

Open

Council

Agenda

6pm
Wednesday, 24th July 2019
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster



Council

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5. This Agenda can be made available in larger print on request; if you require a copy please contact:

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COUNCIL MEETING

16th July 2019

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL AND HONORARY ALDERMEN

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 24th July 2019**, 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, 24th July 2019

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 Rev. Mark Turner, St. Bartholomew's, Areley Kings.	
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 22 nd May 2019.	10
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 15 th July 2019. <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 Twelve 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</i>	20

	<i>must be delivered in writing to the Solicitor to the Council no later than 9am on the day of Council.</i>	
7.	<p>Chairman's Communications</p> <p>To note the engagements of the Chairman of the Council since the Council's last meeting.</p>	23
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>Three motions have been received in accordance with Standing Orders (Section 7, 4.1).</p> <p>1. Notice of Motion by the Conservative Group</p> <p>This Council deplores domestic violence and abuse in any form.</p> <p>This Council resolves to request that the Cabinet Member for Culture Leisure and Community Protection confirm that this Council does not condone domestic violence and abuse in any way.</p> <p>This Council further resolves to request that the Cabinet Member for Culture Leisure and Community Protection bring a report back to Full Council in this municipal year setting out what steps she has taken and will take to ensure that all elected members and staff are aware that violence of any type, especially domestic violence and abuse will not be tolerated.</p> <p>This Council regrets that any elected member especially in their capacity as a councillor would seek to condone domestic violence in any way.</p> <p>This Council resolves that the Leader of the Council publicly comment and confirm to this Council that his current Deputy Leader enjoys his full support.</p> <p>2. Motion from Councillor F M Oborski MBE</p> <p>The Council values all sections of the community and welcomes the contribution of LGBT+ groups to the diversity of Wyre Forest. Council therefore resolves that, from 2020, the Rainbow Flag will be flown during Pride Month.</p> <p>3. Motion from Councillor V Caulfield</p> <p>Council recognises that as a nation we must reduce our use of single use plastics. Council therefore resolves to follow the example of Worcestershire County Council to reduce plastic waste by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertaking an audit of single-use plastics across the council and all council commissioned services, replacing them with sustainable or re-usable alternatives where practicable; 2. Investigating the possibility of requiring caterers at Council 	

	<p>events to avoid disposable plastic items as a condition of their contract;</p> <p>3. Ceasing the provision of plastic water cups at Wyre Forest House and replacing them with washable reusable alternatives;</p> <p>4. Encouraging cafes within council-owned buildings and land to continue to support the Refill scheme and provide free water refills;</p> <p>5. Informing members of the public in its online and written communications about reducing plastic waste;</p> <p>6. Encouraging our towns and local communities to go plastic free.</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>Electoral Issues including Review of the May 2019 Elections</p> <p>To consider a report from the Chief Executive on a number of matters relating to elections as well as to provide a report on the local elections held on 2 May 2019 and the European Parliamentary election held on 23 May 2019.</p>	24
12.	<p>Policy and Budget Framework</p> <p>Matters which require a Decision by Council.</p> <p>a) Recommendations from Cabinet – 16th July 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Management Strategy <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>	40
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.	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.	
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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY,
KIDDERMINSTER

22ND MAY 2019 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: S Williams (Chairman), J Aston, G W Ballinger, C J Barnett, J F Byng, V Caulfield, S J Chambers, A Coleman, R H Coleman, B S Dawes, N J Desmond, H E Dyke, P Dyke, C E E Edginton-White, N Gale, S Griffiths, I Hardiman, P Harrison, M J Hart, K Henderson, L J Jones, A L L'Huillier, N Martin, S Miah, F M Oborski MBE, M Rayner, C Rogers, S E N Rook , D R Sheppard, J W R Thomas, A Totty, L Whitehouse and P W M Young.

C.1 Prayers

Prayers were read by Imam Syed Rahat Ahmad and Revd Robert Legge, Team Vicar, Kidderminster East.

C.2 Election of Chairman

Councillor S Miah was nominated as Chairman. This was moved by Councillor F Oborski MBE and seconded by Councillor G Ballinger.

Decision: Councillor S Miah be elected as Chairman of the Council for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

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

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

C.4 Chairman's Response

The Chairman thanked Council for its unanimous support for his appointment. He felt truly humbled and proud to be given the opportunity to take on this role. He said this was an historic moment for Wyre Forest District Council in electing its first Muslim Chairman, and spoke about the pride that was felt within the Bangladeshi Community.

C.5 Retiring Chairman

The retiring Chairman was presented with a Past Chairman's badge. The Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor M Hart, thanked the retiring Chairman, Councillor S Williams, for his hard work during the last municipal year. He said that Councillor Williams was the first Member to have

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chaired the Council on four separate occasions; and each time it had been with dignity and distinction, and ably supported by his wife Christine. He thanked him for his previous terms as Chairman and for his 20 years of loyal service across the District.

The Leader of the Independent, Liberal Democrat and Green Group, Councillor F Oborski MBE, said that Councillor Williams had been a fantastic Chairman of the Council, and probably one of the best Chairs of the Planning Committee that any District Council in Worcestershire could have. She thanked him for the wonderful job he had done representing the Council over the years.

The Leader of the Independent, Community and Health Concern Group, Councillor G Ballinger, said that Councillor Williams was well known to the people of Wyre Forest, not just because of all the Civic events he had attended with great dignity: it was because of his actions at Planning Committees where he was fair and impartial to everybody. He wished him a happy retirement.

Councillor Williams thanked the Group Leaders for their kind words. He said he was honoured to have been given the Chairmanship on four occasions. He thanked the Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council for all their help with the meetings and also thanked his wife for all her help during his four years as Chairman. He was pleased to announce that he had raised £1,550 during the year for his chosen charity; Kidderminster Hospital League of Friends, and thanked Karen Walsh, Executive Support Officer, for her invaluable help over the last 12 months.

He added that for the last 12 months he had been a Member of Wyre Choir and thanked them for their friendliness and good humour. In relation to his keen interest in planning matters, he thanked the Principal Solicitor, Jane Alexander for all her help with case work and meetings over the years. He wished all Members, Officers and employees all the very best for the future.

