

Appendix A

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25

Tranche One

Savings Proposal Document

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Overview

Redditch Borough Council provides district level local services, like housing, leisure and recreation, environmental health, waste collection, local strategic planning and planning applications, and local tax collection. Local Tax collection includes both Council Tax and Business Rates. The Council also collect Council Tax on behalf of County Council and the Fire and Police Authorities. The Council's proportion is just 13%. Business Rates are collected on behalf of the Council and the Government.

Redditch is in the county of Worcestershire which operates a 2-tiered system of Local Government (and some areas are covered by Parish Councils). The Borough Council provide the "district level" services described in the previous paragraph, whereas Worcestershire County Council provides county level local services like education, highways, transport planning, passenger transport, social care, libraries, waste disposal and strategic planning.

There is one parish council, Feckenham, in Redditch Borough. It provides parish level very local services like some parks, community centres, and war memorials.

Redditch

- Covers an area of 21 Square Miles
- Has 84,000 residents
- Has 41,000 Homes and Businesses
- Has 29 Councillors and 12 Wards which the present boundary review will reduce to 9 wards and 27 councillors.

The Borough has an above-average number of young families; is densely populated other than outlying areas such as Feckenham; has major employment in 'traditional' manufacturing; has areas of significant deprivation; and average median incomes.

Elections are held every year for 3 years with up to 10 seats contested at a time. with no election in 4th year. All out elections will be held in 2024. The council has a 'leader and cabinet' form of governance, which means the council delegates authority to decide some matters to a 'cabinet' called the executive committee, which is chaired by the Leader of the Council. The executive committee handles much of the ordinary business of the council, with the full council having the final say on matters of strategic policy, budget and council tax.

The Council, along with Bromsgrove District Council, were one of the first Councils in the country to form a shared service in 2008. This means we have a single team serving both Councils. Bromsgrove also host services such as Worcestershire Regulatory Services which is pan Worcestershire.

The Council's vision is *"To enrich the lives and aspirations of all our residents, businesses and visitors through the provision of **efficiently-run**, high quality services that ensure those most need in need receive the appropriate help, support and **opportunities**."*

The Council has delivered the following



Key initiatives being delivered in 2023/24 include:

- Regeneration Investment of over £16m under the government's Town Deal. This includes the prospect of a new Community Hub (incorporating library), revitalised Town Centre public realm, and the investment and the delivery of a Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre all by 2026.

Outcomes delivered include

Outcomes

Here are some outcomes that have recently been delivered by the councils, including operational service performance from the previous year and more.

Redditch

- Secured £15.6 million from the Towns Fund (via the Redditch Town Deal Board, on which the council is lead partner as the local planning authority) for major regeneration projects. 
- Awarded £2.5 million from the UK shared prosperity fund for a range of projects.
- Completed a boundary review that will change the electoral makeup of the borough from May 2024.
- Emptied 1.9m domestic bins.
- Made 70,000 garden waste collections.
- Answered 62,000 queries on bins and cleansing. 
- Spent £392,000 on schemes to prevent, and support people facing, homelessness.
- Determined 275 planning applications.
- Given 4,500 people telephone advice on benefits and 34,000 people online advice on their Council Tax.
- Advised 17,000 people online on the government's '£150 Council Tax rebate'.
- Updated 23,000 people's financial circumstances for benefits.
- Helped 9,000 people access the local housing register, Redditch Homes.
- Received change of use planning permission for a new cemetery for future burial provision, at land off Ipsley Church Lane.
- Implemented safe accommodation provision, in line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Ran 40 consultation surveys, including over 400 community panellists.
- Expanded attendance at exercise classes for the elderly and vulnerable, including community transport there and back, from an original four people to 29 people, using Public Health funding. Feedback included that "it has helped my well-being, I enjoy the company, feel better for going, also wanted to thank Dial-A-Ride drivers who are all very kind and helpful." 
- Provided 23,000 Dial-A-Ride trips.
- Gave 5,000 Shopmobility services.
- Translated public info for 27 people in need, including into Ukrainian and Urdu.
- Supported 345 people through local health programmes.
- Welcomed 370 parents to Starting Well programmes.
- Ran over 270 events for families and children.
- Provided lots of fun events in the school holidays and more, plus celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and Commonwealth Games Baton Relay. 
- Supported tenants of Community House to start relocating ahead of asset disposal.
- Invested in refurbished fixtures and facilities at council assets Pitcheroak Golf Club, Arrow Valley Visitor Centre, historic Forge Mill Needle Museum, the Bartleet Fountain, Plymouth Road Chapel, and others. 

