

**REDDITCH
SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITY
STRATEGY
2011-2014**

January 2011

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1. Foreword by the Chair of Redditch Partnership

- 1.1 Redditch Borough is a great place to live. Our residents value the greenery of the town, the trees, our Green Flag awarded parks, the excellent retail facilities, good transport links, a strong manufacturing base (21% of our economy, compared to 12% nationally) and the range of recreational facilities on offer such as the Palace Theatre, Arrow Valley Country Park, Forge Mill Museum and soon the new Abbey Stadium.
- 1.2 Although Redditch is generally a good place to live there are significant health inequalities in the Borough and between different wards and lower levels of educational attainment than the rest of Worcestershire. We have five small areas in the top 20% most deprived in England; two of which are in the top 10%. Since becoming Leader of the Council and Chair of the Redditch Partnership, I have also become aware of a trend reflected in education, with a significant proportion of parents choosing to send their children across the border to other authorities for their education. I am also conscious that the number of VAT registrations i.e. new business start ups, is comparatively low. Such trends are worrying for all of us.
- 1.3 Fundamentally, the Sustainable Community Strategy set out on the following pages is concerned with catching these trends and reversing them by creating the right conditions for business growth, developing schools in the Borough that parents want their children educated in, regenerating areas like Winyates and Church Hill and improving the health of our residents. Redditch Partnership's four priorities are:-
- economic development;
 - improving health;
 - educational attainment; and
 - regeneration of the areas of highest need.
- 1.4 These are the four issues we want to focus on. This is not to say that other important work on, for example, community safety and climate change will not continue, just that the Redditch Partnership will focus on these four priorities.
- 1.5 Tackling these four priorities is not going to be easy. These issues are generational and are not subject to quick fixes or the latest initiative. Also, the Council cannot tackle these issues on its own. We must work in partnership with a sustained long term focus. I believe this Sustainable Community Strategy will give us this. I hope you find it useful and I look forward to reporting progress to you each year.

Carole Gandy
Chair of the Redditch Partnership and Leader of the Council

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy establishes the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the Borough of Redditch. It contributes to meeting the social, economic and environmental needs of the area, helping to improve the lives of local people, both now and in the future.
- 2.2 The Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the priorities of the Redditch Partnership for the next three years. It provides the evidence to explain why these priorities have been chosen, and the measures by which success will be judged. Finally, it outlines some of the specific actions already planned to deliver these priorities. These actions are just a start. Redditch Partnership will develop and build on these over the next three years, responding to new ideas and developing innovative solutions to meet our overall vision.

3. About Redditch

- 3.1 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. The Borough is made up of two distinct areas; the urban area in the north of the Borough, which is inhabited by more than 90% of the total population, and a rural area in the south consisting of the villages Astwood Bank and Feckenham.
- 3.2 There are good transport links within the Borough, including a strong network of dual carriageways and A-roads that connect Redditch to areas such as Birmingham, Bromsgrove and Evesham and the town is also only a short distance from the M42.

Map of Redditch, showing Borough council wards



Source: Worcestershire County Council

Redditch New Town

- 3.3 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). Housing developments such as Church Hill, Matchborough, Winyates, Lodge Park and Woodrow were created to accommodate the large numbers of people in need of housing from an industrially expanding Birmingham.

Population Structure

- 3.4 The current population of the Borough is approximately 78,813. There is a fairly even split between male and female inhabitants, with 49.4% males and 50.6% females.
- 3.5 As a result of its designation as a New Town in 1964, Redditch attracted a large number of young families. 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).
- 3.6 Redditch District has the largest proportion of ethnic minority groups of Worcestershire's six districts. Of Redditch residents, approximately 92% are of White British or White Irish origin. Of the remaining 8% of the population, the ethnic groups with the largest population sizes are Asian or Asian British Pakistani (2.3%) and White Other (1.3%) which includes those of Eastern European origin. Across the County, the proportion of residents of Asian or Asian British Pakistani origin is highest in Redditch District and is more than double the County average proportions (0.9%).
- 3.7 The population of Redditch is projected to increase by about 1,500 for the period 2007-11, and by about 7,000 for 2007-26. In the future, the over-65's are projected to rise by about 7,500, with a smaller projected increase of around 1,000 for the 17 and under age group. There is a predicted drop in the working age population, with the highest expected reduction being the 9.9% anticipated reduction in the 20-29 year group. Redditch is experiencing a negative net migration unlike Worcestershire as a whole. The numbers are relatively small, with a net migration of approximately 250 people a year; nevertheless it is concerning that people appear to be leaving the Borough.