C.6 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Councillor G Ballinger nominated Councillor P Young as Vice-Chairman. This was seconded by Councillor F Oborski MBE.

Decision: Councillor P Young be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

C.7 Vice-Chairman – Investiture and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

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

C.8 Election of Leader

Council considered a report from the Chief Executive which asked

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Members to elect a Leader of the Council for the period to the annual general meeting following the ordinary elections in 2023, in accordance with sections 44A and 44D of the Local Government Act 2000.

Councillor F Oborski MBE addressed Members and nominated Councillor G Ballinger for the position of Leader of the Council. The proposal was seconded by Councillor N Martin.

There were no other nominations and following a vote Councillor G Ballinger was elected as Leader of the Council.

Decision: Councillor G Ballinger be appointed as Leader of the Council.

C.9 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T L Onslow.

C.10 Declarations of Interests by Members

There were no declarations of interest.

C.11 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 27th February 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C.12 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

C.13 Questions

No questions had been submitted in accordance with Standing Order A5 by Members of the Council.

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.

The Chairman announced that his chosen charities for the municipal year are Kidderminster & District Youth Trust, HELP, which has been set up to help homeless people in the District, and Stourport Cancer Research Committee.

C.15. Political and Constitutional Structures 2019/2020

Council received a report from the Solicitor to the Council on the proposed political and constitutional structures for the municipal year 2019/2020.

The Leader of the Council presented the report and drew Members'

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attention to an amendment to the committee appointments which had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting. He moved all the recommendations as set out in the report, as amended.

The Leader of the Conservative Group and former Leader of the Council, Councillor M Hart, thanked the Chief Executive, the Corporate Leadership Team and all of the Council's employees for their hard and diligent work across the District. He said it had been an absolute privilege being the Leader of the Council for the last 5 years. He said as Leader of the opposition Group, he looked forward to working constructively and positively on behalf of the Conservative Group, with Members of the Progressive Alliance. He thanked the Leader of the Council for the proposed Chairman and Vice-Chairman Committee positions for Conservative Group Members.

Upon a vote the recommendations, as amended, were carried unanimously.

Decision:

- 1.1 The revisions to the Constitution as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be agreed.**
- 1.2 The proposed Political Management Structure of committees for 2019/2020 as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved.**
- 1.3 The Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees as contained in the amended version of Appendix 3 of the report be agreed.**
- 1.4 The Municipal Calendar as set out in Appendix 4 of the report be adopted.**
- 1.5 The revised chart of political balance as set out in Appendix 5 of the report be approved.**
- 1.6 The appointments to outside bodies as set out in Appendix 6 of the report be agreed.**
- 1.7 To commission a review of the Council's procedures in respect of handling complaints and concerns about behaviour and standards, and invite the Ethics and Standards Committee to produce a report with recommendations for the July meeting of Council, as outlined in Appendix 7.**
- 1.8 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.16 Members' Annual Activity Reports and Attendance 2018/2019

Council received the schedule of Members' Annual Activity Reports which gave details of their activities in their role as District Councillors for the 2018/2019 municipal year and a record of attendance.

Decision: The reports and attendance be noted.

C.17 Annual Reports for the Municipal Year 2018/2019

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

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

C.18 Leader of the Council Announcements

The Leader of the Council said that the newly formed Progressive Alliance had come together with a common objective; to work in the best interests of the people of Wyre Forest. He added that the new Alliance would take a fresh look at the way things are done in the Wyre Forest and would continue to improve the services for its residents through transformation initiatives. He said that the authority would continue to explore different ways of delivering services and generating income. He said there was no room for complacency as the authority had a major challenge ahead to close the projected funding gap as a result of the changes to Local Government funding from Central Government.

C.19 Motions Submitted under Standing Orders

Four motions had been received in accordance with Standing Orders (Section 7, 4.1).

1. Motion from Councillor Graham Ballinger, Independent Community and Health Concern Group

Council recognises that the Leader and Cabinet structure leads to many "backbench" Councillors feeling that they have little opportunity for active involvement. Council therefore resolves to convene a review panel of the Group Leaders and Deputy Group Leaders to investigate how the committee system has been reintroduced in other councils such as Worcester City Council and bring a report to Council within 6 months on a suggested committee system for the governance of Wyre Forest District Council.

Councillor Ballinger presented the motion. He said that for some time his political party had expressed concern about the whole concept of having a

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powerful Cabinet which can leave certain Members in the dark about what was going on. He added that the request for a review into what alternatives to the Leader and Cabinet System were available to the authority to enable greater involvement of Members from all sides in the decision making progress should be supported. Councillor F Oborski MBE seconded the motion.

On behalf of the Conservative Group, Councillor M Hart spoke against the motion. He said that as a result of the Local Government Act 2000, the Cabinet style system was introduced to allow Councils to remove the old style committee system as it was said that too much power was vested in the hands of the chairmen of those committees. He added that the Cabinet system led to greater openness and transparency. He said that the Conservative Group do not support the implication that just because you are a backbencher you do not have any involvement. He added that the Council embraces the work of backbenchers who make really important decisions on the Licensing and Environmental Committee, the Planning Committee, Budget Review Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A discussion ensued and upon a vote, the motion was carried.

2. Motion from Councillor Fran Oborski MBE, Independent, Liberal Democrat and Green Group

Council recognises that trees play a major part in reduction of our carbon footprint and are a vital part of our ecosystem. Council therefore resolves to work in partnership with all local schools and with Worcestershire County Council to ensure that, within the life of this 4 year Council term, every child in a Wyre Forest school is able to be involved in planting a tree. Council invites the Cabinet to consider any financial implications arising from this resolution and, if necessary, to bring forward proposals for funding as part of the next medium term financial strategy.

Councillor F Oborski MBE presented the motion. She said that she was aware that the Labour Group was proposing an amendment to the motion which she was happy to accept. She added that the issues surrounding climate change was one of the most important things that the world was facing at the moment and it was really important that the incredibly important role of trees as part of the ecosystem was acknowledged.

Councillor V Caulfield said it gave her great pleasure to second the motion. She said that climate breakdown was the biggest threat we faced and it was an emergency that would affect us locally. She added that we all have a responsibility to act now, and not forgetting the responsibility we have to future generations.

