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Redditch Town Centre Strategy

Foreword

Redditch Town Centre matters. It is the heart of our borough: a place where people shop, work, meet friends, enjoy events, visit local businesses and access essential services. From the Kingfisher Centre and High Street to Church Green and our public spaces, the town centre plays an important role in the everyday life of our community.

Like town centres across the country, Redditch has faced significant challenges in recent years. Changing shopping habits, economic pressures and evolving patterns of work and leisure mean that town centres must continually adapt. However, we should be equally clear about the opportunities ahead. Redditch has many strengths: a strong community spirit, successful businesses, excellent transport connections, valued heritage, active community organisations and a town centre that remains central to the life of the borough.

I am ambitious for Redditch and for the future of our town centre. My ambition is simple: a town centre that people are proud of, where businesses want to invest and grow, and where residents and visitors feel welcome, safe and inspired to spend time. Achieving that ambition requires us to build on the strengths we already have while being prepared to address the challenges that hold us back.

This strategy is not about change for change's sake. It is about supporting the people, businesses and organisations that already make Redditch special, while creating the conditions for new investment, new opportunities and new ideas to flourish. It recognises that successful town centres need more than shops alone. They need culture, leisure, events, attractive public spaces, thriving businesses and a sense of identity that encourages people to spend time there.

Since becoming Leader, I have met with businesses, partners and stakeholders and undertaken a town centre walkabout with officers and the Business Improvement District (BID) Manager to understand both the opportunities and the day-to-day issues affecting the town centre. Those discussions reinforced the importance of balancing longer-term regeneration ambitions with practical action on the ground. We must address the issues that affect businesses, visitors and residents today if we are to create the confidence needed for future growth and investment.

The Council has a key leadership role to play, but we cannot deliver this vision alone. The future success of Redditch Town Centre will depend on continued collaboration between the Council, the BID, businesses, landowners, community organisations and local residents. By working together, we can build on what makes Redditch distinctive and create a town centre that is more welcoming, vibrant and resilient for the future.

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This strategy provides a clear direction, but it must also lead to action. I look forward to working with our partners and communities to turn these ambitions into positive change and ensure Redditch Town Centre continues to be a place that serves and reflects the people of our borough.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed their time, insight and ideas in helping shape this strategy. Your commitment and passion for Redditch have been invaluable, and I look forward to working together to deliver its future.

Cllr Matthew Dormer
Leader of Redditch Borough Council

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1. Introduction

Redditch Town Centre is the borough's principal destination for shopping, leisure, culture, services and community life. Developed as part of the New Town programme in the 1960s, it brings together retail, hospitality, public spaces, cultural venues, transport connections and civic functions in a highly accessible location. At its heart sits the Kingfisher Centre, one of the country's earliest purpose-built indoor shopping centres, which remains a vital economic anchor, visitor destination and defining feature of the town centre.

The Kingfisher Centre represents one of Redditch Town Centre's greatest assets and provides a significant opportunity for collaborative growth and investment. Strong relationships are already being developed between partners, creating the foundation for closer joint working that benefits the town centre. By strengthening these partnerships, there is an opportunity to better connect activity inside and outside the centre, encouraging visitors to explore the wider town centre while also drawing more people into the Kingfisher. Together, both destinations can complement and reinforce one another, creating a stronger overall visitor offer, increasing dwell time, supporting businesses and driving footfall across the town centre.

Like town centres across the UK, Redditch is adapting to changing patterns of retail, leisure and consumer behaviour. Online shopping and a reduction in traditional high street retail mean that successful town centres must increasingly offer experiences, culture, hospitality, events and opportunities for social interaction alongside shopping. While some areas are quieter than they once were and parts of the town centre are underutilised, Redditch has strong foundations on which to build.

Excellent bus and rail connectivity, proximity to key employment areas, an established retail offer, and anchor destinations such as the Kingfisher Centre provide a strong platform for future growth. Recent public realm improvements have enhanced accessibility and the visitor experience, while an expanding programme of events and activities continues to bring communities together and attract visitors into the town centre.

