borough of Redditch Local Plan (BORPL5).
- 2.2 A Local Plan sets out the Council's policies on land use and guides development. The Local Plan's purpose is to determine where and how housing, employment and infrastructure are all delivered in the Borough.

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Individual planning applications are made in accordance with the adopted Local Plan policies unless there are significant mitigating circumstances.

- 2.3 The current Borough of Redditch Local Plan (BORLP4) was adopted in January 2017. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that local plans are reviewed every 5 years. Therefore, BORLP4 is due to be reviewed.
- 2.4 Since BORLP4 was adopted, there have been a significant number of changes to the planning system which the Plan needs to be updated to reflect. Updated and new policies will be required to address issues such as housing and employment provision, sustainability, climate change and towards meeting the requirement for biodiversity net gain introduced in the Environment Act 2022. Owing to the age of BORLP4, if it is not reviewed there is a risk that the Plan's policies will become out of date. The best option is therefore considered to be proceeding with the Issues and Options consultation.
- 2.5 The chapters of the Borough of Redditch Issues and Options Local Plan consultation document provide background information on key issues and ask consultees questions to help shape planning policies (to be developed for later stages of the plan).
- 2.6 Housing is of course central to the Issues and Options document. Redditch needs to provide at least 489 dwellings per annum, equivalent to 8,313 additional dwellings up to the period 2043. When existing land allocations, current planning permissions and the windfall allowance are accounted for, this results in a need for new land to be identified for around 3,900 dwellings. The potential broad locations for housing growth and housing mix options are identified in the document. Employment land need (35ha by 2043), options for meeting future employment land requirements and how the plan can help harness investment in regeneration sites is considered. Consultees are also asked how they think the town centre and local centres can adapt to changing retail requirements. Climate change is the golden thread running through the document, with each section focused on how sustainable development can be achieved. The Local Plan is an opportunity to help some of the measures identified in the Redditch Borough Council Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan. For example, improving energy efficiency standards.

### **Next Steps:**

- 2.7 The proposed Issues and Options consultation would run for 6 weeks, from 22<sup>th</sup> May to 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

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- 2.8 All consultation responses received will be processed, analysed and a consultation report produced identifying key themes and demographic information. This work will inform the development of the next stage of the plan-making process.

**3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

- 3.1 The Issues and Options consultation (or 'Regulation 18' consultation) is the first stage of the plan-making process. The purpose of the Issues and Options consultation is to consult the public, statutory consultees and a range of stakeholders on what the new Local Plan should contain. An Issues and Options consultation is less detailed than future consultations in the plan-making process (such as a 'Preferred Option' consultation). Therefore, the Council has some discretion over the format of the Issues and Options consultation.
- 3.2 No proposed development sites will be included in the Issues and Options consultation. However, the Call for Sites process, whereby landowners and developers have the opportunity to submit potential housing and employment sites for consideration, is proposed to form part of Issues and Options consultation. Actual site allocations would form part of the future plan-making stages.
- 3.3 Only a limited range of evidence will support the Issues and Options consultation because the evidence will be gathered as the draft Local Plan progresses towards the final submission stage (which is then subject to examination by an independent Planning Inspector.)
- 3.4 The new Local Plan will be accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report, which also forms part of the consultation. The Scoping Report reviews relevant policies, assesses key baseline data, identifies key sustainability issues and defines the SA framework. A Sustainability Appraisal assesses to what extent a local plan promotes sustainable development. The SA is a key part of the local plan process that can shape and even change proposed local plan site allocations and planning policies to make them more sustainable.
- 3.5 Consultation methods will be designed to reach the broadest range of consultees possible, with the integration of both digital and non-digital consultation methods to achieve this. Council Officers will be available at in-person events, so the public are able to speak with Officers directly.
- 3.6 For this consultation, a consultation online platform called 'Commonplace' will be used. This consultation platform should make it easier to engage with 'harder-to-reach' groups such as young people.

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Commonplace should also make the consultation process more engaging for consultees (through offering a range of options such as being able to look at interactive maps) and enables more detailed post-consultation analysis by using data gained from the digital platform to identify demographic data about consultation respondents. The text used in the Issues and Options document will be consistent with the text used on Commonplace for consistency. The consultation will be undertaken in compliance with GDPR rules on data and the relevant privacy notes will be displayed so respondents are clear how data they provide will be used.

- 3.7 The Issues and Options consultation document will be published on the Council's website, statutory consultees notified and paper copies of the document will be available in the temporary customer services centre (5 George Walk, Kingfisher Shopping Centre), libraries and other locations throughout the Borough. Press releases, leaflets/posters and social media channels will be used to promote the consultation and consultation events to maximise attendance.

- 3.8 Consultees will be encouraged to reply via Commonplace, however email and paper responses will also be accepted to make responding to the consultation as accessible as possible. A dedicated email address ([redditchplan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:redditchplan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)) will be available for consultee responses. All consultation documents will be made available on a dedicated webpage and Commonplace url:

<https://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/council/policy/planning-policy/redditchplan>

<https://www.redditchplan.commonplace.is>

- 3.9 The consultation document itself considers different locations for growth, housing numbers and mix, employment land, travel and infrastructure provision, Town Centre and District Centres, design coding and climate change. Consultees will also have the opportunity to log any issues they think have been missed and should be considered as part of the plan-making process.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 A budget exists for the production of the Local Plan, this consultation is being funded from this budget.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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- 5.1 The Issues and Options consultation will be carried out in accordance with the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 which outlines the statutory obligations for the consultation. The consultation will also meet the commitments set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI includes an explanation of the plan-making process and identifies the consultation methods the Council will use during the consultation process.

**6. OTHER – IMPLICATIONS****Local Government Reorganisation**

- 6.1 The latest National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and English Devolution Bill were published near simultaneously in December 2024. The Department for Communities and Local Government have made it very clear that plan making has to continue with all authorities being required to have a new plan timetable and subsequently a new plan in place as quickly as possible.
- 6.2 It is considered that the best way to mitigate any potential risks to the new Redditch Local Plan from Local Government reorganisation would be to advance the Local Plan review as far as possible to align Redditch with the latest planning reforms.

**Relevant Council Priority**

- 6.3 The recommendations detailed in this report will support the following new proposed priorities for the Council Plan 2025 – 2028:
- 6.4 1. Economy, Regeneration and Prosperity

The Borough of Redditch Local Plan Issues and Options consultation provides an opportunity for consultees to shape future employment, town centre and local centre sites and policies.

3. Community and Housing:

The Borough of Redditch Local Plan Issues and Options consultation provides an opportunity for consultees to shape future housing allocations and policies.

**Climate Change Implications**

- 6.5 The local plan will have significant implications for climate change, shaping the location and nature of new housing, employment, and infrastructure development. To ensure that climate resilience and

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sustainability are at the forefront of our planning, the Council needs to adopt specific strategies such as promoting renewable energy sources, enhancing green infrastructure, and improving energy efficiency. This should ensure that only the most sustainable developments come forward. Additionally, prioritising sustainable transport options to reduce car dependency, implementing flood risk management strategies, and ensuring biodiversity net gain in all projects, will help Redditch Borough achieve its commitment to Net Zero by 2050 and create a more sustainable and resilient community.

### Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.6 This consultation will be open to all to comment in multiple ways both online and in hard copy. Consultation events will also take place in a variety of locations and at different times of the day. Every effort will be made to ensure that we reach the widest amount of people and organisations as possible.

## **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 The Government have stated that all Local Government Authorities must have an up to date Local Plan. The Council approved the Local Development Scheme in February 2025 which sets out the plan making timetable in order to achieve an up to date local plan. This consultation is in-line with this timetable. The risk of not progressing to a new Local Plan is being managed by undertaking this consultation. Should the timetable not be kept to in the future there is a risk of intervention by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in local plan making, as outlined in the report accompanying the Local Development Scheme. The table below summarises the Local Development Scheme timetable:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Action</b>
May-June 2025	Issues and Options consultation begins
September 2025	Notice of plan making under 30-month system
January 2026	Gateway 1 (Advisory)
May-June 2026	Public consultation (8 weeks)
November 2026	Gateway 2 (Advisory)
March-April 2027	Public consultation (6 weeks)
November 2027	Gateway 3 (Stop/Go)

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December 2027	Examination
June 2028	Finalisation and Adoption

**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendices

Appendix A – Redditch Local Plan Issues and Option

Background Papers

Redditch Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) February 2022 [Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment \(HEDNA\)](#)

Redditch Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report (to follow)

Local Development Scheme (LDS) February 2025 [Executive Committee Agenda \(Item 5\) - 24th February 2025](#)

**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Sharon Harvey	24 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Ruth Bamford, Assistant Director of Planning and Leisure Services	23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2025
Financial Services	Bob Watson, Section 151 Officer	23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2025
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor - Governance	2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2025

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Policy Team	Rebecca Green, Policy Manager	TBC
Climate Change Team	Matt Eccles, Climate Change Manager	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2025

## **DRAFT- Redditch Local Plan Review: Issues and Options**



## Contents Page

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Appendix A: Glossary

## 1. Introduction

### **The next phase of Redditch's development**

1.1 Almost 60 years on from the adoption of the Redditch New Town Masterplan, this consultation on the new Redditch Local Plan is an opportunity to shape the next phase of Redditch's development.

1.2 Much of Redditch is defined by its post-war heritage. The Redditch New Town Masterplan sought to respond to the post-war challenges of a housing shortage, increasing car use and overcrowding in the West Midlands conurbation. The Redditch New Town Masterplan left a legacy of relatively low levels of congestion, comparatively large amounts of open space and local services in District Centres accessed by a network of footpaths, all framed by over 3 million trees.

### **Redditch New Town Masterplan image to be included\***

1.3 Redditch is a place of choice for families with its good range of housing, schools and open space. Redditch is a centre for manufacturing with good access to Birmingham and the wider motorway network.

1.4 The new Redditch Local Plan can help address challenges faced by Redditch today such as the housing shortage, the changing nature of town centres and climate change.

1.5 The new Local Plan is a real opportunity for Redditch to decide where new homes are built, what type of new homes are built, what those homes look like and how energy efficient they are. The new Local Plan can help provide businesses with the space to grow, help shape our town centre to adapt to increasing online retail and to define the infrastructure to help us walk, cycle and charge our cars into the future.

1.6 The purpose of this Issues and Options consultation is to hear your views in order to shape the next phase of Redditch's development.

## **2. Redditch Borough Today**

2.1 Redditch Borough is located in North Worcestershire, around 15 miles south of Birmingham. Redditch Borough is surrounded by Bromsgrove District to the west and north, Stratford-on-Avon District to the east/southeast and Wychavon District to the southwest. Redditch Borough is situated at the outer edge of the West Midlands Green Belt boundary.

2.2 The Borough consists of Redditch itself, the villages of Astwood Bank and Feckenham as well as several hamlets. It covers an area of 5,435 hectares (13,430 acres). Between the last two censuses (held in 2011 and 2021), the population of Redditch increased by 3.4%, from around 84,200 in 2011 to around 87,000 in 2021.<sup>1</sup>

2.3 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.

2.4 Redditch was formerly a market town until 1964 when it was designated as a New Town; a status it maintained up until 1985. During this period the Redditch Development Corporation led the significant growth of Redditch, predominantly to the east of the town. As identified at the start of this document, Redditch's twentieth century development has become one of the towns defining features.

2.5 A feature of Redditch's post-war character is that Redditch town itself has a significant amount of open space. There are two areas of designated parkland, including the regionally significant Arrow Valley Country Park (364 hectares) and Morton Stanley Park (38 hectares).

2.6 Redditch Borough has a rich local history with 161 Statutory Listed Buildings, 8 Scheduled Monuments and over 500 other heritage assets, including locally listed heritage assets.

**(Insert map- to be confirmed for version formally formatted in RBC design language)**

### 3. What is a Local Plan?

3.1 A Local Plan sets out the Council's policies on land use and guides development. The Local Plan's purpose is to determine where and how housing, employment and infrastructure are all delivered in the Borough over the next 20 years. Determinations on individual planning applications are made in accordance with the adopted Local Plan policies unless there are significant mitigating circumstances.