Councillor L Whitehouse presented the amendment which was seconded by Councillor H Dyke.

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Councillor N Desmond spoke against the motion. He said that he and his Conservative colleagues agreed with the sentiment behind the motion and totally agree with the importance of climate change and the need for urgent action. He said that it was felt that the motion was slightly premature. He added that if circa 6000 trees were going to be planted, there was a need for a fully costed business plan to set out details such as who would plant the trees, where would they be planted, how would it be funded and future maintenance of the trees. He said that the Conservative Group agreed with the sentiment of the motion and thought it was an excellent idea: however it needed some more facts and figures before they could support it.

Councillor P Dyke left the meeting and 7.14pm and returned at 7.16pm.

A full and robust debate on the amended motion took place. Upon a vote, the motion as amended by the Labour Group was carried.

Decision: Acknowledging that Global Warming is an international crisis, Wyre Forest Council declares a Climate Emergency. Council further recognises that trees play a major part in reduction of our carbon footprint and are a vital part of our ecosystem. Council therefore resolves to work in partnership with all local schools and with Worcestershire County Council to ensure that, within the life of this 4 year Council term, every child in a Wyre Forest school is able to be involved in planting a tree. Council invites the Cabinet to consider any financial implications arising from this resolution and, if necessary, to bring forward proposals for funding as part of the next medium term financial strategy.

3. Motion from Councillor Fran Oborski MBE, Independent, Liberal Democrat and Green Group

Council recognises that the huge housing waiting list and number of homeless and rough sleepers present a human tragedy that requires early action. Council therefore requires the Corporate Director: Economic Property and Place to bring a report to Cabinet within six months on how the Council can be enabled to build social rental housing, constructed on land already in public ownership.

Councillor F Oborski MBE presented the motion. She spoke about the desperate need for housing to be built for social rental housing within the District. Councillor S Rook said that it was a disgrace that in 2019 in one of the richest countries in the world people should not be sleeping outside. She added that this motion was the direction the Council needed to go in, and was proud to second the motion.

Councillor M Hart spoke in favour of the motion and advised that the Conservative Group would support it. He added that the Council had a clear commitment to support rough sleepers; the previous administration's budget included funding for a new Rough Sleepers Night Shelter Protocol.

A named vote on the motion was recorded as follows and was agreed:

For (32)

Councillors: J Aston, G W Ballinger, C J Barnett, J F Byng, V Caulfield, S J Chambers, A Coleman, R H Coleman, B S Dawes, N J Desmond, H E Dyke, P Dyke, C E E Edginton-White, N Gale, S Griffiths, I Hardiman, P Harrison, M J Hart, K Henderson, L J Jones, A L L'Huillier, N Martin, S Miah, F M Oborski MBE, M Rayner, C Rogers, S E N Rook, D R Sheppard, J W R Thomas, A Totty , L Whitehouse and P W M Young.

Against (0) Abstained (0)

Councillor S Griffiths left the meeting at 7.52pm and returned at 7.54pm

4. Motion from Councillor Fran Oborski MBE, Independent, Liberal Democrat and Green Group

Council recognises that the climate change emergency requires councils to take positive action and notes that Wyre Forest has been identified as an area with a very low level of provision of charging points for electric vehicles. Council therefore resolves: (1) to ensure that adequate electric vehicle charging points are provided in Council-owned public car parks (2) to encourage the owners of privately-owned car parks to do likewise. (3) to request the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place to advise Council on how it can require electric vehicle charging points to be provided on all future residential and employment developments where vehicle access is provided. Council invites the Cabinet to consider any financial implications arising from this resolution and, if necessary, to bring forward proposals for funding as part of the next medium term financial strategy.

Councillor F Oborski MBE presented the motion. She said that the District had been 'named and shamed' as having an appallingly low level of electric vehicle charging points and the motion sought to change that. Councillor L Whitehouse seconded the motion. He said that he would like the Council to be very proactive around this particular issue. He added that in order for there to be a rapid growth in electric vehicle ownership, there was a need for simultaneous growth in the charging infrastructure.

Councillor N Desmond said that he wholeheartedly agreed with the sentiment behind the motion; he was only aware of two charging points in the district, one on Weavers Wharf in Kidderminster and a second at the Co-op supermarket in Stourport. However, the motion was lacking in detail. He added that the Conservative Group would be unable to support a motion when they simply do not know the costings involved.

A named vote on the motion was recorded as follows and was agreed:

For (19)

J Aston, G W Ballinger, C J Barnett, V Caulfield, H E Dyke, P Dyke, C E E Edginton-White, S Griffiths, A L L'Huilier, N Martin, S Miah, F M Oborski MBE, M Rayner, S E N Rook, D R Sheppard, J W R Thomas, A Totty, L Whitehouse and P W M Young.

Against (13)

J F Byng, S J Chambers, A Coleman, R H Coleman, B S Dawes, N J Desmond, N Gale, I Hardiman, P Harrison, M J Hart, K Henderson, L J Jones and C Rogers.

Abstained (0)

C.20 Urgent Motions submitted under Standing Orders

There were no urgent motions.

C.21 Independent Remuneration Panel

Council received a report from the Chief Executive which sought agreement to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to recommend any amendments to the scheme of allowances to be paid to Members for the municipal year 2019/20 and subsequent years.

The Leader of the Council presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. He said that it was important for a panel of independent people who were not connected to anybody within the Council chamber to under take this review. The Deputy Leader, Councillor F Oborski MBE seconded the proposal. Upon a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

Council Decided to:

- 1.1 AUTHORISE the Solicitor to Council to convene an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) at the earliest opportunity, after seeking expressions of interest in serving from suitably qualified persons who are independent of the Council and having consulted Group Leaders prior to making appointments to the Panel;**
- 1.2 REQUEST the IRP to report back no later than the Council's meeting in September 2019 with recommendations for the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2019/20 (which would take effect from 7 May 2019) and should include an uprating mechanism that would apply for the years commencing 1 April 2020, 1 April 2021, 1 April 2022 and 1 April 2023.**

C.22 Policy And Budget Framework – Matters which require a decision by Council

a. Recommendations from Planning Committee – 16th April 2019

• Scheme of Delegation – Proposed Changes

The Deputy Leader, Councillor F Oborski MBE, moved the recommendations for approval. She said that the current scheme of delegation was considered to be in need of revision to ensure that it was clear, relevant and unambiguous and to support efficient decision making. The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services, Councillor N Martin, seconded the proposal.

