REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Development Plan Document

Information informing the Issues and Options document

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Urdu اگر آپکو انگریزی میں بات چیت کرنے میں مدد درکار ہے تو 'ایتھنک ایکسیس لنک' کو اس نمبر پر فون کیجیئے 01905 25121

Punjabi ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮੱਦਦ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਐਥਨਿਕ ਐਕਸੈੱਸ ਲਿੰਕ ਨੂੰ 01905 25121 ਨੰਬਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Bengali ইংরেজীতে যোগাযোগ করতে সহায়তার প্রয়োজন হলে দয়া করে 'এথ্‌নিক এ্যাকসেস্‌ লিঙ্ক' এর সঙ্গে 01905 25121 নম্বরে ফোনে যোগাযোগ করুন।

All districts in the United Kingdom are different, with distinct geographical, socio-cultural and architectural features that define them. The Borough of Redditch is no exception, combining unique topographical features with a diverse community that distinguishes it from other districts.

Now a designated Borough, the history of Redditch begins from more modest roots in the twelfth century when the Cistercian monks founded Bordesley Abbey in the valley of the River Arrow. During the sixteenth century, the community moved to the current site of the Town Centre. The nineteenth century saw Redditch developing as a centre of industry, leading the fields in the manufacture of needles, springs and fishing tackle. With its designation as a New Town in 1964, Redditch began to take on its modern appeal with Church Hill, Matchborough, Oakenshaw and Winyates becoming prominent residential areas intended to alleviate the overcrowding in a nearby thriving Birmingham. A modest population of 32,000 soon swelled to around 70,000 residents by the mid 1980's. Meanwhile, Washford, Moons Moat and Park Farm were converted into eminent industrial estates continuing to boost Redditch's manufacturing renown. Redditch became a district within the newly established County of Hereford and Worcester in 1974 and Borough status soon followed in 1980. No longer referred to as a New Town, Redditch continued to grow and today accommodates some 80,000 inhabitants.

Situated at the outer edge of the Green Belt boundary for the West Midlands, Redditch offers easy access to the countryside and prominent local areas, including culturally rich areas such as Stratford Upon Avon and naturally rich areas such as the Cotswolds. The Borough covers a relatively small geographical area of around 55km². Despite its size, Redditch possesses a number of greenfield sites and seeks to protect some 725 hectares (1791 acres) of open spaces, including Six Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), as well as the 364 hectare (900 acre) Arrow Valley Park, which centres around the 12 hectare (30 acre) lake and adjacent Countryside Centre. Notably, there is no urban fringe in Redditch, creating an instant transition from the urban to the rural and an abundance of green buffers and tree-lined highways give the urban area a rural atmosphere. Redditch's location in the heart of England, however, means that it lies far from the country's coastal areas.

The Borough's central location is optimised by an extensive road network offering excellent links to the Major Urban Areas of the West Midlands, including the vibrant city of Birmingham. Redditch's close proximity to the motorways – the M5 and M42 lie within 5 miles (8km) and 6 miles (10 km) of the town centre – ensures good accessibility to the NEC, Birmingham International Airport and further afield. Dual carriageways and A-class roads also serve to efficiently link Redditch to the surrounding towns of Bromsgrove and Evesham. Famed for its roundabouts, Redditch's infrastructure means that accessibility throughout the Borough is excellent, although less so in rural areas. The town centre is accessible from all directions via the ring road, which also acts as a town centre boundary feature.

In terms of public transport, Redditch train station, operating a single line, offers excellent travel to Birmingham with a regular service travelling between Redditch and Lichfield. Although Birmingham New Street, which acts as a hub to many national destinations, can be reached promptly from Redditch train station, Redditch has very poor rail links to other areas. An extensive network of local bus services run from a rejuvenated bus station, offering travel to residences, the hospital and supermarkets in the

town as well as other places outside of the Borough. Bus services operate frequently throughout the day but generally do not operate in the evenings. Some parts of the town operate a segregated bus only route. When developing the New Town, the Master Plan sought to create a network of segregated footpaths but did not consider the needs of cyclists. Despite some improvements in recent years, which have included the creation of a number of cycle lanes, in general cycling provision in the Borough is poor. With only a sporadic and incomplete network of cycle lanes available for cyclists, Redditch sees fewer people travelling to work by bicycle than the national average.

