

Open

Council

Agenda

6pm
Wednesday, 26th July 2017
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster



Council

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COUNCIL MEETING

18th July 2017

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL AND HONORARY ALDERMAN

PRESS AND PUBLIC

Dear Member

YOU ARE INVITED to attend a meeting of the Wyre Forest District Council to be held **at 6.00p.m. on Wednesday 26th July 2017**, in the Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster.

The Agenda for the meeting is enclosed.

Yours sincerely

Ian Miller
Chief Executive

Declaration of Interests by Members – interests of members in contracts and other matters

Declarations of Interest are a standard item on every Council and Committee agenda and each Member must provide a full record of their interests in the Public Register.

In addition, alongside the Register of Interest, the Members Code of Conduct (“the Code”) requires the Declaration of Interests at meetings. Members have to decide first whether or not they have a disclosable interest in the matter under discussion.

Please see the Members’ Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council’s constitution for full details.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) / Other Disclosable Interest (ODI)

DPI’s and ODI’s are interests defined in the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the District.

If you have a DPI (as defined in the Code) in a matter being considered at a meeting of the Council (as defined in the Code), the Council’s Standing Orders require you to leave the room where the meeting is held, for the duration of any discussion or voting on that matter.

If you have an ODI (as defined in the Code) you will need to consider whether you need to leave the room during the consideration of the matter.

(A) TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COUNCIL

The Council

1. Is the ultimate decision making Body.
2. Determines the Budget (but reserves powers to itself in relation to requirements).
3. Is responsible for appointing (and dismissing) the Leader of the Council.
4. Appoints at its Annual Meeting, the Regulatory Committees, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other Committees/Forums necessary to conduct the Council’s business.
5. Decides on matters where the Cabinet is not minded to determine a matter in accordance with Council policy.

(B) MATTERS RESERVED TO THE COUNCIL

1. Those reserved by Law e.g. levying a rate, borrowing money, promotion of or opposition to a Bill in Parliament.
2. Matters reserved to the Council by financial regulations.
3. The adoption and amendment of Standing Orders, including the powers and duties of Committees and other forums.
4. Power to make, amend, revoke or enact or enforce any byelaws.
5. The determination of the objectives of the Council.
6. Matters of new policy or variation of existing policy as contained within the budget and policy framework.
7. Local Development Framework adoption.
8. Any function where a decision would be contrary to a plan, policy, budget or strategy previously adopted by the Council, which would be contrary to the Council’s Standing Orders, Financial Regulations or Executive arrangements.
9. The Scheme of Delegations to Officers.

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At the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 1998. The footage recorded will be available to view on the Council's website for 6 months and shall be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

By entering the meeting room and using the public seating area, you are consenting to be filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and or training purposes.

If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should sit in the Stourport and Bewdley Room where they can still view the meeting.

If any attendee is under the age of 18 the written consent of his or her parent or guardian is required before access to the meeting room is permitted. Persons under 18 are welcome to view the meeting from the Stourport and Bewdley Room.

If you have any queries regarding this, please speak with the Council's Legal Officer at the meeting.

* Unless there are no reports in the open session.

Wyre Forest District Council

Council

Wednesday, 26th July 2017

Council Chamber Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster

Part 1 - Open to the press and public

Agenda item	Subject	Page Number
1.	Prayers To be read by Pastor Rob Palmer, Franche Community Church, Kidderminster.	
2.	Apologies for Absence	
3.	Declarations of Interests by Members In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's) and / or Other Disclosable Interests (ODI's) in the following agenda items and indicate the action that they will be taking when the item is considered. Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's Constitution for full details.	
4.	Minutes To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 th May 2017.	9
5.	Public Participation In accordance with the Council's scheme for public speaking at meetings of Council, to allow members of the public to present petitions, ask questions, or make statements, details of which have been received by 12 noon on Monday 17 th July 2017. <i>If you wish to speak on an urgent matter that has arisen since the deadline and you could not reasonably have known about it at the time, you should register your interest in speaking no later than 9am on the day of the meeting of Council. In the case of a request to speak on an urgent matter, the Solicitor to the Council will rule on whether or not the matter is urgent and that ruling will be final.</i>	
6.	Questions Three questions have been submitted in accordance with Standing Order A5 by Members of the Council. <i>In the case of an urgent matter that has arisen since the deadline above, and could not have been reasonably known at that time, it must be delivered in writing to the Solicitor to the Council no later than 9am on the day of Council.</i>	16