Decision: The proposed changes to the Scheme of Delegation as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be APPROVED.

b. Amendments to the Capital Programme

• to agree an amendments to the Capital Programme

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments presented the report. She said that the award of the grant was extremely good news for the Council, and formally moved the recommendations for approval. The Leader of the Council seconded the proposal.

Decision: The Capital Programme be amended to include the £2.7m grant from the Housing Infrastructure Fund in respect of the Churchfields development; and to increase the total allocation for Industrial Units Development – Silverwoods by £60,000, with funding to come from the Evergreen Investment Fund.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.27pm.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
24th July 2019

QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL

1. Question from Councillor Marcus Hart to the Leader of the Council

Would the Leader of the Council advise this Council when he proposes to appoint member champions?

2. Question from Councillor Marcus Hart to the Leader of the Council

Given that the Leader of the Council said at the annual meeting of Full Council this year, that this is going to be a 'Can Do Council', Can he explain his rationale for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Strategic Review Panel being the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council as opposed to back benchers?

3. Question from Councillor Marcus Hart to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments

Would the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Planning congratulate the previous Conservative administration for their commitment and indeed delivery of the demolition of Crown House at no cost to the tax payer?

4. Question from Councillor Ian Hardiman to the Leader of the Council

Given the comments made at Full Council on 22nd May made by members of the Leader's cabinet will he give me and this Council an assurance that all future agendas, reports and minutes of Cabinet/CLT meetings are made available to all 33 members of the Council?

5. Question from Councillor Marcus Hart to the Leader of the Council

Given the Leader of the Council's commitment at Full Council on 22nd May in wanting to work with and include all political parties, would he now explain to this Council and the public why the Conservatives who are by far the largest group on this Council were not invited to be members of the Progressive Alliance?

6. Question from Councillor Marcus Hart to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

Would the Cabinet Member for Operational Services agree with me that the investment in the Green Street Depot in the form of the 2020 depot project is an excellent example of this Council bringing two locally listed buildings back into prominence and good use and that this was a wise and sound decision taken by the previous Conservative administration?

7. Question from Councillor Ian Hardiman to the Leader of the Council

Given the Leader of the Council's commitment to be a 'Can Do Council', and one that is going to be 'more transparent', whilst I am cognisant of the costs and viewing figures, 'Can' he explain to this Council how he thinks that is consistent with no longer web casting Cabinet meetings?

8. Question from Councillor Ian Hardiman to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

Would the Cabinet Member for Operational Services confirm to this Council that neither he nor this Progressive Alliance will make any reductions in service to parks and open spaces and public toilets during the lifetime of their administration?

9. Question from Councillor Chris Rogers to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services

Would the Cabinet Member for Health, Well-being and Democratic Services confirm to this Council what investment and financial support they will be giving to public transport in this District over the lifetime of this administration?

10. Question from Councillor Tracey Onslow to the Leader of The Council

Following the elections, the Leader of the Progressive Alliance was quoted in the local press as saying that the Progressive Alliance would be '...for the good of Wyre Forest residents'.

In view of the Deputy Leader of the Progressive Alliance's startling decision to write a letter of support for a convicted domestic abuser, could the Leader explain how her decision - and the resultant damage to the reputation of WFDC - was 'for the good of Wyre Forest residents'?

Further in his quote he stated that the Alliance would '...put an end to social media spats'.

Given that this issue was played out widely across social media, would he also agree with me that that part of his vision for the Alliance has, only one month in, already failed?

11. Question from Councillor Nathan Desmond to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments

Please would the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments confirm what the Progressive Alliance's strategy is for WFDC property acquisitions from the £25 million capital portfolio fund.

12. Question from Councillor Alan Totty to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments

Could the Cabinet Member tell me when, and under what circumstances, she first became aware that it would be necessary to re-open the Consultation on the Revised Local Plan.

Chairman's List of Functions – 2019/20

JUNE 2019

- 7th Stourport on Severn Mayor's Civic Reception
- 8th Bewdley Carnival
- 9th Shrewsbury Mayor's Sunday
- 19th Kidderminster Mayor's Darts Tournament
- 20th Youth Makes Music
- 22nd Bewdley Civic Society Day
- 24th Armed Forces Flag Flying Ceremony
- 28th Stourport on Severn Cancer Research Golf Day
- 29th St Annes Church, Bewdley
- 29th Borrington Bash

JULY 2019

- 6th Shirejam 2019 Scout Camp
- 6th Wyre Forest Symphony Orchestra, Town Hall
- 7th Mayor's Civic Service St Mary's
- 9th Holy Trinity School Prizegiving Service, Town Hall
- 12th Kidderminster College Graduation Ceremony, Town Hall
- 13th Mayor of Stourport on Severn's Afternoon Boat Trip and Buffet

* Denotes attendance by Vice Chairman

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**COUNCIL**
24 JULY 2019**Electoral issues including review of the May 2019 elections**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Nicky Martin, Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being & Democratic Services
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	The Local Returning Officer for the European Parliamentary election and Returning Officer for the District and Parish elections.
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ian Miller, Chief Executive ian.miller@wyreforestdc.gov.uk Ext 2700
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 – data on turnout, postal votes, proxy votes etc.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider a number of matters relating to elections as well as provide a report on the local elections held on 2 May 2019 and the European Parliamentary election held on 23 May 2019.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is asked to:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the report on the local elections and European Parliamentary election in May 2019;
- 2.2 **DELEGATE** authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being & Democratic Services, to conduct the statutory Polling Districts and Polling Places Review by 31 January 2020 as set out in paragraph 10.1 of this report, with a report to be brought to Council later in 2019 for decision on the outcome of the Review.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 All out elections were held in the Wyre Forest District on Thursday 2 May 2019 for **Wyre Forest District Council** (12 wards with a total of 33 seats to elect) and both **Stourport-on-Severn Town Council** (6 Parish wards with a total of 18 seats) and **Bewdley Town Council** (3 Parish wards with a total of 13 seats) along with the Parish councils of **Broome** (7 seats), **Chaddesley Corbett** (11) **Churchill & Blakedown** (9), **Kidderminster Foreign** (7), **Rock** (13), **Rushock** (7), **Stone** (9), **Upper Arley** (9) and **Wolverley & Cookley** (14).

