

Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy – Executive Summary

Vision

The Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy is built around a shared vision for the Borough. It is envisaged that by 2026:

‘Redditch will be successful and vibrant with communities that have access to good job opportunities, good education, good health and are communities that people will be proud to live and work in’.

About Redditch

Redditch is situated in the north east of Worcestershire and lies 15 miles south of the West Midlands conurbation. The Borough covers a total of 54 square kilometres, and is comprised of several communities focused around district centres. Redditch was designated a New Town in 1964 and since then the population has increased dramatically from 32,000 to around 78,813 (2001 census).

Compared to other areas of Worcestershire, the Borough has a higher proportion of young people aged 0-17 (22.4% compared to 20.8% in the County), and a smaller proportion of individuals aged 65 or over (14.1% compared to 18.7% in the County). Redditch has the largest proportion of ethnic minority groups of Worcestershire’s six districts with 8% of the population from an ethnic group.

In 2009, the then Government’s performance assessment regime, the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) gave Worcestershire a ‘red flag’. This red flag was given specifically for the differences in the quality of life for people living in Redditch compared to people living in the rest of Worcestershire. Particular areas highlighted included: lower life expectancy; high levels of smoking; poorer GCSE exam results; more people reliant on benefits; and more families on a low income.

Health Inequalities

In broad terms the health of people in Redditch is similar to the England average; however, there are significant differences in health and well being between Redditch and Worcestershire. Inequalities particularly exist in lifestyle choices including smoking, physical activity, and alcohol.

Nationally, alcohol abuse has been flagged as an issue and Redditch is no different. Approximately 19.3% of people in Redditch are considered to be “binge drinkers” and there are approximately 1,629 hospital stays per year for alcohol related harm. Levels of smoking have also been identified as an issue of concern for Redditch. The prevalence of adults who smoke is estimated at 22% which is just below the England average of 22.2% and the worst in the County. According to the 2010 Health Profile, 29.9% of adults in Redditch are classed as obese. The percentage of adults classed as healthy eaters has decreased since 2009 from 24.3% to 21.7% and is now significantly worse than the England average.

Educational Attainment

Educational performance of pupils in Redditch has been recognised as an issue over many years. Redditch has consistently fallen behind Worcestershire in the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* to C. Data from 2009 and 2010 shows that while average results are getting better in Redditch, they are still behind those of the County as a whole.

The Economy

Job losses for people living in Redditch have increased the most and recent statistics from the Office for National Statistics show that more people are out of work with the

overall unemployment level in Redditch at 8.7%. This is 0.6% lower than the regional average, but 0.8% higher than the national average. The gap between the unemployment level for Redditch and Worcestershire is 4.2% with Worcestershire's unemployment level at 4.5% (as at March 2010).

Pockets of Deprivation

According to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007, from the district level summary (where 1 is the most deprived) of the average deprivation score, Redditch is ranked 131st out of 354 areas nationally. This is the most deprived area in Worcestershire. Redditch is in the top 40% most deprived districts.

The most deprived areas in Redditch include parts of Winyates, Church Hill, Batchley and Woodrow. Winyates housing estate is the most deprived area in Redditch, and is the sixth most deprived area in the County. Based on this evidence, Redditch Partnership decided to focus its Areas of Highest Need project on Winyates Centre and the immediate surrounding area.

Priorities

Priority One	Health Inequalities	Focus is on three issues: smoking, alcohol; and obesity / health lifestyles.
Priority Two	Education attainment and raising aspirations of young people.	Focus is on three issues: improving literacy and numeracy; raising aspirations; and improve statistical levels of attainment.
Priority Three	The economy of Redditch with a focus on providing a larger and more diverse job offer.	Focus is on three broad issues: promotion of Redditch as a business location; jobs and worklessness; and fostering economic ambition in young people.
Priority Four	Areas of deprivation with an initial focus on Winyates and Church Hill.	Winyates project focuses on: enhanced security measures for residential areas in Centre; and community engagement in the area.

Delivery

Four action plans have been produced which focus on the four priority areas. They contain actions which are to be undertaken in partnership and which are not already being undertaken by partner organisations as part of their core business. Delivery of the action plans is driven by the Theme Groups with regular reports up to the Redditch Partnership Management Board. The action plans are viewed as 'live' documents which can be altered and amended as new projects come on stream or if circumstances change.

The actions listed are just the start and Redditch Partnership must develop and build on these over the next three years, responding to new ideas and developing innovative solutions to meet the Vision it has set out for Redditch. The yearly meeting of Redditch Partnership will formally review overall progress towards achieving the vision and also hold the Partnership Board to account.

For more information about Redditch Partnership and to see a full copy of the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy please go to <http://redditch.whub.org.uk/cms/housing-services/redditch-partnership.aspx> or contact the Redditch Partnership Manager at helen.broughton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk or telephone 01527 64252 Ext.3237.