7.	<p>Chairman's Communications</p> <p>To note the engagements of the Chairman of the Council since the Council's last meeting.</p>	17
8.	<p>Leader of the Council Announcements</p> <p>To receive announcements from the Leader of the Council.</p>	
9.	<p>Motions Submitted under Standing Orders</p> <p>No motions have been received in accordance with Standing Orders (Section 7, 4.1).</p>	
10.	<p>Urgent Motions submitted under Standing Orders</p> <p>To consider motions in the order they have been received which, by reason of special circumstances, should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Standing Orders (Section 7, 4.1 (vii)).</p>	
11.	<p>Review of the May 2017 Elections and the June 2017 UK Parliamentary Election</p> <p>To receive a report from The Acting Returning Officer for the UK Parliamentary election, Returning Officer for the District and Parish by-elections, Deputy Returning Officer for the County elections and Counting Officer for the Neighbourhood Plan Referendum, on the local elections held on 4th May 2017 and the UK Parliamentary election held on 8th June 2017.</p>	18
12.	<p>Policy and Budget Framework</p> <p>Matters which require a Decision by Council</p> <p>Recommendations from Cabinet, 14th June 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan – Referendum <p>Please note that the reports and associated documents, referred to above, have been circulated electronically to Members. Public inspection copies are available on request. Please refer to the front cover for contact details.</p>	26
13.	<p>To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.</p>	
14.	<p>Exclusion of the Press and Public</p> <p>To consider passing the following resolution:</p> <p>“That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of “exempt information” as defined in the paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act”.</p>	

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

15.	Capital Programme – Recommendations from Cabinet <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 14th June 2017 - Bewdley Medical Centre and Former Library – Redevelopment• 11th July 2017 - Outline Business Case for Investment in Residential Units	-
16.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.	

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY,
KIDDERMINSTER

10TH MAY 2017 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: D Little (Chairman), J-P Campion (Vice-Chairman), J Aston, J Baker, R Bishop, S J Chambers, S J M Clee, J R Desmond, N J Desmond, H E Dyke, P Dyke, N Gale, I Hardiman, J A Hart, M J Hart, K Henderson, V Higgs, A T Hingley, N Knowles, N Martin, S Miah, F M Oborski MBE, T L Onslow, M Rayner, C Rogers, J A Shaw, J D Smith, R J Vale, S J Walker, H S Williams, S J Williams, R Wilson and G C Yarranton.

C.1 Prayers

Prayers were said by Rev. Denise Williamson, Foley Park Methodist Church.

C.2 Election of Chairman

Councillor D Little was nominated as Chairman. This was moved by Councillor M Hart and seconded by Councillor I Hardiman.

Decision: Councillor D Little be elected as Chairman of Wyre Forest District Council for the ensuing municipal year.

C.3 Chairman – Investiture and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

After being invested with his Chain of Office, Councillor D Little made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman.

C.4 Chairman's Response

The Chairman thanked Members for his appointment as Chairman. He felt honoured and humbled to be given the opportunity and would carry out his duties with a passion. He announced that his charities would be the Air Ambulance and Macmillan Nurses.

C.5 Retiring Chairman

The Leader of the Council thanked the retiring Chairman, Councillor R Bishop, for her hard work over the past 12 months. She had been very active in the local community and had represented the Council at many civic engagements across the County.

C.6 Retiring Chairman – Presentation of Badges

The retiring Chairman was presented with a Past Chairman's badge. Councillor Bishop thanked everyone for all the support she had been given during her year of office. She had raised in excess of £2,000 for her charity, Kidderminster and District Youth Trust. She gave special thanks to her consort, Councillor N Gale.

C.7 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Councillor M Hart nominated Councillor J-P Campion as Vice-Chairman. This was seconded by Councillor I Hardiman.