3.2 After months of the Cabinet Office denying that any European elections would take place in the United Kingdom in 2019, the following events took place during April:

1 April : confirmation that Government would reimburse preparatory expenditure by returning officers in the event that elections were held;

8 April : order made specifying 23 May as the date of the European Parliamentary elections (the order quite unusually specifies the time of making at 11.01am and the time of laying in Parliament at 4.15pm. It came into force on 10 April when the notice of election had to be issued by returning officers on 12/13 April).

3.3 This was exceptionally late for electoral administrators across the UK to prepare for and successfully deliver the elections. The lack of clarity from the Government continued until 7 May when it finally conceded that the UK would take part in the European Parliamentary elections 16 days later (note that, by then, postal votes had already been issued).

4. NOMINATIONS

4.1 There were 102 nominations received for the district council elections which were down on the 127 received for the all out district elections held in 2015.

4.2 There were 123 nominations received for the Town and Parish councils which resulted in all of the wards for Bewdley Town Council and Stourport-on-Severn Town Councils being contested. For all other parish councils, the candidates were duly elected as the number of candidates was the same as or lower than the number of vacancies and therefore no poll was held.

5. TURNOUT

5.1 The overall turnout for each of the elections held on 2 May 2019 and 23 May 2019 was as follows:

- **Wyre Forest District Council**– 31%. The count was held on 3 May 2019 and the last seat was declared at 14:50.
- **Bewdley Town Council**– 37.13% with the last seat declared at 15:50
- **Stourport-on-Severn Town Council** – 28.63% with the last seat declared at 15:35.
- **European Parliamentary** – 32.58% which is slightly below the West Midlands average but a decrease from 2015 in the Wyre Forest counting area and now falling behind the UK average. The count was held on Sunday 26 May 2019 commencing at 16:30 with the result being transmitted to the Regional returning Officer at 20:29.

5.2 For comparison purposes a breakdown of the overall turnout figures for various elections may be found in Appendix 1. The appendix also gives a detailed analysis of postal votes, invalid postal votes and proxy votes.

- 5.3 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.

6. EQUALITY OF VOTES

- 6.1 At the counting of votes for both Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn Town Councils, two wards returned a tied result. After recounts and double checking of figures it was agreed that indeed the results were tied. In accordance with Schedule 1 to the Representation of the People Act 1983, 'Where, after the counting of the votes (including any re-count) is completed, an equality of votes is found to exist between any candidates and the addition of a vote would entitle any of those candidates to be declared elected, the returning officer shall forthwith decide between those candidates by lot, and proceed as if the candidate on whom the lot falls had received an additional vote.'

6.2 Stourport-on-Severn Town Council -Stour and Wilden ward

The method the Returning Officer decided to use was for two mock ballot papers marked for each candidate to be folded 3 times each to obscure markings and placed in a ballot box. This was overseen by both candidates. The returning officer drew one paper on stage and that candidate was awarded one extra vote and duly elected.

6.3 Bewdley Town Council- Bewdley East ward

As both candidates were representing the same political party a toss of coin was agreed. The winning candidate was awarded one extra vote and duly elected.

7. POLL CARD ISSUE AT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

- 7.1 In the lead up to polling day for the European election, the elections office received reports that a couple of electors had not received their poll cards in the Foley Park & Hoobrook ward. As this was the first report, it was thought that this was not a significant issue: no delivery mechanism is 100% guaranteed and sometimes someone in a household might inadvertently dispose of poll cards along with marketing mail etc. In any case, it is not necessary to have or present a poll card in order to vote. On polling day itself, it was discovered that the issue was larger than initially thought and affected the majority of the polling district FPH-3.
- 7.2 After an investigation it has been concluded that the problem occurred in the production of the data for poll cards by the elections team, for which I offer my apologies. Electors were inadvertently excluded from the file sent to the print company and therefore poll cards were not produced. This affected 1621 electors in FPH-3 polling district. It did not prevent the electors from voting as there is no requirement to take a polling card to the polling station in order to be issued with a ballot paper. The streets affected in FPH-3 polling district were:
Addenbrooke Crescent, Blackford Close, Bredon Avenue, Bredon Close, Clee Avenue, Clement Dalley Drive, Clent Avenue, Clent Mews, Clifton Road, Coppice Heights, Corndon Close, Cotswold Close, Crosbie Grove, Falling Sands Close, Farm Close, Felix Baxter Drive, Ferguson Drive, Gould Avenue East, Gould Avenue West, Jotham Close, Kinver Avenue, Kirkby Drive, Lawrence Grove, Logan Place

Malvern View, Meredith Green, Silverwoods Way, St Patricks Court, Stourport Road, Tolley Road, Vanneck Close, Walter Nash Road East and Walter Nash Road West.

- 7.3 The fact that the European Parliamentary election was being held was the subject of widespread media and social media coverage. Indeed the holding of the election was itself a significant point of comment and debate. Even if electors had not received poll cards, it is not credible to suggest that many of them would have been unaware of the holding of the election. Absolute numbers of votes cast in Foley Park & Hoobrook were slightly down on 23 May compared to 2 May but there could be a variety of explanations for that: it would be rash to assume that the sole reason was whether or not electors had received poll cards. The number of electors who turned out to vote on 2nd May at St Peters Church Hall (FPH-3) was 282 compared to 265 on 23rd May 2019. The number of votes cast in the whole ward of Foley Park & Hoobrook on 2nd May was 1936 compared to 1956 on 23rd May 2019. These small differences in turnout would not have had any impact on the results for the West Midlands.

