

Open

Council

Agenda

To be held remotely
6pm
Wednesday, 13th May 2020



Council

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COUNCIL MEETING

4th May 2020

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 remotely at **6.00p.m. on Wednesday 13th May 2020.**

The meeting will be available to stream from the Council's live meeting streaming channel

<https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/streaming.aspx>

The Agenda for the meeting is enclosed.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "I Miller".

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.

Wyre Forest District Council

Council

Wednesday, 13th May 2020

To be held remotely

Part 1

Open to the press and public

Agenda item	Subject	Page Number
1.	Prayers To be read by Rev Robert Legge, Team Vicar, Kidderminster East.	
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 extraordinary meeting held on 20 th February 2020, the meeting held on 26 th February 2020 and the extraordinary meeting held on 21 st April 2020.	9
5.	Public Participation In accordance with the Council's scheme for public representations 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 4 th May 2020. <i>If you wish to make representations 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 making representations no later than 9am on the day of the meeting of Council. In the case of a request to make representations 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>	

<p>6.</p>	<p>Questions</p> <p>No questions have been submitted in accordance with Standing Order Section 7, 1.8 by Members of the Council.</p> <p><i>In the case of an urgent matter that has arisen since the deadline, 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></p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Chairman’s Communications</p> <p>To note the engagements of the Chairman of the Council since the Council’s last meeting.</p>	<p>44</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Leader of the Council Announcements</p> <p>To receive announcements from the Leader of the Council.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Motions Submitted under Standing Orders</p> <p>One motion has been received in accordance with Standing Orders (Section 7, 4.1).</p> <p>1. Notice of Motion from Councillor M Hart</p> <p>This Council resolves to publicly congratulate all of our outstanding NHS staff, front line key workers performing a wide variety of roles including shop workers, and our wider public sector workers, including, Fire, Police, Ambulance and Teachers. All of those involved in local government in delivering essential front line services; working in collaboration and having a multi agency approach. They all deserve our grateful thanks.</p> <p>The Council further thanks in particular, each and every one of our staff. From whichever team front facing or back office, uniting to work as one Council for the greater good of our whole community of Wyre Forest in ensuring that such things as; our bins are emptied, our streets swept, our public open space kept safely open, residents being able to get vital assistance with benefits, grants and loans; not only in respect of the Coronovirus pandemic but also as a result of the unprecedented flooding incident back in February, and of course that our democracy can continue with virtual council meetings. To you all, this Council says thank you.</p> <p>This Council therefore agrees that during these unprecedented times all councillors should be doing the same by working together cross party and putting aside political differences for the common good of our residents, and not be seeking to inappropriately point score at this time.</p> <p>This Council therefore deplores the actions of any elected member who would seek to be offensive over social media, and that in particular, a recent example seen on a social media site, saying, ‘I despise all Conservatives’ is offensive and unnecessary. It demeans the office of a councillor and this whole Council.</p>	

	<p>This Council further agrees that all elected members should treat each other and other political parties with respect, including over social media, and that any such actions are totally inappropriate and divisive at this time.</p> <p>This Council resolves to disassociate themselves from these comments and calls upon the said member who has made these comments to formally publicly apologise as our electorate find this type of conduct abhorrent.</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>Municipal Calendar 2020/2021</p> <p>Council is invited to APPROVE the municipal calendar for 2020/21, which has been developed in consultation with Group Leaders.</p>	45
12.	<p>Annual Reports for the Municipal Year 2019/2020</p> <p>(a) Cabinet</p> <p>(b) Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>(c) Ethics and Standards Committee</p>	60 63 70
13.	<p>Members' Annual Activity Reports and Attendance 2019/2020</p> <p>To note the schedule of Members' Annual Reports giving details of their activities in their role as District Councillors for the 2019/2020 municipal year and to receive a record of Members' attendance for the 2019/2020 municipal year.</p> <p><i>These reports are available electronically on the website.</i></p> <p>http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/meetings/com55.htm#mt8238</p>	73
14.	<p>Extension of the timetable for Overview and Scrutiny Committee to report on Flooding</p> <p>To consider a report to agree an extension to the deadline for the Committee to report back about the flooding issues.</p>	74

<p>15.</p>	<p>Policy and Budget Framework</p> <p>Matters which require a Decision by Council.</p> <p>a) Recommendations from Cabinet 31st March 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kidderminster Town Centre Acquisition 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>	<p>75</p>
<p>16.</p>	<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>	
<p>17.</p>	<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

<p>18.</p>	<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>	
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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY,
KIDDERMINSTER**

20TH FEBRUARY 2020 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: S Miah (Chairman), P W M Young (Vice-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 Edginton-White, N Gale, S Griffiths, I Hardiman, P Harrison, M J Hart, K Henderson, L J Jones, A L L'Huillier, N Martin, F M Oborski MBE, T L Onslow, M Rayner, C Rogers, S E N Rook, D R Sheppard, J W R Thomas, A Totty and L Whitehouse.

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting and thanked the members of the public who were in attendance.

A moment of silence was observed in memory of former District Councillors June Salter and Lin Henderson who both have passed away since the last Council meeting.