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- Procured multiple large council housing works contracts under an extensive procurement programme, including aids and adaptations to better enable vulnerable tenants to live independently.
- Secured funding to develop an Asset Based Community Development approach and model to enhance youth work provision.
- Formed a new multi-agency Prevention and Enforcement Group for nuisance and anti-social behaviour. The group of council housing officers, specialist legal counsel, and the police co-ordinate case management, action plans, and responses to referred issues. Work is also underway to integrate physical and mental health services into the process.
- Replaced 700 old boilers in council properties with new, efficient boilers.
- Upgraded LED lighting, fire safety, and waste and recycling facilities in communal areas of many council flats.
- Reduced council property void turnaround times from 53 days to 23, to benefit people on the housing register and reduce rent losses.
- Achieved 100% gas safety audit compliance on council properties (as of December 2022).
- Insulated 33 more homes for better energy efficiency, using government funding.
- Oversaw the start of construction of 19 new council homes, the first new-build properties brought into the council's housing stock since the 1990s.
- Adopted a Leisure and Culture Strategy, an overarching 10-year strategy to deliver outcomes against strategic priorities comprised of Parks and Open spaces, Arts and Culture, and Playing Pitch strategies.
- Won a Royal Town Planning Institute 'play innovation' award for improvements to AVCP, in line with Local Plan.
- Won £85,000 from the Levelling Up fund for a new orchard, play equipment and wayfinding trail at AVCP (Green Flag award to be sought for AVCP in 2024).
- Added a new café and toilets to Morton Stanley Park.
- Won £855,000 from Arts Council England for a 'creative people and places' project in Redditch.



The Council sets a 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan every year, with the final Council Tax Resolution being approved by Council in February. This year's process will be more difficult due to the following factors:

- Starting the process with an initial small deficit from the 2023/24 MTFP.
- The present cost of living crisis.
- Changes to how the Government fund services.
- The number of S114 Statements at Councils, including our nearest neighbour Birmingham, and the impact this will have in funding of the sector.

As such, it is prudent to split the budget process into two tranches,

- Having an initial Tranche which seeks to close as much of the deficit as possible using information known as at the end of September and seeking approval for those savings to be implemented at Council in January
- Having a second Tranche after the Christmas break, which will be approved will be sought in February, that takes account of the Local Government Settlement whose final detail will not be known until early January.

This document sets out the present financial situation as well as Tranche 1 service pressures and savings proposals.

2024/25 Budget Process

The council is faced with a challenging financial position this year. The magnitude of the savings required has meant that we have had to consider significant changes to our operating model and redesign the way we deliver services.

Due to the nature and scale of this, developing the proposals has required additional time and resource to ensure the plans are robust, deliverable and collectively achieve financial sustainability.

As such, the budget will be delivered in two tranches, the first with proposals being approved on the 29th January and the second with proposals being approved on the 26th February.

Tranche 1	
Consultation Start Date	24 th October 2023
Budget Scrutiny Committee	30 th October 2023
Executive	31 st October 2023
Consultation Closing Date	4 th December 2023
Executive	5 th December 2023
Council	29 th January 2024

Tranche 2	
Consultation Start Date	29 th January 2024
Budget Scrutiny Committee	5 th February 2024
Executive	6 th February 2024
Consultation Closing Date	25 th February 2024
Executive	26 th February 2024
Council	26 th February 2024

Redditch has the following Strategic Purposes:

- Run & grow a successful business.
- Finding somewhere to live.
- Aspiration, work & financial independence.
- Living independent, active & healthy lives.
- Communities which are safe, well-maintained, and green.

The Green Thread runs through the Council Plan

“To enrich the lives and aspirations of all our residents, businesses and visitors through the provision of efficiently run and high-quality services, ensuring that all in need receive appropriate help, support and opportunities”.

Following consultation, the Council’s priorities are proposed as:

- Housing
- Parks & Green Spaces
- Economy & Regeneration
- Community Safety

Council Service Areas

Business Transformation & Organisational Development

This service area covers the following Services:

Human Resources and Organisational Development - The Human Resources and Organisational Development primary function is to provide a HR advisory service, organisational development, training and health and safety, providing advice and support to the organisation in respect of; recruitment, employment issues, pay and grading, training, workforce planning and health and safety advice. HR focuses on the people within the business and on every aspect of the employment relationship.