Decision: Councillor J-P Campion be elected as Vice-Chairman of Wyre Forest District Council for the ensuing municipal year.

C.8 Vice-Chairman – Investiture and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

After being invested with his Badge of Office, Councillor J-P Campion made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Vice-Chairman.

C.9 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

C.10 Declarations of Interests by Members

Councillor J Smith declared that, in relation to agenda item 15 – Changes to the Governance Structure of The Community Housing Group (CHG), she was a Member of the CHG but was covered by a general dispensation relating to outside bodies which covers all Members.

Councillor C Rogers declared that he was a Member of the CHG and was covered by the same dispensation.

Councillor S Miah declared that he was a Member of the CHG and was covered by the same dispensation.

Councillor J Hart declared that he was a Member of the CHG and was covered by the same dispensation.

Councillor M Rayner declared that she was a Member of the CHG and was covered by the same dispensation.

Councillor S Clee declared that he was a Member of Vestia and was covered by the same dispensation.

C.11 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd February 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C.12 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

C.13 Questions

There were no questions.

C.14 Chairman's Communications

The Council received a list of functions attended by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman since the Council's last meeting.

C.15 Changes to the Governance Structure of The Community Housing Group

The Leader of the Council presented a report from the Chief Executive which asked Members to consider the Council's position on changes to the governance structure of the Community Housing Group, and moved the recommendations as set out in the report. The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being seconded the proposal.

Councillors N Knowles and J Shaw spoke against the recommendations. Councillor Shaw expressed concern over the removal of the role of elected representatives on the Group and the loss of accountability to Councillors and tenants. Councillor F Oborski MBE stated that as a local authority the Council had a duty to carry out the law and, whilst it may not be what Members personally would want to see passed, the Council was not in a position to be selective on what pieces of legislation it implemented. She welcomed the opportunity for Councillors to be able to put themselves forward for consideration in the event of a vacancy arising on the board under the new structure.

Upon a show of hands the recommendation was agreed. Councillor N Knowles, J Shaw and V Higgs voted against the proposal and asked for their votes to be recorded.

Decision:

- 1. The changes to the governance structure of the Community Housing Group (CHG) be supported;**
- 2. the three Councillors serving on the CHG membership be mandated to sign in favour of the written special resolution to convert CHG into a community benefit society and to adopt rules governing the society;**
- 3. any question of mandating how the Council shareholder should vote in future would be a matter for Cabinet to decide be noted;**
- 4. delegated authority be given to the Solicitor to the Council to**

terminate the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and Community Housing Group relating to Community Member Nominations.

C.16 Political and Constitutional Structures 2017/2018

Council received a report from the Solicitor to the Council on the proposed political and constitutional structures for the municipal year 2017/2018.

The Leader of the Council drew Members' attention to the additional papers which had been circulated following the declaration of the by-election result on 5th May 2017. He moved all recommendations in the report subject to two amendments to the appointments to outside bodies. The first was replacing Councillor R Vale with Councillor R Wilson on Bewdley Museum Management Committee, as Councillor Vale would sit on the Committee in her County Council role, and the second was the substitution of Councillor R Bishop with Councillor S Chambers on the Wyre Forest Local Children and Young People's Trust.

Councillor N Knowles moved three amendments en bloc to the appointments to outside bodies. Upon a show of hands the amendment was lost.

Decision:

- 1. The proposed Political Management Structure of committees for 2017/2018 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.**
- 2. The Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees as contained in Appendix 2 be agreed.**
- 3. The Municipal Calendar as set out in Appendix 3 be adopted.**
- 4. Approve the revised chart of political balance as set out in Appendix 4 be approved.**
- 5. The appointments to outside bodies as set out in Appendix 5 be agreed, subject to the substitution of Councillor R Vale with Councillor R Wilson on Bewdley Museum Management Committee and the substitution of Councillor R Bishop with Councillor S Chambers on Wyre Forest Local Children and Young People's Trust.**
- 6. The Solicitor to the Council be authorised to settle any outstanding details relating to the political structures and to make changes as necessary to the Council's Constitution to give effect to the Council's decisions and any other revisions necessary to reflect needs or circumstances.**

C.17 Members' Annual Activity Reports and Attendance 2016/2017

Council received the schedule of Members' Activity reports which gave details of activities in their role as District Councillors for the 2016/2017 municipal year and a record of attendance.

