



# Electoral Matters Committee

Thu 30 Jul  
2026  
5.30 pm

Oakenshaw Community Centre,  
Castleditch Lane,  
B98 7YB

If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact  
Jess Bayley-Hill

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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.

### **PUBLIC ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of this Committee.

#### **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.

# Electoral Matters

Thursday, 30th July, 2026

5.30 pm

Oakenshaw Community Centre

## Agenda

### Membership:

|        |                              |              |
|--------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Cllrs: | Matthew Dormer<br>(Chair)    | James Fardoe |
|        | Susan Eacock<br>(Vice-Chair) | Jen Snape    |
|        | William Boyd                 |              |

### 1. Apologies for absence and named substitutes

### 2. Declarations of Interest

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

### 3. Minutes of the meetings of the Electoral Matters Committee held on 21st October and 18th December 2025 (Pages 5 - 14)

### 4. Proposed Changes for Future Wards within the Redditch Electoral Area (Pages 15 - 34)

The covering report and Appendix 1 to the report are attached in this agenda pack. Appendix 2 to the report will follow in a supplementary pack.

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

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# Electoral Matters Committee

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Tuesday, 21st October,  
2025

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor William Boyd (Chair), Councillor James Fardoe (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Juma Begum and Sid Khan

### Also Present:

Councillors J. Barker Smith, C. Davies, A. Fry, B. Hartnett, S. Harvey, J. Kane, D. Munroe, R. Rogers, J. Spilsbury, M. Stringfellow and I. Woodall.

### Officers:

Melissa Bassett, Claire Felton and Darren Whitney

### Democratic Services Officers:

Jo Gresham

#### 14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mathur with Councillor Begum as named substitute.

#### 15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### 16. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes from the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025 were submitted for Members approval.

### RESOLVED that

The minutes from the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025 be approved as a true and accurate record.

Chair

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## 17. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION: FUTURE LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN REDDITCH

The Senior Electoral Services Officer presented the Local Government Reorganisation: Future Local Governance in Redditch report for Members' consideration.

In doing so the following was highlighted:

- As a result of the current Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) there needed to be significant structure changes in the Borough, which included neighbourhood governance arrangements. The report contained three options for future governance structures in terms of maintaining civic identity and to ensure effective community governance for the future. It was noted that at this time, the outcome for the future governance arrangements for Worcestershire were still unknown and whether the structure for governance would be one unitary authority or two unitary authorities for Worcestershire; one in the North and one in the South.
- There were touchstones to be considered as part of the review process. A Council must have regard to the specific needs of the areas to ensure that community/local governance was satisfied following LGR and therefore it was imperative that the outcomes reflected the identity and interests of the community and were effective and convenient.
- There were three options for consideration by Members.

These were as follows:

- Neighbourhood Area Committees (NAC) – it was the vision of the Government that Neighbourhood Area Committees or forums be established by the new unitary authority (whichever model was decided upon). These would cover large areas and would be expected to provide the main mechanism and localised governance for communities.
- Charter Trustees – This option dealt with civic identity in the Borough following Vestment Day for the new

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authority. This option would ensure the safeguarding of the civic and ceremonial traditions within an area including regalia, mayoralty and historic property. However, it was noted that Charter Trustees were not permitted to own land or buildings.

- Committee Governance Review – This was a long and complex process which considered the unparished areas of the Borough in order to look to establish Parish Councils. Members were informed that Parish Councils had a wide range of powers and responsibilities including allotments, parks and open spaces. They were also permitted to raise their own funding through a precept and operated under the same financial and audit framework as Local Authorities.

Following the consideration of the report, Members and those Members who were observing the meeting were invited to speak by the Chair. The areas of discussion were as follows:

- If NACs were to be introduced this would provide more power for local people as the governance would be more localised and at grass roots. Some Members felt it was difficult to see if this type of governance would be appropriate as a decision had not been made in terms of the structure of the unitary Local Authority in the future as part of LGR. However, it was noted that these had been implemented in other areas with limited success. There were also queries raised regarding powers and discretion around funding or grants if NACs were implemented in the future.
- Members were keen to retain the identity and civic pride of Redditch including the Mayoral position. Redditch had a number of key assets that were important to residents living in the Borough which included Forge Mill, Bordesley Abbey and the Redditch Palace Theatre. Members felt it was extremely important that these be retained for the future. Members also queried what the future would

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be for Rubicon Leisure Limited. It was noted that all these areas were complex and needed to be considered carefully within the context of LGR.