Information Communication and Technology - The different areas of ICT include

- helpdesk support, technical project implementation, infrastructure and business
- application support, small systems development and automation, service requests,
- website design and support, graphical information systems support (including street naming and numbering) and information management.

Business Improvement Team - The Business Improvement team supports service areas to improve their delivery of our Strategic Purposes, through changing work practices, processes, and behaviours.

Policy, Equalities and Performance Team - The Policy Team supports elected members, CMT, managers and service areas with corporate planning (such as the development of the Council Plans), performance, data gathering and analysis, consultation and engagement and equalities.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive's Unit comprises Strategic Partnerships (facilitating partnership working across the Borough to ensure more effective outcomes for people), Communications and Print and PA / Directorate Support (which provides administrative support to the Leader, Corporate Management Team and Mayor (including post room)).

Corporate Financing

Corporate financing sets out how the Council funds its revenue expenditure. The Council funds the majority of its activities from the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates. There are also Grants such as the Lower Tier Services Grant, and New Homes Bonus that makes up this figure.

Expenditure such as the Councils Minimum Revenue Position for borrowing and the net effect of investment income and payments also sit in this area.

Community and Housing General Fund Services

This service area covers the following Services:

Community Safety ensures compliance of the Council's statutory duties under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 alongside providing co-ordination and support to the statutory Community Safety Partnership. Project activity improves community safety and reduces risk of crime & disorder with a focus on prevention. Examples include a youth work team, Safer Spaces Scheme, Nominated Neighbour Scheme, Respect Programme.

The **Housing Strategy** team comprises of the Housing Strategy & Enabling Service which is responsible for developing strategies and policies for all housing services and the effective management and delivery of Redditch's housing development programmes. The private sector housing team are responsible for ensuring good housing standards by private sector landlords. Included in this service is the support for Disabled Facilities Grants. The Climate Change Officer provides advice to services across the Council with the aim of bringing about carbon reduction and efficiencies, including grant applications and the delivery of energy efficiency schemes.

A door-to-door **community transport scheme** called Dial A Ride provides a community transport for those who cannot access or use public or private transport.

The **Shopmobility** service in the Kingfisher Centre provides manual and motorised equipment for people with poor mobility so they can access local shops and health providers.

The **CCTV** service is monitored from our 24/7 Monitoring Centre using a vast number of cameras to cover the Borough. We support the police in spotting potential criminal activity and providing evidence for courts, as well as other community concerns such as a missing child.

NEW Lifeline is a telecare and assistive technology alarm service available 24 Hours per day, 365 days per year to any vulnerable person living within the Borough. Services include a pull cord/pendant to summon assistance, bed and fire alarm sensors, support for residents with dementia.

Bromsgrove and Redditch **Starting Well** is a commissioned service that works in partnership with Worcestershire Health & Care Trust. The focus is on improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities at the individual, family and community levels across Worcestershire. The service will contribute to ensuring every child has the best start in life, they are ready to learn at 2, ready for school at 5, thrive and develop well during their school years and into adult life.

The **Grants to Voluntary Bodies** scheme in Redditch supports local voluntary groups to deliver services to our communities by running an annual grants programme. Each year we support over 15 voluntary groups and providing over £150,000 worth of grants.

Environmental Services

This service area covers the following Services:

Environment

Environmental services and operations, deliver a wide range of boroughwide and 'place based' services including weekly waste collections to nearly 80,000 households, and a paid for garden waste service to 22,000 households across the 2 Council areas (Bromsgrove and Redditch). The teams also deliver both a commercial waste and commercial recycling service, and a septic tank and cesspool emptying service to both households and commercial customers.

Grass cutting and street cleansing services are delivered via our 6 place teams and the core environmental team also undertakes Environmental Enforcement across the 2 Council areas.

The other key service areas include management of the Councils tree stock including Tree Preservation Orders and high hedges applications. Bereavement services, deliver both cremations and burial services.

Support services include management of the Council transport and vehicle fleets including the provision of workshops at the two depots, a Stores Service, Design and management of civil engineering projects and customer management via the Business Support Team.

Our on street enforcement and land drainage services across the 2 Council areas are delivered by a public sector contract/shared services with Wychavon and Wyre Forest respectively.

Housing Property

The team manages Redditch Borough Councils retained housing stock of approximately 5800 properties delivering a responsive repairs and maintenance service, void repairs and refurbishment and installations of equipment and adaptations.

Full compliance services are delivered including gas servicing, repair and replacement of boilers and heating systems, alongside electrical inspection, repair, and upgrades of properties

Asset Management and programmed capital works to our properties are undertaken using stock condition data, and fully supported by other compliance works including asbestos, fire safety and water.