8. FEEDBACK FROM THE DEBRIEFING MEETING.

- 8.1 A 'wash up' de-brief was held with agents and candidates on 30 May to discuss the preparation and delivery of the local elections and European Parliamentary election in May 2019. This meeting was attended by two political parties. The main discussions included:
- The local elections and European Parliamentary election in May 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.
 - Both candidate and agents and polling staff to be reminded in their pre election briefings about what a teller can and cannot do at a polling station.
 - It was noted that electors at the European Parliamentary elections were commenting on the lack of tellers present and how much more pleasant it was when visiting the polling stations on 23 May.
 - Parties wanted consideration of additional notices in polling stations and polling staff informing electors of how many votes they have on each ballot paper, in addition to the statutory instructions on ballot papers and the prescribed notices
 - Parties wanted the introduction of a second acknowledgement letter for valid nominations received to be given to the person handing in the nomination papers, rather than relying solely on a letter posted to the candidate;
 - It was acknowledged that the process of poll card production process would be reviewed and updated.

9. FAWCETT SOCIETY REPORT

9.1 In November 2017, the then group leaders considered the report of the Fawcett Society’s Local Government Commission: Does Local Government Work for Women?, which had been published in July 2017. Group leaders at that time noted the recent trend for the Council to have a higher percentage of female councillors, although the position was some way from balance:

Municipal year	Number of female councillors	Percentage
2014/15	11/42	26%
2015/16	13/33	39%
2016/17	13/33	39%
2017/18	12/33	36%

9.2 It is recognised that there are various schools of thought in debates about how best to support diversity and gender balance. The Fawcett Society report is aligned with those who would be in favour of setting quotas or targets. Others advocate methods that provide under-represented individuals with relevant skills and experience such as mentoring or shadowing schemes, assertiveness training etc. Others feel that targets are not appropriate and that the best person or people should be chosen for any particular role. Through the discussion in November 2017, the political groups were invited to consider the issues relating to representation of women in selecting candidates for the elections in May 2018 and May 2019 – the latter elections were identified as particularly important as the first in the cycle of whole council elections and therefore likely to “fix” the composition of the Council for the period to 2023.

9.3 The table below presents data by political party on the gender of candidates and those elected

Party	Number of female candidates/number of candidates	Percentage	Number of female candidates elected	Percentage of elected councillors who are female
Conservative	9/27	33%	6	43%
Green	5/11	45%	1	100%
Independent Community Health Concern	6/14	43%	4	50%
Labour	6/21	29%	1	50%
Liberal Democrat	6/14	43%	1	33%
United Kingdom Independence Party	0/10	0%	0	N/A
Independent candidates				
Independent	3/5	60%	3	60%
Total	35/102	34%	16	48%

- 9.4 It is welcome that the proportion of female councillors has made a step change increase to 48% (16/33). In effect the Council has reached gender balance because the odd number of councillors in total will always mean that a greater number of councillors will be of one gender than the other. The position in Wyre Forest is well ahead of the 35% average reported by the Fawcett Society in respect of the May 2019 elections, with Wyre Forest being one of only 35 councils with 45% or more councillors who are women.
- 9.5 However the percentage of female candidates was much lower, at 34%. Therefore it is only because – for whatever reason – female candidates were more successful at winning seats that the positive move towards balance has been achieved. The proportion of female candidates varied from ward to ward. While there was at least one female candidate in every ward, there was one three member ward where there was only one female candidate on the ballot paper; and there were several examples of different parties who fielded two or three candidates in a ward and all of them were male. The political parties may wish to reflect further on how their candidate selection policies support good gender balance both in the choice put before voters and in terms of councillors elected.

10. COMPULSORY POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES REVIEWS

- 10.1 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. The next compulsory review must now be completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020.
- 10.2 The report therefore includes a recommendation to authorise the Chief Executive to issue consultation proposals – the final decision on the outcome of the review would be taken by Full Council in September or December 2019, and a further report will be brought to Council accordingly.

11. ELECTIONS IN MAY 2020

- 11.1 On 8 June the Government announced that the May Day bank holiday in 2020 would be moved from Monday 4 May to Friday 8 May, to mark the 75th Anniversary of VE-Day. Thus a bank holiday will fall on the day after polling (Thursday 7 May) for Kidderminster Town Council and the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner. There had been no public consultation about this change of date.
- 11.2 It had been the Returning Officer's intention to verify and count the votes on Friday 8 May. On 18 June, the Returning Officer informed the political parties in Wyre Forest and Kidderminster Town Council, that counting on 8 May would not be appropriate. Apart from any difficulties and cost that might be encountered in recruiting staff, it would be disrespectful to veterans of the fighting in Europe, including those who gave their lives, and their families to conduct a count over the bank holiday weekend when the verification and count can be conducted on Monday 11 May 2020 instead. As things stand, the intention is instead to hold the verification and count on 11 May 2020. Holding the count on 11 May would not affect the coming into office of the Police and Crime Commissioner which is on the 7th day following the poll; nor would it affect the coming into office of councillors at Kidderminster Town Council on the 4th day after the day of the election, which will be Monday 11th May in any case.

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 No additional financial implications arise from this report. The financial accounts for the different elections held in May 2019 are currently being compiled so the appropriate recharges can be made to the Electoral Claims Unit, Bewdley Town Council, Stourport-on-Severn Town Council and the other parish councils which had elections. The share of the costs for the District Council elections are met by the Council budgets for this purpose.
- 12.2 The cost of conducting the review of polling districts and polling places will be met from existing budgets.

13. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 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>.

14. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 14.1 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.

15. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 15.1 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.

16. CONCLUSION

- 16.1 The Council is invited to note this review of the 2 May 2019 Local elections and 23 May 2019 European Parliamentary election; and to delegate to the Chief Executive authority to conduct a review of polling districts and polling places with the outcome of the review to be reported to Council later in 2019 for decision.

17. CONSULTEES

- 17.1 Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being & Democratic Services
17.2 Corporate Leadership team

18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1 A breakdown of the full results for each of the elections held on 2 May 2019 and the European Parliamentary election held on 23 May 2019 can be found at

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

- 18.2 Fawcett Society report and data following 2019 elections

<https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/does-local-government-work-for-women-final-report-of-the-local-government-commission>

<https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/news/new-fawcett-data-reveals-that-womens-representation-in-local-government-at-a-standstill>

Appendix 1 – data on turnout, postal votes, proxy votes etc

Turnout

Turnout for the European Parliamentary election compared to the previous equivalent elections is set out in Table 1. Comparisons for the District Council are in Table 2 and in Tables 3 & 4 for Bewdley Town Council and Stourport-on-Severn Town Council respectively.