- As part of the LGR process, it was necessary for Councils to present a financially stable and resilient proposal. Therefore, it was key that Members provided a clear instruction on the way forward for the Borough including the future of assets owned and maintained by the Borough.
- If Option three (CGR) was agreed as the preferred option by Members, there would need to be a robust public consultation strategy in order for residents to understand the process and what the outcomes for this might be in order to avoid any mixed messages and confusion for residents. This would also need to include consultation with local groups in Redditch, and the costs required to undertake such a review and the resources needed as part of a review on this scale. Members queried whether if Option three was not agreed at this meeting, would there be an opportunity to investigate this at a later date. It was confirmed that this would be possible however due to the length of time this kind of review would take, Officers would need to commence such review as early as possible in readiness for the implementation of LGR in May 2028.
- Members were concerned that if the currently unparished areas within the Borough were made into had parishes there would be extra financial implications for the residents as a result of the payment of precepts. It was noted that this would put further strain on some residents who already experienced pressures due to the current cost of living.
- The uncertainty of the structure of local Government at present. Central Government aimed to streamline the current structure of local government and the Council's proposal for LGR due to be submitted in November 2025 was robust. Therefore, this was not the appropriate time to implement a CGR process.

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Members expressed that it was important to keep options open for the future depending on what the outcomes of LGR were. This would enable the Council to take the most appropriate next steps with a clear position.

Following the detailed discussions Members felt that the best option for the Council at the current time was to explore Option two (Charter Trustees).

Therefore, on being put to the vote it was

**RESOLVED that officers explore in more detail the option of appointing “Charter Trustees” for the Borough and that a further report, including costings and a timetable for appointing Charter Trustees, be presented to Council in due course.**

[Following consideration of this item there was an adjournment between 19:50 and 19:57].

## **18. ELECTORAL PILOT FOR MAY 2026 ELECTIONS**

The Electoral Services Manager presented the Electoral Pilot for May 2026 Elections report for Members’ consideration. In doing so, Members were informed that in August 2025 the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published a prospectus on Flexible Voting Pilots 2026 under the Government’s Electoral Modernisation banner. It noted that little had changed in the way that voting was carried out since the Ballot Act 1872 and that it was necessary to explore ways to make voting in person more efficient, convenient and better aligned with the electorate of today.

The MHCLG invited local authorities due to hold elections in May 2026 to make formal applications to pilot flexible voting options. The deadline for applications was 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025 which was later amended to 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2025.

There were several areas that MHCLG wished to pilot. These were:

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- a. Voting at any polling station;
- b. Voting Hubs;
- c. Mobile polling stations; and
- d. Early in-person voting.

Local authorities were allowed to consider a mixture of the above approaches or suggest their own, however MHCLG would not consider proposals for online or electronic voting. Following discussions with the Chief Executive and Group Leaders it was agreed that Redditch Borough Council would apply for early voting and the use of voting hubs. These proposals were explained to Members, and it was noted that the early voting period was proposed from Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2026 through to Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2026. Hours of poll were still to be determined but early considerations were 8am-7pm, with an earlier finish of 5pm on the day before actual polling day. In terms of Voting Hubs, it was noted that the proposals were that one hub be situated in a location of high footfall (e.g. the Kingfisher Shopping Centre or Abbey Stadium Leisure Centre), supplemented by up to four further hubs in other parts of the Borough. There would be real time electronic registers available during this process that provided real time accuracy.

Officers proposed that should the pilot scheme proceed then a Working Group be established, with Members of the Electoral Matters Committee, along with other Elected Members that expressed an interest and relevant officers. The main purpose of the Working Group would be the decision on where voting hubs were to be located.

Members were informed that there was no cost to the Council, and that the pilot scheme would be funded by the MHCLG.

Following the presentation of the report, Members expressed that this was an exciting pilot which would encourage voting and greater engagement in the democratic process for the residents of Redditch.

The number of voting hubs across the Borough was raised by Members. Officers explained that there was no limit to the number

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of voting hubs by MCHLG. However, it was important to ensure that the correct number be established for this pilot. The Working Group would be key in ascertaining the correct number and locations along with looking at any risks, such as suppliers for the hubs and ICT stability throughout the voting period. This would include the availability of manual registers and ballot boxes alongside the proposed electronic systems. It was further explained that these voting hubs were not designed to replace usual polling stations and that the communications of the pilot would ensure that there would be no confusion in terms of both the voting hubs and the usual polling stations.