Financial and Customer Services

This service area covers the following functions:

Finance

Corporate finance set the Councils financial agenda. They are responsible for the Councils financial regulations/controls and compliance to them, Supporting Members, the Chief Executive and CMT, setting and delivering the budget, closing the Council's Accounts, in year monitoring of the Councils financial position to stakeholders.

Management Accountancy is the primary source of financial support to Budget managers and Heads of Service. They are responsible for the delivery of the operational budget, the monthly/quarterly monitoring, and the closure of accounts in liaison with budget managers and other Council staff.

Exchequer Services delivers the Councils Payment and Income Services along with running the GPC Card (procurement Card) system and Insurance.

Payroll Services is a small team which work closely with HR and finance and run the monthly payrolls for Bromsgrove, Redditch, Rubicon and Wyre Forest Councils.

Revenues Services

Revenue Services is responsible for the annual collection of £60m of non-domestic rates; £116m council tax, £27m in sundry income and is responsible for collection of £2.4m in overpaid housing benefit across both Redditch and Bromsgrove.

Benefit Services

The principal functions of the Benefits Service are to maximise benefit awareness and take-up and to assess benefit claims promptly and accurately.

The service area is responsible for paying over £30 million of Housing Benefit and almost £10 million Council Tax Support to our residents across both Councils.

We also have £60k Essential Living Fund budget to administer alongside the £250k Discretionary Housing Payments. Our experienced Financial Independence Team deal with the applications for these schemes.

Customer Services

Customer Services provided a comprehensive service to the council, mainly face-to-face enquiries on both reception and cashiers.

When the building was closed to the public during the C-19 pandemic, we quickly mobilised the Customer Service Officers to take council tax and business rates calls, as well as providing outbound calls for locality where tenants were in arrears. When the buildings were re-opened in July, staff have maintained these functions, albeit with fewer numbers.

Legal, Democratic and Property Services

This service area covers the following Services:

Legal Services - The shared legal service for Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils, is an in-house support service, providing legal advice and representation to the Council in its governance and decision-making role and to all departments of the Council in the delivery of their services to residents and in achieving their strategic objectives, including: Procurement, Contract negotiation, Litigation (both as Plaintiff and Defendant), Prosecutions, Planning Agreements, Property transactions (acquisitions and disposals), Corporate governance and supporting corporate projects, Member support and the decision-making process.

As well as these operational services, we have an over-arching responsibility to ensure that the Council acts in a lawful manner, is compliant with the regulatory and statutory regimes within which it operates and to protect the council's standing with the courts and other external organisations, and its reputation generally.

The Local Land Charges service sits with the shared legal service though there is a separate budget for Land Charges.

Bromsgrove District Council is the 'host' authority to Worcestershire Regulatory Services [WRS], the shared environmental health and licensing service for Worcestershire. The Council act as legal advisor to meetings of its governing body, the WRS Joint Committee and provide advice and representation for BDC and RBC environmental health and licensing cases.

Procurement - Procurement is a support service which is at the core of both Councils and Rubicon Leisure. The Service strives to promote compliance with legal and corporate regulations and drives efficiencies and savings through a corporate wide approach to purchasing.

The Team provides support both for active procurements across the organisations at all stages of a procurement and additionally provides advice on procurement strategy more generally. The Team also provides support with contract

management, assisting teams in ensuring that contractors deliver what has been procured to the correct standards, at the correct time and at the right price.

Shared Electoral Services - The Democratic Services team facilitates Committee meetings, manages the decision-making process, including the work programmes (Forward Plans) and provides a support service to elected Members and officers.

Electoral Services manage and deliver elections and electoral administration

Property Services - The Property Services Team manage the asset portfolio in line with the Asset Management Strategy and all associated repairs, cyclical maintenance and refurbishment of the portfolio of properties, owned by the Council.

Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services

The Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Service is composed of the following teams: Building Control: Strategic Planning and Conservation: Development Management: Leisure and Cultural Services. NWEDR and Emergency Planning and Business Continuity are managed by WFDC in a three-way shared service arrangement and these teams link into the Service.

Building Control - The Building Control team ensures buildings are safely constructed with appropriate fire escapes.

Strategic Planning and Conservation - The team prepares local plans and supplementary planning and conservation documents and provides general policy, conservation, and listed building advice.

Development Management - This team is responsible for processing all types of applications under planning legislation and investigating breaches of planning control.