Decision: The reports and attendance be noted.

C.18 Annual Reports for the Municipal Year 2016/2017

Council received the annual reports from the Leader of the Council, and the Chairmen of both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Ethics and Standards Committee.

Decision: The Annual Reports for the Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Ethics and Standards Committee be noted.

C.19 Leader of the Council Announcements

The Leader referred Members to his tabled report.

C.20 Motions Submitted under Standing Orders

One motion had been received in accordance with Standing Orders (Section 7, 4.1).

Motion from Councillor Nigel Knowles, Leader Labour Group

"Wyre Forest District Council is determined to make a positive difference to the economic and social structure of our District, and to provide an income stream to alleviate short falls in our budget.

Council approved the borrowing of £35million to help achieve that ambition, and all Council members should be included in the project.

There is a real need to provide housing in the District, both social and private residential and affordable to accommodate all of those 2,000 on the housing waiting list or those who are struggling to get onto the housing ladder with a mortgage, often presently unaffordable.

We welcome the prospect of WFDC, and a suitable partner, being a provider of new and refurbished rented housing and accommodation at fair rent levels.

Council urges that the project gets underway at the earliest opportunity, and therefore will illustrate suitable sites and units, and seek a building partner.

We will continue to support, given the strictures of legislation, local, social community housing groups.

Agenda Item No. 4

Council will press ahead with the provision of small scale start-up industrial units on our currently available sites.

We will endeavour to be a strong player for this sector, with partners who can give the best terms and conditions for young people who can benefit from apprenticeships and fair wages in environments where health and safety is a priority, and also have the opportunity to join a trade union.”

Councillor Knowles presented the motion and stressed the importance of all Members being given the opportunity to be involved in the project to enable them to make a real contribution towards this essential part of the District Council’s programme.

The Leader of the Council tabled an amendment to the motion on behalf of the Conservative Group. He stated that housing and employment was vitally important to the local communities across the District, and outlined the importance of achieving an income from investments to support the financial position of the Council. He assured Members that the projects would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and in response to concerns raised by the Chairman of the Local Plans Review Panel, Councillor F Oborski MBE, he advised that the process would not prejudice the review of the Local Plan, which would play a vital part in the scheme by allocating housing and employment land across the District.

Councillor Knowles accepted the amendment to the motion and urged all Members to support it. A robust discussion ensued and concerns were raised about the provision of housing for care leavers and the people across the District who were on low incomes and unable to obtain a mortgage.

Upon a show of hands the motion as amended was agreed.

Decision: The following motion received from the Leader of the Labour Group, as amended by the Conservative Group be agreed:

Wyre Forest District Council is determined to make a positive difference to the economic and social structure of our District, and to provide an income stream to alleviate short falls in our budget.

Council approved the borrowing of £35million to help achieve that ambition, and notes that, while not all political groups voted for the budget, all Council members will be included in the project by consideration of reports at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Council accepts there is a real need to provide housing in the District, both private residential and all types of affordable tenures, and will continue to address those on the housing waiting list or those who are struggling to get onto the housing ladder with a mortgage, often presently unaffordable.

Council welcomes the opportunity of being a provider of new and refurbished rented housing and accommodation at fair rent levels,

where this is financially viable, and of working with suitable partners on such projects where appropriate.

Council supports projects getting underway at the earliest opportunity, and therefore endorses the illustration of suitable sites and units and efforts to seek potential partners.

Council welcomes the grant from the Government to support development of community-led housing projects in Wyre Forest and will work with local community groups and others to ensure most effective use of the funding.

Council welcomes the Cabinet's decision to press ahead with the provision of small scale start-up industrial units on our currently available sites.

Council believes that supporting housing and economic growth in the district is the best approach to improved community well-being, including access to jobs and appropriate housing to meet residents' needs.

C.21 Urgent Motions submitted under Standing Orders

There were no urgent motions.

The Chief Financial Officer left the meeting at this point.