**RESOLVED that:-**

- 1) A letter be sent to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to endorse the proposal for the Council to take part in the pilot of early voting at designated hubs; and**
- 2) Subject to the success of the application detailed at recommendation 1 above, a Working Group be established to consider and recommend locations to use for the voting hubs.**

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 8.15 pm

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# Electoral Matters Committee

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Thursday, 18th December,  
2025

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor William Boyd (Chair), and Councillors Matthew Dormer and Jen Snape

### Officers:

M. Bassett and D. Whitney

#### 19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mathur with Councillor Snape as named substitute. No further apologies for absence were received.

#### 20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### 21. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee at the request of Members.

#### 22. ELECTORAL PILOT EARLY VOTING HUBS FOR MAY 2026 ELECTIONS

The Electoral Services Manager presented the report regarding possible locations for early voting hubs as part of the electoral pilot to be held in May 2026.

Members expressed their support for the pilot and their regret was noted that electronic voting pilots were not being allowed by Government.

Officers had investigated a number of locations that had the potential to be used within the Borough and the Electoral Services Manager updated Members on each location that had been referred to within the report. To support this, a paper was circulated which

Chair

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covered the progress regarding each potential hub (Appendix 1 to the minutes). Each location was discussed, and Members determined that only four were viable to be utilised within the tight timetable.

These were:

- Abbey Stadium
- Arrow Valley Visitor Centre
- Kingfisher Shopping Centre
- Temporary Building(s) near café in Morton Stanley Park, Windmill Drive

It was noted that three of the four locations were directly connected to the Borough Council which would make progressing arrangements easier. Officers informed Members that there had been positive discussions with the Kingfisher Shopping Centre in securing a unit for a voting hub at that venue, although they would not be able to give an exact location until late January 2026. The Committee had previously agreed to set up a working group to review the locations, however no nominations had been received outside of the Committee. Taking this into account along with the viable locations, Members decided that a working group was no longer necessary and that officers could proceed with the pilot arrangements using the four locations stated above.

## **RESOLVED that**

**subject to consultation with Group Leaders, officers approach:**

- **Abbey Stadium;**
- **Arrow Valley Visitor Centre;**
- **Kingfisher Shopping Centre; and**
- **Morton Stanley Park.**

**to establish early voting hubs, for the May 2026 electoral pilot, at those locations.**

The Meeting commenced at 5.25 pm  
and closed at 5.34 pm

**Electoral Matters Committee**

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**Proposed Changes for Future Wards within the Redditch Electoral Area**

|                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder                                                                                | Councillor Craig Warhurst<br>Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance                                                            |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted                                                                               | Yes                                                                                                                                 |
| Relevant Assistant Director                                                                              | Claire Felton, Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services                                                     |
| Report Author<br>Darren Whitney                                                                          | Job Title: Electoral Services Manager<br>Contact email:<br>darren.whitney@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk<br>Contact Tel: 01527 881650 |
| Wards Affected                                                                                           | All                                                                                                                                 |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted                                                                             | All                                                                                                                                 |
| Relevant Council Priority                                                                                | High quality services and supported governance                                                                                      |
| Non-Key Decision                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                     |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. |                                                                                                                                     |

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Electoral Matters Committee is asked to **NOTE**:

- 1) The results of the Redditch warding arrangements for interim unitary arrangements questionnaire.

The Electoral Matters Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND** that:-

- 2) an updated ward pattern for Redditch be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to be included in the unitary authority's Structural Changes Order based on two three-member wards and five two-member wards, including ward names (as specified by the Electoral Matters Committee).

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Early on in the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) asked for local authorities to include their suggestions for ward arrangements in their interim plans which had to be submitted by 21st March 2025. In Worcestershire, under either a single county unitary model for local government or a two unitary authority model, the initial

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response put forward was that the current county divisions could be retained and the number of members to be elected could be doubled for each ward.