The Chairman spoke about this week's devastating floods, following Storm Dennis, which have unfortunately directly affected residents and properties in our district. He said our hearts go out to everyone whose home or business has flooded. Wyre Forest District Council will continue to do everything in its power, working closely with emergency services and other agencies, to offer support so everyone directly affected can get back home, get their businesses back up and running and back to normal as soon as practically possible. On behalf of Council, he thanked staff of the Council and all agencies, voluntary bodies and local residents who have been and will continue to work tirelessly to support residents and businesses during this time.

He added that all members were pleased to see that the Council acted quickly to make immediate financial help available to all those directly affected by flooding. Although flood warnings remain, it does appear that the worst may be over, although we should not be complacent. We will continue to work with our partners to support our communities during incidents such as this.

He added that Colleagues will have seen that a motion will be discussed at next week's full council which will give members the opportunity to discuss the flooding incident in detail at that time.

C.57 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence

C.58 Declarations of Interests by Members

Councillor C Edginton-White declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in agenda item 4 – Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016-2036), as she has a financial interest in one of the sites within the plan and will be leaving the meeting.

Councillor L Whitehouse declared a Other Disclosable Interest (ODI) in agenda item 4 – Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016-2036), as his Grand-father owns Rock Works and he feels it right to leave the room.

Councillor A Totty made the following statement in respect of agenda item 4 – Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016-2036);

I am a ward councillor for the area that includes the Kidderminster East Extension and am also Chairman of the Offmore Comberton Action Group, Local plan sub group, which opposes the part of that extension immediately behind the Offmore estate. In both capacities I have been vocal in my objection to the allocation of this site, appearing online and in the press, as a consequence I am unable to come to this meeting with an open mind. As such, I have predetermined my view and shall now withdraw from the meeting.

Councillors C Edginton-White, L Whitehouse and A Totty left the meeting at this point, (6.07pm).

C.59 Public Participation

In accordance with the Council's scheme for public participation at meetings of Full Council, the following members of the public addressed the meeting at this point.

Rachel James on behalf of Claire Wood – Blakedown Resident

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. As a resident of Lynwood Drive in Blakedown, my family will be directly impacted by both elements of the amendment to the local plan proposed at Blakedown station. I addressed the Overview & Scrutiny Committee a couple of weeks ago raising my concerns about the safety of the proposals.

I learnt four things during that Committee meeting...

Firstly, that you, Wyre Forest District Council, were forced into this amendment by Worcestershire County Council – a fact admitted by your own Spacial Planning Officer.

And secondly therefore, it is clear that the consultation process was conducted only because you had a legal obligation to do so. You never had any intention to pay any heed to the evidence, views, counter proposals or potential comprises submitted as part of that consultation exercise. You knew the plan would simply get rejected by Worcestershire

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County Council if it did not contain the development at Blakedown station. Ergo the consultation exercise was simply to tick a box.

Thirdly, I learnt that many of you are as unhappy with the local plan, for a variety of reasons, as the villagers of Blakedown are. Your own Sub-Committee for the review of the Local Plan could not even bring themselves to endorse it. Talk about damned with faint praise.

Fourthly, and back to my original safety concerns, I learnt that you relied on Worcestershire County Council's Road Safety Report – as confirmed again by your Spacial Planning Officer.

It may interest you to know that Churchill & Blakedown Parish Council had a meeting with the Highways Officer who prepared the report on the development for Worcestershire County Council. At which it became evident that his report was flawed. The Officer in question had clearly not done his homework on the volume of trains going through Blakedown – 154 per day to be precise. During the meeting, held at the Station Signal Box, he professed himself to be 'surprised' by both the frequency and duration of the level crossing closures – the barriers can remain closed for up to 15 mins at a time.

He also admitted that he had failed to spot that there was a primary school in the vicinity.

As you can imagine, none of that fills us with confidence as to the validity and accuracy of the remainder of his findings.

Add to the fact that his report is to back up an amendment to the Local Plan that, by your own admission, Worcestershire County Council are pushing through. I think it hardly likely that their own report was going to find fault with their proposed amendment – don't you? Turkeys after all do not vote for Christmas.

We do not recognise the need for Blakedown to be responsible for fixing the transport problems for either Kidderminster or more broadly Worcestershire.

This is not democracy in action.

True consultation has not taken place.

You have bowed to the demands of Worcestershire County Council.

The villagers of Blakedown deserve better.

The Wyre Forest electorate deserve better.

And I expect more both of you, our elected officials and of those who serve in our local authority.

So my question to you this evening is when are you going to step up; defend your electorate and do what is right for both Blakedown and Wyre Forest?

Richard Benney – Chairman of Churchill & Blakedown Parish Council

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This relates to Policies AM 36.10 and 36.11 regarding car parking in Blakedown.