Table 1

Turnout %	2009	2014*	2019	% difference in Turnout from 2014
European Parliamentary, Wyre Forest Counting Area	37.5%	36.15%	32.58%	-3.57%
European Parliamentary – West Midlands region	34.8%	33.1%	33.1%	0.00%
European Parliamentary - UK as a whole	34.3%	35.6%	36.9%	+1.30%

Note * The 2014 European Parliamentary election was combined with District and Parish elections.

Table 1A gives a detailed breakdown of turnout in the counting areas (district wards) used for the European Parliamentary election.

Table 1A

Count Area	Electorate	Votes cast	Turnout
Aggborough & Spennells	6410	2234	34.85%
Areley Kings & Riverside	6347	2042	32.17%
Bewdley & Rock	6864	2741	39.93%
Blakebrook & Habberley South	6546	1973	30.14%
Broadwaters	5456	1829	33.52%
Franche & Habberley North	7531	2267	30.10%
Foley Park & Hoobrook	7229	1956	27.05%
Lickhill	2172	726	33.43%
Mitton	7291	2188	30.01%
Offmore & Comberton	7216	2237	31.00%
Wribbenhall & Arley	4316	1632	37.81%
Wyre Forest Rural	7201	2794	38.80%
Total	75576	24619	32.58%

Table 2

Turnout %	2015*	2018**	2019	% difference in Turnout from 2018
Aggborough & Spennells	65.1%	36.09%	36.14%	+0.05%
Areley Kings & Riverside	27.04%	30.98%	30.22%	- 0.76%
Blakebrook & Habberley South	55.8%	25.42%	28.29%	+2.87%
Broadwaters	53.0%	26.12%	27.21%	+1.09%
Bewdley & Rock	73.7%	37.34%	35.37%	-1.56%
Foley Park & Hoobrook	55.0%	26.27%	26.30%	+0.03%
Franche & Habberley North	64.3%	31.68%	29.81%	-1.87%
Lickhill	68.9%	N/A***	33.21%	N/A
Mitton	68.9%	25.97%	26.65%	+0.68%
Offmore & Comberton	61.6%	28.68%	28.67%	-0.01%
Wribbenhall & Arley	69.7%	34.97%	36.14%	+1.17%
Wyre Forest Rural	74.4%	35.51%	37.76%	+2.25%
Wyre Forest District Council	63.37%	30.64%	31.01%	+0.37%

Note * The election in 2015 was combined with UK Parliamentary election. Areley Kings & Riverside was countermanded until June 2015 following the death of a candidate **The election in 2018 was the final election in ‘thirds’ for Wyre Forest District Council. ***No seat up for election in Lickhill ward in 2018.

Table 3

Turnout %	2014	2017	% difference in Turnout
Bewdley East	43.33%	35.6%	-7.73%
Bewdley West	44.08%	39.57%	-4.51%
Bewdley Wribbenhall	41.21%	36.50%	-4.71%
Bewdley Town Council	42.63%	37.13%	-5.5%

Table 4

Turnout %	2015	2019	% difference in Turnout from 2015
Areley Kings East **	28.85%	24.50%	-4.35%
Areley Kings West	72.7%	32.89%	-39.81%
Lickhill	68.8%	33.12%	-35.68%
Stourport Central	66.8%	33.73%	-33.07%
Stourport North	62.0%	27.91%	-34.89%
Stour & Wilden	60.9%	24.11%	-36.79%
Stourport-on-Severn Town *	65.17***	28.63%	-36.51%

Note * The elections for Stourport-on-Severn Town Council held in 2015 were combined with UK Parliamentary and District elections. **Areley Kings West ward was countermanded until June 2015 and held with the district ward.

*** This total is excluding Areley Kings East.

Postal votes returned

A breakdown of the postal voting returns for each district ward for the local elections on 2 May is set out in Table 5. Tables 6 and 7 provide the breakdown for the Town Councils. Table 8 sets out the figures for the European election.

Table 5

District ward	Postal Vote Electorate	Postal Votes returned	Turnout
Aggborough & Spennells	1066	790	74.95%
Areley Kings & Riverside	926	659	71.17%
Bewdley & Rock	1147	804	70.10%
Blakebrook & Habberley South	856	799	93.34%
Broadwaters	1054	597	56.64%
Foley Park & Hoobrook	1054	774	73.43%
Franche & Habberley North	1227	845	68.87%
Lickhill	344	263	76.45%
Mitton	1066	714	66.98%
Offmore & Comberton	1022	718	70.25%
Wribbenhall & Arley	769	546	71.00%
Wyre Forest Rural	1157	844	72.95%
Total	11759	8362	71.11%

Table 6

Bewdley Town Council wards	Postal Vote Electorate	Postal Votes returned	Turnout
Bewdley East	320	229	71.56%
Bewdley West	351	267	76.07%
Bewdley Wribbenhall	544	384	70.59%
Bewdley Town Council	1215	880	72.43%

Table 7

Stourport-on-Severn Town Council wards	Postal Vote Electorate	Postal Votes returned	Turnout
Areley Kings East	296	215	72.64%
Areley Kings West	309	206	66.66%
Lickhill	321	236	73.52%
Stourport Central	555	382	68.83%
Stourport North	344	263	76.45%
Stour & Wilden	511	332	64.98%
Stourport-on-Severn Town Council	2336	1634	69.95%

The turnout by postal voters in the European Parliamentary election was lower than normal, at 64.5%. The breakdown to District ward level is in Table 8 below.