- 2.2 On 19th May 2026, MHCLG wrote to local authorities in Worcestershire asking for their views on the Structural Changes Order (SCO). As part of their correspondence MHCLG stated, *"With regard to your suggested warding arrangements, these can be based on any combination of existing wards, divisions and parish boundaries. We understand there may be significant work compiling this, and that you may wish to wait until after a decision on which proposal is to be implemented to finalise this work. We will need any further information on warding by 17 August and would appreciate receiving it before this date wherever possible."*
- 2.3 It was proposed in Worcestershire that the initial Council size would either comprise of 114 Councillors for a single unitary authority or 54 (North Worcestershire) and 60 (South Worcestershire) in the case of two unitary authorities. It is now known that on 16th July 2026 the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government confirmed that he had decided to move forward with the implementation of the two unitary proposal for Worcestershire submitted by Bromsgrove District Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Worcester City Council and Wychavon District Council. These new councils will comprise the current areas of: Bromsgrove District Council, Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council (referred to in the proposals as 'North Worcestershire') and Malvern Hills District Council, Worcester City Council and Wychavon District Council (referred to in the proposals as 'South Worcestershire'). There is no suggestion to change the numbers of elected Members representing the North Worcestershire Authority.
- 2.4 In the original proposals, the suggestion was that each current county division return twice the number of councillors for the new Council or Councils. This would mean all divisions apart from the Redditch electoral area would return two Councillors. Redditch divisions, in this scenario, would return four Councillors, a total of sixteen Members.
- 2.5 With the opportunity to provide feedback to MHCLG mentioned in paragraph 2.2, officers in Redditch cited concerns regarding four Member wards in the electoral area for Redditch within the new unitary authority. This is based on the complication of holding a principal election with four seats in each ward, the dilution of accountability and reducing representational clarity for residents.

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- 2.6 Although there is no legislative upper limit on the number of Councillors who may represent a ward or electoral division, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) guidance states that divisions/wards returning more than three Councillors can dilute accountability to the electorate. The Commission will not normally recommend a principal ward area with more than three members unless there is compelling evidence to support it. Its guidance also provides that, for authorities holding whole-Council elections, electoral arrangements may be based on a combination of single, two and three-member wards. It is important to note that the MHCLG follows LGBCE guidance as far as possible when developing the interim electoral arrangements for new unitary authorities.

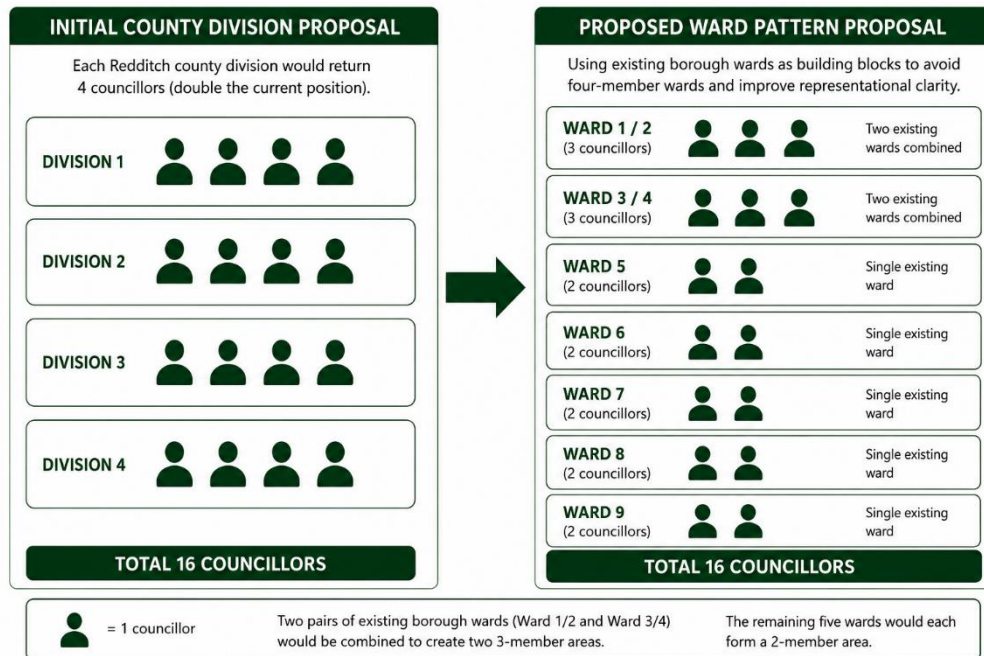
**3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

