
Redditch Borough Local Plan – Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation, Local Plan Timetable and Scoping Consultation

Relevant Cabinet Member	Councillor Matt Dormer
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Ruth Bamford
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Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priority	1. Economy, Regeneration & Prosperity 2. Green, Clean & Safe 3. Community & Housing
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Council is asked to RESOLVE that

1. The Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation, attached at Appendix A, be approved.

2. The Local Plan timetable attached at Appendix B, be approved.

3. The Local Plan Scoping Report at Appendix C, be approved

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Nationally there has been a change and there is a new system for plan making in the UK. For Redditch Borough Council this means that a new plan needs to be prepared under the new system. The previous progress made on the Redditch Borough Local Plan (that was being prepared under the old system), most notably the information obtained from consultation on the Issues and Options over the Summer of 2025, will be rolled forward into the new plan making system. This work will be used to help inform the decisions taken as the Council prepares a new draft plan.

2.2 Towards the end of last year work with respect to the above national changes in the planning regulations progressed, and in March 2026 the

Government formally introduced the new 30+4 plan making system. This system, in conjunction with changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), are intended to streamline plan-making to allow for quicker adoption of Local Plans, therefore increasing the delivery of housing and economic development across the country.

- 2.3 The purpose of this report is to outline the initial processes required to begin plan preparation under the new system, allowing the progression of the new Redditch Borough Local Plan to adoption as quickly as possible.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation

- 3.1 Appendix A contains a Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation (the Notice). As can be seen, this notice contains the information required by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 (the regulations). Publication of this notice is a requirement to begin the 4 month 'scoping' element of the new process before the 30-month process formally begins. This notice is a procedural step and well defined in the regulations. The Notice needs to be agreed before December 2026. The Council has received funding dependant on the Notice being published before the end of June 2026.

Local Plan Timetable

- 3.2 Appendix B contains a new timetable for the completion of the Redditch Borough Local Plan under the new 30+4 process. This timetable has been reproduced in a simplified table below. The requirement for the publication of a Local Plan timetable and its contents is set out in the regulations.

<u>Local plan event</u>	<u>Start date</u>	<u>End date</u>
1) Publish local plan timetable under regulation 8	29 th June 2026	
2) Publish notice of intention to commence local plan preparation under regulation 19(1)	29 th June 2026	
3) Publish notice of scoping consultation under regulation 20(1)(b)	3 rd July 2026	

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Council
2026

29th June

4) Scoping consultation under regulation 20	3 rd July – 14 th August 2026	
5) Gateway 1: Publish Gateway 1 self-assessment summary under regulation 21(3)	October 2026	
6) Publish summary of scoping consultation under regulation 22	October 2026	
7) Publish notice of local plan content and evidence consultation under regulation 23(1)(a)	June 2027	
8) Consultation on the proposed local plan content and evidence (not less than six weeks) under regulation 23	June 2027	July/August 2027
9) Publish summary of consultation on the proposed local plan content and evidence under regulation 24	October 2027	
10) Gateway 2: observations and advice will be sought under section 15CA(3) of the Act in accordance with regulation 26	October 2027	
11) Publish Gateway 2 observations and advice in accordance with section 15CA(5) of the Act and regulation 26(5)	November/December 2027	
12) Publish notice of proposed local plan consultation under regulation 27(1)(a)	March 2028	
13) Consultation on the proposed local plan (not less than eight weeks) under regulation 27	March 2028	April/May 2028
14) Publish summary of consultation on the proposed local plan under regulation 30	August/September 2028	
15) Gateway 3: observations and advice will be sought under section 15CA(3) of the Act in accordance with regulation 31	August/September 2028	
16) Publish Gateway 3 observations and advice in accordance with section 15CA(5) of the Act and regulation 31(5)	September/October 2028	
17) Submit the proposed local plan for independent examination under section 15D(1) of the Act	October 2028	

18) Publish the examiner's recommendations and reasons in accordance with section 15D(13) of the Act and regulation 37.	TBC
19) Adoption of the local plan under section 15EA of the Act	April 2029

3.3 As can be seen from the timetable above, the intention is to publish the notice and the timetable formally after the Council meeting, this provides for a robust timetable to be set, shows the Council's commitment to plan making in line with the governments aspirations, and will also allow for £108k of additional funding to be secured. The Scoping consultation will follow a few days later with consultation commencing on the 3rd July. The details of this report has previously been presented to the Planning Advisory Panel.

Scoping Consultation

3.4 The proposed Scoping report can be seen at Appendix C. As opposed to the detailed guidance and regulations on the notice and the timetable, the requirements of exactly what a scoping consultation is are not set out explicitly. The guidance is repeated below:

“This consultation stage provides the local community and other key stakeholders with the opportunity to have their say at the very start of the plan-making process. You must ask for views on:

- *what to include in the local plan*
- *how to approach future local plan engagement*
- *any other matters that you want to consult on*

You must run your scoping consultation after you have given notice of intention to commence plan-making. This consultation should last for at least 21 days and must finish before you publish your Gateway 1 self-assessment summary. You should use the feedback from the scoping consultation to inform your community engagement strategy.

For this consultation, you must invite representations from the:

- *general consultation bodies you consider appropriate*
- *specific consultation bodies you consider may have an interest in the preparation of the local plan*

You do not have to invite anyone else, but anyone can make representations at this stage.”

- 3.5 The limited regulations only require the scoping document to addresses the following issues:
- What the Council should include in a Local Plan,
 - How you would like the Council to consult you during the preparation of the Local Plan.