C.22 Senior Management Structure

Council considered a report from the Chief Executive which proposed changes to the senior management structure of the Council. The Leader of the Council moved the recommendations and outlined the rationale for the review of the management structure following the resignation of a deputy chief officer post holder.

Decision: The creation of the post of Corporate Director: Resources which would be filled by the Chief Financial Officer with effect from 1 June 2017 be agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.28pm.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
26TH JULY 2017**

QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL

1. Question from Councillor S Miah to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being

In light of the tragic fire in Kensington could the Cabinet Member please tell me what steps are being taken to ensure that the high rise blocks in Kidderminster are as safe as they can possibly be?

What steps are being taken to reassure residents of those flats?

What steps are being taken to liaise with HWFRA to ensure that any requirements or recommendations from the FRA are carried out?

2. Question from Councillor F Oborski MBE to the Leader of the Council

Could the Leader please tell me what expectation he has in terms of work/time commitment for Cabinet Members in Wyre Forest i.e. How many hours/ days a week does he commit to as Leader and how much time do Cabinet Members commit?

3. Question from Councillor F Oborski MBE to the Leader of the Council

Could the Leader please tell me what progress has been made in getting a bus service diverted to serve the Leisure Centre?

Chairman's List of Functions – 2017/18

MAY 2017

- 12th Bewdley Town Council Mayor Making
- 14th Upton upon Severn Civic Service
- 17th Kidderminster Town Council Mayor Making
- 19th Weavers Cottage Celebration Event
- 21st Shrewsbury Mayor's Sunday
- 22nd Redditch Borough Council Mayor Making
- 24th Ludlow Town Council Mayor Making

JUNE 2017

- 10th Bewdley Carnival
- 16th Stourport Mayor's Civic Reception
- 18th Worcester Civic Service
- 19th Armed Forces Day Flag Flying
- 25th Bewdley Mayor's Sunday*

JULY 2017

- 16th Wychavon Civic Service

* Denotes attendance by Vice Chairman

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**COUNCIL**
26 JULY 2017**Review of the May 2017 Elections and the June 2017 UK Parliamentary Election**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor N J Desmond, Cabinet Member for Resources
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	The Acting Returning Officer for the UK Parliamentary election, Returning Officer for the District and Parish by-elections, Deputy Returning Officer for the County elections and Counting Officer for the Neighbourhood Plan Referendum
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ian Miller, Chief Executive ian.miller@wyreforestdc.gov.uk Ext 2700
APPENDICES:	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a report on the Local elections held on 4 May 2017 and the UK Parliamentary election held on 8 June 2017.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the report on the Local elections in May 2017 and the UK Parliamentary election in June 2017.
- 2.2 **DELEGATE** authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources, to publish consultation proposals for a Polling Places review for Mitton ward to seek an alternative to St Wulstan's Community Centre, Stourport.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Elections were held in the Wyre Forest District on Thursday 4 May 2017 for **Worcestershire County Council** (9 Divisions with 10 seats to elect), District council (1 ward by-election with 1 seat), **Kidderminster Town Council** (1 Parish ward by-election with 1 seat), and **Stourport-on-Severn Town Council** (2 Parish ward by-elections with 1 seat each). In **Churchill & Blakedown** there was a Neighbourhood Plan Referendum.
- 3.2 On 18 April 2017 a snap UK Parliamentary election was called which was held on 8 June 2017.

3.3 The overall turnout for each of the elections held on 4 May 2017 and 8 June 2017 was as follows:

- **Worcestershire County Council**– 36.11% for the Wyre Forest District which is higher than the overall County turnout of 34.81%. The count was held on 5 May 2017 and the last seat was declared at 16:05.
- **Wyre Forest District Council**– 28.16%.
- **Kidderminster Town Council**– 27.34%.
- **Stourport-on-Severn Town Council** – 35.88% in Arley Kings West ward and 27.58% in Stour & Wilden ward.
- **Neighbourhood Plan referendum** – 39.62%
- **UK Parliamentary** - 65.87% which is slightly below the national average but an increase from 2015 in the Wyre Forest Constituency.