3.2 Local Plans are prepared through engagement with local communities, other interested parties and statutory bodies. Local Plans are prepared in accordance with national legislation and policy and are informed by a comprehensive evidence base.

3.3 This "Issues and Options" consultation is an early stage of the Local Plan review process and further public consultation will follow. Your views will help define the issues the Plan sets out to tackle and inform the potential options for doing so, such as the location of development and the approach of key planning policies.

#### **What is outside of the scope of the Local Plan?**

**3.4 As well as defining what the Local Plan can do, it's important to consider what is outside of the scope of the Local Plan to help consultees respond effectively.**

- **Housing Numbers:** determined by central government based on the Standard Method. **(To include link).**
- **Proposed sites:** There are no proposed sites included within this document as the 'Call for Sites' process has not yet been undertaken. Further detail on this is provided in chapter 6).
- **Employment land requirements:** set locally through the Housing and Economic Development Need Assessment **(link to evidence base to be included).**
- **Roads:** Worcestershire County Council highways are responsible for matters such as traffic calming, road repairs, 20mph zones etc. This does not fall under the remit of the Local Plan.
- **Health:** The Local Plan process will include consulting the NHS, GPs and other care providers on the necessary health provision for new development. The Local Plan cannot solve any current problems with healthcare provision.
- **Bringing specific businesses to the town centre:** The Economic Development team works with individual businesses to support and attract them to the town
- **Climate/ energy policies:** Central government defines the national approach to climate and energy policies. The Local Plan operates within that framework.

3.5 Please note that this Issues and Options consultation is the first consultation for the new Redditch Local Plan. There will be at least two more consultations in the future at the Local Plan Preferred Option and Submission Local Plan stages.

## 4. Why do we need a Local Plan review?

4.1 All Councils are required to prepare a local plan to chart a path for the evolution of the area over a period of 20 years. Local Plans are required to be reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain relevant to current needs.

4.2 The current Borough of Redditch Local Plan (BORLP4) was adopted in January 2017 and covers the period from April 2011 to March 2030. It will remain in effect until the new local plan is adopted.

The BORLP4 can be found here:

<https://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/council/policy/planning-policy/borough-of-redditch-local-plan/borough-of-redditch-local-plan-no-4/adopted-borough-of-redditch-local-plan-no-4/>

4.3 Given the time elapsed since the adoption of BORLP4, the Council is required by law to undertake its review and start planning for the period beyond 2030. Furthermore, there have been significant changes to the national planning context

since BORLP4 was adopted and there is a need to determine the extent of changes to local circumstances.

4.4 BORLP4 allocated land for the construction of approximately 6400 dwellings and 55 hectares of employment land up to March 2030 to meet the Borough's identified development needs. Revised housing need figures from the Government's recent revision of national planning policy mean that under the adopted Plan, the Borough has a housing allocation shortfall of approximately 3500 dwellings covering the period up to 2043. A further allocation of employment land will also be required to meet future economic growth needs.

4.5 Updated and new policies will also be required to address issues such as protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environments, providing sufficient infrastructure addressing climate change and sustainability and, amongst other things, to ensure that Redditch Borough is a place where people want to live, work and relax.

### **Local Development Scheme**

4.6 The timeline for the new Redditch Local Plan is contained within the Local Development Scheme (LDS), which can be found here:

#### **[Local Development Scheme \(LDS\)](#)**

### **Local Plan Evidence Base**

4.7 The Local Plan will be led by the Council's evidence base. The evidence base consists of studies on key topic areas to ensure the Local Plan is based on the latest local data and information. The full evidence base will be produced and published as the Local Plan advances through the key plan-making stages identified in the LDS above.

4.8 A key starting point for the evidence base is the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA). The HEDNA (2022) identifies the future housing and employment needs across Redditch Borough for the period 2021-2040.

4.9 The HEDNA and the wider Issues and Options consultation evidence base library can be found here: [Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment \(HEDNA\)](#) Link to I and O evidence base page to be included.

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

4.10 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) assesses to what extent a Local Plan promotes sustainable development. The SA is a key part of the local plan process that can shape and even change proposed local plan site allocations and planning policies to make them more sustainable.

4.11 Sustainability is judged by how the Local Plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic, and social objectives.

4.12 It is a legal requirement to carry out an SA during the preparation of a local plan under Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Paragraph 33 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies the Local Plan SA requirements.

4.13 An SA Scoping report has been produced to inform this Issues and Options Local Plan. Whilst the SA is a legal requirement for a local plan, the SA Scoping report itself is not. The Scoping Report has been undertaken to provide a greater understanding of the key issues that the Redditch Local Plan will need to address.

4.14 The Scoping Report has 5 purposes:

1. To review relevant policies, plans and programmes (PPPs) which may affect the SA
2. Analyse baseline information
3. Identify key sustainability issues
4. Develop the SA framework
5. Consult statutory bodies on the SA Scoping Report

4. 15 The SA Scoping Report can be found here ([link to the evidence base library tbc prior to consultation](#)).

4.16 Each section of this document identifies how the SA scoping report has shaped the development of key questions.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

4.17 The NPPF was first published in March 2012, and most recently revised in December 2024. The NPPF is the Government's 'rule book' that local plan preparation (and other areas of planning) must take account of. The interpretation and application of the NPPF is supplemented by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The PPG is an online resource offering detailed advice on the NPPF and it can be accessed [here](#). The PPG also identifies what supporting evidence base work should be undertaken.

4.14 Changes in the revised NPPF will render some existing policies outdated, thus warranting an update to the Local Plan. The Local Plan Review will need to:

- Reflect the policies set out in the NPPF and associated PPG;
- Contribute towards achieving sustainable development and be supported by appropriate Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment;
- Meet the development and infrastructure requirements of the Borough;
- Consider the unmet development needs of neighbouring authorities and demonstrate that the Duty to Cooperate with neighbouring authorities has been met;
- Take account of evidence relating to environmental constraints on development and the need to conserve the built and natural environment;

- Be deliverable within the Plan period taking account of identified constraints, infrastructure requirements and viability considerations.

## 5. Consultation and how to respond

### **Aims of the consultation**

5.1 The consultation requirements of a local plan are set out in the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Regulation 18 of the act identifies the requirements for consulting stakeholders on the initial 'Issues and Options' stage of a local plan.

5.2 The Regulation 18 Issues & Options consultation is where the Council considers the factors that are influencing the need to update the adopted Local Plan.

5.3 The aim of this consultation is to gain feedback and comments on the draft Issues and Options for the Local Plan to address. Consultation feedback will be used alongside the wider plan evidence base, discussions with key stakeholders and national policy to help the Council to prepare the first draft Local Plan, which will then be publicised for further consultation. When adopted, the Local Plan will cover a period up to 2043.

### **How will we raise awareness of the consultation?**

5.4 The consultation will start on the **22nd<sup>th</sup> May until 3rd July**

5.5 The Council's Issues and Options consultation strategy will utilise the following methods to raise awareness of the consultation:

- Use of online consultation platform Commonplace (<https://Redditchplan/commonplace.is>)
- Print and display relevant documents in the libraries and some publicly accessible Council buildings\*
- Exhibition drop-in events
- Posters and pop-up banners
- Social media
- Website
- Adverts in local papers
- Potential school workshops (term dates and curriculum pending). This will be specifically with young people ages 10-21.

\*Please note that due to current works at Redditch Town Hall, customer services has temporarily moved to 5 George Walk, Kingfisher Shopping Centre (behind Primark). Opening hours are 9am-5pm, except for bank holidays.

### **Who are we going to consult?**

5.6 The Council is required by legislation to consult certain bodies which it considers may have an interest in or be affected by the document. These bodies include:

- All statutory consultees
- As many residents as the Council can reach through the consultation methods outlined above
- In addition to this the Council will also seek to ensure a wide range of other stakeholders and individuals such as voluntary and community groups have the opportunity to be involved in the consultation process.

#### **When and how will we consult?**

5.7 The Issue and Options consultation period will run for six weeks from **22nd May until 3rd<sup>h</sup> July**.

5.8 The consultation documents will be available to view and comment on the Council's website. They will also be available to read during normal opening hours at the Council's Customer Service Centre in at 5 George Walk, Kingfisher Shopping Centre. In addition, the consultation documents will be available to view at local libraries.

5.9 There will be a direct email/letter notification to all consultees registered on the Council's consultation database to advise them of the consultation dates and how to view and respond to the consultation.

#### **How will people be able to respond?**

5.10 Respondents will have a choice of ways to make their comments including answering questions via an online consultation platform (Commonplace), using an online questionnaire or sending written comments in by e-mail or by post.

Online form: <https://Redditchplan/commonplace.is>

Email: [redditchplan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:redditchplan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

Post:

There will also be several events across the consultation period in person at the following locations **XXXX (locations to be finalised)**.

Location	Date	Time

***Please note that by responding to this consultation period, we will add you to our consultees database and automatically notify you of future Plan Review consultation periods. Formal wording tbc prior to consultation.***

## 6. Call for Sites

6.1 The Council is carrying out a Call for Sites exercise as part of the Issues and Options consultation. The Call for Sites will run for the six-week duration of the Local Plan. Submissions will be accepted from 9am on 22nd May and the deadline for Call for Sites submissions is 5pm on 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

6.2 The Call for Sites exercise enables developers and landowners to submit potential development sites that they wish to be considered for inclusion in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan Review.

6.3 The below form (**TBC**) should be completed to suggest sites that you think should be considered by Redditch Borough Council for their suitability for housing, employment or other development land uses over the period to 2043.

6.4 If you have any queries completing this form please contact the Strategic Planning team at Redditch Borough Council on **XXX** or email: [redditchplan@bromsgroveandredditch.go.uk](mailto:redditchplan@bromsgroveandredditch.go.uk)

### Form Completion Notes

6.5 • Please complete ONE FORM PER SITE.

- Please complete each form as fully as possible. The Local Planning Authority will contact you for more detailed information regarding your site submission if required - please wait to hear from us.
- Please attach a scaled location map showing the precise boundary of the site, indicating clearly where development could be located. If possible, please provide as a GIS shape file and any further information such as available masterplans.
- Other relevant information that you consider appropriate may be appended as part of the submission including indicative site layouts, masterplans, proposed delivery rates.
- Electronic submissions are preferred.

**6.6 When you submit your completed form to us we will store your details on our internal database. We need your permission to hold your details on our database and therefore ask that you sign and date the agreement below before returning the form to us. Submission of a form electronically will be taken as authority to store your data. Submission in hard copy will require a pen signature and date.**

## 7. Design Coding

7.1 Consultation on Design Coding forms part of the Redditch Issues and Options Local Plan consultation.

7.2 Design codes seek to create successful places as set out in the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Guide:

[National design guide - GOV.UK](#)

[National Model Design Code - GOV.UK](#)

7.3 It is National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirement to now produce a design code for each area. NPPF Para 131 states: "...Design guides and codes provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high quality standard of design..."

7.4 More specifically: "A design code is a set of design requirements for the physical development of a site or area. It is made up of rules that are clear, specific and unambiguous, and it should normally include extensive graphical illustrations. The code should build upon a design vision, such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area."

7.5 Design coding for high-density, mixed-use locations like Redditch town centre will of course differ significantly from design coding for other places in Redditch. Therefore one of the key options to decide is determining the scale of the design code for Redditch and what it should cover.

7.6 The detailed design code will be produced later in the new Local Plan period and will be informed by the responses from this Issues and Options consultation.

#### **Question 1 (Q1): What areas should a Design Code for Redditch cover?**

Option 1: A Borough wide general Design Code?

Option 2: An overall Design Code but with different requirements for specific areas?

Option 3: Design Codes for specific areas only e.g. Redditch town centre. (If so, which areas?)

Option 4: Produce a new Design Code only for new, large development sites

#### **Q2: Are there any specific design features you would like to see included in design codes for specific areas when new development comes forward?**

## 8. Vision

**8.1** The emerging vision is *for Redditch to become a greener, safer place with pride in its heritage. Redditch will have more decent, energy efficient homes and employment space to allow businesses to thrive and create highly skilled jobs.*

*Redditch will draw upon its post-war heritage to adapt to the challenge of climate change with new active travel routes, enhanced green infrastructure/natural environment and energy efficient development.*

8.2 The Vision for Redditch Borough, and its associated Objectives, will be refined as the Borough's Local Plan is developed and more certainty is gained about:

- what, where, how and when new development will be delivered
- the issues and challenges that emerge through public consultation
- the aspirations that emerge through public consultation.