Amenities and Facilities

- 3.8 Redditch benefits from a wide range of amenities and facilities for all ages. Health care facilities are good and include a hospital (the Alexandra Hospital) with its own Accident and Emergency Unit. There is a large indoor covered shopping Centre (The Kingfisher Centre) that also incorporates a seven-screen cinema.

Redditch is considered to be a very green town which boasts three large parks with green flag status and many other additional open spaces. There is the well-utilised (and recently refurbished) Edwardian “Palace Theatre” and also a museum (Forge Mill Needle Museum) dedicated to showcasing the town’s history of needle making.

- 3.9 Redditch Borough Council owns, operates and maintains a number of community centres in various communities in the town. Redditch Borough Council’s Sports and Leisure Services also offer a wide range of sports facilities which include 4 sports centres, 2 swimming pools, a golf course, athletics track and various football pitches.
- 3.10 Redditch has a good road system that is mainly free from congestion. There is easy access to the M42 and other major towns and cities in the region. There is a train line, which runs a half-hourly service to Birmingham and then onto Lichfield. Industry in Redditch is mainly dominated by light manufacturing and service industries. Housing provision in Redditch is good with a vast amount of choice of size, type and style of accommodation. Redditch also offers a high proportion of affordable housing.
- 3.11 There is a three-tier education system with first, middle and high schools. Schools operate in a pyramid system with four pyramids – 3 in specific geographical locations and 1 that takes pupils of the Roman Catholic faith. There is also a very well regarded further education college (North East Worcestershire NEW College), which caters for a wide range of vocational and academic courses and has recently opened a new facility to enable residents to take university level courses in the town.

4. Current Issues in the Borough and Evidence for Priorities

- 4.1 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. The CAA report highlighted a number of issues where inequalities existed for people living in Redditch. These included:
- lower life expectancy;
 - high levels of smoking;
 - poorer GCSE exam results;
 - more people reliant on benefits; and
 - more families on a low income.
- 4.2 It was recognised that a number of existing interventions were in place to deal with these issues, but that work was not being adequately co-ordinated to efficiently deal with these problems in the long term. Redditch Partnership recognises that it needs to take a lead role in co-ordinating work

and plans to address these issues if they are going to get better. From the report, Redditch Partnership was able to identify the three key areas of health inequalities, education and the economy that it needed to prioritise in order to start to improve the quality of life for people in Redditch. This formed the basis of the evidence base for the priorities, along with community consultation.

Health Inequalities

- 4.3 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 across a broad range of measures. The reasons for this are complex, but can be broadly summarised as: inequalities in opportunity – for example poverty, employment, education and family; inequalities in lifestyle choices including smoking, physical activity, alcohol and sexual activity; and inequalities in accessing services.
- 4.4 The CAA illustrated several health related areas where Redditch was falling behind the rest of the County. Life expectancy has been identified as an issue with people in Redditch living shorter lives than the rest of the County. The most recent life expectancy figures are 77.6 years for males and for females 81.5 both of which are below the England and County average.
- 4.5 Nationally, alcohol abuse has been flagged as an issue and Redditch is no different. The CAA illustrated the fact that alcohol had been found to be a problem in the town. Alcohol abuse has an effect on levels of crime and anti-social behaviour especially focussed on the town centre at night. Furthermore, alcohol abuse has become more prevalent in children and younger people in the town. 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. Both of these figures have risen since the publication of the 2009 Health Profile.
- 4.6 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. This figure has improved in 2010, but there is still work to be done to reduce this further. Each year approximately 102 people in Redditch die from smoking related illnesses.
- 4.7 It was noted by the CAA report that generally, across the County, the number of people who were classed as obese had been rising. According to the 2010 Health Profile, 29.9% of adults in Redditch are classed as obese. This is significantly worse than the England average and has also worsened since 2009 where the figure was 28.5%. Furthermore, 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.