3.4 For comparison purposes a breakdown of the overall turnout figures for the different polls against the previous elections is set out in Table 1.

Table 1

Turnout %	2015	2017	% difference in Turnout
UK Parliamentary Wyre Forest Constituency	64%	65.87%	1.87%
UK Parliamentary - UK as a whole	66.10%	68.73%	2.63%

Note * The 2015 UK Parliamentary election was combined with District and Parish elections.

Turnout %	2013	2017	% difference in Turnout
Worcestershire County Council - Wyre Forest Area	33.65%	36.11%	2.46%
Worcestershire County Council - Whole County	30.70%	34.81%	4.11%
Bewdley	35.80%	38.70%	2.90%
Chaddesley	32.30%	38.68%	6.38%
Cookley, Wolverley & Wribbenhall	33.80%	36.50%	2.70%
St Barnabas	29.42%	33.99%	4.57%
St Chads	30.60%	30.95%	1.56%
St Georges & St Oswalds	26.50%	28.06%	1.56%
St Johns	30%	28.33%	-1.67%
St Marys	24.60%	24.65%	0.05%
Stourport-on-Severn	29.10%	30.26%	1.16%

Turnout %	2016	2017	% difference in Turnout
Wyre Forest District Council - Mitton Ward	26.60%	28.16%	1.56%

Note ** The election in the Mitton ward in 2016 was combined with Police and Crime commissioner elections.

Turnout %	2016	2017	% difference in Turnout
Kidderminster Town Council- Foley Park & Hoobrook Ward	27.60%	27.34%	-0.26%

Note *** The election in the Foley Park and Hoobrook ward in 2016 was combined with Police & Crime Commissioner elections.

Turnout %	2015	2017	% difference in Turnout
Stourport-on-Severn Town Council - Areley Kings West Ward	72.70%	35.88%	-36.82%
Stourport-on-Severn Town Council - Stour & Wilden Ward	60.90%	27.58%	-33.32%

Note **** The elections for Stourport-on-Severn Town Council held in 2015 were combined with UK Parliamentary and District elections.

- 3.5 A breakdown of the counting areas used for the UK Parliamentary election is set out in Table 2.

Table 2

	Count Area	Electorate	Votes cast	Turnout
1	Areley Kings & Riverside	5541	3417	61.67%
2	Aggborough & Spennells and Offmore & Comberton	11775	7409	62.92%
3	Broadwaters and Foley Park & Hoobrook	11783	6415	54.44%
4	Wyre Forest Rural	5956	4235	71.10%
5	Mitton & Lickhill	8075	4840	59.94%
6	Franche & Habberley North and Blakebrook & Habberley South	11760	6960	59.18%
7	Bewdley & Rock and Wribbenhall & Arley	9248	6491	70.19%

8 & 9	Postal Votes	13620	11452	84.08%
	Total	77758	51219	65.87%

3.6 The figures in Table 2 show that turnout varied between 54% (Broadwaters and Foley Park & Hoobrook) and 71% in (Wyre Forest Rural). The turnout by postal voters was 84%. There is no breakdown to ward level so we are unable to examine the return rate per ward. This could explain some of the variation in turnout between wards.

3.7 At the **UK Parliamentary election** count on 8 June, 90 ballot papers were rejected. 76 were rejected as 'void for uncertainty' and 14 for 'excess votes'. At the count on May 5 the following number of ballot papers was rejected for each election:

- **Worcestershire County Council** – a total of 38 ballot papers were rejected. 24 voters were rejected for 'excess votes', a total of 13 were 'void for uncertainty' and 1 was rejected as 'writing or mark by which the voter could be identified'.
- **Wyre Forest District Council by- election-** 10 ballot papers were rejected with 6 for 'excess votes', 1 'writing or mark by which the voter could be identified' and 3 'void for uncertainty'.
- **Kidderminster Town Council** - a total of 12 ballot papers were rejected with 11 being 'void for uncertainty' and one for 'excess votes'
- **Stourport-on-Severn Town Council** – A total of 12 ballot papers were rejected over the 2 by elections with 5 being 'excess votes' and 7 ' void for uncertainty'.
- **Neighbourhood Planning Referendum** – all 20 of the ballot papers rejected were 'void for uncertainty'.