## 9. Key Issues for Redditch

9.1 The Sustainability Appraisal scoping report, evidence base documents such as the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) and conversations with locally elected council members has helped to identify the issues below:

### **Housing:**

- Meeting demand for Redditch's growing population
- Sustainable locations for new development and regenerating older housing stock
- Redeveloping brownfield sites
- Boundary extension options for expansion within the Borough
- Shortage of affordable housing and family housing
- Shortage of elderly accommodation/retirement villages to meet demand from Redditch's ageing population
- Reduce the council housing waiting list by creating more social housing

### **Economy:**

- Regeneration of the Town Centre and District Centres
- Dealing with high vacancy rates in the Town Centre
- Creating more leisure and cultural events to grow the visitor economy
- Attracting investment and growing the economy
- Responding to employment needs in the Borough
- Ensuring the Local Plan is aligned with relevant strategies such as the emerging National Industrial Strategy
- Encouraging investment in emerging technology and green industries
- Working with businesses, education providers and the forthcoming Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre to provide the right size and location of employment land

**Infrastructure:**

- Improving public transport, walking and cycling which will improve overall health of the Borough
- Improve access around the Borough to attractions and green space

**Natural Environment:**

- Promote healthy lifestyles
- Recognising environmental issues such as flooding and wildlife
- Ensuring sustainability across the district
- Making the most of heritage assets and improving the visitor experience

**Climate Change:**

- Reducing carbon emissions through new technology
- Measures to adapt to aspects of climate change e.g. coping with increased rainfall
- Energy efficiency in new developments

**Questions**

**Question (Q1): Do you agree with the issues identified?**

**Q2: Are there other issues (relating to planning) which the new Local Plan should be addressing?**

## 10. Possible Growth Options

10.1 The Council has not yet undertaken the 'Call for Sites' exercise so doesn't yet know which potential sites for housing and employment are available. The Council can however identify possible broad locations for development based on the characteristics of Redditch Borough. Below is a range of growth options on which the Council would like your views.

10.2 As the Local Plan progresses, these growth options will be refined into the growth strategy. A growth strategy will help us determine the right broad locations for strategic growth and will help deliver homes, employment and infrastructure to meet the needs of the Borough's residents and businesses.

10.3 The growth strategy will be informed by what sites are available for development, the suitability of potential sites submitted through the Call for Sites exercise and where the evidence base indicates are the most sustainable locations for new development.

10.4 The growth strategy will be shaped by Redditch Borough's tight administrative boundaries because this limits the potential sites available within Redditch Borough itself. The land to the south of Redditch mainly consists of green belt land. Non-green belt land on the southern edge of the Borough is classed as 'open countryside' land.

10.5 Among the changes in the revised NPPF is the introduction of 'grey belt'. Grey belt is a new classification of designated land, defined as "*land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land.*" To be considered to be 'grey belt' land, a potential site should not strongly contribute to certain Green Belt purposes, such as preventing urban sprawl. Some land in Redditch that is currently protected by the Green Belt could now be considered for development.

10.6 The growth options will be subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) following the Issues and Options consultation.

#### **Option 1: Focus on urban renewal and urban intensification**

This option consists of focusing development on existing urban brownfield sites and considers the potential to increase housing densities. This could include regenerating district centres and existing Council housing stock. This option could provide development in highly sustainable urban locations.

This option may not be enough to meet Redditch's housing numbers in full but could help revitalise parts of Redditch whilst providing new homes in highly sustainable locations.

#### **Option 2: Focus development on the Green Belt south of Redditch**

Allowing for growth in the Green Belt to the south of the Borough could provide new homes, employment land and services with good access into Redditch town itself.

This option would mean housing and employment growth would be accommodated within Redditch's Borough Council's administrative boundaries without having to extend into neighbouring local authorities.

#### **Option 3: Focus development on the open countryside south of Feckenham**

Allowing for growth beyond the Green Belt to accommodate new housing. Development in the open countryside would need to be of a sufficient size to provide sufficient infrastructure to support development.

#### **Option 4: Building on existing open space**

Developing green spaces in the urban area could deliver some of the development needed in sustainable locations close to existing employment and services.

#### **Option 5: Urban Extension at the edge of Redditch in neighbouring districts**

An urban extension which would include homes, community infrastructure and employment.

Urban extensions would reflect the reality of Redditch Borough's tight administrative boundaries to the west, north and east of the Borough, meaning there are limited options for significant growth within the Borough itself. Urban extensions would cross over into the boundaries of neighbouring authorities.

**Q4: Which of the above options (or combinations of options) do you think is best and why?**

**Q5: Are there any other options for developing new homes and employment in Redditch you would include?**

## 11. Climate Change

11.1 Redditch Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. The Council subsequently published the Redditch Borough Council (RBC) Carbon Reduction Strategy & Implementation Plan 4.5 in February 2024 to reflect the Council's commitment to achieving Net Zero by 2050. It is paramount for Redditch Borough to integrate carbon reduction into all aspects of development. It is an underlying theme that will influence all aspects of Local Plan policy.

11.2 Redditch Borough Council recorded a 2% increase in Carbon Dioxide (Co2) emissions in Redditch between 2021-2022<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the area is highly car-dependent. Data from the 2021 Census 2021 shows that 63.2% of residents travel to work by car, while only 7.7% chose an active travel mode.

11.3 The Borough is legally required to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects, as stipulated in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 19(1A)). Therefore, the Council has incorporated options for reducing carbon emissions throughout the Local Plan document.

### **How can Local Plans respond to climate change?**

11.4 The adopted Local Plan consists of policies for mitigating climate change by supporting sustainable development. It addressed flooding, incorporated sustainable drainage, encouraged active travel and required developments to maximise energy

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<sup>2</sup> [UK local authority greenhouse gas emissions estimates 2022](#)

efficiency. By reviewing and updating existing policies, we can go further in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

11.5 The Council invested £3.2 million in energy efficiency in 2023, benefiting 280 buildings within the Borough. Higher energy efficiency can be achieved by incorporating sustainable technologies in new developments.

11.6 In terms of energy supply, the most effective adaptation response is to consider diversifying energy sources by including renewable energy. The Local Plan will include policies on renewable energy measures, such as solar farms.

11.7 Flood mitigation remains one of the challenges within the Borough. As climate change will inevitably increase the likelihood of flooding, there is a need to consider flood mitigation measures. The Natural Environment section includes questions about mitigating flood risk.

11.8 In line with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements, the Local Plan presents an opportunity to enhance the quality of our natural environment. The Natural Environment section includes options to enhance biodiversity, which can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support climate change adaptation.

### Questions

**Q6. Do you agree or disagree with our overall approach to addressing climate change issues? Is there anything further you would include?**

## 12. Housing

12.1 Implications from the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report on Housing:

- Need to provide housing in sustainable locations
- There is a need to ensure that the housing mix meets housing needs e.g. the need to accommodate the requirements of an ageing population

12.2 England is widely considered to be experiencing a housing crisis, with quality homes being out of reach for many people. One of the means of addressing this issue is to build more new homes and to ensure a significant portion of those homes are affordable to those that need them. Our current Local Plan is working towards this goal, and this new Plan will increase the number of planned new homes in line with the government's requirements. The new Local Plan is an opportunity to shape the type of new homes built.

12.3 These new homes should be designed to meet the diverse needs of our residents, including family homes which are affordable for all, elderly peoples' accommodation, specialist housing needs and custom build housing, as well as providing space for the gypsy, traveller and travelling show people communities. These homes should also be fit for the future in terms of energy efficiency and sustainability so that future renovations are not required to meet the Borough's climate change obligations. We need your views on how we set about meeting those goals.

12.4 If you have a potential development site that you wish to put forward for assessment, please refer to the Call for Sites section of this document.

## What is our Housing Requirement?

12.5 Local Housing Need (LHN) is calculated using the [Standard Method](#), which was updated in the December 2024 revision of the NPPF and PPG. Local authorities are required to meet the overall LHN requirement.

12.6 The revised LHN need figure for the Borough stands at 489 dwellings per annum, equivalent to 8313 additional dwellings up to the period 2043. When existing land allocations, current planning permissions and a windfall allowance are accounted for, this results in a need for new land to be identified for around 3900 dwellings.

## Affordable Housing

12.7 Approximately 35% of housing completions since the adoption of BORLP4 have been what the [Government defines as affordable](#), in line with Policy 6 of the adopted Local Plan for developments of 11 or more dwellings. However, there is still a great need for affordable homes in the Borough. The latest Redditch Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) provides an estimate of the affordable housing required in the Borough for the period 2021–2040, and the government has stated a desire to increase the supply of social rent properties across the country.

**Q7: The government defines the following types of Affordable housing.**

- **Social rent**
- **Other affordable housing for rent**
- **Discounted market sales housing**
- **Other affordable routes to home ownership**

**Are there any additional forms of affordable housing that the Councils should consider?**

## What should the mix of housing types be?

12.8 The NPPF (section 5) steers local authorities towards delivering a wide choice of high-quality homes by planning for a mix of housing.

12.9 The Redditch HEDNA provides recommendations on the size, type and tenure of new housing. This mix is based on current and future demographic trends and

addressing the needs of different groups to reflect local demand. The final housing mix may be subject to change. The Council is interested in your views on the mix of housing types in new developments. The current recommendations (from the HEDNA) are summarised in the following table.

*Table 1: Dwelling Mix Recommendations Redditch HEDNA 2022.*

<b>Dwelling Size/Type</b>	<b>Market Housing</b>	<b>Affordable Home Ownership</b>	<b>Social/Affordable Rent</b>
2-bedroom house	9%	10%	32%
3-bedroom house	66%	64%	18%
4+ bedroom house	13%	6%	6%
1 bed Flat	6%	11%	32%
2+ bed Flat	6%	10%	11%
Total	100%	100%	100%
<b>Bedrooms</b>			
1 bedroom	6%	11%	32%
2 bedrooms	15%	20%	43%
3 bedrooms	66%	64%	18%
4+ bedrooms	13%	6%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%
<b>Dwelling Type</b>			
House	88%	80%	57%
Flat	12%	20%	43%
Total	100%	100%	100%

12.10 Based on the evidence, there is a need to consider a range of housing options. As part of this consultation we are seeking your feedback as to what part of the housing mix consultees feel should be prioritised.

**Q8: Are you happy with the currently proposed housing mix? What type of housing mix do you believe Redditch requires?**

- **Detached or semi-detached family housing**
- **Bungalows**
- **Smaller houses such as terraced housing**
- **Higher density development such as flats and town houses**
- **Higher amounts of affordable housing or other affordable types such as First Homes**
- **Self Build and Custom Housebuilding plots**

## What should the density of new housing developments be?

12.11 Based on the housing requirement figures detailed above, the Council will need to identify additional land for approximately 3900 dwellings.

12.12 The lower the density at which homes are built, the higher the amount of land they use. At 30 dwellings per hectare, the land requirement for housing alone (i.e. not including associated amenities) would be approximately 130 hectares, at 50dph this figure drops to 78 hectares. Therefore, a balance must be found between appropriate densities and the amount of land available to build on. The adopted Local Plan sets out the Council's current approach to housing density. Specifically, Policy 5, the effective and efficient use of land, which states "densities of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare will be sought in Redditch Borough, and 70 dwellings per hectare will be sought on sites for residential development that are within or adjacent to Redditch Town Centre and the District Centres".

**Q9: Which of the following approaches to housing density do you consider the most appropriate for Redditch Borough?**

1. **Set a minimum density requirement for the Borough as a whole**
2. **Set different minimum density requirements for different parts of the Borough**
3. **Have no set minimum density requirements and rely on distinctive local characteristics to inform site design**
4. **Have no set minimum density requirements and rely on site attributes such as proximity to services to inform site design**

## What sort of homes should we provide for the Elderly?

12.13 As of the 2021 Census, 18.6% of the population of Redditch was aged 65 and over, this is a proportional increase of 4.4% since the 2011 Census. The proportion aged 45-64 stood at 30.8% suggesting the portion of older people continues to increase. The Local Plan should reflect this reality and plan appropriately. The Redditch HEDNA estimates that housing exclusively for people aged over 55 (known as Age Exclusive housing) will need to increase by 303 dwellings (as part of the overall Local Housing Need). In addition to the general LHN, 753 specialist units and 463 additional care home bedspaces are needed. Of these bedspaces it is recommended that 49% are with nursing provision.