Our detailed objections are reproduced in Appendix D, but in summary we have obtained legal advice from Counsel at Landmark Chambers, professional planning advice, and transport advice which is that the Submission Plan should not pass scrutiny for the following reasons:

It is

- Unsound – it is not consistent with the NPPF and does not demonstrate exceptional circumstances for the removal of Green Belt*
- Unjustified and Not Legally Compliant:*
- it has not fully examined alternatives,*
- is not based on proportionate or accurate evidence,*
- and proper sustainability and environmental appraisals have not been undertaken.*
- It contradicts the Council's 2017 Green Belt Review*
- The Station Drive site was not proposed in the Call for Sites process despite the County Council saying it was*
- The Council has said it does not want to build more houses on Green Belt than is necessary*
- The Objective Assessment of Housing Needs did not require large scale development in Blakedown or any of the rural villages.*
- The Neighbourhood Plan provides for small scale development but specifically resists large scale development such as this.*
- If there had been an exceptional urgent need for a large-scale development in Blakedown, it would have been included at the Preferred Options stage*
- It demonstrates a failure to consult properly and a failure to cooperate with adjoining authorities to develop a combined strategy to deal with infrastructure issues*
- It has no regard to the adopted Neighbourhood Plan covering the area*
- It uses outdated housing need evidence in particular*
- Why does The Plan continue to use the 2016 based household projections when NPPF and PPG require the assessments to be based on 2014 figures?*
- This artificially inflates housing from 248 to 276 houses per annum and 640 for the Plan period after the 15% allowance*
- If these 600 are removed there would be far less need to develop on Green Belt land*
- The parking and transport policies are supported by lately submitted transport papers, the technical accuracy of which is disputed, and the latest one is a study of Hagley.*
- Depending whose report you read we need 10, 80 or 250 parking spaces?*
- The most recent evidence in LTP4 suggests only 79 which could be accommodated in Station Yard*
- The transport evidence is flawed*
- In support of the Plan the Council uses a recently published study of the A456 in Hagley – NOT Blakedown!*
- It fails to consider alternatives, such as station expansion and parking provision at Hartlebury or the Safari Park which could better serve the*

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south and rural west of the District and the towns of Bewdley and Stourport.

- *These could improve rail transport and reduce car journeys for the rural west and south of the District or towns of Bewdley and Stourport where almost 30% of the population lives. or even in Kidderminster where 53% of the population lives*
- *Using a small village to overcome the sustainability issues of District wide problems undermines the sustainability of this Plan.*
- *The Plan lacks a basic level of detail, practicality and knowledge of the local area such as train frequency, the level crossing, access to the site, proximity to a primary school, the existing traffic on the A456 and the unsuitable network of lanes that run from Lea Castle.*

There is no need for any further train station car parking within Blakedown that cannot already be met by the car park allocation at Station Yard.

“Exceptional Circumstances” required by NPPF have not been demonstrated to remove the Station Drive site from the Green Belt

The risk in supporting the flawed policies in this Plan is the intervention of the Planning Inspector. That could leave the District unable to manage development across its administrative area as it wishes, and potentially damage the Council’s image and reputation if a plan is not adopted in time.

The Submission Plan should not proceed to examination in its current form. If it does, then we will submit to the Inspector that its preparation has not complied with the legal requirements, it is unsound, and that its deficiencies are incapable of rectification within the examination process.

Sue Fowler – Blakedown Resident

I am Sue Fowler, resident of Blakedown for more than 30 years. I also spoke at the Oversight and Scrutiny Committee meeting a fortnight ago. Then I was trying to make clear the dramatic and detrimental impact the introduction of station car parking 26 times the size of the current provision together with a (for us) large scale housing development will have on Blakedown as a village. I also tried to open a route to compromise between Wyre Forest and Blakedown residents, but, as the term is clearly not understood, that door remains firmly shut, adding further credence to our impression that the consultation exercise in the autumn of 2019 was a sham.

At the O&S Committee and at the Cabinet meeting last week, I heard several Councillors express their great reluctance to build any more houses than are strictly necessary on Green Belt land. Well, I have very good news for you – you don’t need to build 50 houses on Green Belt in Blakedown, because they aren’t necessary – there is no urgent need for large scale development of either social or private market housing in Blakedown. Just look at the Neighbourhood Plan – there’s provision for small scale development, but nothing of this size. Look at the Inspector’s Review of the Local Plan back in 2003, which specifically confirmed that the Land off Station Drive should remain Green Belt, and that the fact that

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there is a railway station does not justify further housing development, particularly in this Green Belt location. Look at Wyre Forest's own original Pre-Submission Plan - if these 50 houses were necessary, they would certainly have been allocated back in 2018 after the Green Belt Review, not in June 2019 as a knee jerk reaction to demands from Worcestershire County Council.

We've been told categorically that there will be no changes to the Submission Plan in its current version before examination. My question tonight is – can you confirm that, if (or, we shall try to ensure, when) this particular Amendment to the Plan fails at examination, there will be no change to the Green Belt boundary in Blakedown?

Mike Pitt – Blakedown Resident

My name is Mike Pitt a resident in Mill Close, Blakedown

This development would be on Green Belt Land but seems to pay little attention to the NPPF, in particular that 'planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance valued landscapes. Moreover at the edge of the northern boundary of the site is an area designated a Local Wild Life site including marshlands, pools and wet woodland and is associated with the Churchill and Blakedown streams and pools system.

A WCC environmental report was prepared in connection with the Plan. With regard to the site at Station Drive it states 'The LWS in Blakedown is a highly sensitive habitat which must be protected from development and associated impacts'. There is also mention that some protected species have been reported in the area including Badgers, bats, otters etc.

Marmaris who own the land had previously put in plans to develop this site for car park spaces and houses and it was refused by the Inspector. The Inspector stated that there were no exceptional circumstances why this area should be released from Green Belt. Nothing in our view has changed since these plans were rejected.