3.8 The number of postal votes issued and counted at the elections in May 2017 and at the UK Parliamentary election is set out in Table 3.

Table 3

Postal Votes	May 2016	June 2016	May 2017	June 2017
A: Number of Postal Votes issued	11,411	13,706	12,036	13,622
B: Number of Postal Votes Returned	8,143	12,466	8,537	11,926
C: Postal Votes accepted as valid and counted	7,691	12,229	8,401	11,452
D: Percentage of Postal votes included in the count (C/A * 100)	67.4%	89.2%	69.8%	84.1%

- 3.9 The breakdown of postal votes per ward for the elections in May 2017 and at the UK Parliamentary election in June 2017 is set out in Table 4.

Table 4

Ward	Number of Postal voters for elections in May 2017	Number of Postal voters for election in June 2017	Increase in Postal Voters from elections in May 2017	% increase in Postal voters from elections in May 2017
Aggborough & Spennells	962	1075	113	11.75%
Areley Kings & Riverside	1036	1249	213	20.56%
Bewdley & Rock	1171	1298	127	10.85%
Blakebrook & Habberley South	905	1007	102	11.27%
Broadwaters	1177	1343	166	14.10%
Foley Park & Hoobrook	1274	1421	147	11.54%
Franche & Habberley North	1042	1141	99	9.50%
Lickhill	320	392	72	22.50%
Mitton	1078	1215	137	12.71%
Offmore & Comberton	1064	1206	142	13.35%
Wribbenhall & Arley	769	886	117	15.21%
Wyre Forest Rural	1214	1387	173	14.25%
Total	12012	13620	1608	13.39%

- 3.10 Within the figures for the UK Parliamentary postal vote figures are 149 postal ballot packs issued to overseas electors of which 120 were returned from across the world, these include: Australia, Canada, Utah in America, New Zealand, Egypt as well as many from European countries. The return rate for our overseas electors was 80% which is broadly in line with those returned in the Wyre Forest district. All overseas electors (UK Citizens living abroad) have to provide a qualifying address which they lived at and were registered to vote in the Wyre Forest district within the last 15 years.
- 3.11 Fifteen postal vote packs have been received in the post since 8 June 2017, with three of these from overseas postal voters.
- 3.12 The overall increase in postal voters between the elections in May 2017 and June 2017 was to be expected due to the nature of the UK Parliamentary election, the short notice period of the election and with more electors being away on holiday in June compared to May.

- 3.13 The trend of postal voters being far more likely to cast their vote than people voting in person has become well established. Therefore, while other measures to encourage participation will continue, the most effective is likely to be encouraging more people to register for a postal vote.
- 3.14 By law the Electoral Registration Officer must write to postal voters whose ballot papers were not included in the count because their personal identifiers on the postal vote could not be verified and to explain the reason why e.g. incorrect date of birth provided or signature didn't match that on the original application form. A total of 175 letters have been issued to those electors who had a postal vote rejected in May 2017. Those where the signature didn't match the original supplied to us will also be supplied with an identifier refresh form to complete. A total of 380 letters have been issued in respect to the UK Parliamentary election for the same purpose.
- 3.15 The breakdown of proxy voters per ward for the elections in May 2017 and at the UK Parliamentary election in June 2017 is set out in Table 5.

Table 5

Ward	Number of Proxy voters for elections in May 2017	Number of Proxy voters for elections in June 2017	Increase in Proxy Voters from elections in May 2017	% increase in Proxy voters from elections in May 2017
Aggborough & Spennells	4	26	22	550%
Areley Kings & Riverside	2	30	28	1400%
Bewdley & Rock	4	31	27	675%
Blakebrook & Haberley South	6	34	28	467%
Broadwaters	5	49	44	880%
Foley Park & Hoobrook	3	32	29	967%
Franche & Habberley North	3	22	19	633%
Lickhill	0	6	6	-
Mitton	3	31	28	933%
Offmore & Comberton	1	20	19	1900%
Wribbenhall & Arley	11	20	9	82%
Wyre Forest Rural	8	44	36	450%
Total	50	345	295	590%

- 3.16 Whilst the increase of proxy voters between the elections in May 2017 and June 2017 is substantial, it is not as large as the increase for the Referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union in June 2016. In May 2016, 52 electors had

appointed a proxy whilst in June 2016 that had risen to 536. That is an increase of 484 compared to this year's increase of 295.