12.14 These figures are a useful starting point. The question below is intended to give us insight into whether these estimates reflect what our residents consider would be required with regards to potential future accommodation following retirement.

Table 2: Housing by type/tenure Redditch HEDNA 2022.

Housing Type	Additional Need 2021-2040	% Available for Rent
<b>Age Exclusive Housing</b>	303	86%
<b>Specialist (Total units)</b>	753	62%
Retirement/Sheltered Housing	671	56%
Enhanced Sheltered Housing	18	0%
Extra Care Housing	64	100%
<b>Care Homes (Total beds)</b>	463	-
Care Home without nursing (beds)	237	-
Care Home with nursing (beds)	226	-

## What other Specialist Housing should we provide?

12.15 As part of the homes coming forward in future Local Plans there will be a need for dwellings designed for those with specific needs. Beyond homes for the elderly, these could include family homes, homes for those with disabilities and student housing.

12.16 Meeting the disability needs of Redditch's population will require the delivery of appropriately designed new dwellings and adaptations to existing housing stock. The Redditch HEDNA estimates that by 2040, 6716 people 'limited a lot' by their condition will live in Redditch, an increase of 429. Additionally, those suffering from 'bad or very bad health' will increase by 238 to 3722. An additional 502 homes with appropriate adaptations will be required, including an additional 104 households designed for wheelchair users.

### 12.17 Types of specialist housing

#### Accessible property in regular development

Defined as a home designed to accommodate people with chronic health conditions (including being able to accommodate wheelchair users)

#### Accessible property in 'retirement village'

As above but located within a 'retirement village' where home purchases are age restricted (over 55) and there may be staff located on site

#### Independent living (apartments)

Specialist accommodation that has been designed to accommodate older people e.g. with mobility issues where residents still live without assistance but can access support on-site if needed

#### Traditional house / bungalow future proofed for later life

**Care Home**

Accommodation designed for older people who need daily support

**Other please describe**

**Q10: what other specialist types of housing should the new Local Plan look to provide**

**Q11: What type of homes suitable for older people should the new Local Plan be planning for?**

## Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show-People

12.18 When we are considering the housing needs of the Borough, we also need to take into consideration the housing needs of different groups in the community, which includes gypsies, travellers and travelling show-people. Insufficient suitable allocated sites can lead to unauthorised encampments as well as speculative applications or appeals. Having a Local Plan policy that sets out how the need will be met provides certainty to communities and ensures gypsies, travellers and travelling show-people have access to education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure.

**Q12: Are there any sites or locations you believe would make good potential plots for the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show-People Community? (Formal site submissions can be made through the Call for Sites process which forms part of this consultation).**

## What should the Council's housing design standards include?

12.19 Redditch Borough Council is currently in the process of drafting a Design Code for the Borough. The resulting Design Code, created in consultation with residents, will specify a clear vision for what will be considered good design with regards to appearance, sustainability, function and quality.

12.20 The minimum standards in terms of energy efficiency and generation, water usage and CO2 emissions (embedded and in use) for new residential properties are set by the Building Regulations 2010 and subsequent amendments and Approved Documents, at least until the Government implements the anticipated Future Homes Standard. Whilst these regulations state the minimum, it is permissible for local planning authorities to require standards over and above the minimum, however the Council will need to build a strong evidence base for such a policy. It is therefore important for us to gauge the level of public support for such a policy.

**Q13: Do you believe that the Council should seek to exceed Building Regulations regarding sustainable technologies for new homes?**

**Q14: If so, what area should the council consider a priority?**

1. **Energy / Heat efficiency (insulation and controlled ventilation)**
2. **Low carbon heating (electrified heating)**
3. **On site Renewable Energy Regeneration**
4. **Low / negative carbon construction materials**
5. **All of the above**

## 13. Economy

Implications for the employment land strategy of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

13.1 The Sustainability Appraisal forms a key part of the Local Plan evidence base. The SA Scoping Report identifies the following key sustainability issues:

- **Redditch's population is ageing.** Providing more entry level jobs and graduate roles for young people will help attract and retain younger residents whilst ensuring businesses have the employees they need to expand
- **Wages:** Wages in Redditch are lower than some surrounding areas. Securing investment may create higher paid jobs to reduce out-commuting
- **Skills:** The local labour force needs to be upskilled to safeguard and attract business investment

### Overview

13.2 The Local Plan is vital for Redditch's economy. The Local Plan identifies where new employment sites are developed and shapes how existing employment sites are redeveloped.

13.3 Providing the right sites to enable business growth in the Borough is vital for the expansion of existing businesses and to attract new businesses and inward investment.

### How much employment land is needed?

13.4 The Redditch Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (2022) (HEDNA) calculated that Redditch needs 35.5ha of new employment land by 2040. The figure is calculating by looking at past trends.

### What employment land is the Council required to deliver by the Planning system?

13.5 The NPPF requires the Local Plan to plan proactively to encourage economic growth (Para 86). The Local Plan should "pay particular regard to facilitating development to meet the needs of a modern economy, including by identifying suitable locations for uses such as laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight and logistics;" (Para 86c).

### **What is Redditch's economy like? What does this tell us about future need?**

13.6 Overall employment levels are above the County average. Redditch has a strong manufacturing sector, comprising 20% of the local economy. Manufacturing is however forecast to decline up to 2041 as a proportion of the local economy, so it is important to plan to support both the existing manufacturers and emerging economic sectors.

13.7 Redditch's central location and good access to the road network help make distribution and professional services key future growth areas. However, Redditch's office market is hampered by a lack of Grade A office stock, with the existing office stock ageing and with good quality office stock in key locations such as the town centre in short supply.

### **What type of employment land does Redditch need?**

13.8 Redditch is benefiting from investment in the railway station, the new Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (DMIC) and an enhanced public realm in the town centre. The local plan provides an opportunity to harness this new investment by providing policies and land allocations to link in to these projects.

13.9 There are currently vacancies across various units- including large units- in the Borough. However, a level of vacancies (or 'churn') is considered normal. The local plan is planning for demand towards the middle of this century, so vacancies today shouldn't impact how future provision is viewed.

### **Where will new employment land be located?**

13.10 Whilst potential future employment land is not yet known (as the 'Call for Sites' process hasn't taken place yet but is being undertaken as part of this consultation), the Council can identify the likely main growth options for new employment land based on the characteristics of Redditch Borough.

### **Options:**

#### **Option 1: Redevelopment of existing employment sites- at higher densities**

Redevelopment could provide high quality new employment units in sustainable locations with good road access. This could also provide an opportunity to regenerate previously developed 'grey belt' sites in the green belt

#### **Option 2: Extensions to existing employment areas where possible**

Extending existing employment areas could help upgrade existing infrastructure in sustainable locations with proven market demand for employment land

#### **Option 3: New employment sites**

Providing new employment sites could enable new jobs, infrastructure and investment across the Borough

#### **Option 4: Allocate a large employment sites (25 hectare plus)**

Large employment sites over 25ha are formally known as 'strategic employment sites'. Allocating a Strategic Employment Site could drive inward investment into the Borough and/or enable existing businesses to expand. Strategic Employment Sites could accommodate large manufacturers, distribution or other emerging uses such as data centres. For example, the West Midlands Strategic Sites Study provides evidence to support reserving some land on new employment sites for manufacturing uses.

**Q15: Which employment growth option (or combination of growth options) should the new Local Plan include and why?**

**Q16: What type of employment sectors do you think the Local Plan should prioritise through providing new employment land?**

- Advanced manufacturing (including renewable energy, automotive, etc)
- Logistics
- Professional services (requiring office space)
- Other

**Q17: Redditch has the highest stock of industrial land in Worcestershire. When units are vacant long-term, alternative uses such as gyms might be proposed for these units.**

**Do you think the Council should pursue a flexible approach to allowing alternative business uses on land designated for traditional employment use?**

**Q18: What kinds of flexible uses should the Local Plan be more accommodating for?**

- Conversion of empty units to sports and leisure uses such as gyms, soft play facilities etc.
- Conversion of empty units to large retail facilities outside of the town centre
- Conversion of empty units to other uses
- Do you consider any other options are appropriate?

### **Rural economy in Redditch**

13.11 Around half of the Borough of Redditch is rural so it is essential that the local plan contains policies that help support a prosperous rural economy.

13.12 The NPPF recognises that development in rural areas require different ways of achieving sustainable development: "Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport."

**How can the Local Plan support Redditch's rural economy?**

13.13 Whilst the majority of employment land is within the Redditch urban area, rural areas of the Borough can make a vital contribution to the overall supply of employment land. Local plan policies recognise that there are a variety of business in rural areas, from land-based businesses to offices located in converted barns. Redditch Borough's rural areas are also home to mixed use industrial estates that have expanded from farm buildings to become significant commercial sites in themselves. Rural areas of Redditch Borough could also provide locations for new employment land development.

13.14 An increasing number of conversions/changes of use can be carried out under permitted development (not requiring a planning application). The local plan needs to be updated to reflect this in order to effectively guide development that does require planning permission.

**Q19: How should the Local Plan look to support the rural economy in Redditch**

**Option 1:** The local plan should provide flexible policies to support proportionate expansion of businesses in rural areas and farm diversification.

**Option 2:** The local plan should actively encourage the expansion of employment sites in rural areas

**Option 3:** The local plan should allocate large employment land in rural areas of Redditch Borough

**Q20: What should the local plan do to support rural social enterprises and community assets?**

## Redditch Centres

### Redditch Town Centre

13.15 Implications of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report for Redditch Town Centre local plan policy:

- New services located in the town centre are needed to support new development. This must be within the context of how town centres are changing
- Improvements to public transport, walking and cycling to provide a viable alternative to car use

**What role does the Local Plan have in shaping the development of the town centre?**

13.16 In response to increased online shopping, town centres nationally are becoming less retail focused and increasingly more mixed use. The Local Plan can provide policies and site allocations to support the town centre as it changes.

13.17 In June 2021 Redditch secured a historic investment of £15.6 million (the 'Town Deal') which will help fund improvements to the railway station, public realm

enhancement and the Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (DMIC). The funding represents one of the single largest government investments in Redditch since it became a new town in the 1960s.

13.18 The new Local Plan will run to 2043, so it is important to consider the next phases of the regeneration of Redditch town centre after current projects have been completed. For example, the town centre has undeveloped or underused sites which may come forward for development in the future.

13.19 The town centre is a highly sustainable location for new housing, with good access to public transport and services. However, it is appreciated that town centre sites can often only deliver a limited number of homes compared to larger housing allocations.

### **What role will offices play in the town centre?**

13.20 The Redditch HEDNA does not identify a figure for office space demand to ensure flexibility in the face of shifting market demand.

13.21 Redditch's office stock is ageing. Some offices that are no longer desirable for employment uses are being converted to residential use. Furthermore, the HEDNA identifies that office rental values in Redditch are not currently considered high enough to deliver new build office development without public sector involvement.

13.22 Not making provision for future office space risks a future shortage should market conditions change. The Local Plan will look to be flexible to accommodate future changes.

### **Local Plan town centre policy options**

There are many ways the town centre could change over the local plan period. This Issues and Options consultation is an opportunity to put forward ideas as to what Redditch Town Centre will look like in the future.

#### Options:

**Option 1:** Prioritise residential uses in the town centre. This option could be supported through the development of new town centre residential policies on design and amenity. Policies could provide detail on the conversion of upper floors to residential uses (when outside of permitted development), conversion of post-war buildings and setting high standards for new site allocations for residential use.

**Option 2:** Allocate a series of sites for development to form a new 'quarter' for regeneration to provide a cohesive development, with mixed use ground floors for retail, leisure and community uses.

**Option 3:** Prioritise offices over residential uses where possible, including provision of co-working space whilst ensuring some provision for retail (especially convenience retail for everyday needs).

