

Local Government Reorganisation: Redditch Warding Arrangements Briefing Note

Why we are asking for Members' views

Redditch Borough Council is seeking views from all Members to help inform the proposed warding arrangements for the Redditch electoral area as part of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). This exercise is not connected to determining which unitary arrangement (a single county unitary or two councils, one covering the north and the other the south) is right for Worcestershire. Views relating to that have already been passed on to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for the Government to consider.

The purpose of this exercise is to gather local knowledge about community links between existing Redditch borough wards. This will help inform considerations about the most suitable ward pattern arrangements for the area irrespective of the decision on LGR. It is not asking Members to choose a final ward pattern that they would prefer, but information from this work will assist the Electoral Matters Committee in proposing a ward pattern, which will then ultimately be considered at an extraordinary Council meeting on 10 August.

What these arrangements would be used for

The warding arrangements being considered would apply to the **shadow elections only**.

These arrangements, if agreed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), would be included in the Worcestershire Structural Changes Order and used for the first elections to the new unitary authority or authorities.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has confirmed that reorganised areas are usually reviewed before their next scheduled unitary elections. This means that the longer-term warding arrangements would be considered through a full electoral review at a later stage.

Why Redditch is being looked at separately

The original LGR submission at interim plan stage in March 2025 to MHCLG for Worcestershire was based on using current county electoral divisions, with the number of councillors doubled. In Redditch, this would mean each county division would return four councillors. MHCLG on 19th May 2026 asked for any further information on warding to be made available by 17th August or before.

Informal advice has been sought from MHCLG and the LGBCE. The advice received confirms that four-member wards are not normally supported, as they can dilute accountability and make representation less clear for residents.

For that reason, Redditch needs to consider a limited variation from the original approach.

What would change

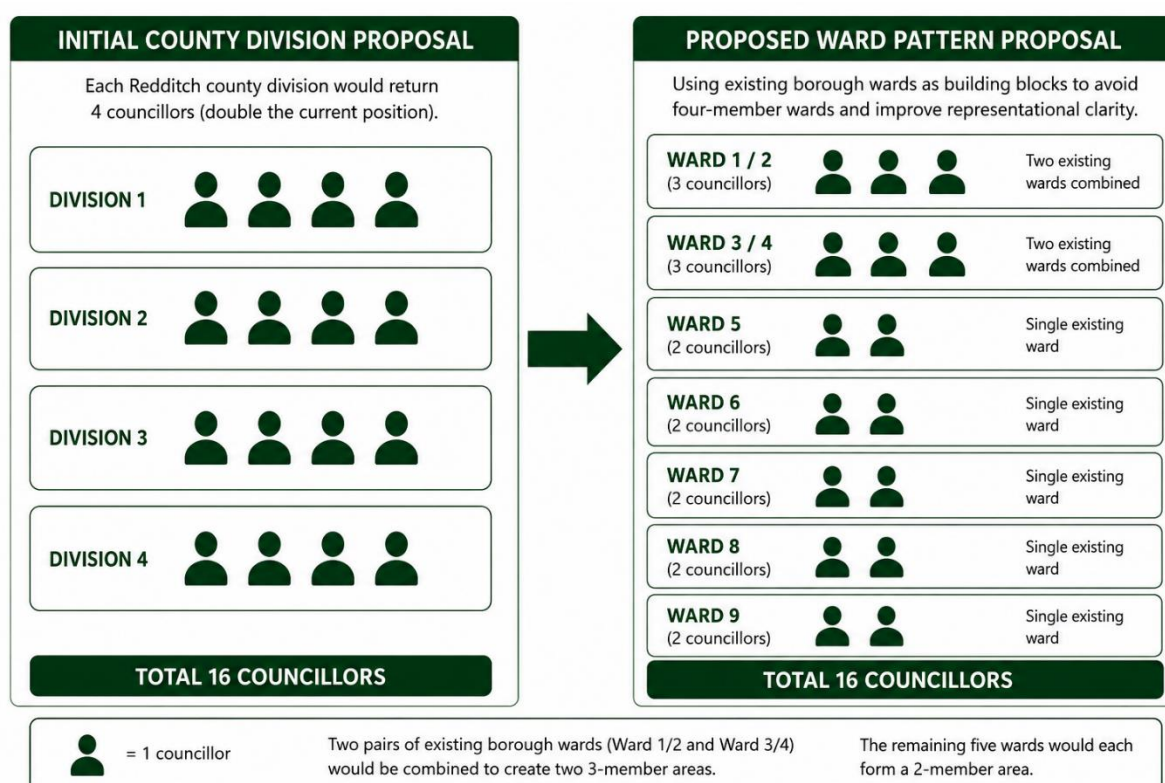
The revised approach would use the existing Redditch borough wards as the building blocks, rather than the county divisions.

This would not change the overall number of councillors. The total number of councillors across Worcestershire would remain 114, whether there is one unitary authority or two unitary authorities.

For Redditch, the only alternative option is to use the existing nine borough wards and create:

- five two-member wards; and
- two three-member wards, each made up of two existing borough wards.

This means two pairs of existing borough wards would need to be combined.



Why the options are limited

There are very limited options available because the interim warding arrangements need to be based on existing electoral areas.

This means the arrangements must use existing borough wards, county divisions, parish areas, or a combination of these.

For Redditch, using the existing borough wards as building blocks is the only practical way to avoid four-member wards while keeping the overall number of councillors unchanged.

How electoral variance will be considered

Electoral variance remains a relevant consideration. This means looking at how evenly councillors would represent the electorate across each ward. However, the LGBCE has advised that, in the context of interim arrangements for local government reorganisation, the usual levels of electoral equality may not be achievable within the limited parameters available.

The key issue for this exercise is therefore to understand which existing borough wards have the strongest community links and would support effective and clear representation. This is referred to as community cohesion.

What we mean by community cohesion

When answering the questions, please think about whether different areas have natural links with each other.

This may include:

- shared shops, local centres or high streets;
- shared schools, health facilities, community buildings, parks or leisure facilities
- similar housing, development patterns or socio-economic characteristics
- shared transport links, main roads, walking routes or bus routes
- recognised local identities or neighbourhood names
- existing links between residents, community groups, voluntary organisations or local services
- clear physical boundaries, such as main roads, open space, railway lines or natural boundaries
- whether residents are likely to see the areas as linked communities.

How the responses will be used

The responses will be used to help officers assess community cohesion and effective representation between existing Redditch borough wards.

This evidence will be considered alongside electoral variance data and the advice received from MHCLG and the LGBCE. It will assist the Electoral Matters Committee, at its meeting on 30 July, in considering a proposed ward pattern for the Redditch electoral area.

Any recommendation from the Electoral Matters Committee will then be considered by Council at an extraordinary meeting on 10 August.

It should be noted that Redditch Borough Council is not making the final decision on the warding arrangements for the new unitary authority or authorities. The Council

would be making a proposal to MHCLG. The final unitary structure and electoral arrangements will ultimately be determined by Government through the Structural Changes Order.