

Appendix 2

Key Points and Recommendations from Electoral Matters Committee Meeting held 30th July 2026

Points relating to the report presentation:

- The original (Interim Plan) Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) submission to Government had stated that the existing County Council divisions could be retained, with the number of elected members simply being doubled for each ward.
- In Redditch, however, the current County Council divisions were already represented by two members and, if the original approach were retained, this would result in four-member wards and that such arrangements could dilute accountability and reduce clarity of representation for electors.
- The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) generally recommended a maximum of three members per ward, and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) was following this guidance when developing arrangements for new unitary authorities.
- A detailed analysis had been undertaken to identify warding arrangements that would retain sixteen members for Redditch, as changing the number of seats available would go beyond what MHCLG was allowing. Officers advised that the only viable arrangement identified comprised seven wards in total, consisting of five two-member wards and two three-member wards. Whilst testing various scenarios, it had been noted that electoral variances increased under the proposed arrangements. LGBCE had indicated that a greater degree of electoral variance would be acceptable as an interim arrangement where necessary to achieve the best overall outcome although lower variances were preferable where they could be accommodated.
- The proposed seven-ward model had been considered by the Informal Working Group on LGR within Worcestershire on 1st July 2026, where it had received support. The proposal had also been considered at a meeting of Redditch Borough Council Group Leaders on 2nd July 2026, who had agreed that the matter should be referred to the Electoral Matters Committee and subsequently to Council on 10th August 2026
- The Chief Executive advised that a second meeting of the Informal Working Group on LGR had taken place earlier that day (30th July) and that the Group had reviewed its earlier position in light of the now-confirmed outcome of the reorganisation process. It was noted that representatives from Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest District Councils had expressed support for the proposed approach

- The timescale for consideration was limited due to MHCLG requiring comments to be submitted by 17th August 2026, as confirmed in correspondence issued to Chief Executives on 20th July 2026.
- A short questionnaire had been circulated to all Members seeking views on which wards would be most suitable to form the proposed three-member wards. Sixteen responses had been received by the deadline, and the comments and analysis had been included within the supplementary papers circulated for the meeting.
- From the questionnaire several potential ward combinations had been assessed, with particular regard being given to community links and local identity. From this there were six possible scenarios presented to Members.

Points relating to the debate and recommendations:

- Some Members expressed support for scenario one (page 39 of the main Council agenda pack), which proposed the first three-member ward as Astwood Bank and Feckenham with Webheath and Callow Hill and the second ward as North with Winyates. It was thought that this scenario provided the strongest outcome in terms of electoral equality and maintained the lowest electoral variances. It was suggested that keeping variances as low as possible would support fair and effective democratic representation.
- Other Members raised concerns regarding some of the proposed ward combinations within scenario one, particularly the grouping of Astwood Bank and Feckenham with Webheath and Callow Hill. It was argued that these areas did not share strong community links and that the ward would cover a very large geographical area. These Members also noted that planned housing developments within the area could significantly alter electorate numbers in the future.
- An alternative view was presented in support of scenario six (page 44 of the main agenda pack). Members advocating this option highlighted the common characteristics shared by Batchley and Brockhill ward with Central ward, particularly their links to the town centre and ongoing regeneration activity. It was also noted that Woodrow and Greenlands were jointly benefiting from Government neighbourhood improvement funding, and it was argued that these areas shared stronger community connections than some of the ward combinations proposed in other scenarios.
- Committee Members acknowledged the challenges of accommodating all established communities within a warding pattern that retained the required allocation of sixteen Councillors. It was recognised that some existing wards contained communities with differing characteristics and that achieving a perfect fit would be difficult within the constraints imposed by the reorganisation proposals.
- Questions were raised regarding the extent to which the proposed arrangements might influence future boundary reviews. Officers advised that

any future reviews would begin afresh and would not be bound by the interim warding arrangements proposed as part of LGR. Members were further advised that a future review of the North Worcestershire unitary authority could consider cross-boundary issues and a different allocation of Councillors.

- Following the debate, a proposal was put forward to recommend scenario one. Upon being put to the vote, the recommendation was carried.
- The Committee then considered the naming of the two proposed three-member wards. Members discussed a number of possible approaches, including naming wards after prominent local areas. Following consideration, Members agreed that the two three-member wards should be named Redditch North and Redditch South, reflecting their geographical locations within the Borough.
- Recommendation one, based on scenario one, arising from the Electoral Matters Committee meeting can be found on page 31 of the main agenda pack. It follows that the authority to finalise the submission be made to the Chief Executive as recorded in recommendation two also on page 31 of the main agenda.