**Option 4:** Encourage flexible policies to enable a balance between both residential and office uses, with the expectation that ground floor uses would mostly consist of retail, leisure and/or community uses.

**Option 5:** Allocate land for new leisure/entertainment uses to support the night-time economy, with some complimentary retail uses.

**Option 6:** Prioritise policies around transport such as bus priority routes, enhanced cycling routes/lanes or an enhanced 'transport hub' at the railway station (through Section 106 money and any future funding bids).

**Option 7:** Prioritise further public realm enhancement. For example, the creation of new parks or public squares (for events) on existing surface level car parks.

**Option 8:** Allocate land to expand the further education offer, or even the development of a university hub and seek to attract student accommodation developers

**Option 9:** Prioritise the town centres historic buildings through frontage enhancement/renovation schemes

**Q20: Which of the above is your preferred option (or combination of options) for the town centre?**

**Q21: What measures would you like to see included in the new Local Plan to improve the town centre? re there any town centre sites you think should be allocated for uses such as housing in the local plan?**

## District Centres

13.24 Implications of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for District Centres:

- The development of District Centres is vital for sustainability by reducing the number of car journeys required to access basic shopping
- The community facilities District Centres provide are vital for wellbeing

13.25 District Centres- the local shops, services and facilities clustered together in a defined local area- are vital for everyday needs. Despite changes to retail, there is still a strong role for convenience retail (everyday shopping) which our District Centres can meet.

13.26 District Centres help to make settlements more sustainable as they provide shops, services and facilities within walking and cycling distance of where people live.

13.27 Some District Centres in Redditch were developed as part of the New Town initiative and now suffer from dated layouts and designs, which can encourage anti-social behaviour e.g. through poor visibility and can be unattractive to businesses and customers alike. Previous work has been undertaken to regenerate some of these Centres- namely Winyates and Matchborough- but hasn't been able to secure funding.

### **What role can the Local Plan play in supporting District Centres?**

13.28 The Local Plan can provide policies to help take forward proposals for District Centre regeneration by providing greater certainty on development, which may assist when applying for government funding or may encourage housing associations and developers to invest.

**Q22: Which options below would you like to see brought forward for the District Centres of Matchborough, Winyates, Woodrow and any other District Centres (please name them)? You can choose more than one option.**

**Option 1:** Redevelop existing District Centres but aim to retain their existing character through minor ‘facelifts’ to replace the public realm, frontages, partial demolition but retaining key units etc.

**Option 2:** Redevelop existing District Centres at much higher densities, to include more flats

**Option 3:** Expand the scope of District Centres redevelopment to include surrounding streets/land to create wider regeneration schemes

**Option 4:** Create District Centres in new locations due to a lack of facilities in a certain area

**Option 5:** Reduce existing surface car parking and develop surface car parks as new community facilities or green space

**Q23:** Which District Centres should be prioritised for regeneration

**Q24:** What are your priorities for improvement in our District Centres?

## **14. Infrastructure**

14.1 Implications of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for infrastructure:

- Ensure walkable communities by providing safe walking routes, especially within the context of Redditch’s postwar heritage
- Ensure connectivity between public transport modes e.g. bus and rail to encourage public transport use
- Address public health concerns through the provision of new health facilities and well-designed new communities

### **Overview**

14.2 Infrastructure is the one of the foundations of sustainable development. The Local Plan process will help to establish what new infrastructure is required to support proposed new housing and employment development.

The Local Plan will consider:

- Transport infrastructure
- Community infrastructure
- Education provision
- Utilities and communications infrastructure
- Open Space, sports and recreation
- Health and Education Infrastructure
- Green Infrastructure

### **Transport infrastructure**

14.3 Redditch has good road links, with the M42, M5 and M40 being in relative close proximity. Redditch has two train services per hour to Birmingham. There is no direct rail link to Bromsgrove town but regular bus services run between Bromsgrove and Redditch, as well as buses to Birmingham and Worcester.

14.4 The future development of transport infrastructure overall is shaped by Worcestershire County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTPs). The current Local Transport Plan- LTP4 - is available here: [The Local Transport Plan | Worcestershire County Council](#)

14.5 Worcestershire County Council's Streetscape Design Guide provides a framework that shapes new infrastructure requirements for streets. For example, the Streetscape Design Guide identifies parking standards for Redditch Borough.

14.6 Transport infrastructure in Redditch will be enhanced by Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). LCWIPS are a strategic approach to identifying priorities for active travel (defined as walking, cycling and wheeling) improvements. In practical terms this means mapping out potential enhancements to footpaths, cycleways and other routes e.g. existing pathways through parks.

14.7 The Redditch Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) ([Redditch Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan \(LCWIP\) 2024](#)) is led by Worcestershire County Council. The final Redditch LCWIP (to be published in Spring 2025) will set out detailed proposals for a long-term plan for active travel in Redditch.

### **Health and Education Infrastructure**

14.8 New healthcare and education facilities in the Borough will be expected to be located in the most sustainable locations possible. The full education and healthcare requirements to support new housing development in the local plan will be determined in consultation with key stakeholders such as the NHS, GP's and other care providers as the new Local Plan advances.

NPPF Paragraph 96c identifies that Planning Policies should:

“c) enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.”

### **Community infrastructure**

14.9 Community infrastructure consists of the local community centres, libraries and sports halls which are vital for wellbeing. Community infrastructure has played a key role in Redditch historically, with District Centres enabling good access to community infrastructure for residents throughout the town. New development would be expected to provide new community infrastructure where possible or provide access to/enhance existing community infrastructure when applicable.

There will also be a need for new burial provision across the borough and the Council would be interested on your view on how best to provide this additional infrastructure.

### **Utilities and communications infrastructure**

14.10 Utilities and communications infrastructure covers electricity grid capacity, broadband infrastructure, sewage and water capacity. This will be defined by the Council's engagement with utility companies directly.

### **Open Space, sports and recreation**

14.11 Open space, sports and recreation facilities can be safeguarded through local plan requirements. The Local Plan can also identify locations for new open space, sports and recreation infrastructure.

14.11 Preserving and enhancing Redditch's open space will be central to improving wellbeing. New developments would be expected to meet open space requirements, alongside ensuring comprehensive walking and cycling access both within sites and to existing developments.

### **Green Infrastructure**

13.12 Green infrastructure (GI) is defined as connected green spaces (both natural and man-made) which provide social and environmental benefits. GI includes parks, green open spaces, woodland and features such as street trees.

### **Infrastructure Delivery Plan**

13.13 The Local Plan will be supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which will replace the current Borough of Redditch IDP (2014) ([Link TBC](#)). The IDP will provide the detail of what new infrastructure will be provided, when and how it will be delivered. The IDP is a live document which would be updated over time.

### **Questions**

13.14 Walking, cycling, road and public transport will be upgraded where development occurs. It is too early in the local plan process to identify specific locations for infrastructure improvements as the Call for Sites hasn't been undertaken (but is being undertaken as part of this consultation.)

**Q23: Does the list above include all types of infrastructure the new Local Plan should be planning for? If not, what is missing?**

**Q24: Do you support the provision of new and enhanced walking and cycling routes and what do you think will make them work well?**

**Q25. How can Redditch Borough balance providing the car parking space required for new developments with the need to address climate change?**

**Q26: Do you have any other comments regarding the infrastructure required to support new development?**

## 15. Natural and Historic Environments

### Natural Environment

15.1 Implications of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the Natural Environment:

- The need to enhance biodiversity through local policies
- Integrate local plan policies with national and local initiatives

15.2 Redditch Borough has a rich natural environment, consisting of 732.18 hectares of open space. Redditch Borough features 6 Sites of Special Scientific Importance (SSSIs), 24 Local Wildlife Sites and over 87 hectares of land designated as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). There are 25 designated parks, including Arrow Valley Country Park and Morton Stanley Park. In a broader context, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Worcestershire, to be published for consultation during summer 2025, is expected to protect and improve wildlife and natural species. In particular, it will include a Local Habitat Map and set out priorities for biodiversity enhancement opportunities.

### Biodiversity Net Gain

15.4 A national Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirement was introduced in 2024, requiring all new development to deliver a minimum of 10% BNG. Additionally, it remains essential to continue to protect our natural assets including parks, natural and

semi-natural greenspaces and Public Rights of Way (PROW). Blue and Green Infrastructure considerations play a crucial role in both protecting existing and identifying opportunities for the expansion or improvement of new natural assets. The Council need to update the policies in the upcoming Local Plan to reflect these changes and continue to preserve our natural environment within Redditch Borough.

### **How can Local Plans respond to BNG?**

15.5 A mandatory approach to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was implemented under the Environment Act 2021, requiring new developments to deliver a minimum of 10% BNG. This offers an opportunity to Redditch to enhance its biodiversity across the Borough.

15.5 If a developer cannot achieve the required 10% on-site, they can choose to enhance or create habitats off-site. This could include priority areas within Redditch Borough where there is a need to enhance biodiversity, especially if identified through the LNRS.

15.6 For new developments, there are a range of opportunities to implement ecological measures in supporting biodiversity. Some of these strategies include Bat-sensitive streetlights, fences with hedgehog holes and permeable paving.

### **What should the Council prioritise when preserving our Green Space?**

15.7 The natural environment is one of the key assets in Redditch Borough. The Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4 (BORLP) has served well in protecting these natural assets, particularly through the implementation of BORLP Policy 16 Natural Environment.

15.8 Despite high satisfaction among Redditch residents<sup>3</sup> regarding the quality of green spaces, further enhancements can still be made. This includes increasing the accessibility by improving way finding and planning the location of green spaces strategically, especially in the context of areas of the Borough accommodating new development.

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<sup>3</sup> Redditch Borough Open Space Study (2023)

**How can the Council maximise the environmental benefits of the Public Rights of Way (PROW)?**

15.9 The Borough has a network of public paths and bridleways, offering opportunities for leisure and tourism. It is important to integrate these natural assets into strategic planning.

15.10 Policy 43A of the BORLP No. 4 supports leisure proposals that contribute to the natural environment, including Public Rights of Way. Could PROW be better utilised to maximise environmental benefits?

15.11 As an example, the PROW network could be an ideal location for higher ecological value funded by BNG contributions. Alternatively, there could be opportunities for heritage and/or environmental trails.

**What areas might require additional flood risk management strategies?**

15.12 Climate change is likely to increase the frequency and intensity of flooding. In line with the NPPF, the BORLP No. 4 have established policies to manage flood risk, including Policy 17 Flood Risk Management and Policy 18 Sustainable Water Management.

15.13 Since the last Local Plan, there have been changes to government policies on flood risk, including for example, on the creation of sustainable drainage systems.<sup>4</sup> There are other existing flood prevention and mitigation measures which are set out in important evidence such as Flood Risk Assessments (FRA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRA) that support both the plan-making process and development management consideration of planning applications.

15.14 Some new developments have incorporated additional flood risk mitigation measures, such as rainwater storage ponds, permeable pavement<sup>5</sup> and green roofs.

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<sup>4</sup> Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. (2023, January 10). *New approach to sustainable drainage set to reduce flood risk and clean up rivers*. GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-approach-to-sustainable-drainage-set-to-reduce-flood-risk-and-clean-up-rivers>

<sup>5</sup> Permeable pavement is a type of surface that allows rainwater to infiltrate into the soil instead of running off. This helps reduce the amount of water that accumulates on roads during storms.

15.15 Some areas within the Borough are more prone to flooding and may require additional flood risk mitigation measures, particularly in locations where new developments are planned.

**Q25: In which areas do you think biodiversity should be enhanced?**

**Q26: What ecological measures are needed in new developments to support biodiversity in Redditch?**

**Q27: How should we enhance the quality of Green Space?**

**Q28: How can the Council maximise the functionality and environmental benefits of Public Rights of Way (PROW)?**

**Q29: Do you think that there are any Natural Environment Issues that the Council has missed? If so, please provide details**

## Historic Environment

15.16 Implications of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the Historic Environment:

- The need to promote high quality design that respects the historic environment
- Adopting climate change technologies without undermining the historic environment

15.17 Redditch Borough contains 2 conservation areas, 163 listed buildings (152 Grade II, 10 Grade II\* and 1 Grade I) and 8 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The two Conservation Areas are Feckenham Conservation Area and Church Green Conservation Area. The former is known for its traditional cottages, narrow lanes, and green spaces that reflect its medieval origins, while the latter is centred around St. Stephen's Church, located in the Town Centre.