It appears that some of the councillors/planners did not realise how close the local school is to the proposed development. It is unfortunate that the Education Department chose to assign this school on a Main Road for expansion. The School has been forced to make arrangements with the Sports Committee to use their Car Park as a Drop- off point. The entrance to the Car Park is a narrow drive at the side of the school which is as little as 20 meters away from Station Drive.

The number of children attending Blakedown Primary school has increased by nearly 50% in last 4 years now totalling some 163 and many of these children are transported to the school by parents from outside the area. This has already an effect on the A456 and surrounding roads, the 325 extra vehicles created by the 2 car parks and housing will make the congestion even greater.

The children's safety is paramount we have also had one child fatality in

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the village going to school and just recently a child was knocked down outside the school.

The level crossing near the site is already dangerous. Network Rail risk assessment of Blakedown level crossing is 4 where a score of 13 is the lowest. As stated by Network rail any new development will result in this score being lowered.

I would hope that the councillors here today will not make the decision on a political basis but on the basis of conserving the Green Belt and the LWS and the safety of all our children.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for their participation.

C.60 Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016-2036)

Council considered a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place to agree the submission of the proposed Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016-2036) and Policies Map for forwarding to the Secretary of State (including all supporting evidence base).

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning & Capital Investments presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. She said that in recommending this Local Plan to Council, she recognised that for many members it has been necessary to make compromises; no member wants to see any more development of the Green Belt than absolutely necessary but the council must ensure that it maintains a supply of new housing otherwise it runs the risk of not maintaining our five year land supply and falling foul of the housing delivery test; either of which could actually undermine the value of the plan and expose the whole district to unwanted development.

She explained that this Local Plan has been in preparation since 2018 and it is now time to submit it to the Planning Inspectorate to hold an examination in public which will consider whether we have a 'sound' plan. She added that we have passed the point now of deliberating on which sites to include or exclude. All of that has been thoroughly consulted on; from the Preferred Options consultation back in Summer 2017 to the more recent Pre-Submission consultations in 2018 and again in 2019. She said that 'soundness' means that the Plan is; positively prepared; justified; effective and consistent with national planning policy, enabling the delivery of sustainable development.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning & Capital Investments said that she was pleased to commend the suite of documents that make up the Submission Plan to Council as meeting those tests of 'soundness'. She added that we know there will be matters that some people disagree with and that there are those who will seek to challenge whether the Plan is 'sound'; that will be what the Inspector examines when we submit the Plan. There is no place for us now to consider any amendments to the Plan that would undermine its 'soundness'.

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She further explained that the provision of parking at Blakedown is crucial to the Plan using sustainable transport options. It and Kidderminster are the only stations in our District and it is important that we show that we are prepared to promote them for sustainable transport purposes. If we didn't do that we'd immediately face formal objections from Worcestershire County Council as Highways Authority. It would also undermine our plans for other highway infrastructure improvements, such as the A450 and Mustow Green, as the Department for Transport will only support funding for new road schemes where there is demonstrable support given to sustainable transport as well. She added that it would be a glaring omission recognised by any Planning Inspector if there was not additional car parking to support use of the station and a housing allocation for meeting Blakedown's housing growth requirements. Any inspector would want to know why we were not taking the opportunity to use this transport hub fully.

In relation to the recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning & Capital Investments said that she was somewhat surprised to hear the Conservative group's suggested amendment to the Plan, which was that we should revert to the lower housing numbers based on the 2014 Household Projections. She was surprised not only because the higher numbers were in the Pre Submission consultation which was undertaken in 2018 under the previous Administration's leadership, but also because of the implications of using the 2014 projections. If such a change were to be made, it would render the plan before Council tonight unsound and it therefore could not be submitted to the Secretary of State. Such a change would mean a very considerable delay to the progress of the Plan and a not inconsiderable additional cost. It would not just be a consultation on housing numbers that would have to be undertaken: the Council would need to reconsider which sites it no longer wished to bring forward for housing development, which in turn would require further transport modelling, remodelling of the viability plan and a refresh of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, as these are all related.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services seconded the proposal. She said whilst all Members share the same concern about agreeing the development of our Green Belt, we are elected to face these difficult decisions and make the right choice for the district as a whole. She added that we must remember that by far the significant majority of the Green Belt will remain protected under the proposed plan. She said that as Cabinet Member with responsibility for housing, she was acutely aware of the need to continue to deliver housing in order to ensure that we can increase the number of affordable housing in the district. She added that in order to be able to do that, we need to maintain a higher level of new housing for the district as a whole; the 2016 household projection figures would enable us to do that. She reminded Members that in November 2019, Cabinet received a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place, in response to the Council's agreed motion from Council in May 2019, which set out how the Council could deliver more social housing. She said that Members were advised that the most effective way would be to get the Local Plan adopted

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and she urged Council to agree the recommendations and take the next step in the Local Plan process.