Leisure and Cultural Services - Leisure Services includes the strategy development and management of parks and events and the development of arts, sports and cultural services

Economic Development and Regeneration - The team leads on regeneration initiatives, supporting businesses, shaping the skills agenda, and generally making sure the issues locally are appreciated by all who make or shape decisions or release funding.

Emergency Planning and Business Continuity - This function ensures the councils, with its partners are prepared for a range of scenarios.

Regulatory Services

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) is the shared Environmental Health and Licensing service governed by a Joint Board, making it part of the six Worcestershire

District Councils, with Bromsgrove District Council as the host authority. We provide all the traditional environmental health and licensing regulatory services for the six Worcestershire District Councils to include health & safety for commercial premises, food hygiene inspections, environmental protection (nuisance, contaminated land, air quality, private water supplies and industrial permitting) as well as administration of the licensing regime for taxi's, drivers, pubs, nightclubs, pet shops, animal boarding, stables, zoos and street trading. In addition we provide some environmental health and licensing services and associated services under contract or agreement for other local authorities in and outside Worcestershire.

Overall Financial Position

Redditch Position Statement				
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Base Budget Position 22/23 MTFP				
Expenditure	10,290	10,428	10,661	10,661
Funding	-9,341	-9,595	-9,621	-9,621
Net	949	833	1,040	1,040
Revised Gap	949	833	1,040	1,040
Phase 1 Savings 2023/24 MTFP	-1,529	-1,849	-2,221	-2,221
Revised Position	-580	-1,016	-1,181	-1,181
Phase 1 Pressures 2023/24 MTFP	2,319	2,324	2,446	2,446
Phase 1 2023/24 MTFP Position	1,739	1,308	1,265	1,265
Local Government Settlement	-934	-700	-700	-700
Additional Savings (Phase 2)	-1060	-1060	-1060	-1060
Additional Pressures - Phase 2	566	519	432	432
Final 2023/24 MTFP Position	311	67	-63	-63
Known Changes				
23/4 Pay Award - 5% More than planned		575	575	575
Utilities Increases running at 60% - 40% Savings		-228	-228	-228
Existing Inflation Budget (unallocated)		-269	-274	-274
Inflation on Contracts - additional 5%		125	125	125
Additional 1% on 24/5 Pay Award - to 3%		100	100	100
Additional 2% pay Award for 2026/7				200
7% addition on Fees and charges		-238	-241	-243
Draft Opening Position 24/25	311	132	-6	192
Possible Adjustments				
Quarter 1 23/4 Overspend position	557			
Use of 23/4 Utilities Reserve	-557			
2% Council Tax 2025/6			-144	-144
2% Council Tax 2026/7				-147
Year 2 Fees and Charges Increase at 2%			-69	-70.5
Year 3 Fees and Charges Increase at 2%				-73.5
Government Grant at 23/4 Levels		-148	-148	-148
Draft Opening Position	311	-16	-367	-391
Service Adjustments				
Reduction in Benefits Overpayments Target		200	200	200
Use of HVO Fuel by 100% of Fleet		20	20	20
Increase in HR Establishment		10	10	10
PRA Housing Licence Costs		15	15	15
Planning Enforcement through WRS		31	31	31
Garden Waste Service		20	-27	-56
Interest Charges on Updated Capital Programme		82	102	121
MRP Increases on Capital Programme		22	140	153
Revised Opening Position	311	384	124	103

Savings/Funding Proposals

Use of the Utilities Budget

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget	570,000	570,000	570,000
Savings Proposal	-228,000	-228,000	-228,000
Revised Budget	342,000	342,000	342,000

The utilities budget was increased by 100%, and an additional 100% put in reserves, to mitigate increased fuel charges due to the Ukraine crises. Costs are being monitored and they have only increased by 60%. The remaining 40% of the budget is therefore no longer required and is a savings.

Use of Existing Inflation Budgets

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget	269,000	274,000	274,000
Savings Proposal	-269,000	-274,000	-274,000
Revised Budget	0	0	0

Like the Utilities budget, due to increased prices, a budget was put in the 2023/4 MTFP for increased inflation. There has been no call on this budget to date this year and as such it is a savings.