**What more can we do to protect the historic environment?**

15.18 Redditch consists of a range of statutorily protected assets, including Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and the Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Currently, Policy 36 in the BORLP No. 4 encourages heritage-led regeneration, especially in relation to the Town Centre Strategic Sites. Policy 37 and Policy 38

provide provision for the protection of historic buildings, historic structures and conservation areas. Additionally, Redditch has a list of 'locally listed' buildings as documented in the Schedule of Buildings of Local Interest (2009). A building being on the list carries some weight in the decision-making process but are not legally protected from demolition. The Council need to review and update the policies if necessary for protecting the historical assets in Redditch.

- **Q31: Is there a need to update the list of 'locally listed' buildings in Redditch?**
- **Q32: Is the existing historic environment policy sufficient to protect our historic heritage assets?**

## Appendix A: Glossary

Page	Para ref.	Terminology
		<b>Adoption</b> The final confirmation of a Local Plan as a statutory document by the Local Planning Authority
		<b>Affordable Housing</b> Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following: Social rent, Shared ownership, First Homes, Rent to buy, Other affordable routes to home ownership
		<b>Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)</b> A policy to ensure the habitats for wildlife are left in a better state after the development. Developers are required to deliver a minimum of 10% BNG under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).
		<b>Borough of Redditch Local Plan (BORLP)/ Local Plan</b> A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, with updates from the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023. The local plan can consist of both strategic and local policies.
		<b>Green Belt</b> Designated areas of countryside around towns and cities. It serves the following 5 main purposes stated in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) para 143: (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

		(b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; (c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and (e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
		<b>Green Infrastructure (GI)</b> The network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect our cities, towns and villages. It is the open spaces, waterways, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, wildlife habitats, street trees, natural heritage and open countryside. Green Infrastructure provides multiple benefits for the economy, the environment and people
		<b>Grey Belt</b> It is defined as previously developed land in the Green Belt and/or other land that does not contribute to any of the purposes (a), (b), or (c) in the NPPF (2024) para 143.
		<b>Climate Change</b> An increase in the mean annual surface temperature of the earth's atmosphere, due to increases in atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) such as Carbon Dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ), Methane (CH <sub>4</sub> ) and Nitrous Oxide (N <sub>2</sub> O)
		<b>Climate Emergency</b> The Redditch Borough Council declared a climate emergency in 2019. It is demonstrated by the Council's commitment to achieve Net Zero by 2040.
		<b>Climate Resilience</b> To ensure development fully mitigates against the effects of climate change and minimises the potential impacts of climate change now and in the future
		<b>Employment land requirement</b> Employment demand forecasting which includes forecasts of employment demand by linking property and economic analysis and identifying the priority sectors of the local economy. Includes forecasting of future floorspace needs and their uses
		<b>Flood and Water Management Act 2010</b> The Act is designed to improve the management of flood risk. It mandates the implementation of Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Sequential Testing, promotes the integration of Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) and requires cooperation with Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) to mitigate flood risk in local areas.
		<b>Habitat Regulations Assessment</b> The purpose of the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is to identify any aspects of the emerging Local Plan that would have the potential to cause a likely significant effect on Natura 2000 or European sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites), (either in isolation or in combination with other plans and projects), and to identify appropriate avoidance and mitigation strategies where such effects were identified. There is a legal requirement for all Local Plans to be subject to an HRA. The need for HRA is set out within Article 6 of the EC

		Habitats Directive 1992, and interpreted into British law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
		<b>Housing completions</b> The number of new homes built in a 12-month period (1 April to 31 March), which includes private market and affordable housing completions. Affordable housing is only secured on sites of 11 or more dwellings. The housing completions figure includes sites of less than 11 dwellings where no affordable housing contribution has been secured. Therefore, the number of completed affordable housing units will always be less than (up to) 40% of all housing completions
		<b>Local affordability ratios</b> Housing affordability is calculated by dividing house prices by annual work place-based earnings. In 2023 Redditch's affordability ratio was 7.85, which is better than Worcestershire (8.63), West Midlands (7.18) and England (8.26).
		<b>District Centres</b> District Centres include a range of small shops of a local nature, serving a small catchment. Typically, district centres might include, amongst other shops, a small supermarket, a newsagent, a sub-post office and a pharmacy. Other facilities could include a hot-food takeaway and launderette. District centres may also provide the focus for other community social facilities including health or education
		<b>Local Development Scheme (LDS)</b> Sets out the programme for developing the Local Plan and other Local Development Documents
		<b>Local Housing Need</b> The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in the planning practice guidance.
		<b>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</b> The NPPF was first published in March 2012, replacing past Planning Policy Statements/Guidance (PPSs/PPGs), and was revised and republished in December 2024. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England, how these are expected to be applied and the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities
		<b>Neighbourhood Plan</b> A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead

		<p><b>Plan-making and Decision-taking Processes</b></p> <p>Plan-making is the process of preparing and producing a Borough Plan/ Local Plan. Decision making is the process of determining planning applications, which should be done in accordance with the Borough Plan/Local Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise</p>
		<p><b>Planning Practice Guidance</b></p> <p>The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place. It was launched in March 2014 and coincided with the cancelling of the majority of Government Circulars which had previously given guidance on many aspects of planning.</p>
		<p><b>SA Scoping Report</b></p> <p>The first stage of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process, which appraises baseline data, plans, policies and programmes and sets out the approach to undertaking SA</p>
		<p><b>Safeguarded Land</b></p> <p>Formerly referred to as Areas of Development Restraint (ADRs). Areas of land taken out of the Green Belt in the Borough Plan/ Local Plan which have been identified as possible land for new development when required in the future</p>
		<p><b>Self-build plots</b></p> <p>Must have access to a public highway and have connections for electricity, water and wastewater at the plot boundary</p>
		<p><b>Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)</b></p> <p>Relates to specifically defined areas where protection is afforded to sites of national wildlife or geological interest. Natural England is responsible for identifying and protecting these sites</p>
		<p><b>Sustainability Appraisal (SA)</b></p> <p>Appraisal of the economic, environmental and social effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development</p>
		<p><b>Test of Soundness</b></p> <p>Soundness means founded on a robust and credible evidence base and the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives. For something to be sound it must also be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy</p>
		<p><b>The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended up to 2024</b></p> <p>These Regulations set out the legislative procedures that need to be followed throughout the plan-making process</p>

If you have any queries regarding any aspect of this consultation, please contact a member of the Strategic Planning Team on: **XX** or email [strategicplanning@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:strategicplanning@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 10th March, 2025

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), and Councillors Brandon Clayton (substitute), William Boyd, Andrew Fry, Joanna Kane, Sachin Mathur, David Munro, Rita Rogers and Paul Wren

### Also Present:

Councillor Joe Baker – Leader of the Council  
Councillor Sharon Harvey – Deputy Leader of the Council

### Officers:

Peter Carpenter, Guy Revans, Rachel Egan, Simon Parry, Judith Willis, Rebecca Green, Georgina Harris, Doug Henderson and Della McCarthy

### Democratic Services Officers:

Mat Sliwinski

## 80. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Craig Warhurst. Councillor Brandon Clayton attended the meeting as a substitute for Councillor Warhurst.

## 81. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

During consideration of item 7 (Minute No. 86), Councillor Rogers declared an other disclosable interest in agenda item 7, Redditch Partnership – Annual Report Update (Minute No. 86.). Councillor Rogers was employed by Worcestershire County Council and as part of work duties was involved with the Bromsgrove Partnership. It was noted that Councillor Rogers had no work or other involvement with the Redditch Partnership or the Redditch District Collaborative which were the subject of this agenda item. Councillor Rogers remained in the room and took part in the debate for the consideration of this item.

There were no other declarations of interest or of party whip.

Chair

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## 82. MINUTES

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025 were submitted for Members' consideration.

### **RESOLVED that**

**the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.**

## 83. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no public speakers who had registered to speak at this meeting.

## 84. FUTURE CEMETERY PROVISION - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Environmental Services Manager presented the Future Cemetery Provision report for the consideration of Overview and Scrutiny.

It was noted that it was previously envisaged that burial provision would be enlarged at the Ipsley Church Lane site. Following elections in May 2024, the new administration had requested putting a hold on any further works on the Ipsley Church Lane site whilst a review of alternative sites was carried out.

Following an independent review of potential alternatives for burial provision within the Borough, looking at 10 locations and 13 sites across the Borough, a potential new site for burial provision was proposed in the report on Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD (Proposed Site 2B).

There remained a need for burial provision whilst this site was further investigated. It was added that even with the additional two years of provision found following internal review, there was not enough provision available to last before the proposed site could be operational. It was therefore proposed that a section of land within the Abbey Cemetery that had previously been used for ashes scattering be repurposed to provide ten years of further burial provision.

It was acknowledged that the use of the former ashes scattering area at the Abbey Cemetery and Redditch Crematorium could be upsetting for those who had used this area previously. However, it was confirmed that there would be detailed searches of records and

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communications provided to those residents who had used this site previously. These communications would be made through social media, websites, and notices posted at the location to inform people of the proposed future use. Residents would be listened to and Members were reassured that this would be an open and transparent process throughout. An appropriate memorial would be considered for installation at the site.

A further proposal contained within the report was that burial provision be included as a specific reference within the Redditch Local Plan, the development of which was currently underway. This recommendation would enable all feasible options and funding for providing new burial space to be considered through the policies and allocations in the new Borough of Redditch Local Plan.

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services was invited to speak and in doing so highlighted that the resolutions arrived at within the report were not proposed lightly and full consideration would be given to residents affected by the proposals. The Deputy Leader stated that the first recommendation would ensure the Council had sufficient time to find alternative sites for burial provision and in this regard it was noted that as part of the proposals there would still remain a large area for ashes scattering within the Abbey Cemetery. It was acknowledged that many people may find this place very special to them, and the Council would therefore do its best to alleviate people's concerns.

The Deputy Leader clarified that for the proposed site identified for burial provision, the Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD (Proposed Site 2B), the report recommended further investigation to be carried out to determine if the site could be used. Any final decision locating burial provision at this site would be subject of a separate report. The Deputy Leader drew attention to the third report recommendation in that by incorporating new burial provision into the Redditch Local Plan the Council would be better able to monitor the burial provision levels required in the Borough given future housing developments.

Once the report had been presented, Members discussed the following points in detail:

- Arrangements for soil removal at the ashes scattering area at Abbey Cemetery and Redditch Crematorium, B97 6RR – A Member queried the arrangements for removing the top soil of the area that had been used for ashes scattering, in preparation for use as a burial site. The Officers explained that at the site the ashes were scattered on top of the lawn

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and had already been distributed into the soil. There were no markers present to indicate specific locations of where ashes had been scattered. The proposal in the report was to repurpose part of the ash scattering area within the Abbey Cemetery for burials. This would be through using the soil present at the site for burials. A Member expressed his disapproval and ethical concern with the proposal, noting that the graves would be dug up using the same soil on which ashes had previously been scattered.

- Suitability of the Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD (proposed site 2B) for cemetery development – Concerns were raised by some Members regarding the suitability of the proposed site, given that the site was located within the part of Arrow Valley Park used by the Council every summer for sporting events and festivities. A Member raised a further concern regarding the high water table at the site given the proximity of the lake to the site. It was noted that soil samples had not been taken prior to papers being presented to the Committee and there was a risk that the site could be rejected following feasibility studies. A Member expressed hope that the water table would not be an issue given the lake was man-made and therefore lined.
- Records of caskets at the Abbey Cemetery and Redditch Crematorium, B97 6RR – The Officer clarified that based on the records passed to the Environmental Services Manager by his predecessor there were no caskets that had been put in the area under consideration for repurposing. It was explained that if during further investigation of paperwork any evidence of caskets would come to light the Council would need to reconsider its plans as exhumation licence from the Ministry of Justice would then be required. A Member urged the Council to undertake the land survey before any works began, given complications and that could occur if coffins were subsequently found at the site.
- It was reiterated by the Environmental Services Manager that the Council would take special care to investigate every single record to determine if any caskets were left buried at the site and the Council would exercise every caution and promptly contact the Ministry of Justice and the families concerned if there was any casket found during the course of the investigation of the site.