On behalf of the entire Conservative Group, Councillor M Hart said that they had fully considered the matter and reflected upon the position we are in. He acknowledged the need for a property adopted Local Plan and the ramifications for not having one as no body wants hostile developments; particularly in the Green Belt, and it is absolutely essential that we have a five year land supply. He added that departure from using the standardised methodology will need to be fully justified. The Conservative Group were not persuaded that it is fully justified but won't at this stage be making any amendments. In conclusion he said, having had due regard to the legal and professional advice and having considered all of the arguments in particular in respect of the amended preferred options, the Group are not persuaded that the proposed Local Plan is sound.

Councillor Desmond said that failure to have an effective and sound plan would be dangerous for the authority and we absolutely need to have a five year land supply. He acknowledged that there has to be some strategic release of the green belt. However the Conservative Group has always maintained that there should not be one more house built on the green belt that is absolutely necessary. He said that he had concerns over the methodology of the housing numbers being 'sound' as the updated NPPF required us to use the 2014 household projection figures, not the 2016 figures. He added that the additional houses are completely unnecessary because the methodology is wrong and therefore he believed that using the lower figure is the right thing to do.

Upon a show of hands, the recommendations as set out in the report were agreed.

Decision: Council

- 1) Approved the proposed Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016-2036) and Policies Map (together with the associated evidence base, including the Sustainability Appraisal) for the purpose of its submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination under section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the PCPA 2004) (as shown in Appendix 1);**
- 2) Approved the Table of Additional (Minor) Modifications to the Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016-36) and Policies Map (as shown in Appendix 2);**
- 3) Approved the submission documents prepared pursuant to Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (the Local Planning Regulations) (see Appendix 3);**
- 4) Noted the technical study 'Traffic Demand in the Hagley Area (A456 Corridor)' (in Appendix 4) as a background paper (which**

has yet to be published by the County Council);

- 5) **Approved the ‘Statements of Common Ground’ with third parties such as statutory agencies and adjoining Councils (as shown in Appendix 5); and**
- 6) **Delegated authority to the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments for the following matters relating to the Local Plan:**
 - a) **To take or authorise such steps as may be necessary for the independent examination of the Local Plan to be completed, including:**
 - i **Proposing, requesting from and agreeing with the Inspector, at submission and through the examination, ‘main modifications’ to the wording of the Local Plan to ensure its soundness and legal compliance, in accordance with section 20(7C) of the PCPA 2004 (noting that ‘main modifications’ will subsequently be subject to public consultation prior to the completion of the examination and approved by Council);**
 - ii **Agreeing ‘additional (minor) modifications’ to the wording of the Local Plan (noting that these will relate to minor changes which do not materially affect the policies in or soundness of the Plan and will subsequently be approved by Council at adoption);**
 - iii **Entering into ‘Statements of Common Ground’ with third parties such as statutory agencies and adjoining Councils;**
 - iv **Undertaking other tasks pursuant to informing and ensuring the effective running of the examination, including making submissions of hearing statements to the Inspector and providing to the Inspector such further or revised documents or information as may be necessary;**
 - v **Agreeing Topic Papers including but not limited to housing growth, viability and Green Belt release (noting that these are for explanatory purposes only); and**
 - vi **Publishing the recommendations of the Inspector in accordance with section 20(8) of the PCPA 2004 and Regulation 25 of the Local Planning Regulations.**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6.52pm.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY,
KIDDERMINSTER

26TH FEBRUARY 2020 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: S Miah (Chairman), P W M Young (Vice-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 Edginton-White, N Gale, S Griffiths, I Hardiman, P Harrison, M J Hart, K Henderson, L J Jones, A L L'Huillier, N Martin, F M Oborski MBE, T L Onslow, M Rayner, C Rogers, S E N Rook, D R Sheppard, J W R Thomas, A Totty and L Whitehouse.

C.61 Prayers

Prayers were said by Rev Sue Levitt, Wesley Methodist, Stourport and Alveley & Callow Hill & Areley Kings Methodist Churches.

C.62 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

C.63 Declarations of Interests by Members

Councillor T Onslow declared an interest in agenda item 15 – Council Tax Setting 2020-2021, because she is the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia.

C.64 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2019 and the Minutes of the special meeting held on 22nd October 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C.65 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

C.66 Questions

Ten questions had been submitted in accordance with Standing Order Section 7, 1.8 by Members of the Council.

Agenda Item No. 4

1. Question from Councillor Mary Rayner to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services

How many public health funerals have taken place in Wyre Forest in the last 5 years?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services

I can confirm that in the past five years there have been a total of 23. There were four in 2015-16, six in each of the following three financial years and one so far in the current financial year.

Supplementary question

Where do these public funerals take place? Are relatives allowed to attend and do they have to pay anything?

Supplementary answer

They take place in Redditch. We always advise family members and they are allowed to attend. We advise family members about the funeral payment grant available from Department for Work and Pensions.

2. Question from Councillor Nathan Desmond to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services

At Annual Council last May, a motion was introduced by the Progressive Alliance which was unanimously supported by all political parties, that sought to increase and promote electric vehicle charging points across the Wyre Forest, especially on Council owned public car parks.

Could the relevant cabinet member please update Council on the progress to date of this very important initiative.

Answer from Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services

Councillor Desmond will recall that at last December's Overview and Scrutiny meeting Members were presented with the Climate Change Action Plan 2019-20. Within that document the action was recorded as "Increase provision of electric vehicle charge points in WFDC car parks and encourage the owners of privately owned car parks to do likewise." It was noted at that time that Worcestershire County Council had made a funding bid for new charge points where it would benefit residents without access to private car parks. I can confirm that Raven Street and Dog Lane car parks had been included with a likely timescale for implementation by this Summer.

