
Request for the Establishment of Charter Trustees for Redditch

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Craig Warhurst, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Claire Felton, Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services
Report Author	Melissa Bassett Job Title: Senior Electoral Services Officer Contact email: melissa.bassett@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 587014
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priority	All
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council RESOLVE that: -

- 1) A request be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for provision to be included in the relevant Structural Changes Order for the establishment of Charter Trustees for the unparished areas of the current Borough of Redditch from the re-organisation date; and**

- 2) Authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Monitoring Officer, to agree the wording of the request and to take any necessary steps to progress the proposal through the Local Government Reorganisation process.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Local Government Reorganisation is expected to result in the abolition of Redditch Borough Council and the transfer of local government functions to a new unitary authority from the reorganisation date,

subject to the final decision of Government and the making of the necessary legislation.

- 2.2 The detailed arrangements for the transition to the new authority will be set out in a Structural Changes Order. The Order will establish the new local government structure, provide for the abolition of the predecessor Councils and set out the principal transitional and implementation arrangements.
- 2.3 Redditch was granted a Charter conferring Borough status on 15 May 1980. This entitled the Chairman of the Council to use the title of Mayor and established a civic tradition which has continued since that date.
- 2.4 When Redditch Borough Council is abolished, the Council's civic role and the office of Mayor will not automatically continue in their present form. Unless specific provision is made, the Borough's historic and ceremonial property would ordinarily transfer as part of the wider transfer of property associated with Local Government Reorganisation.
- 2.5 Charter Trustees provide an established mechanism through which historic civic rights, traditions and ceremonial property can be preserved where a Borough Council is abolished and no parish or town council is in place to inherit them.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 Charter Trustees may be established through an order made as part of Local Government Reorganisation. Their purpose is to preserve the historic rights, privileges and traditions associated with an area where the existing Council is being abolished.
- 3.2 For Redditch, the establishment of Charter Trustees would provide continuity for the mayoralty and enable the Borough's charters, civic insignia, chains of office, regalia, plate and other property of a historic or ceremonial nature to be held and safeguarded for the local area.
- 3.3 Charter Trustees would not replace the local government functions currently exercised by Redditch Borough Council and would not operate as a further tier of local government. Their responsibilities would be limited principally to civic and ceremonial matters and the preservation of the Borough's historic rights and traditions.

Membership and operation

- 3.4 Charter Trustees are not normally appointed in the same way as appointments to outside bodies. Under the Charter Trustees Regulations 2009, the Charter Trustees would ordinarily be the councillors of the new unitary authority who are elected for electoral areas falling within the Charter Trustee area.
- 3.5 For Redditch, this means that membership of the Charter Trustees would be expected to consist of those councillors elected to the new unitary authority for the unparished Redditch area covered by the Charter Trustees. It would not normally include councillors elected for areas outside the Charter Trustee area, for example councillors representing other parts of the new unitary authority.
- 3.6 The Regulations do, however, allow for additional Charter Trustees to be appointed in certain circumstances. This may include cases where the number of Charter Trustees for the area would otherwise be fewer than five, or where up to three additional Charter Trustees are considered desirable. Any additional Charter Trustee must be a councillor of the relevant council, which would be the new unitary authority.
- 3.7 The Charter Trustees would be required to establish appropriate administrative and governance arrangements, including arrangements for meetings, standing orders, financial administration, record keeping and the custody and use of civic property.

Civic and Ceremonial Property

- 3.8 The Charter Trustees Regulations 2009 provide for charters, insignia, plate and other property of a historic or ceremonial nature relating to the charter trustee area to vest in the Charter Trustees on the reorganisation date.
- 3.9 Further work will be required to identify and record the property which may be appropriate for transfer. This is expected to include the Borough Charter, mayoral and deputy mayoral chains, civic insignia and other items used in connection with the mayoralty and the Borough's civic traditions.
- 3.10 An inventory of relevant civic and ceremonial property will need to be prepared as part of the transition process. Legal advice may also be required where there is any uncertainty about whether a particular item falls within the definition of historic or ceremonial property.

- 3.11 The Charter Trustees would represent the unparished area of the current Borough of Redditch. Feckenham Parish would not form part of the charter trustee area because it already has a parish council.
- 3.12 The precise boundary of the charter trustee area would need to be defined in the Structural Changes Order, normally by reference to the relevant electoral areas or other geographical descriptions applying at the time the Order is made.
- 3.13 If all or part of the charter trustee area subsequently becomes parished through a Community Governance Review, the effect on the Charter Trustees would be governed by the relevant legislation. Where the whole charter trustee area becomes comprised within one or more parishes, the Charter Trustees would be dissolved and their property, rights and liabilities would transfer in accordance with the applicable statutory arrangements.