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- A Member commented that the site earmarked for repurposing within Abbey Cemetery was maintained by Redditch Borough Council and grass was regularly mowed at the site of ashes scattering so there was already disruption to the ashes scattered both from mowers and weather conditions, for example wind.
- The number of families that might be affected by proposals to repurpose the ashes scattering area – The Environmental Services Manager responded that a third of scattering garden L at the Abbey Cemetery and Redditch Crematorium would be affected. The Council would be able to investigate records by garden location to determine the families affected in that garden, subject to any ashes scattering on the grounds that the Council was not aware of.
- Burial provision capacity in Redditch – It was reported that the figure of 71 new burials per year was based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) data for death-rates in Redditch. Based on this figure, it was calculated that Edgioake Lane Cemetery had approximately five years burial provision available at its current usage, and the Abbey Cemetery had approximately two years left. This was the remaining available space, if the recommended actions were not taken to increase provision.
- Capital expenditure for repurposing the existing ash scattering ground at Abbey Cemetery – It was noted that the estimated figure of £250,000 was a figure quoted within the consultants' report and it was based on the consultant's experience with previous similar projects. The Environmental Services Manager reported that the Council would not be spending this much as some of the infrastructure work at the site, such as paths to the site, would be undertaken by the Council internally.
- The costs of development of the Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD (proposed site 2B) – It was noted that the estimated cost of between £1.25 million to £1.75 million for the development of this site was based on recent similar projects. The Officers highlighted that a feasibility study at the site was required, as per resolution two in the report, as many factors remained unknown. It was noted that the feasibility study of the site might uncover a need for significant mitigation works to be undertaken at the site, such as drainage, which could significantly increase the

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cost and/or result in less burial space at the site than anticipated.

- Inclusion of costs relating for development of Proposed Site 2B within Council's Budgets – It was clarified by Officers that the budget for undertaking a feasibility study for a new burial site was included in the current 2024/25 financial year (£400,000), which would be carried forward, and there was also an allocation in 2025/26 financial year (£125,000). The budget allocated was deemed sufficient for undertaking feasibility studies.
- With regard to development costs for the Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD (proposed site 2B), it was highlighted that this was not included in the 2025/26 budget and would need to be included in a future Medium Term Financial Plan once investigative work had been carried out to understand the topography and geology of the site. It was highlighted that no timescale was yet in place for when detailed plans would be ready. It was predicted that the investigate work and planning would take in excess of one year. Members were reassured that any final cost proposals would be submitted to the Executive Committee and Council as part of the Budget setting report.

On being put to the vote, the recommendations contained in the report were endorsed.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **the Land located at the current Abbey Cemetery site, used previously as an ashes scattering area be utilised for earth burial provision for an interim period of up to ten years commencing in January 2027.**
- 2) **A review be commissioned of the potential to use the site at Land North of Morrisons and West of the B4497, B98 0JD for burial provision in the long-term.**
- 3) **A process begin of incorporating new burial provision within the new Borough of Redditch Local Plan.**

## **85. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND 2025-26 - PRE-SCRUTINY**

The UK Prosperity Fund Manager presented the report. It was explained that there had been a one-year extension of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for the financial year 2025/2026

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at a reduced rate of funding. This had resulted in Redditch Borough Council being allocated £818,536.

It was reported that there had been some further changes in the UKSPF for this financial year, in that the list of fifty plus interventions had been replaced with five themes and twelve sub-themes.

The Investment Plan for the funding for 2025/26 had been aligned with the priorities outlined by Members and included support for communities and the Voluntary Sector, improvement of the Town Centre, Parks and Green Spaces and the Cost of Living. Furthermore, there had been consultation with the Redditch Town Deal Board who also supported the priority of investment in upskilling, youth unemployment and support for local businesses as key priorities.

It was noted that one of the proposed recommendations contained within the report would also allow any funds that had not been spent as per the Investment Plan to be reallocated following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Governance. This would ensure that all available monies were spent within the deadline.

It was highlighted that the guidance for the UKSPF recommended that a Local Partnership Group, made up of key stakeholders, advised the Council regarding the strategic fit and deliverability of the UKSPF Investment Plan. It was confirmed that the Redditch Town Deal Board, which performed the local partnership group function for Redditch, supported the 2025/26 Investment Plan.

The Leader of the Council was invited to speak and in doing so thanked the Officers for preparing the Investment Plan. The Leader stated that it was felt important to focus on economy within the Plan, supporting local businesses and the voluntary sector. Another key aspect was to support young people, which included the new youth hub in Redditch. It was highlighted that for businesses to grow within the Borough, there was a need for people to be provided with training and upskilled, and having a fund to support with these objectives was welcomed.

During the debate, the following themes were discussed:

- Future of UKSPF – There was a one-year extension to UKSPF for 2025/26. When this extension was announced, the Government stated that a new set of growth funding was

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being developed, and it was expected that UKSPF would be replaced by a different fund in the future.

- Reduction in projects funded from UKSPF – It was reported that the 49 per cent reduction in UKSPF funding for 2025/26 would necessitate the discontinuation of some programmes that had been funded from UKSPF in previous years. In assessing which programmes would continue for 2025/26, Officers assessed how the programmes were performing and prioritised those which had been the most successful. In addition, those programmes which had no access to alternative sources of funding and met the ambitions of the Council Plan would also be continued where possible. It was highlighted that within the UKSPF scheme no programmes were subsidised with Council funding.
- Monitoring of UKSPF funds spending – It was confirmed that the Council did monitor how the programmes spent their UKSPF funding allocations, and it was confirmed that all programmes spent money on Redditch activities.

On being put to the vote, the recommendations contained in the report were endorsed.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **The Investment Plan be 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.**

## **86. REDDITCH PARTNERSHIP - ANNUAL REPORT UPDATE**

The Redditch Partnership Manager introduced the report and in doing so noted that Redditch Partnership was the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the Redditch area and aimed to bring together representatives from a wide variety of agencies across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors to enable partnership working for the benefit of local residents.

There were a number of groups that stemmed from the Redditch Partnership. The Redditch Community Wellbeing Group (RCWG) was a longstanding partnership group that met bi-monthly and covered health and wellbeing across all ages. The RCWG had

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recently developed a monthly in-person multi-agency drop-ins for residents to access advice from multiple agencies.

The Cost of Living Partnership Group was a group operating across Redditch and Bromsgrove that was chaired by the Council's Assistant Director Community and Housing Services. This Group aimed to minimise the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and ensure that people were aware of where they could access support. The messages were distributed in many formats including on the website, via social media messages, and through a printed cost of living leaflet. Most recently, a 'useful contacts' business card had been printed and distributed via the Council teams and partners.

The Redditch Business Leaders (RBL) was a group that originated from the Redditch Partnership but became an independent self-sustained group. The aim of the group had been to focus on skills, in particular employment and career skills of young people. In response to a question, it was stated that RBL was not defunct, and meetings were still being held but the Council had not been directly involved for some time. It was confirmed that the last meeting of RBL took place in December 2024 with the next meeting due to take place in April 2025. In terms of the RBL's Youth Group, it was clarified that the current approach was for RBL representatives to deliver training and undertake mentoring for young people within schools.

Redditch Mental Health and Housing Group was a Redditch specific group focused on bringing together Redditch Council's Housing and NHS Mental Health Teams, along with other relevant agencies.

The Redditch District Collaborative (RDC) was developed following changes nationally with the formation of the Integrated Care Systems (ICS). The RDC was part of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICS, with the ICS represented at county level through the County Council's Health and Wellbeing Board and at local Redditch level through the RDC. There were two Primary Care Networks (PCNs) within Redditch and it was the PCNs which had worked closely with the County Council's Public Health and Redditch Borough Council to establish the RDC.

The Redditch Partnership Manager highlighted that due to resource changes, there was no longer a programme lead for the RDC. This triggered a review of how RDC would operate going forward. Following the review there had been a reduction in the number of RDC groups and the focus had shifted towards enhancing connections within established local networks, such as the Redditch Partnership's Community Wellbeing Group.

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It was explained that the Wellbeing in Partnership E-Bulletin had continued to be produced monthly and was received by all Councillors and provided local information on voluntary and community developments that could be passed on to local residents. The Knowledge Bank was a Redditch and Bromsgrove fully searchable directory of community services, publicly available on the Council's website.

Following the presentation, a Member expressed concerns about the lack of performance data available on the Redditch Partnership and the Redditch District Collaborative (RDC). Questions were also raised about how these local groups were accountable to elected members.

A response was provided by the Redditch Partnership Manager in that Redditch Partnership was a completely voluntary, non-statutory partnership. As such, it was difficult to set precise targets as the aim of the Partnership was for voluntary organisations and public sector bodies within Redditch to come together and form connections and partnerships.

It was explained that several years ago the Redditch District Collaborative was in a situation where multitude of groups existed that were not connected to one another with the result that a number of different groups of voluntary sector and public partners worked in isolation. Following a review outlined within the presentation, the number of groups under the umbrella of Redditch Partnership had reduced. Membership of each group was also reviewed and all groups retained had to set out how they linked to the overall Redditch Partnership structure. It was noted that work continued on establishing which organisations were best represented through the RDC.

It was stressed that one of the main aims of the Partnership was to enable community outreach workers from different voluntary and charitable organisations to engage and make connections with an array of other organisations operating across Redditch and Bromsgrove. It was highlighted that Redditch District Collaborative was a completely voluntary partnership of third sector organisations and no public funding was attached. There was therefore no performance data produced in the way that there would be for programmes that were funded from grants such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

It was added that data was shared within the RDC between the different partners, for example on what the individual partners could

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do within their organisations to improve performance and what the RDC could do collectively to help improve outcomes for residents.

Following the Officer's response, a Member requested further clarification as there seemed to be a lack of targets and performance data available to elected members on RDC's performance. In response, it was clarified by the Redditch Partnership Manager that collaboration through RDC enabled the different organisations to network and share ideas on how they were delivering their individual programmes and initiatives and how they organisations could collaborate to improve overall outcomes for residents. It was reiterated that as such there could not be set quantitative targets comparable to those for funded programmes as the RDC was a meeting place for partners to share ideas.

An example of added value of organisations forming partnership through the RDC was provided in the starting well service for young people, where the service was able to increase its outreach to residents after linking with the voluntary sector organisations.

A question was asked whether Mental Health and Housing partnership groups were operating in other parts of Worcestershire. It was responded that, within Worcestershire, Redditch and Bromsgrove were the first districts to develop this partnership group. It was noted that the Head of Housing and Health Partnerships for Worcestershire (a post within Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust) was created in 2022 and one of the first tasks for that post holder had been the setting up of Redditch specific group focussing on bringing together Redditch Borough Council Housing and NHS Mental Health Teams.

**RESOLVED that**

**the annual update report be noted.**

## **87. COUNCIL PLAN - PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Policy Manager presented the Redditch Borough Council Plan, which had been developed by the Executive Committee alongside Officers and the Local Government Association (LGA). It was stated that in addition to the Council Plan there would be a separate Implementation Plan to link the Council Plan to the Medium Term Financial Plan and Service Areas Business Plans. It was anticipated that the Council Plan would be reviewed annually and key objectives and outcomes measured as part of the Quarterly monitoring reporting regime.

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The Council Plan had three new priorities for the Borough which were Economy and Regeneration, Green, Clean and Safe, and Community and Housing. There was also a section on organisational priorities. Other sections of the draft plan were also outlined during the presentation.

The Leader of the Council addressed the Committee and in doing so thanked the Officers and Members for their work in putting the Council Plan together. The Leader outlined developments that had taken place under the current leadership including finding alternative sites for burial provision, the ability to use Towns Fund for other projects apart from Town Hall redevelopment, continued progress on the digital manufacturing and innovation centre (DMIC) and the opening of the outdoor market. It was highlighted that in addition the Council Plan contained a number of other, simpler initiatives such as area warders. The Leader highlighted the work undertaken by the Portfolio Holder for Performance together with the Policy Manager in developing this Council Plan.