- 3.1 Officers discussed their concerns of wards returning four members with representatives from MHCLG and it was confirmed that they didn't ask for detailed warding as part of the original LGR proposals and therefore it was not necessary to link anything in those documents and that changes can be made in respect of the SCO for the new authority. Officers were reminded by MHCLG that ministers will decide the final Council size and that MHCLG are seeking local suggestions for the SCO in terms of warding. However, any different arrangements should use existing electoral areas, which may include current District or Borough wards, parish areas or county electoral divisions.
- 3.2 As there is only one parish within the Redditch electoral area, and officers were not proposing any change to the overall number of Councillors to be returned, the alternative approach was to consider the use of existing Borough wards as the basis for the interim warding arrangements. Maintaining the existing allocation of sixteen Councillors for the Redditch electoral area was considered important, as changing the number of Councillors for Redditch would go beyond a local refinement to the warding pattern and could have wider implications for the overall Council size and distribution of Councillors across Worcestershire.
- 3.3 The analysis showed that, in order to retain sixteen Councillors for the Redditch electoral area, the only viable arrangement would be to create seven wards: five two-member wards and two three-member wards.

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Figure 1



As can be seen from figure 1 above, the ward patterning would involve combining two current Borough wards to create each three-member ward.

- 3.4 This approach was discussed with both the MHCLG and the LGBCE before taking any further action, both were content with the approach and the LGBCE expanded on the position regarding use of wards to create ward patterns: *“In our guidance to councils on developing warding patterns, we do advise against recommending any four-member electoral areas.”* They followed up with the fact MHCLG has adopted this guidance too and stated: *“It would certainly be appropriate to use Redditch borough wards as building blocks. In other LGR areas some councils have used wards as building blocks as a baseline, instead of electoral divisions, and so there is precedent for that approach. There are also instances where there has been a combined proposal using both wards and divisions as building blocks, so a Worcestershire approach along these lines should also fall within the guidance and be consistent with what we have seen elsewhere in the country.”*
- 3.5 Officers tested some scenarios and did note that electoral variances did have a greater divergence than the original divisional proposal including up to 19% so the LGBCE were asked for their comments on divergence. The LGBCE replied: *“that kind of electoral equality is not a*

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*major concern at this stage and you should feel comfortable going ahead with the ward building blocks in Redditch” noting that their official guidance to Councils undergoing unitarisation states “when developing interim warding arrangements, councils are unlikely to be able practically to adhere to all the criteria we follow when conducting an electoral review.” The LGBCE further commented that this appeared to be “a clear example of where effective & accountable local government takes priority over perfect electoral equality.” Additionally, it was also noted that, in previous cases of unitarisation, interim arrangements have had variances in the range of 20-30% away from the average. Members may be interested to know that the new North Yorkshire Council had two divisions with a variance of more than 30% and 57% of divisions had a variance of more than 10%.*

- 3.6 A paper was taken to the Informal Working Group on Local Government Reorganisation in Worcestershire (which consists of the Leaders of Worcestershire councils and LGR Portfolio Holders) on 1st July 2026. At this meeting members of the group supported a seven ward solution for the Redditch Electoral Area and it was noted that Redditch Borough Council would want to consider the new ward patterns.
- 3.7 Redditch Borough Council Group Leaders met on 2nd July and agreed a meeting of this Committee. It has subsequently been agreed that an extraordinary Council meeting will be held on 10th August to consider ward patterning in the Redditch Electoral Area.
- 3.8 Officers produced a short questionnaire for all members of the Council so they could have a say on which wards they felt have the best community cohesion and community links to help identify the warding pattern of the Redditch Electoral Area for the shadow authority. A copy of the questionnaire and the relevant briefing note can be found in Appendix 1. Due to the timing of the deadline for responses to the questionnaire and also the deadline for publication of the agenda for the Electoral Matters Committee meeting, the results of this questionnaire, as detailed in Appendix 2, will be published in a supplementary pack for this meeting.
- 3.9 Members of the Committee are asked to consider the results of the questionnaire and to decide on a ward pattern to recommend to Council based on strong community links and effective community cohesion. The Committee may also want to suggest a name for the combined wards.
- 3.10 As described in the questionnaire briefing note, community cohesion can include:

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- shared shops, local centres or high streets;
- shared schools, health facilities, community buildings, parks or leisure facilities;
- similar housing, development patterns or socio-economic characteristics;
- shared transport links, main roads, walking routes or bus routes;
- recognised local identities or neighbourhood names;
- existing links between residents, community groups, voluntary organisations or local services;
- clear physical boundaries, such as main roads, open space, railway lines or natural boundaries; and
- whether residents are likely to see the areas as linked communities.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no additional costs at this stage.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provides for the Secretary of State to issue invitations to Councils for unitary proposals.
- 5.2 Section 7 of the 2007 Act gives the Secretary of State power to make an SCO with or without modification.
- 5.3 The SCO will include provision for electoral arrangements including the number of Members of the unitary authority, the number and boundaries of electoral areas for the purpose of elections of Councillors to it and the number of Councillors to be returned by each electoral area.

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

- 6.1 The proposal arises directly from Local Government Reorganisation as amended ward patterning for the Redditch Electoral Area will be forwarded to MHCLG, before their deadline of 17th August to help inform the creation of the SCO.

**Relevant Council Priority**

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- 6.2 The proposals detailed in this report, relate to delivering quality services under the organisational priorities of high quality services and supported governance.

### **Climate Change Implications**

- 6.3 There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report.

### **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.4 There are no equalities and diversity implications for this report as access to polling stations within the electoral area would remain the same (unless changed under a review by this Committee).

### **Community Impact Implications**

- 6.5 There are no direct community safety or health and wellbeing implications.

## **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 As Ministers have the final decision on warding, if an indication from the Council on ward patterning isn't made a less favourable pattern might be chosen.

## **8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Appendix 1 – Copy of questionnaire and briefing note to Elected Members
- Appendix 2 – Results of questionnaire (to follow)

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**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

| <b>Department</b>                  | <b>Name and Job Title</b>                                                       | <b>Date</b> |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Portfolio Holder                   | Councillor Craig Warhurst                                                       |             |
| Lead Director / Assistant Director | Claire Felton, Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services |             |
| Financial Services                 | Deb Goodall, Assistant Director of Financial and Customer Services              |             |
| Legal Services                     | Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor - Governance                               | 14/07/26    |

## APPENDIX 1

# Redditch warding arrangements for interim unitary arrangements

Please ensure you have read the supporting information document before completing this form. The document can be found here: [Local Government Reorganisation - Redditch Warding Arrangements Briefing Note Member Questions Final 3.docx](#) It would be helpful to complete this form by **Monday 20th July** so the results can be considered at the Electoral Matters Committee.

When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.

\* Required

1. Please provide your name \*

Enter your answer

2. Which Redditch borough ward or wards are you most familiar with? (select all that apply) \*

- ☐ Astwood Bank & Feckenham
- ☐ Batchley & Brockhill
- ☐ Central
- ☐ Greenlands & Lakeside
- ☐ Headless Cross & Oakenshaw
- ☐ Matchborough & Woodrow
- ☐ North
- ☐ Webheath & Callow Hill
- ☐ I have borough-wide knowledge

3. When thinking about community links between areas, which of the following should be taken into account? (Please select all that apply) \*

- ☐ Whether the areas feel like they naturally sit together
- ☐ Whether residents are likely to use some of the same local facilities or services
- ☐ Whether the areas have similar local issues or priorities

- ☐ Whether the areas have a similar local character
- ☐ Whether there are clear boundaries or barriers between the areas
- ☐ Whether the arrangement would make sense to residents
- ☐ Other

4. Which of the following potential ward pairings do you think have the strongest community links?  
(please select 2, and do not use any ward twice) \*

Please select 2 options.

- ☐ Astwood Bank & Feckenham with Webheath & Callow Hill
- ☐ Astwood Bank & Feckenham with Headless Cross & Oakenshaw
- ☐ Webheath & Callow Hill with Headless Cross & Oakenshaw
- ☐ Webheath & Callow Hill with Batchley & Brockhill
- ☐ Batchley & Brockhill with Central
- ☐ Headless Cross & Oakenshaw with Central
- ☐ Central with Greenlands & Lakeside
- ☐ Headless Cross & Oakenshaw with Greenlands & Lakeside

- ☐ Headless Cross & Oakenshaw with Matchborough & Woodrow
- ☐ Matchborough & Woodrow with Winyates
- ☐ Greenlands & Lakeside with Matchborough & Woodrow
- ☐ Greenlands & Lakeside with Winyates
- ☐ Greenlands & Lakeside with North
- ☐ North with Winyates
- ☐ Not Sure

5. What is/are the main reason(s) you think they have strong community links? (select all that apply)

\*

- ☐ The areas feel like they naturally sit together
- ☐ Residents are likely to use some of the same shops, facilities or services
- ☐ The areas have similar local issues or priorities
- ☐ The areas have a similar local character
- ☐ The arrangement would support clear and effective representation

☐ The arrangement would make sense to residents

6. Are there any of the potential pairings that you think would be difficult from a community cohesion point of view? (please select any that apply)

\*

☐ Astwood Bank & Feckenham with Webheath & Callow Hill

☐ Astwood Bank & Feckenham with Headless Cross & Oakenshaw

☐ Webheath & Callow Hill with Headless Cross & Oakenshaw

☐ Webheath & Callow Hill with Batchley & Brockhill

☐ Batchley & Brockhill with Central

☐ Headless Cross & Oakenshaw with Central

☐ Central with Greenlands & Lakeside

☐ Headless Cross & Oakenshaw with Greenlands & Lakeside

☐ Headless Cross & Oakenshaw with Matchborough & Woodrow

☐ Matchborough & Woodrow with Winyates

☐ Greenlands & Lakeside with Matchborough & Woodrow

☐ Greenlands & Lakeside with Winyates

☐ Greenlands & Lakeside with North

☐ North with Winyates

☐ Not Sure

☐ None of the above

7. If you selected any difficult pairings, what is/are the main reason(s)? (select all that apply)

\*

☐ The areas do not feel naturally linked

☐ Residents are unlikely to use the same facilities or services

☐ The areas have different local identities

☐ The areas have different local issues or priorities

☐ There are physical boundaries or barriers between the areas

☐ The arrangement may not make sense to residents

☐ Other

☐ Not applicable

☐ Other

8. Is there anything else the Electoral Matters Committee should take into account when considering the proposed ward pattern?

\*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure



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## **Local Government Reorganisation: Redditch Warding Arrangements Briefing Note**

### **Why we are asking for Members' views**

Redditch Borough Council is seeking views from all Members to help inform the proposed warding arrangements for the Redditch electoral area as part of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). This exercise is not connected to determining which unitary arrangement (a single county unitary or two councils, one covering the north and the other the south) is right for Worcestershire. Views relating to that have already been passed on to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for the Government to consider.

The purpose of this exercise is to gather local knowledge about community links between existing Redditch borough wards. This will help inform considerations about the most suitable ward pattern arrangements for the area irrespective of the decision on LGR. It is not asking Members to choose a final ward pattern that they would prefer, but information from this work will assist the Electoral Matters Committee in proposing a ward pattern, which will then ultimately be considered at an extraordinary Council meeting on 10 August.

### **What these arrangements would be used for**

The warding arrangements being considered would apply to the **shadow elections only**.

These arrangements, if agreed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), would be included in the Worcestershire Structural Changes Order and used for the first elections to the new unitary authority or authorities.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has confirmed that reorganised areas are usually reviewed before their next scheduled unitary elections. This means that the longer-term warding arrangements would be considered through a full electoral review at a later stage

### **Why Redditch is being looked at separately**

The original LGR submission at interim plan stage in March 2025 to MHCLG for Worcestershire was based on using current county electoral divisions, with the number of councillors doubled. In Redditch, this would mean each county division would return four councillors. MHCLG on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026 asked for any further information on warding to be made available by 17<sup>th</sup> August or before.

Informal advice has been sought from MHCLG and the LGBCE. The advice received confirms that four-member wards are not normally supported, as they can dilute accountability and make representation less clear for residents.

For that reason, Redditch needs to consider a limited variation from the original approach.

### What would change

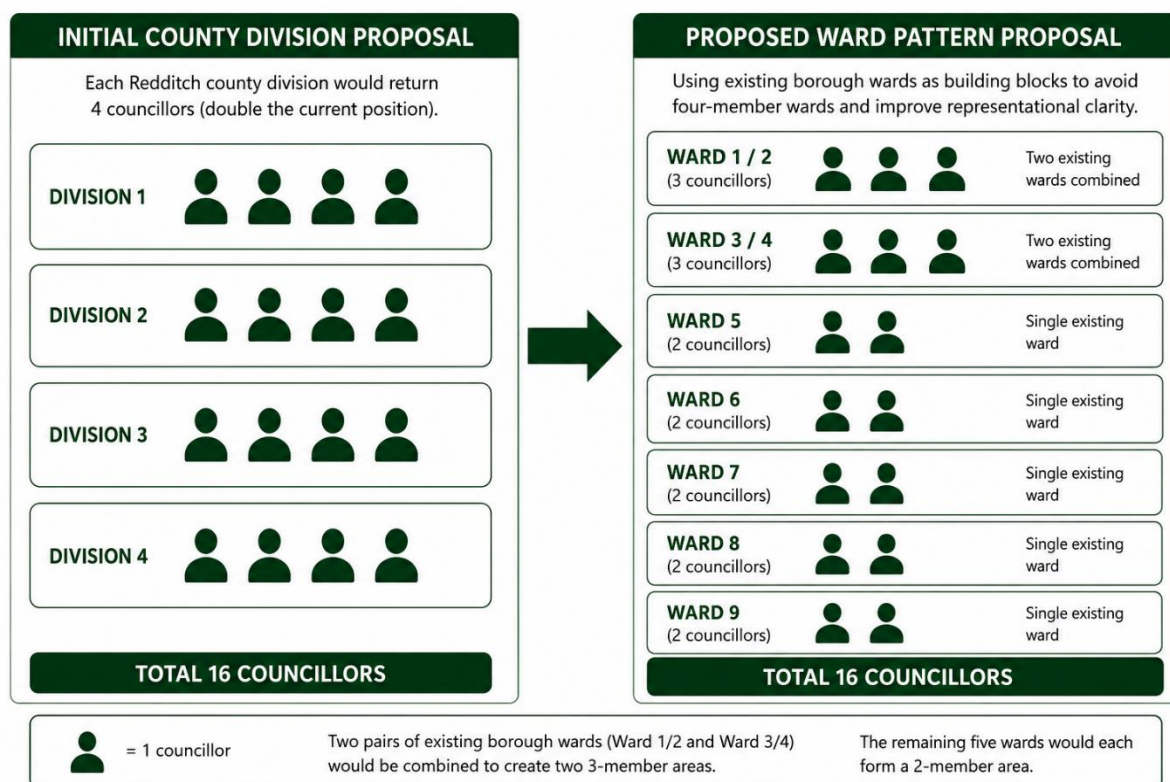
The revised approach would use the existing Redditch borough wards as the building blocks, rather than the county divisions.

This would not change the overall number of councillors. The total number of councillors across Worcestershire would remain 114, whether there is one unitary authority or two unitary authorities.

For Redditch, the only alternative option is to use the existing nine borough wards and create:

- five two-member wards; and
- two three-member wards, each made up of two existing borough wards.

This means two pairs of existing borough wards would need to be combined.



### Why the options are limited

There are very limited options available because the interim warding arrangements need to be based on existing electoral areas.

This means the arrangements must use existing borough wards, county divisions, parish areas, or a combination of these.

For Redditch, using the existing borough wards as building blocks is the only practical way to avoid four-member wards while keeping the overall number of councillors unchanged.

### **How electoral variance will be considered**

Electoral variance remains a relevant consideration. This means looking at how evenly councillors would represent the electorate across each ward. However, the LGBCE has advised that, in the context of interim arrangements for local government reorganisation, the usual levels of electoral equality may not be achievable within the limited parameters available.

The key issue for this exercise is therefore to understand which existing borough wards have the strongest community links and would support effective and clear representation. This is referred to as community cohesion.

### **What we mean by community cohesion**

When answering the questions, please think about whether different areas have natural links with each other.

This may include:

- shared shops, local centres or high streets;
- shared schools, health facilities, community buildings, parks or leisure facilities
- similar housing, development patterns or socio-economic characteristics
- shared transport links, main roads, walking routes or bus routes
- recognised local identities or neighbourhood names
- existing links between residents, community groups, voluntary organisations or local services
- clear physical boundaries, such as main roads, open space, railway lines or natural boundaries
- whether residents are likely to see the areas as linked communities.

### **How the responses will be used**

The responses will be used to help officers assess community cohesion and effective representation between existing Redditch borough wards.

This evidence will be considered alongside electoral variance data and the advice received from MHCLG and the LGBCE. It will assist the Electoral Matters Committee, at its meeting on 30 July, in considering a proposed ward pattern for the Redditch electoral area.

Any recommendation from the Electoral Matters Committee will then be considered by Council at an extraordinary meeting on 10 August.

It should be noted that Redditch Borough Council is not making the final decision on the warding arrangements for the new unitary authority or authorities. The Council

would be making a proposal to MHCLG. The final unitary structure and electoral arrangements will ultimately be determined by Government through the Structural Changes Order.