Supplementary question

Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that with the Government now

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making an announcement that all new diesel, petrol and hybrid vehicles will be phased out from 2035, the infrastructure to a green agenda is going to be absolutely huge throughout the country, and in order to do that local government has a key and fundamental role to play. Does she agree that she and the administration will continue to lobby the LGA and local Member of Parliament, Mark Garnier, for better funding initiatives to Local Authorities in order that they rollout more charging points across their areas?

Supplementary answer

Yes, indeed she can. Officers should have had a meeting today with Cenex about this very subject, but due to the unfortunate flooding in Bewdley the meeting had to be cancelled.

3. Question from Councillor Tracey Onslow to the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection

Given WFDC's performance in respect of Community Wellbeing, could the Cabinet Member please confirm that the Progressive Alliance will be continuing with the 'free to attend' events programme across Wyre Forest, including such popular events as 'Bands in the Park' and 'Country & Western', which bring the community together?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection

I am sure the Member will be aware, the Medium Term Financial Strategy clearly states on page 37, paragraph 8.2.4 that funding for arts development, all discretionary events and summer activities will be sought from Town councils or other sponsors. Unfortunately, if this is not achieved the final year of funding by this Council will be 2020-21. In fact as Members will also be aware Officers and I have been actively working on this for some time now between Councils. Indeed the budget consultation questionnaire specifically sought the views of respondents to the question of whether parish and town councils ought to be funding such discretionary activities, 55% agreed and 67% agreed that parish and town councils should increase their council tax to protect services. This was the largest budget response that we have had to a budget questionnaire.

Supplementary question

Having spoken to my Town Councillor colleagues, none of them have agreed to take on these events, will you therefore confirm that you will be cutting these events with effect from next year?

Supplementary answer

I cannot confirm that because ongoing talks are still taking place through Town Councils. You may have spoken to different members of Town Councillors than I have, there have been some positive responses and we will continue to work along those lines.

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

Could the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments confirm that the current policy in respect of acquisitions from the capital portfolio fund in respect of the two LEP geography is being fully followed and therefore specifically how many properties have been looked at in the Redditch Borough Council area and how many have been looked at in the Bromsgrove District Council area since 22nd May, 2019?

Answer from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments

I was asked an identical question by Cllr Desmond at last July's Council meeting and I confirmed at that time that the new Administration was following the adopted strategies and policies of this council. Nothing has changed since then. You will remember that the new Administration publicly stated that our priority on capital investments will be to purchase properties within the Wyre Forest District.

Every week the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place receives from the Council's acquisition and asset management consultants, Jones Valerio, a cumulative schedule of all potential opportunities that have arisen during that week. It has to be said that the whole market slowed in 2019 compared to 2018 so there were fewer opportunities presented and as far as Bromsgrove and Redditch properties that were on that list, none of them met the Council's viability criteria.

Supplementary question

Would she confirm to me and indeed this Council that there is absolutely no agreement of any type; whether that be formal, informal, written, spoken or a gentleman's agreement between this Council and the Leaders of Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council and their Chief Executive, as discussed at a Northern Alliance meeting, that Wyre Forest would simply not pursue any acquisitions within Bromsgrove or Redditch areas. I understand the Leaders of those areas, particularly Bromsgrove were somewhat upset when we purchased a certain property in Bromsgrove, so would she categorically confirm the position in respect of that?

Supplementary answer

No properties have been looked at in Bromsgrove and Redditch. The only properties we are concerned about considering purchasing are within the Wyre Forest District.

5. Question from Councillor Ian Hardiman to the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection

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Does the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection still value the work and contribution of the Parish Councils in this District?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection

I believe I have been asked this question before at our last meeting on 25th September and I think the only difference in the question is the word 'still' added. I refer Councillor Hardiman to page 14 of this meeting's agenda for the answer I gave then. I can confirm as I did then that I and the administration value the work of all Parish Councils. They play an important part of our work across the area and are very efficient and hard working partners.

Supplementary question

Since Councillor Mrs Dyke's Cabinet appointment last May, can she confirm which of the nine Parish Council meetings she has attended and does she agree with me that failure to attend is discourteous to them?

Supplementary answer

I attended the first Parish Forum intending to meet with Members from the Parishes. We were greeted at the Forum by the Chairman who made the comment of what is all the District Council doing here. I find that slightly discourteous to us as well. I am happy to visit any Parish Council. I don't want to just impose myself on them. If a Parish Council would like to get in touch we can have a conversation and I will gladly visit it. I do not consider myself discourteous and never have.

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

Given Cllr. John Thomas' response to myself at the Full Council meeting in September when he confirmed he had visited the depot and hub to see the refurbishment and that the wider cabinet had, could he advise this Council of the date and time he visited and that of his 4 cabinet colleagues?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

If the matter is of such interest to you Councillor Hart, I am a little perplexed why you did not contact me in the intervening five months for you to raise the question with me further. I can confirm that my colleagues and I have visited the facilities at Green Street at various times and I do so frequently in my role as Cabinet Member for Operational Services.

Supplementary question

Would he actually answer my question and tell this Council exactly when the Leader, Deputy Leader and the Cabinet Members attended Green Street, because he told Council on 25th September that they had visited. So could he tell me when prior to that meeting they had visited or was this

Council recklessly or deliberately misled?

Supplementary answer

Perhaps you would like to set out the evidence you have for this extraordinary claim. There is no comprehensive record of who enters the Green Street site and I am sure he would agree with me that no single person within that complex could possibly observe all the comings and goings in one day let alone over a sustained period.

7. Question from Councillor John Byng to the Leader of the Council

Far from having all the information that has been requested, Bewdley Town Council still awaits the following:-

Condition reports on Load Street toilets and the Riverside North Park paddling pool.

Transfer documents for the toilets.

Amended contract for the paddling pool.

Information as to why BTC has to contribute £50k to the museum.

Would the Leader of the Council please let us know when this information will be shared?

Answer from the Leader of the Council

Councillor Byng has asked about a large number of issues and I need to give him a detailed answer as it seems that he may not have been given correct information by his colleagues in the Town Council.

Load Street Toilets - The 2017 condition survey was shared on 29 November 2019 and again on 10 December 2019. At the request of the Town Council, a new survey was completed in January 2020, received 4 February 2020 and sent to the Town Council on 13 February 2020. Transfer documents are being drafted with a view to transfer April 2021 in line with the wishes of the Town Council.

Riverside North Paddling Pool – there have been discussions with the Town Council since 2017 about the paddling pool transfer. On 18 December 2018 the draft agreement and conditions survey were sent to Cllr Anna Coleman. The previous town clerk also had received all relevant documents including the conditions survey.

From March 2019 legal colleagues held meetings with the town clerk and all relevant documents – lease, service level agreement, condition survey- were discussed and were in the possession of the Town Council.

At a meeting on 21 November 2019 the clerk informed the District Council that the Town Council no longer wished to take on the paddling pool and

instead the Friends group would receive £5,000 from the Town Council. At

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a subsequent meeting with the Friends group on 29 November 2019, they confirmed this arrangement. Therefore, no further amended documents have been prepared for the Town Council.

It is our understanding that neither organisation wish to take on the paddling pool at this point in time. If that is the case, it will not reopen this summer.

Bewdley Museum – In response to a query from the town clerk on 29 November 2019 about a contribution to the museum, officers emailed the Town Council on 6 December 2019 to confirm that potentially any contribution UP TO £50k would be sought. It is up to the Town Council whether or not it wishes to make a contribution to the museum when it becomes an independent trust. I would hope that the Town Council would look favourably on the value that this important facility brings to the town and its economy.

I hope that this answer demonstrates that the Town Council has already had all of the information mentioned in Councillor Byng's question.

Supplementary question

There is a Localism meeting with Bewdley Town Council tomorrow evening, will the Leader be attending?

Supplementary answer

I have every confidence in the portfolio holder, Councillor Mrs Dyke, who has a real grip on the situation within the three Towns. I did go to the first meeting over there with the Chief Executive. It would not be my intention to go tomorrow evening. Councillor Mrs Dyke has the confidence of the full Cabinet. I gave a very full answer to the question and I would encourage the Bewdley Town Council to take a positive decision about what role it wants to play in the localism agenda and not make negative comments, commencing with the meeting Councillor Mrs Dyke is holding with Town Councillors tomorrow evening.

8. Question from Councillor Ian Hardiman to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments

Would the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments confirm to this Council that the Wyre Forest Green Party representative enjoys her full support -Yes or No?

Answer from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments

This question seems to imply a misunderstanding of the democratic process. Councillors are elected to represent the residents of their ward; not to represent a political party. I can assure Council that Councillor Vicky

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Caulfield has my total confidence both in her role as a member of the Independent, Liberal Democrat and Green Group, and as a Councillor of Blakebrook and Habberley South.

Supplementary question

Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that it is completely disingenuous to campaign against the Green Belt development, get elected on that basis and now support extensive development in the Green Belt?

Supplementary answer

At last week's Special Council meeting the majority of this Council took the responsible decision to ensure that this District has a viable Local Plan. Many of us campaigned in the elections against Green Belt development and indeed every Member of this Council wishes Green Belt development to be absolutely minimal. As a responsible Member of this Council, Councillor Vicky Caulfield voted in favour of submitting the Local Plan so that this District was not held hostage by hostile planning applications from greedy developers.

9. Question from Councillor Chris Rogers to the Leader of the Council

Given the Chief Executive of the Council's recent email regarding comments made by a member or members of this Council regarding comments made regarding Simply Limitless would the Leader, having obtained the information from the Chief Executive, advise this Council of who that member or members is/are and will he apologise and advise this Council of what he said to them and what action he is taking against them to ensure this Council is not brought into disrepute and confirm that this organisation has the full support of the Progressive Alliance?

Answer from the Leader of the Council

Again there are five questions in there, we could have answered those quite simply if we had have been asked privately without exciting all the people watching at home and those in the Chamber tonight. You won't be surprised that I am saying there is no need for me to apologise about this matter, as the question implies. I am happy to confirm that the Council is supportive of this charitable organisation and the Council's Sustainability Team has worked closely with Simply Limitless on various projects over the last five years. Some of the services at Simply Limitless are commissioned by the county council.

