

Redditch Borough Council – Council Plan 2025 - 2028

Introduction- Cllr Joe Baker, Leader of the Council

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

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

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

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

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

We are aspirational for Redditch to be:

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

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

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

Our vision & priorities

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

**Economy,
Regeneration
& Prosperity**

**Green, Clean
& Safe**

**Community
& Housing**

About Redditch Borough

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

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

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

Key demographic characteristics include:

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

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

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

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

Redditch Local Plan

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

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

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

Economy & Regeneration

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

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

Key objectives

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

Key projects

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

Green, Clean & Safe Redditch

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

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

Key objectives

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

Key projects

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

Community & Housing

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

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

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

Key objectives

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

Key projects

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

Organisational Priorities

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

Key organisational priorities:

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



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

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

Local Government Reorganisation

TBC...

Engagement, Partnership and Collaborative Working

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

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

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

Other partnership activities include:

- Working to deliver the latest North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership Plan.
 - The North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership deliver a range of community safety initiatives and work with agencies and communities to achieve the Partnership's vision of keeping "North Worcestershire a safer place to live, work and visit"

- Supporting the Cultural Compact for North East Worcestershire, in order to increase active and creative behaviours and connectivity with open space.
 - A Culture Compact is a strong and sustained collaboration between strategic place-based partners which support co-design and deliver a vision for culture within a place. The partnership brings together local authorities, business, education providers, cultural and community leaders, driven by a shared ambition for culture and place, to co-design and deliver a vision for culture within North East Worcestershire.

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

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

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

Risk Management

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

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

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Budget and Resources

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

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

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

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

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

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