Increases to Fees and Charges

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget	-3,404,000	-3,404,000	-3,404,000
7% Increase 24/5	-238,000	-241,000	-242,000
2% Increase 25/6		-69,000	-70,500
2% Increase 26/7			-73,500
Revised Budget	-3,642,000	-3,714,000	-3,790,000

It is proposed that fees and charges increase by 7% in 2024/5 – This increase is in line with the inflationary increases to salaries which are running at just over 7% and inflation which as of October 2023 was 6.8%. It is proposed that the Dial a Ride registration fees are reduced from £16.50 to £15, but journey fees increase by £1. Lifeline Alarm rates remain at present levels. Increases for future years have been assumed at 2%.

Increases to the Council Tax Base

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget	-7,217,000	-7,217,000	-7,217,000
2% Increase in 2025/6		-144,000	-144,000
2% Increase in 2026/7			-147,000
Revised Budget	-7,217,000	-7,361,000	-7,508,000

Figures assume the full 1.99% allowable increase over all years of the 3 year MTFP and no increase in numbers of properties. In reviewing base budgets, the full 1.99% was not applied to 2025/6 and it has also been applied to the new financial year on the MTFP.

Government Support Assumptions

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget			
Savings Proposal	-148,000	-148,000	-148,000
Revised Budget			

Our assumption on the Local Government Settlement in the 2023/4 MTFP is £148k less than the Council received in 23/4. The Council took a prudent approach at that stage. On reviewing settlements however, since the removal of the RSG, they have been consistent and therefore this sum has been brought in line with 2023/4 settlement levels.

Growth Proposals

2023/24 Pay Award

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget	9,923,080	10,083,877	10,083,877
Growth Proposal	575,000	575,000	575,000
Revised Budget	10,498,080	10,658,877	10,658,877

The jointly negotiated employers pay award for 2023/4 is approximately 7%. The Council budgeted for a 2% increase and therefore this growth bid ensures the budget reflects the expected pay award.

Future Pay Awards

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget	10,498,080	10,658,877	10,658,877
1% on 24/5 pay budget	100,000	100,000	100,000
2% Pay Award in 2026/7	0	0	200,000
Revised Budget	10,598,080	10,758,877	10,958,877

As set out above, the Council budgets for a 2% Pay award. It is felt that it is prudent, given the large pay awards of the past 2 years, to increase this to 3% for 2024/5 before reducing the ongoing effect to 2% for future years.

Contract Inflation

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget	0	0	0
Growth Proposal	125,000	125,000	125,000
Revised Budget	125,000	125,000	125,000

Although we have taken out the inflation budget, that has not been called on, from last years MTFP, we feel it is prudent to allow for inflationary increases in 2024/5.

Benefits Overpayments

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget	-500,000	-500,000	-500,000
Growth Proposal	200,000	200,000	200,000
Revised Budget	-300,000	-300,000	-300,000

There is presently a target of £500k for the reclaiming of Benefit overpayments. We now have more accurate information and processes which mean that initial payments are more accurate and the need for recovery of overpayments has diminished. Over the past 2 years the Council has recovered under half of this amount (with many linked to Universal Credit payments) and so it is prudent to reduce this amount to £300k.

Use of HVO Fuel

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget	174,424	174,424	174,424
Growth Proposal	20,000	20,000	20,000
Revised Budget	194,424	194,424	194,424

The Government has still not provided guidance on Waste delivery. The Council has a diesel fleet which could use HVO fuel which would reduce the Carbon footprint of

the fleet and the Council significantly. With alternatives to Diesel (Electric and Hydrogen powered vehicles) being extremely expensive with vehicles 2 to 4 times more expensive than existing vehicles it would be prudent to ensure the fleet used HVO fuel, significantly reducing the Council's carbon footprint. However, HVO fuel at the moment is significantly more expensive than diesel and this would cost an additional £64k a year. Moving fully to HVO fuel will save 90% of the 574 tonnes of greenhouse gases emitted by the fleet each year. The Council's Carbon pledge is to move to this position over time so a £20k increase in budget allows for, prices dependent a 30% use of this fuel and an estimated savings of 154 tonnes of greenhouse gases from the fleet.

Increase of Human Resources Establishment

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget	525,339	537,126	537,126
Growth Proposal	10,000	10,000	10,000
Revised Budget	535,339	547,127	547,126

The HR structure reports into one post. This funding added a second senior post to relieve pressure in this service area. This is a shared service and so costs are split with Bromsgrove.

Ongoing Licence Costs of Private Rental Housing System

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget	0	0	0
Growth Proposal	15,000	15,000	15,000
Revised Budget	15,000	15,000	15,000

There is the new requirement for the monitoring of the Private Housing Sector. There is a capital bid of £30k for software to undertake this. The ongoing licensing costs are £15k a year.