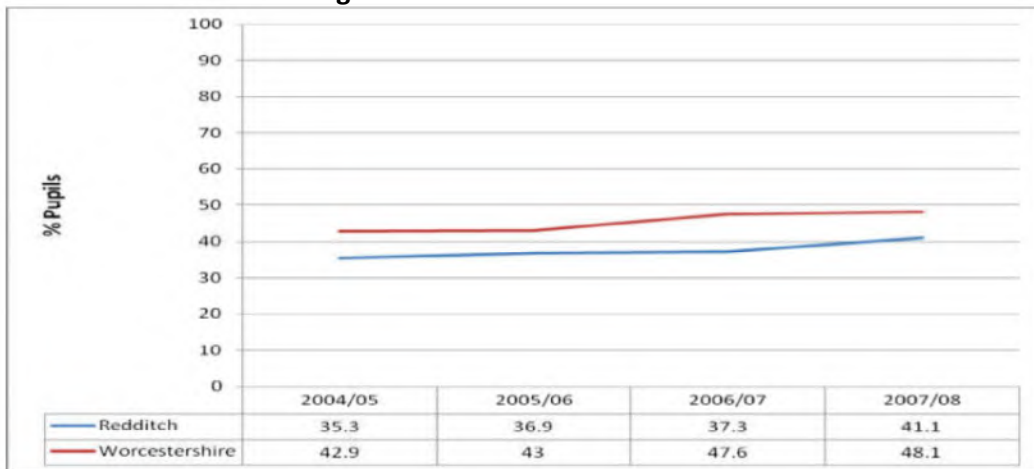
4.8 In addition to these areas of concern, of the 14 areas of Worcestershire identified as being health “hotspots”, with the worst overall health outcomes in the County, 4 are in Redditch. These hotspots are Abbey, Batchley and Central Wards, Churchill, Greenlands and Winyates.

Educational Attainment

4.9 The CAA report highlighted the specific issue of inequality relating to educational attainment. It was noted that Redditch has a high number of schools where children are achieving less than the national average, and below average in the County.

4.10 Educational performance of pupils in Redditch has been recognised as an issue over many years. The table below demonstrates that 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.

% of 16 Year Olds Achieving 5 or More GCSEs at Grade A* to C



Source: FTI Area Profiles

4.11 It has been suggested through the CAA process that “to improve attainment throughout the County it has to help children and young people in Redditch increase their potential and improve results”. Redditch Partnership recognises that its role in addressing this issue is twofold. Firstly, it can help to support schools in driving up educational performance and attainment of pupils. Secondly, it can take a more direct approach in tackling the wider issues that contribute to children not reaching their potential and help to raise children and young people’s aspirations.

Economy

4.12 The CAA process highlighted a number of areas of concern relating specifically to the economy of Redditch and how Redditch compares to the rest of Worcestershire. In particular it was highlighted that Redditch had low income levels and more people out of work and taking up benefits.

- 4.13 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). There has been an increase in the number of people claiming benefits in Redditch. The number of people claiming key out of work benefits in May 2010 was 12.7% which is 0.3% below the national average. This is 2.7% higher than the number of people claiming across Worcestershire.
- 4.14 The proportion of individuals employed in manufacturing industry is considerably higher at 25.1% than the rest of the County. Redditch has fewer individuals employed in distribution, hotels and restaurants compared to other areas in Worcestershire. The number of VAT registrations has fluctuated over time, but generally has been consistently lower than the County and national average since 2000.
- 4.15 All of these issues have previously been recognised by partners and work has been on-going to address them. Redditch Borough Council's Economic Development Unit has worked with partners to produce an Economic Strategy for the Borough. The Sustainable Community Strategy and the Economic Action Plan further emphasises the need to tackle issues such as unemployment especially in the current economic climate, with the aim of building on existing projects and partnership working.

Areas of Highest Need

- 4.16 The Indices of Deprivation were produced in 2007 by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The Indices are a measure of deprivation for every Super Output Area and local authority area in England. It combines a number of indicators across seven domains (Income, Employment, Health deprivation and disability, Education, skills and training deprivation, Barriers to Housing and Services, Living Environment deprivation and Crime) into a single deprivation score and rank for each area.
- 4.17 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 and compares to Wyre Forest with a ranking of 154. Therefore Redditch is in the top 40% most deprived districts. This is a slight deterioration from 2004 when it was ranked 146th.

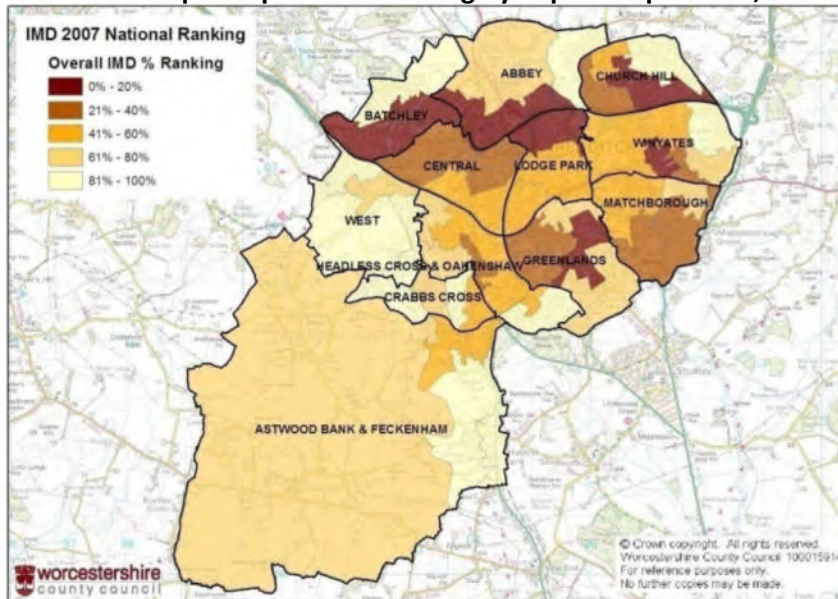
The most deprived areas in Redditch are listed in the table below.

Top Five Deprived Super Output Areas in Redditch

Area Description	Deprivation in England	Ward
Winyates Housing Estate (Ipsley C.E. Middle School)	Top 10%	Winyates
Church Hill YMCA Area	Top 10%	Church Hill
St Thomas More First School	Top 20%	Greenlands
Batchley	Top 20%	Batchley
Between Woodrow North and Woodrow South Roads	Top 20%	Greenlands

4.18 The area of Winyates housing estate around Ipsley Middle School is the most deprived area in Redditch, being the sixth most deprived area in the County. Being in the top 40% masks more serious deprivation in a small number of Super Output Areas.

Index of Multiple Deprivation ranking by Super Output Area, Redditch, 2007



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government

4.19 Based on this evidence, Redditch Partnership decided to focus its Areas of Highest Need project (funded through Local Area Agreement monies) on Winyates Centre and the immediate surrounding area. This project combines a security project on social housing in the Winyates Centre to improve the quality of the physical environment for residents living in that area, in addition to community engagement and building social capital.

4.20 Additionally, the Partnership wishes to facilitate and co-ordinate social regeneration and community engagement in another deprived area of Redditch – Church Hill Centre and the surrounding Church Hill housing estate.

Redditch Borough Council is project managing physical regeneration of the Church Hill Centre to improve the physical fabric of the area; rejuvenate existing amenities and to bring in further services to the area. Redditch Partnership believes that this presents an excellent opportunity to holistically regenerate the area both physically and socially and will be looking for opportunities to work in partnership to deliver social and community focussed projects in the area as the physical regeneration progresses.