This strategy sets a direction for a town centre where people choose to spend time, not simply pass through; a place that supports business growth, cultural activity and a vibrant day-to-evening economy. It provides a long-term framework to guide decision-making, investment and collaborative partnership working to 2035 and beyond, establishing a shared vision, guiding principles and priorities for action.

2. Vision and Outcomes

Redditch Town Centre will be a welcoming and vibrant place that reflects and embraces the diverse heritage, people and communities at the heart of the town. We will celebrate all that makes Redditch special and create a centre that is easy to use, safe, inclusive and enjoyable for everyone — including young people, residents, businesses and visitors.

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Over the next decade, the town centre will be a place where people feel welcome and valued, where opportunities can grow, and where local culture is supported. By working with local people, businesses and partners, we will help create new ideas and opportunities that reflect the community spirit, ambition and pride of those who call Redditch home.

By 2035 we will:

- Strengthen the Town Centre's identity, culture and heritage so it is visible in everyday experience.
- Grow a safe and welcoming evening economy, increasing activity and improving perceptions of the town centre after dark.
- Support a more diverse economy, including creative industries, independent businesses and flexible workspace.
- Improve public spaces, gateways and routes through the town centre, making it easier and more enjoyable to visit and explore.
- Embed collaboration in day-to-day delivery, so partners, communities and businesses have a clear role in shaping activity and making change happen.

Role of the Town Centre:

- The civic, cultural and social heart of the borough
- A mixed-use destination for community life, culture, events, enterprise, learning and living
- A welcoming destination with clear routes, good signage and strong connections between the train station, transport hubs, key destinations and public spaces across the town centre.
- The Town Centre will continue to evolve, supporting mixed uses and more activity through the day and evening as patterns of living, working and spending time change.

3. Guiding Principles

The following principles provide a consistent basis for delivery. They help partners make choices that align with the vision, while leaving room to respond to opportunities and changing needs:

Collaboration first

Improving the Town Centre is a shared endeavour. Progress relies on partnership between public, private and community interests, rather than action by any single organisation.

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Community-centred

Day-to-day experience matters. Decisions should be informed by how people actually use and experience the Town Centre.

Inclusive

The Town Centre should be welcoming, accessible and reflective of all communities, backgrounds and ages.

Flexible and adaptive

The strategy must be able to respond to change—whether economic, social or environmental—without losing its overall direction.

Incremental

Long-term improvement will come through cumulative action over time, not just large-scale schemes.

Identity-led

Change should strengthen confidence, pride and distinctiveness, building on what makes Redditch recognisable and valued.

These principles provide a consistent basis for assessing future proposals, projects and partnerships, helping ensure that change in the Town Centre is coherent, purposeful and aligned with the wider vision.

4. Baseline: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges

Strengths

- Strong community identity and growing appetite for collaboration.
- The Kingfisher Centre, a major regional asset and economic anchor, attracting significant footfall and providing opportunities for joint promotion, events and visitor circulation across the wider town centre.
- Established and growing partnership with the Kingfisher Centre, creating opportunities to align activities, increase dwell time and encourage movement between indoor and outdoor town centre destinations.
- Distinctive heritage and cultural assets such as the Jon Bonham statue.
- Central location with good regional transport accessibility.
- Established retail core, market presence and mix of national and local businesses.
- Active Business Improvement District (BID) and engaged stakeholders.
- Recent public realm improvements that provide a stronger foundation for future investment and placemaking initiatives.

Weaknesses

- Fragmented Town Centre layout and wayfinding challenges
- Perceptions of safety, cleanliness and evening activity

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- The layout of the town centre can limit visibility and connections between key destinations, reducing awareness and footfall in areas such as Church Green and the wider High Street.
- Underused spaces
- Heritage and cultural assets are under-utilised in the everyday Town Centre experience

Opportunities

- Repositioning the Town Centre as a cultural and social destination
- Growth of independents, markets, pop-ups and experiential uses
- Increased cultural programming, events and trails
- Improved public realm, greening and gateways
- Stronger partnership working and community-led activity

Challenges

- Ongoing retail change and market uncertainty
- Public sector funding constraints
- Managing perceptions
- Ensuring inclusive engagement across diverse communities
- Aligning multiple stakeholders with different priorities and timescales

5. Strategic aims and key actions

The strategy is organised around five priority themes. Each theme includes high-level actions, designed to stay relevant as investment, partners and opportunities change.