Planning Enforcement through Worcester Regulatory Services

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget	0	0	0
Growth Proposal	31,000	31,000	31,000
Revised Budget	31,000	31,000	31,000

The present pilot scheme on planning enforcement being delivered by Worcester Regulatory Services is regularised as part of the budget at an ongoing cost of £31k a year.

Garden Waste Service

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget	0	0	0
Growth Proposal	20,528	-26,742	-56,162
Revised Budget	20,528	-26,742	-56,162

Councils have a discretionary duty to provide a Garden Waste service, for which a charge can be made to the resident. This proposal sets up a Redditch based service to build on service demand. The cost of the service for a resident would be £60 a year with a £20 initial setup cost.

Increased MRP Costs due to Changes to the Capital Programme

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget	1,204,000	1,440,000	1,440,000
Growth Proposal	22,000	140,000	153,000
Revised Budget	1,226,000	1,580,000	1,593,000

The Capital section sets out changes to Capital Programme requirements. Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is required to offset the cost of Capital. For the IT changes, the lifetime is 5 years, for the remainder it is assumed to be 10 years. Play area work accounts for £38k of this ongoing cost.

Increased Interest Costs due to Changes to the Capital Programme

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget	1,069,415	623,000	623,000
Growth Proposal	82,000	102,000	121,000
Revised Budget	1,151,415	725,000	744,000

The Capital section sets out changes to Capital Programme requirements. As this will be debt funded, the interest charges for that debt need to be accounted for. For the IT changes, the lifetime is 5 years and attracts an interest charge of 5.27%, for the remainder it is assumed to be 10 years and attracts an interest charge of 5.37%. Interest costs are as per Public Works Loan Board Rates as at the 11th October. Play area work accounts for £20k of this additional cost.

Capital Programme Proposals

Summary Position

Capital Programme Changes	2023/4 £000	2024/5 £000	2025/6 £000	2026/7 £000
Lifeline		72		
PRS Housing ICT System		30		
Play Areas (Replacement of Surfaces)		10	10	7.5
AVCP - Parking Bays near Visitor Centre		12		
AVCP - Car Park Extension 25 Spaces		95		
Morton Stanley Park - Footpaths		16.5		
Ipsley Rd Cemetery (As per Q1 Monitoring)	-125	125		
Increased Buildings Maintenance Costs		150	150	150
Arrow Valley Park Visitor Centre Improvements		150	150	150
Fleet Costs (as per Q1 Monitoring)		585	26	
	-125	1245.5	336	307.5

Narrative

Lifeline

Lifeline Digital Service - The nationwide telephony upgrade is gathering pace. Digital phonelines require digital telecare equipment as analogue equipment on the digital network is prone to failure, thus leaving the vulnerable service users unable to call for assistance in a (often medical) emergency.

We are currently in year 4 (23/24) of a 5 year program. This is funding for final year.

PRS Housing Scheme

Provision of IT system to record service provision within the Private Sector housing function covering enforcement of property standards and houses in multiple occupation inspection and licensing.

The renters reform bill will place additional duties on local housing authorities in relation to property standards in it area. There are currently just over 10,000 PRS tenancies over the two authorities. The intension of the legislation will be to improve enforcement of standards and use the legislation provided and provide evidence of actions being undertaken and numbers of instances. Having the correct technology is critical to enable the Council to improve the running and delivery of the services, plan for the future, keep the services sustainable and ensuring that the services are customer focused. Currently cases are recorded on a excel spreadsheet and the manual HHSRS scoring takes a considerable amount of officer time.

Play Areas (Replacement of Surfaces)

Repair and replacement works on play area surfacing and equipment. Replacement of safer surfacing and ageing pieces of equipment even on a small play area generally cost at least £10000. With the current play budget, we can allocate that amount to perhaps 1 play area each year to improve it. other than that we have to rely on Section 106 funding to upgrade play areas

AVCP – Parking Bays near Visitor Centre

We would like to have additional parking bays at the main car park nearest to the visitor centre within Arrow Valley Park. These would be on existing grass areas adjacent the car park.