5. What you Told Us...Public Consultation

- 5.1 During the course of 2010, Redditch Partnership has undertaken several consultation exercises with the residents of Redditch. The aim of consulting with local people was to:
- ensure that the Sustainable Community Strategy captures the priorities of local people;
 - to find out what factors impact on local people the most; and
 - to raise awareness of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Redditch Partnership.

- 5.2 In January, Redditch Partnership hosted the “We Are Redditch” event. This was a week long event held in a vacant unit in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre where partners were able to showcase the work they were undertaking in partnership and to provide an opportunity to talk to the public about Redditch. The aim of the consultation exercise was to try to capture information from Redditch residents about what they liked and disliked about Redditch, what could be improved, and what they perceived to be the priorities for the town.

The top two priority areas identified were:

1. education; and
2. the economy and jobs;

- 5.3 With regards to education people commented that:
- the standard of education in Redditch schools needed to be raised;
 - the number of schools needed to be increased; and
 - increased numbers of further education and vocational opportunities should be made available.
- 5.4 With regards to the economy of Redditch, people felt that:
- more jobs needed to be made available, in particular, for young people;
 - increased investment was needed to bring more businesses to the town; and
 - Greater diversity of jobs, especially for those with higher qualifications.
- 5.5 Residents did acknowledge good aspects of Redditch including Redditch’s good parks and green spaces; the Kingfisher Shopping Centre and general

shopping amenities in the town; and the efficient road system; however other issues perceived as problems included:

- the lack of a diverse retail offer in the town centre;
- the level of anti-social behaviour in the town centre at night;
- the lack of community spirit in the town;
- public transport both within the town and to other areas; and
- the need for more activities for children / teenagers including “good youth clubs, free bowling, cheap activities” and also “more summer clubs for kids during the summer holidays” and “children’s play areas”.

5.6 During the summer of 2010 further consultation work was undertaken which focussed on the emerging priority areas for Redditch Partnership of health, education and the economy. Specific questions were asked of these issues to people attending the Morton Stanley Festival.

Health

5.7 A fair number of people spoken to were satisfied with the healthcare they were receiving in Redditch and did not think there were any major health issues in the town. Remaining respondents felt that there were the following problems:

- obesity in all age groups;
- alcohol misuse;
- smoking;
- access to healthcare especially with regards to accessing appointments either with their GP or at the hospital;
- lack of exercise and physical activity;
- promotion of healthy eating with very few healthy eating options in the town; and
- lack of health education.

Education

5.8 Generally people interviewed were satisfied with education in Redditch; however, a number of comments were made regarding:

- inconsistency with standards of schools across the town;
- disruptive pupil behaviour;
- poor discipline;
- poor teaching;
- lack of funding; and
- class sizes being too large.

Some suggestions were made as to how education could be improved in Redditch including:

- Increased parental involvement in the school system;
- Communication between parents and schools;
- Better access to schools and teachers; and

- Supportive parents – it was noted that parents needed to take more responsibility for supporting their children through school and with their education.

Economy

5.9 The majority of people interviewed felt that more work needed to be undertaken to improve the economy in Redditch. Some of the issues highlighted included:

- Shortage of jobs;
- Diversity of jobs;
- The need to increase the number of apprenticeships;
- Increase number of work experience and volunteering opportunities;
- Incentives and promote Redditch to businesses;
- Better facilities and services in the town; and
- Jobs with better pay structures.

6. Vision

6.1 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’.

What Redditch Will Look Like in the Future...

6.2 The town already has a reputation for being a very green place to live including three parks with green flag awards. We want the Borough to continue to be renowned for its green spaces and quality environment and look for further opportunities to enhance these assets of the town. We want the Borough to always be clean and tidy with civic spaces that residents can be proud of. We will strive to do our bit to help tackle climate change by continuing to look at ways of cutting energy consumption, increasing recycling and looking at ways of reducing CO2 emissions from buildings and different modes of travel.

6.3 Redditch will be a great place to do business. It will be an area where companies will want to invest and new businesses start up. The employment rate will be high with a diverse range of jobs available across a range of industries and commercial sectors. We will look to support the development of the town centre economy and to maintain and improve on the public and private transport linkages into and out of the town that the Borough depends on for economic prosperity.