Structural Changes Order

- 3.14 The establishment of Charter Trustees would need to be provided for through the Structural Changes Order or other associated legislation made as part of the Local Government Reorganisation process.
- 3.15 It is therefore proposed that the Council submits a formal request to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government at the appropriate stage, asking that provision for the Redditch Charter Trustees be included within the relevant Order.
- 3.16 The request should be made early enough to allow the proposed arrangements, geographical area and treatment of civic property to be considered during the preparation of the Order and before the reorganisation date.
- 3.17 Further reports may be required during the transition period to address the detailed operating arrangements, budget, civic programme, administrative support and transfer of property to the Charter Trustees.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The submission of a request for Charter Trustees is not expected to result in significant immediate expenditure. There will, however, be officer resource implications associated with identifying civic and ceremonial property, supporting the development of the Structural

Changes Order and establishing the necessary governance arrangements.

- 4.2 In the financial year in which the Charter Trustees are established, they may request funding from the new unitary authority for the discharge of their functions, within the amount anticipated for that purpose under the relevant structural change financial arrangements.
- 4.3 From the financial year following their establishment, Charter Trustees are treated as a local precepting authority for council tax purposes and may issue a precept to the billing authority to fund the discharge of their functions. Any precept would apply only to properties within the charter trustee area. The Charter Trustees would determine their annual budget and precept, with the new unitary authority acting as billing authority and collecting the charge through council tax bills for the charter trustee area.
- 4.4 Financial Services will need to be involved in the development of the detailed arrangements, including the treatment of any existing civic budgets, the funding required in the first year and the process for calculating and issuing any future precept.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Charter Trustees Regulations 2009 set out the principal arrangements applying to Charter Trustees established through Local Government Reorganisation. These include provision relating to the transfer and holding of historic and ceremonial property, membership, the appointment of additional trustees, the election of a Mayor and Deputy Mayor, meetings, financial administration and other procedural matters.
- 5.2 The Regulations provide that relevant charters, insignia, plate and other historic and ceremonial property relating to the charter trustee area vest in the Charter Trustees on the reorganisation date.
- 5.3 The Charter Trustees would consist principally of members of the new unitary authority elected for electoral areas within the charter trustee area. The statutory arrangements also allow for additional Charter Trustees to be appointed in specified circumstances.
- 5.4 The proposed Charter Trustees can only be established through the relevant statutory process. A resolution of Redditch Borough Council

would amount to a request for provision to be included in the Structural Changes Order and would not, by itself, establish the Charter Trustees.

- 5.5 Further legal advice will be required during the preparation of the Order and the transfer process, particularly in relation to the property to be transferred, the preservation of charter rights and the detailed governance arrangements.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 The proposal arises directly from Local Government Reorganisation and the expected abolition of Redditch Borough Council. Establishing Charter Trustees would provide continuity for the Borough's historic civic identity following the transfer to a larger unitary authority.
- 6.2 The detailed arrangements for the Charter Trustees would need to be developed alongside the wider Local Government Reorganisation transition programme and in consultation with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the implementation body and, following its establishment, the shadow authority.
- 6.3 The proposal would not determine the wider neighbourhood governance arrangements of the new unitary authority and would not prevent a future Community Governance Review from considering parish or town council arrangements for Redditch.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.4 Work on local governance arrangements supports all the Council's current priorities.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.5 There are no direct climate change implications arising from the proposals detailed in this report.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.6 No direct equalities implications have been identified at this stage.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The principal risk is that, if no provision is made before the reorganisation date, the office of Mayor and Redditch's civic and ceremonial traditions may not continue in their current local form.
- 7.2 There is also a risk that historic and ceremonial property may transfer to the new unitary authority without arrangements being in place for its continued local use and custody. This will be mitigated by making an

early request for Charter Trustees and preparing an inventory of relevant property.

- 7.3 Financial and administrative risks will be managed by developing a proportionate operating model and bringing forward further proposals once the future structure, membership and support requirements are clearer.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers

- *The Charter Trustees Regulations 2009*
- *The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007*
- *Report: Local Government Reorganisation: Future Local Governance in Redditch, Electoral Matters Committee, 21 October 2025*

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Craig Warhurst, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance	
Assistant Director	Claire Felton, Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services	
Financial Services	Deb Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings – Principal Solicitor - Governance	16/06/26