Table 8

Count Area	Postal Vote Electorate	Postal Votes returned	Turnout
Aggborough & Spennells	1075	709	65.95%
Areley Kings & Riverside	940	633	67.34%
Bewdley & Rock	1166	792	67.92%
Blakebrook & Habberley South	1155	727	62.94%
Broadwaters	865	540	62.43%
Franché & Habberley North	1238	757	61.15%
Foley Park & Hoobrook	1051	673	64.03%

Lickhill	347	232	66.86%
Mitton	1071	674	62.93%
Offmore & Comberton	1021	66	63.27%
Wribbenhall & Arley	779	508	65.21%
Wyre Forest Rural	1174	770	65.59%
Total	11879	7662	64.50%

Rejected ballot papers

At the **European Parliamentary election** count on 26 May 2019, 185 ballot papers were rejected. 1 was rejected for 'want of an official mark', 25 for 'voting for more Candidates than voter was entitled to', 1 for 'writing or mark by which voter could be identified' and 158 for 'being unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty'.

At the count on 3 May 2019 the following number of ballot papers was rejected for each election:

- **Wyre Forest District Council** - 145 ballot papers were rejected across all wards with 2 for 'want of an official mark', 46 for voting for more Candidates than voter was entitled to', 1 'writing or mark by which the voter could be identified' and 96 'unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty'.
- **Bewdley Town Council** - a total of 79 ballot papers were rejected with 5 being 'voting for more Candidates than voter was entitled to' and 74 for being 'unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty'.
- **Stourport-on-Severn Town Council** – A total of 320 ballot papers were rejected with all 320 being 'unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty'.

Valid postal votes

The number of postal votes issued and counted at the elections on 2 May 2019 and at the European Parliamentary election on 23 May 2019 is set out in Table 9.

Table 9

Postal Vote Stage	May 2014	May 2015	May 2016*	May 2018	2 nd May 2019	23 rd May 2019
Elections	Euro, District & Parish	UK Parliamentary, District & Parish	Police, District & Parish	District	District & Parish	European
Number of Postal Votes issued	10075	11060	11080	11,917	11,777	11,888
Number of Postal Votes Returned	7784	9355	7959	8,548	8,362	7,687

Postal Votes accepted as valid and counted	7286	8934	7481	8,159	7,844	7,422
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* May 2016 the Lickhill ward was not up for election.

Number of electors voting by post

The number of electors voting by post per ward for the local elections on 2 May 2019 and at the European Parliamentary election on 23 May 2019 is set out in Table 10.

Table 10

Ward	Number of Postal voters for elections on 2 May 2019	Number of Postal voters for election on 23 May 2019	Increase in Postal Voters for 23 May election	% increase in Postal voters for 23 May election
Aggborough & Spennells	1066	1075	9	0.8%
Areley Kings & Riverside	926	940	14	1.5%
Bewdley & Rock	1125	1166	41	3.6%
Blakebrook & Habberley South	1147	1155	8	0.7%
Broadwaters	856	865	9	1.1%
Foley Park & Hoobrook	1054	1051	-3	-0.3%
Franche & Habberley North	1227	1238	11	0.9%
Lickhill	344	347	3	0.9%
Mitton	1066	1071	5	0.5%
Offmore & Comberton	1022	1021	-1	-0.1%
Wribbenhall & Arley	769	779	10	1.3%
Wyre Forest Rural	1157	1174	17	1.5%
Total	11759	11879	120	1.02%

Within the figures for the European Parliamentary postal vote figures are 75 postal ballot packs issued to overseas electors of which 58 were returned from across the world, these include: Australia, Canada, Baltimore and New York in America, Christchurch in New Zealand as was as many from European countries. The return rate for our overseas electors was 77% which is slightly higher than 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.

30 postal vote packs have been received in the post since 2 May 2019 in relation to the local elections. 23 postal vote packs have been received in the post since 23 May 2019 in relation to the European Parliamentary elections with 2 of these from overseas postal voters.

The overall increase in postal voters between the elections on 2 May 2019 and 23 May 2019 was to be expected due to the nature of the European Parliamentary election, the short notice period of the election and with more electors being away on holiday at the end of May compared to the start of May.

Invalid postal votes

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 their original application form. A total of 216 letters have been issued to those electors who had a postal vote rejected in the local elections on 2 May 2019. Those where the signature didn't match the original will also be supplied with an identifier refresh form to complete. A total of 137 letters have been issued in respect to the European Parliamentary election for the same purpose.

As a comparison Table 11 lists previous elections and the number of rejected Postal Votes.

Table 11

Election Type	Year	Number of rejected postal votes due to identifiers not matching	Number of rejected postal votes in Total
European	2019	137	265
Local – District & Parish	2019	216	518
Local - District	2018	202	389
UK Parliamentary	2017	341	446
County Council	2017	67	271
Local & Police	2016	N/A	N/A
Local & UK Parliamentary	2015	148	421

Proxy voters

The breakdown of proxy voters per ward for the elections on 2 May 2019 and at the European Parliamentary election on 23 May 2019 is set out in Table 12.

Table 12

Ward	Number of Proxy voters for elections on 2 May 2019	Number of Proxy voters for elections on 23 May 2019	Increase in Proxy Voters from elections on 2 May	% increase in Proxy voters from elections in May 2019
Aggborough & Spennells	3	9	6	200%
Areley Kings & Riverside	7	11	4	57%
Bewdley & Rock	7	15	8	114%
Blakebrook & Habberley South	2	2	0	0%
Broadwaters	7	11	4	57%
Foley Park & Hoobrook	3	8	5	167%
Franche & Habberley North	3	9	6	200%
Lickhill	3	5	2	67%
Mitton	3	9	6	200%
Offmore & Comberton	3	10	7	233%
Wribbenhall & Arley	7	5	-2	-29%
Wyre Forest Rural	9	20	11	122%
Total	57	114	57	100%

Whilst the increase of proxy voters between the elections on 2 May 2019 and 23 May 2019 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 or UK Parliamentary election in June 2017. In May 2016, 52 electors had appointed a proxy whilst in June 2016 that had risen to 536. That was an increase of 484 compared to this year's increase of 57.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
24TH JULY 2019

POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK
MATTERS WHICH REQUIRE A DECISION BY COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET –
16TH JULY 2019

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. See the report on page 26 of the pdf at this link:

<http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/meetings/com60.htm#mt8087>

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	CABINET MEMBER
<p>Asset Management Strategy</p> <p>Recommend to Council that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Asset Management Strategy be adopted as part of the Capital Strategy 2019-22. 	<p>Councillor F Oborski MBE</p>