As such as can be seen at appendix C, the scoping document does not contain or set a spatial strategy or contain details on any future policy or site allocations. The scoping document makes it clear, that people who have already responded to the issues and options do not need to repeat their comments unless they have more to add, previous comments will still be taken into account in the preparation of the plan under the new system. It will also be stressed that there will be further opportunities to comment on detailed policies and possible site allocations as the new plan progresses, as per the stages outlined below.

- 3.6 As can be seen from above, the purpose of the scoping document is to seek stakeholder views at the outset of the plan-making process. This includes, but is not limited to, local residents, parish councils, infrastructure providers, statutory agencies, local businesses, developers and agents. As the Council has already sought the views via the issues and options local plan consultation, the scoping document will be drafted to ensure the views relevant to the scope of the plan that have already been expressed are reflected in the document.
- 3.7 It is proposed that the Scoping consultation will be undertaken between 3rd July – 14th August. The Council website will host all of the relevant information, as well as the documents being placed in key places such as the libraries. A comms strategy is also being developed to make sure the information is shared widely. Responses will be able to be received via the survey on the Councils website and also via email and letters

Future Local Plan Stages

- 3.8 The ‘plan content and evidence’ stage (local plan event number 8 in the table above) of the system has been widely interpreted by the planning profession as being the first significant draft of the Local Plan. The timetable indicates that the Council will consult on the draft plan in the summer of 2027. This will allow for all the responses from the previous issues and options consultation, the additional evidence such

as the revised Green Belt review to be fed into this draft plan, and help develop a draft infrastructure plan to be published alongside it as part of the consultation. Following this consultation there will be a gateway assessment carried out by an assessor appointed by the planning inspectorate, which will consider issues the plan may be facing at this stage, and if necessary, suggest ways in which any issues may be overcome.

- 3.9 The ‘proposed local plan’ stage (event 13 in the table above) is in effect the submission plan which the Council would like to present to the inspector. This stage has been timetabled for Spring 2028. This is to allow for enough time to respond to the previous stages, and also for a third gateway check on the plan to be carried out by the planning inspectorate prior to formal submission.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Local Plan process has a budget of £823k, financed as follows:
- 4.2 An initial £885k has been identified in reserves from 2026/27 onwards to fund the evidence base development, Examination in Public costs and any associated legal fees.
- 4.3 Funding of £70k has been awarded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to progress the Green Belt Assessment. An additional £108k has been awarded by MHCLG to help progress the Local Plan. To release the £108k the following requirements must be met by the Council:
- Publish a Notice of Intention to commence Local Plan preparation by 30th June 2026; and
 - Publish Gateway 1 self-assessment by 31st October 2026.
- 4.4 The total available budget is £823k is proposed to be spent as per the table below.

Evidence base costs RBC	£660k
Legal Fees	£125k
Examination costs	£100k
MHCLG Green Belt Review	£70k
MHCLG Plan Making	£108k

Total Local Plan Spend	£1,063,000
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4.5 Staffing resource comes from existing posts within the establishment supplemented by three additional posts There is currently one vacancy within the establishment, and additional posts, are currently in the process being recruited to.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The new plan making system is now set out in the following regulations The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 In June 2025, MHCLG wrote to Chief Executives of the Worcestershire Councils with an update on Local Government Reorganisation. Included within that letter is the following statement:

‘The Government also recognises that developing proposals could distract councils from their essential day-to-day activities. However, residents and businesses depend on councils to deliver crucial services and to continue the efforts needed to establish successful new unitary councils. This is particularly important for advancing local plans to allocate land for new homes. As mentioned in the invitation letters, the Government expects local planning councils to work towards adopting an up-to-date local plan as soon as possible. Local Government Reorganisation should not hinder this vital work, nor should the introduction of the new legal framework for local plan-making later this year or our strategic planning reforms. Significant financial support has already been provided to eligible councils to aid in plan-making, and we encourage councils to utilise additional support available through the Local Government Association’s Planning Advisory Service.’

- 6.2 The position expressed above remains unchanged, plan-making must continue irrespective of the Local Government Reorganisation work.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.3 The Redditch Borough Local Plan is relevant to the following Council priorities:

1. Economy, Regeneration & Prosperity

2. Green, Clean & Safe

3. Community & Housing

Climate Change Implications

6.4 The Redditch Borough Local Plan will have significant implications for climate change, shaping the location and nature of new housing, employment, and infrastructure development.

Community Impact Implications

6.6 The approval of the Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation and Local Plan Timetable will provide the communities across Redditch Borough with a valuable update on how the Redditch Borough Local Plan will be progressed. The final adopted local plan will have policies and allocations which address high quality design, provide for safer communities and help to address wider health and wellbeing by providing communities facilities and accessible open space.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.7 The consultation process is open to all to comment.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The Redditch Borough Local Plan progress is being monitored via the Council's Corporate Risk Register.

7.2 The risk of not progressing a new Local Plan has been discussed at length in many forums. Whilst the Council does not have to begin plan-making under the new system until December 2026, there is no need to delay the initial processes under the new system until then. MHCLG has made it very clear that it expects plan-making to continue at pace and will not be afraid to intervene if plan-making does not progress.

7.3 Plan-making is strongly encouraged without delay. It suggests that the Council is committed to plan-making. Whilst simply progressing the earlier stages of plan-making does not give the control an adopted Local Plan gives, progressing a Local Plan as identified by this report does help to provide evidence that the plan is progressing and shows a pathway to adopting a plan. This is useful information to use in other settings such as development management.

7.4 In addition, should the notice and timetable publication and the scoping consultation not take place as described in this report, then the additional funding secured will have to be returned to the Government.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation
Appendix B Local Plan Timetable
Appendix C Local Plan Scoping Report.

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Matt Dormer	16.06.26
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Guy Revans /Ruth Bamford	16.06.26
Financial Services	James Walton	16.06.26
Legal Services	Claire Felton	16.06.26
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)		