- 6.4 We want our residents to be fit and healthy so that they live longer with good health and to ensure that there is less health inequality between the different communities in the Borough. The Borough will have high quality sports facilities, more focused sports development work, particularly, in the communities that have health inequalities. We will more actively promote healthy lifestyles to individuals and employers in Redditch, in particular, eating the right food, stopping smoking and drinking less alcohol. We will also use our licensing powers to support this and our planning powers, so that the physical layout of the Borough encourages residents to walk, cycle, use the stairs, rather than the lift and to generally be more active.
- 6.5 Redditch will be a place where young people are valued and respected. The schools in Redditch will be considered a good standard where people will want to send their children to be educated. Redditch will provide excellent activities, facilities and amenities for young people that will help to inspire and enthuse Redditch's youth to raise their aspirations and ambitions.
- 6.6 Redditch will continue to provide a diverse offer of housing options both in the rented, private and social housing sectors. There will a sustained effort to provide good quality social and affordable housing for people who in the current climate are unable to get onto the property ladder. Housing in Redditch has long been recognised as one of the attractions for people to move to the town and provides families with a good choice of property to live in.
- 6.7 Redditch will continue to be a safe place to live. Work will be undertaken by partners to make sure crime and anti-social behaviour remains low and that the perception of the town centre is improved, in particular, the night time economy will make it a safe and enjoyable place to visit for all.
- 6.8 Finally, the five Super Output Areas in the top 20% of most deprived areas in England will have been physically and socially regenerated.

7. Priorities of Redditch Partnership

7.1 From the evidence and information detailed on the previous pages, Redditch Partnership has deemed that the priorities for Redditch are:

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.

8. How Redditch Partnership Will Deliver this Vision and Priorities

8.1 Redditch Partnership brings together representatives from public, private, community and voluntary agencies to work together to deliver the long-term vision for Redditch. The work of Redditch Partnership is overseen by the Partnership Board of senior representatives of member organisations. Membership of the Board is reviewed annually by Redditch Partnership to ensure representation from across public, private, voluntary and community sectors is fit for purpose. Membership of the Board is as follows:

- Redditch Borough Council – Councillors and Officers
- Worcestershire County Council – Councillor and Officers
- West Mercia Constabulary
- Worcestershire Primary Care Trust
- Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN)
- North East Worcestershire (NEW) College
- Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue
- Business Community Representative (Federation of Small Businesses)
- Hereford & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce
- Redditch Community Safety Partnership Chair
- Redditch Community Forum
- Kingfisher Shopping Centre

- 8.2 Sitting underneath the Management Board are a number of Theme / Sub Groups which reflect the priorities:
- Health and Well Being Group;
 - Local Children’s Partnership;
 - North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit (under development) and the Town Centre Forum; and
 - Areas of Highest Need (Winyates) Multi Agency Partnership (under development).
- 8.3 Other groups which form part of the Partnership structure include the Community Safety Partnership and the Community Forum. (See Appendix A). The Partnership Board provides the strategic direction and oversees the Sustainable Community Strategy while the theme groups are the delivery arm of the Partnership.
- 8.4 Redditch Partnership is committed to expanding the role of voluntary and community organisations, as well as the business community, in delivering services and improving the quality of life for everyone who lives or works in Redditch. This will be achieved by:
- VCS and Business representation on the Partnership Board; and
 - Contributions to and representation on existing theme groups or networks.

9. Monitoring and Managing Performance

- 9.1 There are four action plans for the four priorities. The Redditch Partnership Board will monitor the progress to achieving the priorities of the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy at its bi-monthly meetings. Theme and Task Groups established to deliver on these Action Plans will provide reports at these meetings.
- 9.2 The Action Plans are to be considered ‘live’ documents and the Partnership Board will be able to assess them to identify where further work is needed and take action to adapt them to any changes in need and circumstances which may arise in the future.
- 9.3 Members of Redditch Partnership may submit items for consideration by the Partnership Board in order to shape the work required to deliver the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy. The actions listed here 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.