Some Members raised concerns with the impact of local government reorganisation on the delivery of this Council Plan and the potential that some initiatives could be scrapped if they were not delivered before the commencement date for the new unitary structure of April 2028.

Regarding the digital manufacturing and innovation centre (DMIC) it was stated that the same company was brought back in to oversee the innovation centre development as had been in place at the beginning of the project.

On being put to the vote the recommendations contained in the report were endorsed.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) The Council Plan 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 a result of the Local Government reorganisation.**

## **88. TASK GROUPS, SHORT SHARP REVIEWS AND WORKING GROUPS - UPDATE REPORTS**

Updates on the Task Groups and Working Groups were provided as follows:

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a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Warhurst

There was no detailed update as Councillor Warhurst had submitted his apologies; however, it was noted that meetings of Budget Scrutiny took place on 18<sup>th</sup> February and 7<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> February was to further scrutinise the Medium Term Financial Plan Tranche 2 before the report was submitted for decision-making by the Executive Committee and Full Council. At the meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> March the Q3 Revenue and Performance Monitoring and the Finance Recovery Programme reports were scrutinised.

b) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Warhurst

There was no update provided as Councillor Warhurst had submitted apologies.

c) Fly Tipping and Bulky Waste Task Group – Chair, Councillor Dormer

It was reported that this Task Group had now been concluded, and the final report of the investigation was being drafted. The Task Group's final report would be presented to a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny in summer 2025.

d) Post-16 Education Task Group – Chair, Councillor Warhurst

There was no update provided as Councillor Warhurst had submitted apologies.

**RESOLVED that**

**the Task Groups, Short Sharp Reviews and Working Groups update reports be noted.**

**89. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS**

Updates on the meetings of External Scrutiny bodies were provided by the representatives as follows:

a) West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Council Representative, Councillor Kane

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Councillor Kane reported that the last meeting took place on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March where the West Midlands State of the Region 2024/25 report was presented. The report focused on inequalities across the West Midlands Combined Authority region in areas such as the economy, housing, health, and civic participation. It was highlighted among other things that the growth in the average disposable income in the West Midlands was lower than the UK average and that 25 per cent of the population felt they could impact on their local decision-making, slightly higher than the national figure of 23 per cent.

- b) West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Transport Delivery Overview and Scrutiny – Council Representative, Councillor Munro

Councillor Munro reported that no matters of relevance to Redditch were discussed at the last meeting of Transport Delivery Overview and Scrutiny.

- c) Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) – Council Representative, Councillor Munro

Councillor Munro reported that the last meeting took place on 20<sup>th</sup> February. There were two main items on the agenda at that meeting, both of considerable relevance to Redditch: mitigation of winter pressures on urgent and emergency care, and the overview of winter pressures from West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS).

Councillor Munro reported that a presentation by Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust was provided into winter pressures. The Trust had a winter plan designed to reduce ambulance handover times, improve emergency department waiting times, improve emergency access standard performance, and reduce number of patients receiving corridor care, however, the representative highlighted that the overall results were disappointing and the improvements expected were not being delivered.

It was cited that the Trust had an overall performance target that by March 2025 78 per cent of patients attending the emergency department should be admitted to hospital, transferred to another provider, or discharged within four hours. The actual figure being achieved as of January 2025 was 57.2 per cent. The target for patients spending over twelve hours in emergency department was 7 per cent. The latest performance data showed this to be at 11 per cent.

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It was reported that the Trust had attempted to reduce ambulance handover delays but there remained significant concern over the number of handover delays and lost paramedic hours. There were some improvements such as discharges from both the Worcestershire Royal Hospital, Worcester, and Alexandra Hospital, Redditch, increasing by circa 10 per cent compared to the previous year. Corridor care had remained a considerable problem at both hospitals, and the January 2025 figures from the ambulance service had indicated that handover delays had reduced, particularly at the Worcestershire Royal Hospital.

Councillor Munro reiterated that the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust had been subject of a Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection in 2023 and was found to 'require improvement'. Councillor Munro commented that the need for improvement remained, with the Trust still placed in Tier 1, requiring the highest level of support and improvement, and being required to report to the Department of Health on a weekly basis.

Councillor Munro reported that an overview from West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) was also provided at the 20<sup>th</sup> February meeting. It was reported that the position on handover delays between WMAS and the Trust hospitals had deteriorated sharply since August 2024. However, ambulance response times across Worcestershire and Herefordshire had seen a considerable improvement and on average were close to achieving the 18-minute target for category 2 emergency calls and were achieving the national 30-minute response target for less urgent calls; it was reported that these WMAS was achieving these targets despite the issues at the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.

Councillor Munro reported that WMAS had made an investment of over £4 million to increase the number of ambulances and staff, with the workforce expanded by 334 staff and the ambulance fleet increasing from 340 to 420. The investment had been fifty per cent funded by the Department of Health, with the remaining half to be funded jointly by the Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) within the WMAS catchment area. Only the Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB was yet to agree payment terms with WMAS.

Councillor Munro quoted figures on the lost paramedic hours across the areas covered by WMAS. The loss of paramedic hours due to hospital handover delays was expected to be 255,000 hours by April 2025. This figure was already reached by January 2025 for the year 2024/25 and it was expected that the final figure for the year would be circa 375,000 paramedic hours lost across the WMAS catchment.

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**RESOLVED that**

**the External Scrutiny Bodies updates be noted.**

**90. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME - SELECTING  
ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY**

The Executive Committee Work Programme was presented for Members' consideration. It was reconfirmed that the items from this work programme that had been added to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme in previous meetings would remain for consideration at meetings in the new municipal year.

**RESOLVED that**

**the Executive Committee's Work Programme be noted.**

**91. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme was presented for Members' consideration.

**RESOLVED that**

**the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.**

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 8.08 pm

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025****Digital Manufacturing Innovation Centre – Proposed Project Changes**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Sharon Harvey
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration & Property
Report Author: Neil Batt	Job Title: Regeneration Manager Email: neil.batt@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 07484 546690
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priority	Economy and Regeneration
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Executive Committee RESOLVE that:-**

- 1. AHR Architects design team costs are increased up to a maximum of £1,450,000 for design of Redditch Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (DMIC);**
- 2. Costs for Gardiner and Theobald (G&T) project management services for the DMIC are increased up to a maximum of £250,000.**

**The Executive Committee is asked to NOTE**

- 3. Any draw down of contingency is subject to approval by the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) in conjunction with the Assistant Director for Regeneration and Property.**
- 4. that the additional funding at recommendations 1 and 2 above utilises reallocated central government grant monies.**

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** In June 2021, Redditch secured an historic investment of £15.6 million Town Deal funding. The Town Deal is the result of the submission to government through the Towns Fund. The Redditch submission was based on a vision for the transformation of the town summarised in

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the [Town Investment Plan](#). This investment plan was successful in securing funding for the following projects:

- Digital Manufacturing Innovation Centre (£8,000,000)
- Redevelopment of Redditch Library Site (£4,200,000)
- Redditch Public Realm (£3,000,000)

Note that an additional £400,000 was awarded for programme management costs across the above three projects, making up the total £15,600,000 funding award.

- 2.2 A decision has since been taken by the Council to cancel the redevelopment of Redditch Library site, following a change of administration, initially leaving £4,200,000 underspend.
- 2.3 AHR Architects were appointed to carry out the design work for DMIC in January 2024 following a tender exercise via Procure Partnerships framework. Gardiner & Theobald were also appointed to carry out project management services in January 2024. Details of the tender exercises carried out (in relation to both appointments) were summarised in a report to Executive on 9th January 2024 where both appointments were approved.
- 2.4 Design work for DMIC progressed rapidly throughout 2024 and was previously on track to commence construction in Spring 2025. However, in Autumn 2024, the Council's newly appointed regeneration team reviewed the business model and identified potential to expand its benefits and increase financial viability utilising the underspend from the cancelled library project.
- 2.5 The decision was subsequently taken by the Town Deal Board to expand the development and increase the amount of net lettable floorspace, in order that the building can become more sustainable with expanded benefits.
- 2.6 A Project Adjustment Request (PAR) has since been submitted and signed off by MHCLG, to utilise the £4,200,000 Library underspend. The PAR included £3,937,000 for DMIC, with the remaining £263,000 required to complete the Redditch Public Realm project. Note that a request for extended timescales has also been approved by MHCLG which allows until the end of March 2027 to spend the funding.
- 2.7 In consideration of the above, DMIC is being redesigned to increase the building in size resulting in additional economic benefits and overall sustainability.

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- 2.8 The extent of design work required has subsequently increased as well as timescales for delivering the work (estimated additional 12-15 months). This combination of factors has inevitably resulted in increased design and project management costs.
- 2.8 This report recommends the sign off of the additional design and project management costs associated with the expanded development. A further report will be brought forward for consideration by the Executive, prior to appointment of a construction contractor.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Council in relation to this report as the increase in fees is covered by Town Deal Funding.
- 4.2 Further information relating to the financial implications arising from this report are detailed in the exempt appendix to this report.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Note that the additional costs for both AHR Architects and G&T have been quoted in line with original rates provided via the Procure Partnerships framework. Procure Partnerships have also been consulted, alongside the Council's procurement and legal team to ensure that best value is being demonstrated in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. Both AHR and G&T are best placed to provide best value for money given their prior knowledge of the project, combined with rates that have been market tested via the Procure Partnership framework. In the case of AHR, it would not be cost effective or feasible for any other organisation to attempt to pick up the design work midway through the process. It would also not be feasible for another organisation to take on the additional project management tasks, given that they are integrated into existing work being carried out by G&T.
- 5.2 As above, work can be added to the existing NEC4 PSC contracts via compensation events.

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

- 6.1 The proposals detailed in this report align with the Council's Corporate Priority "Economy and Regeneration". They will also support the proposed priority, detailed in the draft Council Plan that is due to be

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considered at the Annual Council meeting in May 2025, of “Economic Development”.

**Climate Change Implications**

- 6.2 AHR are the lead designers of the building and therefore ensure that designs are environmentally friendly and in line with local and national climate change policies. The design has been through a whole life carbon assessment to minimise the embodied carbon within the building. The super structure has been designed to bring maximum efficiency and reduce material weight. Achieved by reducing spans where possible to reduce the size of beams and columns. High carbon materials like aluminium have been avoided in favour of long-life and recyclable products like brick.
- 6.3 The building will follow a fabric first approach to maximise the sustainability credentials through: a regular, efficient form factor; highly insulated walls (0.15 W/m<sup>2</sup>K), floor (0.15 W/m<sup>2</sup>K), and roof (0.15 W/m<sup>2</sup>K); high-performing windows (1.3 W/m<sup>2</sup>K) and doors (1.6 W/m<sup>2</sup>K); and passive solar measures to reduce overheating. It will be fully electric and follow its ventilation, heating, cooling and water systems, which will be low-energy, efficient systems that follow sustainable principles. It will be a sealed (air tightness target 3.5m<sup>3</sup>/hm<sup>2</sup> @50Pa), mechanically ventilated building that has a high degree of control to individual spaces that seeks to maintain a consistent and comfortable internal temperature. Heat recovery whilst ventilating the building is done through individual MVHR units within tenant spaces and central air handling for landlord spaces. air source heat pumps provide low-temperature heating to spaces via fan-coil units or wet radiators depending on the space. The building seeks to gain a NABERS accreditation of 4.5 stars in addition to statutory requirements.

**Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.3 There are no direct equality or diversity implications arising as a result of this report.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 There is an up-to-date risk register which is held by the project team and reviewed at Town Deal Board meetings.

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**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Financial Implications – Exempt Information

Background Papers

“Appointment of Design Team and Project Managers – Towns Fund Schemes”, report to the Executive Committee considered on 9<sup>th</sup>.

January 2024: [Link to the covering report to the Executive Committee - 9th January 2024](#)

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025****9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Joe Baker	
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Rachel Egan (Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services)	11 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
Financial Services	Debra Goodall (Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services)	10 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor – Governance Claire Green, Principal Solicitor – Contracts, Commercial and Procurement	9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Awaiting Feedback*** (Rebecca Green)	
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Awaiting Feedback*** (Matthew Eccles)	

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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