

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



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## 1. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **2. Redditch Borough Today**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 3. What is a Local Plan?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The BORLP4 can be found here:

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

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

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

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

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

### **Local Development Scheme**

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

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

### **Local Plan Evidence Base**

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

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

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

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

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

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

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

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

4.14 The Scoping Report has 5 purposes:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 5. Consultation and how to respond

### Aims of the consultation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Who are we going to consult?



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Post:

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

Location	Date	Time

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

## 6. Call for Sites

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

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

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

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

### Form Completion Notes

6.5 • Please complete ONE FORM PER SITE.

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

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

## 7. Design Coding

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Option 1: A Borough wide general Design Code?

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

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

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

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

## 8. Vision

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

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

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

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

## 9. Key Issues for Redditch

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

### **Housing:**

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

### **Economy:**

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

**Infrastructure:**

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

**Natural Environment:**

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

**Climate Change:**

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

**Questions**

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

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

## 10. Possible Growth Options

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 11. Climate Change

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Questions**

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

## **12. Housing**

12.1 Implications from the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report on Housing:

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

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



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

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

## What is our Housing Requirement?

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

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

## Affordable Housing

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

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

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

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

## What should the mix of housing types be?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## What other Specialist Housing should we provide?

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

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

### 12.17 Types of specialist housing

#### Accessible property in regular development

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

#### Accessible property in 'retirement village'

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

#### Independent living (apartments)

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

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

## Care Home

Accommodation designed for older people who need daily support

## Other please describe

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 13. Economy

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

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

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

### Overview

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

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

### How much employment land is needed?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Options:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Rural economy in Redditch**

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Redditch Centres**

### **Redditch Town Centre**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Options:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## District Centres

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **14. Infrastructure**

14.1 Implications of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for infrastructure:

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

### **Overview**

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

The Local Plan will consider:

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

### **Transport infrastructure**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Health and Education Infrastructure**

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

NPPF Paragraph 96c identifies that Planning Policies should:

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

### **Community infrastructure**

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

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

### **Utilities and communications infrastructure**

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

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

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

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

### **Green Infrastructure**

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

### **Infrastructure Delivery Plan**

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

### **Questions**

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

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

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

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

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

## 15. Natural and Historic Environments

### Natural Environment

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

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

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

### Biodiversity Net Gain

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Historic Environment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Appendix A: Glossary

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

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

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

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

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