

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL****CABINET**  
**15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2010****Worcestershire Partnership – Terms of Engagement**

<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:</b>	Stronger Communities
<b>CORPORATE PLAN AIM:</b>	A Well-Run and Responsive Council
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Councillor J-P Campion
<b>DIRECTOR:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Ian Miller, Ext. 2700 ian.miller@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	Appendix 1 - Terms of Engagement

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To ratify the Terms of Engagement that have been adopted by the Worcestershire Partnership.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **Cabinet is asked to RATIFY the Terms of Engagement for use in progressing future significant decisions on Wyre Forest's budget and service design.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 1 February, the Worcestershire Partnership adopted the Terms of Engagement in appendix 1. They address how the statutory bodies in the partnership commit themselves to behave in taking decisions on spending, against the backdrop of expected significant reductions in funding for public services. The Government has already announced total spending reductions of over £6bn in 2010-11: the emergency budget on 22 June will give more detail. Spending plans for future years will emerge in the comprehensive spending review in the autumn.

**4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 While the various statutory bodies are autonomous and are responsible for taking their own budget decisions, the Terms of Engagement recognise that all public sector organisations in Worcestershire face major budget pressures over the next 4-5 years and that there would be benefit in working together in addressing these challenging circumstances. They set out a number of commitments to discuss major budget decisions with one another, to consider service redesign across organisational boundaries and to consult businesses, the third sector and other stakeholders where appropriate.

- 4.2. The review of the Worcestershire Partnership's governance and accountability arrangements undertaken during 2009 led to the recommendation that a partnership-based efficiency and cost reduction strategy should be developed. These Terms of Engagement form an element of the response to the recommendation. They have been drafted and developed by members of the Shenstone Group and Worcestershire Partnership Management Group and formally approved by the Worcestershire Partnership Board.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no significant financial implications from adopting the Terms of Engagement. Depending on what changes other statutory bodies might contemplate in the future, full compliance with some of the commitments might limit the district council's scope for manoeuvre. However the Terms of Engagement are not contractual or binding, and therefore the council retains autonomy in its decision-making.

**6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no legal or policy implications arising from ratification of the Terms of Engagement.

**7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken and it is considered that there are no adverse impacts on the six equality strands. The commitment to consider whether there would be disproportionate cumulative impacts on some communities or groups provides an important check.

**8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 No significant risks arise through ratification of the Terms of Engagement.

**9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The Terms of Engagement demonstrate the strong commitment to working in partnership in Worcestershire in the difficult times that face public services. It is appropriate that Wyre Forest should play its part in working with statutory partners in the best interests of the district by ratifying the document.

**10. CONSULTEES**

- 10.1 Leader of the Council  
10.2 Cabinet Member for Resources  
10.3 Corporate Management Team



## **Worcestershire Partnership Statutory Partners: Terms of Engagement**

The public sector agencies in Worcestershire recognise that over the next 4-5 years, we will all face major budget pressures, requiring changes and sometimes reductions in services.

Our commitment is to:-

1. Talk to each other before we make major budget decisions
2. Protect critical services to the public and businesses as far as possible, by redesigning services across organisational boundaries and achieve savings by sharing strategies, resources and budgets
3. Put the needs of local people and places ahead of bureaucratic needs
4. Prevent the cumulative effect of decisions affecting some communities or groups in society disproportionately
5. Minimise adverse consequences for the local economy
6. Engage with businesses and the third sector where appropriate, and jointly consult stakeholders before major decisions are made.