This approach recognises that delivery will be shared across many organisations, while ensuring that different projects and activities work together towards the same outcomes.

The Strategic Aims that follow focus on:

- strengthening identity, culture and heritage
- supporting regeneration, business growth and a more diverse economy
- adapting to changes in retail and the night-time economy
- improving public spaces, movement and connectivity
- encouraging collaboration, participation and community use

Together, these aims reflect a shift away from a Town Centre defined primarily by retail, towards one that is more mixed, experience-led and people-focused.

Identity, Culture & Heritage

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Aim: Celebrate Redditch's character by making culture and heritage visible, active and easy to discover.

- Develop and promote a stronger town centre identity that celebrates Redditch's heritage, culture and distinctive character.
- Explore opportunities to introduce new public art and flexible heritage displays that celebrate the town's distinctive identity
- Update existing heritage studies and use them to shape projects, trails and interpretation.
- Improve shopfronts on key streets to reinforce character and quality of the Conservation Area
- Use our international twinning to broaden cultural activity and community participation.

Regeneration & Business Growth

Aim: Attract investment, support local enterprise and deliver regeneration that strengthens the Town Centre economy.

- Cultural quarter – define a creative/cultural quarter concept to attract footfall, grow creative industries and reinforce identity.
- Develop a proactive approach to vacant premises, including engagement with property owners, the promotion of available opportunities and the exploration of High Street Rental Auction powers where appropriate.
- Innovation centre – create a focal point for the local innovation ecosystem and a base for business support and collaboration on the old police station site.
- Business support and funding – target grants and advice, strengthen networks and grow peer-to-peer support.

Retail, Markets & Night-Time Economy

Aim: Strengthen the retail and market offer and grow a safe, welcoming evening economy that increases footfall and dwell time year-round.

- Animate vacant space with pop-ups, street theatre and street-food activity to increase dwell time.
- Run a coordinated Town Centre marketing and events programme (markets, festivals and campaigns) to build a consistent year-round offer.
- Host periodic business support events for retail, hospitality and service businesses.
- Commission murals and public art to improve visual appeal and showcase local creativity.

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- Promote Redditch Town Centre as a destination for investment, business growth, retail, leisure and development opportunities through coordinated marketing and promotional activity.

Public Realm, Placemaking & Environment

Aim: Create high-quality, green and accessible public spaces that encourage people to dwell, explore and feel safe.

- Improve pedestrian movement from the train station to Unicorn Hill, prioritising direct, attractive routes.
- Improve street lighting in key locations to support safety and evening use.
- Explore the introduction of a Town Centre ambassador or warden scheme to provide a visible, welcoming presence, support visitors and help address day-to-day issues in the town centre.
- Increase tree planting and greening to improve comfort, environmental quality and character.
- Develop a Canopies Area improvement and activation programme

Transport, Connectivity & Movement

Aim: Make it easier to get into, through and around the Town Centre by improving connections and supporting safe, sustainable travel.

- Work with transport providers and Worcestershire County Council to improve evening transport options, including bus services and demand-responsive transport, to support access to the town centre.
- Improve wayfinding across the centre, including underpasses and key approach routes.
- Provide visitor information at or near the train station.
- Align any movement/active travel app with the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).
- Ensure adequate safe, secure cycle parking in priority locations.
- Test taxi marshal provision during peak evening periods to support safety and accessibility.

Community, Collaboration & Participation

Aim: Enable communities, partners and businesses to work together to help shape and bring the Town Centre to life.

- Support 'third spaces' (cafés, clubs, pubs and community venues) that help people meet, connect and spend time in the centre.

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- Support delivery of St Stephen's Church youth-focused provision such as the Lightbox.
- Expand the Redditch arts and culture programme to increase participation and visibility in the town centre.
- Use meanwhile uses to bring vacant spaces into temporary use for community and cultural activity.
- Use Mercian Square as a platform for community-led events and activity.
- Establish a young people's focus group to inform Town Centre activity and shape the delivery and development of the strategy.
- Develop an understanding of existing groups and organisations and explore ways to strengthen coordination and collaboration over time.
- Work with the statutory Community Safety Partnership (CSP), West Mercia Police, businesses and community organisations to support initiatives that improve perceptions of safety, reduce anti-social behaviour and create a welcoming town centre environment.

6. Delivery, governance and monitoring

Governance

- The Council will provide strategic leadership and coordinate delivery with partners.
- Delivery will involve the BID, businesses, landowners, community and cultural partners, the Community Safety Partnership and other stakeholders.

Delivery plan

- Alongside longer-term regeneration initiatives, partners will prioritise the day-to-day management and quality of the Town Centre environment. This will include public realm maintenance, cleanliness, landscaping, enforcement activity, shopfront quality, vacancy reduction and measures to improve the overall visitor experience. These actions will form part of the annual Town Centre Action Plan and be reviewed regularly through partnership governance arrangements.
- Quarterly partnership meetings will coordinate activity, review progress and respond to emerging issues.
- A delivery plan will sit beneath this strategy, setting out actions, lead partners, timescales and resources.
- The annual action plan will include both strategic regeneration projects and operational management priorities.
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will track progress and support accountability.

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Monitoring and review

- Progress will be reviewed regularly through partnership governance arrangement.
- An annual Town Centre health check will track economic, social and environmental indicators.
- The strategy will be kept current by updating actions as circumstances change while maintaining the long-term vision and direction.

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Redditch Town Centre Action Plan – Year 1 September 2026-August 2027			
Strategic Aim / Action	Lead	Delivery Timescale	Success Measure
Transform Public Spaces and Connectivity within the Town Centre and Celebrate its Unique Identity			
Undertake a comprehensive Town Centre Public Realm & Landscaping Review covering paving, planting, lighting, street furniture and public spaces	RBC	September - February	Review completed and action schedule agreed
Audit all street furniture, signage, bollards, bins and wayfinding to establish a coordinated Town Centre design approach	RBC	September - February	Audit completed
Remove redundant, damaged or unnecessary signage and identify replacement requirements	RBC	December - August	Number of improvements delivered
Prepare and implement a Canopies Area Improvement Action Plan, including activation, maintenance, events and marketing activity	RBC	December - August	Action Plan completed and initial improvements delivered
Deliver initial greening and seasonal planting programme	RBC	December - August	Number of planting schemes delivered
Audit unauthorised shopfront alterations and advertisements and establish an enforcement programme	RBC	December-February	Audit completed
Enhance Town Centre Links and Visitor Access			
Improve visitor information and wayfinding between the railway station and town centre	RBC / WCC	March - August	Initial improvements delivered
Build a Safe and Inclusive Town Centre Community			

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Redditch Town Centre Action Plan – Year 1 September 2026-August 2027			
Strategic Aim / Action	Lead	Delivery Timescale	Success Measure
Develop a Town Centre maintenance and cleanliness improvement programme	RBC	January	Programme adopted
Review cleanliness, waste storage and servicing arrangements in key areas including William Street and Threadneedle House	RBC	September - February	Improvement actions agreed
Undertake targeted enforcement activity relating to waste management and commercial bin compliance	RBC	September - August (ongoing)	Number of issues resolved
Establish Young People's Town Centre Forum	RBC	Ongoing	Forum established
Pilot Town Centre Ambassador / Warden Scheme	RBC / BID	March - August	Pilot completed
Complete community stakeholder mapping exercise	RBC	October	Database established
Cultivate a Thriving Local Business Ecosystem			
Identify eligible long-term vacant units and explore use of High Street Rental Auction (HSRA) powers	RBC	December - May	Eligible properties identified
Prepare implementation process for High Street Rental Auctions where appropriate	RBC	March - August	Process approved
Launch vacant shop pop-up programme	RBC / BID	September - August (ongoing)	Number of units activated
Produce a Town Centre Inward Investment Prospectus	RBC	June - August	Prospectus launched
Create a Buzz and Attract More Visitors			

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Redditch Town Centre Action Plan – Year 1 September 2026-August 2027			
Strategic Aim / Action	Lead	Delivery Timescale	Success Measure
Deliver a coordinated annual events programme	RBC / BID	September - August (ongoing)	Event attendance