4. POLLING PLACE REVIEW

- 4.1 There is a need for a polling places review in one case where, in the medium to longer term, the availability of the building is uncertain. St Wulstan's Community Centre was not available for the May and June elections as it was awaiting repairs to the roof, and the timing of these works is not known. The St Michaels Scout Hut in Mitton Close was used successfully for both elections. The report therefore includes a recommendation to authorise the Chief Executive to issue consultation proposals to review the polling places for Mitton ward – a final decision on any change would be taken by Full Council and proposals will be brought for decision no later than February 2018.

5. FEEDBACK FROM THE DEBRIEFING MEETING.

- 5.1 A 'wash up' de-brief was held with agents and candidates on 29 June to discuss the preparation and delivery of the elections in May and the UK Parliamentary election in June 2017. This meeting was attended by 4 Political parties. The main discussions included:

- The local elections in May and the UK Parliamentary election in June were well run and organised. Thanks were given to the Returning Officer and the Elections staff from all parties present.
- There were no issues reported in respect of queuing at polling stations and the voting procedure ran smoothly.
- Disappointing that in June a political party contravened guidance given on not displaying advertising material on the highway or county or district council assets. Appropriate action was taken by the Acting Returning Officer and County Council where the incidents were reported to them.
- Some parties wanted consideration on additional resources needed for the running of an election with additional polling stations at national elections and in May 2019 with the 'whole council elections' combined with Town and Parish elections.
- The timetable for issuing of postal votes was discussed as parties were requested that Postal votes are not issued as early to help with their campaigning. Legislation dictates that Returning Officers must issue Postal votes as soon as practicably possible after the close of nominations. This is to ensure the maximum time is given for the voter to receive and return their vote.
- The short timetable for the UK Parliamentary election was raised as it caused problems for campaigners. Whilst this will be fed back to the Electoral Commission and Cabinet Office, the timetable is set by legislation.
- New count location at Wyre Forest Leisure Centre was well received, with no major problems. A few small technical issues revolving around the sound and

visual aspects were highlighted in May and improved for the UK Parliamentary election count in June.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No additional financial implications arise from this report. The financial accounts for the different elections held in May and June 2017 are currently being compiled so the appropriate recharges can be made to the Electoral Claims Unit, Worcester County Council, Kidderminster Town Council and Stourport-on-Severn Town Council. The share of the costs for the District Council by-election and Neighbourhood Plan Referendum are met by the Council budgets for this purpose.

7. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report has no specific legal or policy implications. The legislative framework for implementing the UK Parliamentary and Local elections as well as electoral registration can be viewed at <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk>.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report. However, all elections and electoral registration activity has due regard to the public sector equality duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 All elections and electoral registration work is supported by robust risk management plans to ensure contingency arrangements are in place for meeting electoral legislation at all times.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 The Council is invited to note this review of the May 2017 Local elections and June 2017 UK Parliamentary election.

11. CONSULTEES

- 11.1 Cabinet Member for Resources
11.2 Corporate Leadership team

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 A breakdown of the full results for each of the elections held on 4 May 2017 and the UK Parliamentary election held on 8 June 2017 can be found at

<http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/the-council/elections-and-voting/election-results.aspx>

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
26TH JULY 2017**

**POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK
MATTERS WHICH REQUIRE A DECISION BY COUNCIL**

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET –
14TH JUNE 2017**

Purpose of Report

To consider recommendations from the Cabinet on matters outside the policy framework or approved budget of the Council.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Would Councillors please note that the related reports and documents have not been included in the Council book, as they have already been sent to Members via the Cabinet agenda. A public inspection copy is available on request. The policy documents, referred to below, have been posted on the Council's website.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	CABINET MEMBER
<p>Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan – Referendum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the Development Plan for Wyre Forest District Council. 	<p>Councillor I Hardiman</p>