During the Covid period usage of the park has hugely increased. A new play area has been installed the offer at the visitor centre has improved and more people have had "staycations". This demand has not slowed throughout the period once restrictions were relaxed. Go to the Park was the message and people have and continue to do so. We experienced many occasions when cars were trying to park anywhere they could (grass verges etc) and large queues formed waiting for spaces

AVCP – Car Park Extension 25 Spaces

To extend the main car near to Arrow Valley visitor centre to accommodate approximately 25 more parking spaces. To add a power and water supply for events plus additional lighting.

the car parks nearest to the main access and visitor centre at Arrow Valley Park are frequently full on weekends, holiday periods and when the weather is good. There have often been cars parked on grass verges and others waiting for people to leave the park. The new play area and refurbishment of the visitor centre has attracted more visitors to the park. The new supermarket being built adjacent the front entrance will put additional pressure on that car park pushing more people to the main car park along the drive near to the centre.

Morton Stanley Park Footpaths

Additional pathway repairs in Morton Stanley Park.

The pathways within the park were in need of repair and refurbishment. With the S106 monies we had we were able to completely refurbish the 2 worst sections of path and do some patching work in other areas. We could not get all of the areas that required attention sorted. This additional money would allow us to complete and make the paths in the park safe for years to come.

Increased Buildings Maintenance Costs (non Town Hall)

Property Repairs and Maintenance budgets have been 250K since 2009. This increase covers Inflation and increasing costs for initiatives such as ensuring our buildings meet the energy efficiency standards in 2026.

Arrow County Park Visitor Centre Improvements

These works will improve Café provision from the site, replace the external food cabins, provide additional external toilets, replacement of Jetty to allow future lake activities and landscaping to increase the " dining area". This will all increase income potential for Rubicon Leisure and improved customer experience for our residents and visitors..

In addition to this there are also the following Leisure Proposals following the Play Audits:

Play Area Audit Outcomes	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
MMP proposal consider MUGA for MS Park		100
MMP proposal new bins for MS Park		2
MMP proposal new benches for MS Park		3
MMP recommendation carry out an ecological survey MS Park		5
Requirement renew pathway section "loop adjacent woods MS	25	
MMP recommendation AVCP North improve surfacing and widen path along route between the Abbey ruins and the fishponds.		30
MMP recommendation AVCP Replace or repair broken bins, adopting a consistent style of bin across the site (in my opinion you do not need to change every bin to the same style, we try to zone so similar styles in an area. Taking a perfectly good bin out is a waste of money. Replace as required		5
Additional funds are required to carry out repairs to things such as rubber surfacing, gate replacement, worn spare parts etc which are currently risk rated to ensure the play areas are kept safe and the risk is not raise to medium or high which could result in play area closures.	100	
MMP recommendation AVCP South. Repair or replace car park surface at Icknield St Drive.	25	
MMP recommendation Overdale Park Install information board in the Orchard area to replace the temporary information sheets attached to the fruit trees and "sorry not for general use" notice OR display this information in the display cabinet at the Overdale Close entrance.	1	
MMP Overdale park recommendation Resurface paths where needed with self-binding gravel		10
MSP Cableways	43	
AVCP Pump Track	33	
Total	227	155

Consultation Feedback Form

BUDGET CONSULTATION FORM

We want to hear the opinions of all residents, partner organisations, businesses and other interested parties as part of the budget setting process.

People will be able to give their opinions by [completing an online survey on the city council website by the 4th December 2023](#).

[Hard copies can be requested by emailing the Finance Team at the Town Hall](#)

The consultation will close on [4 December 2023 at 5pm](#). Executive will consider comments on [Tuesday 5 December 2023](#) and Full Council will debate the Tranche One proposals on [Wednesday 26 January 2024](#).

The consultation will ask the following questions:

1. Do you have any comments to make about the tranche one budget proposals?

2. Having read the tranche one proposals document, how much do you now feel you understand about why the council must make total savings of almost £0.883 million in 2024/25 Tick the answer you agree with.

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Nothing at all

3. If you have any specific ideas about how the council can save money or generate additional income to protect services, please state these here:

So that we can check this survey is representative of Redditch overall, please complete the following questions.

Are you?

- Male
- Female

Please tick which of the following best describes who you are:

- Resident
- Business person
- Member of council staff
- Borough councillor
- Work, but don't live in Redditch
- Member of community or voluntary organisation
- Regular visitor
- Other (please state).....

Which of these age groups do you fall into?

- Under 16
- 16 to 24 years
- 25 to 34 years
- 35 to 44 years
- 45 to 54 years
- 55 to 64 years
- 65 to 74 years
- 75 years or over
- Prefer not to say

What is your ethnic group?

A White

English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Any other white background

B Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other mixed/ multiple ethnic background

C Asian/ Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, write in

D Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British

African

Caribbean

Any other Black/ African/ Caribbean background

E Other ethnic group

Any other ethnic group

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes.....

No

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey