

Redditch

Worcestershire

'Mark Two' New Town – Designated 10 April 1964

Redditch was already a market town of notable size when in 1964 it was designated as the second New Town (after Telford) aimed at relieving overcrowding in the West Midlands conurbation. It was designed to accommodate around 33,000 people (mainly from Birmingham) over a period of 15 years, with the existing town forming the nucleus of the New Town. Redditch was one of the first New Towns with a distinctive emphasis on public transport rather than the private car. It developed largely as the masterplan envisaged. Today, the New Town accounts for 50% of the borough area and 93% of its population. The emerging Local Plan recognises the influence of Redditch's New Town status on its transport networks, open space, economy, and local distinctiveness.



Redditch Borough Council

Key facts:

- **Location:** 23 kilometres south of Birmingham.
- **2011 Census population:** 84,214, in 34,722 households.¹
- **Local authority:** Redditch Borough Council.
- **Local Plan status:** Saved policies from Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3 (May 2006), and Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4 Submission Version, published March 2014.

New Town designation:

- **Designated:** 10 April 1964.
- **Designated area:** 2,914 hectares.
- **Intended population:** 70,000, revised to 90,000 (population at designation: 32,000).
- **Development Corporation:** Designated to relieve congestion and provide housing and employment for people in the Birmingham area. The Development Corporation aimed to enable residents to work in the town; provide social and commercial facilities; integrate existing and proposed development; provide open space for recreation and amenity; and develop to a high standard of layout and design. Development Corporation wound up 31 March 1985.

Housing, deprivation and health:

- The proportion of homes in Redditch that are owner-occupied (65.7%) is higher than the UK New Towns average and lower than the UK average. 21.2% of households are in social rent, which is in line with the UK New Towns average. Private renting in Redditch is at lower levels than the UK and UK New Towns averages.
- Levels of deprivation are broadly in line with the English New Towns and England averages, but there are pockets of deep deprivation. Life expectancy differs by 9-10 years between the least and most deprived areas in Redditch.
- The 2011 Census reported that the 'general health' of Redditch's residents is consistent with the UK New Towns and UK averages – 1-2% more than the UK New Towns and UK averages declared themselves to be in 'good' health.

Employment/economic profile:

- In 2011-12, 6.3% of Redditch Borough's economically active population were unemployed – lower than the West Midlands and UK averages of 8.9% and 8.1%, respectively.
- Redditch Borough has a high proportion of manufacturing businesses compared with the rest of the county and the region.
- The town provides a shopping centre for the Borough and the surrounding region.
- Within Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP and Worcestershire LEP.

Development Corporation legacy:

- The legacy of the masterplan is still strong through a separation of residential and employment areas.
- The efficient road network has low levels of congestion.
- There are large amounts of open space compared with neighbouring boroughs – Redditch has over 3 million trees.
- Some elements of the layout (such as the segregated busways) are today considered unsafe as they are not overlooked. The masterplan did not make sufficient provision for cyclist and pedestrian networks.

Key issues for the future:

- Meeting housing needs – the tight local authority boundary restricts growth.
- Town centre regeneration – the town lacks a high street and is dominated by a covered shopping mall.
- Regenerating employment areas.
- Regenerating some district centres – improving the public realm and countering the fear of crime.

¹ Local authority area data used – the Borough consists of Redditch New Town and a rural area to the south which is mainly Green Belt

Did you know?

In the 19th century Redditch was the international centre for the needle-making and fishing tackle industries, producing 200 million needles a week.