The Borough reflects the changing norms in housing, offering dwellings of post-medieval influence, Victorian tenements, 1930's semi-detached residences as well as more modern builds. In addition, housing in Redditch is usually cheaper than in surrounding areas. Housing developments in Redditch continue to be constructed to cater for the Borough's demand, with a range of accommodation including the recent development of flats and apartments. These flats create the impression of less garden space, however, higher density residential developments, such as these, benefit from increased natural surveillance which has traditionally been lacking in New Town areas. Unfortunately, New Town housing estates have less parking than residents require.

Whilst in the older parts of Redditch, residential and employment areas are integrated, these two domains are clearly defined in the New Town, with substantial tree buffers segregating the residential from the industrial. Integrating the residential and employment areas in the older parts of Redditch increases the likelihood of there being a detrimental effect on residential amenity and limits economic activity. Where the two domains have been segregated, employment areas suffer from reduced surveillance. However, these newer employment zones profit from improved accessibility which the older employment zones lack. Those industrial areas which predate the New Town industrial developments however, provide Redditch with a balanced portfolio of employment sites: the former needle mills offering a distinctive feature in the building stock.

Indeed, the architectural make-up of the Borough is a defining feature of Redditch: the Ridgeway at Astwood Bank, the water tower at Headless Cross and St. Stephen's Church in the heart of the town creating a distinctive skyline for the town. The Church Green Conservation Area, designated in 1971 and expanded to its current size of 4.13 ha in 1978 and 2006, was established in order to preserve the historic identity of the area at the heart of the town centre, which incorporates St. Stephen's Church as well as a number of buildings dating from the eighteenth century. A second conservation area designated in 1969 and extended in 1995 and 2006 and covering 14.7 ha incorporates most of the village of Feckenham. The Borough oversees some 3,000 listed buildings, which have a particular historic or architectural significance.

Redditch is home to the Kingfisher Shopping Centre which is situated in the town centre. Originally opened in the 1970's, the Centre is the main shopping area in Redditch and has undergone substantial development since the centenary which has contributed to it becoming one of the largest covered shopping centres in the West Midlands. Although Redditch offers an outdoor market, there is no high street in the town. Redditch town centre operates as a service centre for a wide catchment area and in addition there are several local centres located in the various constituencies within Redditch each featuring a range of small shops. The Borough also has supermarkets and superstores which reside at independent sites outside of the town centre.

Educationally, Redditch follows an unusual three tiered schooling system that is intrinsic in Worcestershire and sees pupils progress from primary, middle to high school. Over thirty schools in Redditch conform to this system and cater for some 12,000 pupils. Whilst nationally 5.2% of pupils leave school without any qualifications, only 3% of school leavers in Redditch fail to obtain any qualifications. However, educational attainment in the Borough falls below the national standard on several criteria, including the percentage of students achieving 5 or more A* to C grades at GCSE level – 45% in Redditch compared to 52.9% in England. The Borough boasts specialist schools in the fields of Sport, Art and Business and has a number of education, skills and training facilities. In terms of health, the Alexandra Hospital provides the health and accident and emergency facilities for residents of the Borough and also residents of surrounding areas.

Redditch suffers from a poor image and is generally perceived to be plagued by the same problems as inner-city areas, however, a number of initiatives have been developed under the leadership of the Redditch Partnership to help combat these problems. With regard to leisure facilities, the community of Redditch is diverse and thus a range of provisions are available to serve the different strata of society. Sports facilities cater for traditional pastimes such as football, swimming and lawn bowls, whilst a skate park encourages enthusiasts from across the region. Culturally, Redditch offers a 425 seat theatre, a 7 screen cinema as well as a museum exploring the Borough's needle heritage. Redditch is twinned with both the towns of Auxerre in France and Mtwara in Tanzania and has preserved its relations with these towns for decades. Redditch continues to grow and work towards an improved future.