The Chief Executive's message contained a very clear reminder that members should not criticise any organisation without evidence to support their views. This could involve a breach of the code of conduct including the provision that "You must treat others with respect". I am sure members understand and support that it is always inappropriate to make unsubstantiated comments and criticisms of organisations or individuals and that applies to us all.

Supplementary question

Is the Leader aware that his Deputy made disparaging remarks about Simply Limitless at the recent Treasury Management meeting and would he distance himself from those remarks and join me in supporting the good work Simply Limitless does.

Supplementary answer

I will certainly be happy to repeat what I have said. I hope that all Groups have taken heed of the advice and remind their Members from time to time about the Code of Conduct.

10. Question from Councillor Anna Coleman to the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection

Could the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection confirm categorically that this Progressive Alliance will not withdraw any Council funding from Bewdley Museum?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection

Councillor Coleman appears to have forgotten the report to Council on 25 September. Paragraph 4.24 said "Work is under way to explore conversion of Bewdley Museum into a self-standing charitable trust", which if you remember Councillor Coleman was mentioned at the last Bewdley Museum meeting, item 7, to be discussed again at the next meeting on Tuesday 3rd March, agenda item 6, "which would be overseen by a board of independent trustees and which would employ the staff. This change is considered essential in order to move the Museum to a sustainable position where its operating costs can fall because of the tools that would be available to it as a charity. The financial and support calls on the District Council would be reduced or removed, and the District Council's role would be limited to being a funding partner."

Councillor Byng sort of had the wrong end of the stick earlier, the figure that he mentioned, £50,000, is the target we have set for the reduction in this Council's net contribution to the museum. That is only a small proportion, less than 10%, of the expenditure that Wyre Forest District Council currently incurs on the museum and store, Guildhall and QEII Jubilee Gardens.

C.67 Chairman's Communications

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

C.68 Leader of the Council Announcements

The Leader of the Council referred Members to his tabled report.

Motions Submitted under Standing Orders

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

1. Notice of Motion from Councillor C Edginton-White

Council

- a) *Extends its thanks to all public agencies, voluntary organisations and individuals for their response in assisting local residents and businesses affected by the flooding caused by Storm Dennis, noting in particular the work and commitment of the Environment Agency staff who worked through very adverse conditions throughout the night to respond to the emergency situation and the ongoing support they provided on site especially at Beale's Corner;*
- b) *Notes that there was good forewarning from the Met Office about the impending storm event, with Storm Dennis being named on 11 February, although there were unprecedented local weather conditions which led to a very rapid rise in river levels at Bewdley on the night of Saturday 15 February;*
- c) *Expresses concern that it was not possible for the Environment Agency to erect the Severnside South barrier and the temporary barrier at Beale's Corner in time to prevent a number of properties being flooded in Lax Lane and leaving Beale's Corner properties vulnerable and the bridge closed on Sunday 16 February;*
- d) *Refers the issues arising from this and the ongoing current flooding events to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for it to take evidence from relevant bodies including the Environment Agency, with a view to making recommendations no later than the Council's meeting in July 2020 on lessons to be learned and what case can be made to the Government for permanent flood protection arrangements at Beale's Corner.*

Councillor C Edginton-White presented the motion, which was seconded by Councillor J Byng.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor M Hart said that we should not prejudge or predetermine what any of the statutory agencies are going to say, and therefore it would not be appropriate for Council to have a lengthy debate on the issue at this time. He moved an amendment to the effect that the item be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He said that it would be for the Committee to decide who they would like to invite; such as the Environment Agency, statutory agencies, representatives from the community and voluntary sectors. He added that the scope of the scrutiny exercise could potentially be widened to examine the impact on residents, local businesses, car parks etc.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor I Hardiman. Councillor Edginton-White was happy to accept the amendment.

Upon a show of hands the motion as amended was carried unanimously.

Decision: The Motion from Councillor C Edginton-White, as amended by Councillor M Hart be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

C.70 Urgent Motions Submitted Under Standing Order No. D1 (7)

There were no urgent motions submitted under Standing Orders.

C.71 Governance and Constitutional Issues

Council considered a report from the Chief Executive which dealt with; Governance review recommendations; Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations and Adoption of amended code of conduct.

The Leader of the Council presented the report and formally moved the recommendations as set out in the report en bloc.

The Leader advised Members that the group leaders and deputy group leaders had undertaken a thorough review of the governance arrangements, following last May's motion. Their recommendation was that Council should not move away from the Cabinet and Scrutiny model that Wyre Forest District Council has operated for almost twenty years. He said that the Progressive Alliance backed the motion last May when the motion indicated that we would examine moving to a committee system. All members have had the chance to be part of this review, and advice was sought from the Local Government Association. He said the conclusions reached by group leaders reflect the fact that there was no strong consensus in favour of change. He added that we should never be ashamed to review arrangements that have operated for such a long period. He added that the review had produced recommendations on which he believed there will be a consensus, and the Cabinet welcomes and supports the recommendation about how it might undertake policy development work in future.

The Leader further explained that the Council's approach in recent years has been to accept the IRP's recommendations in full and he believed that it was the right thing to do. He thanked the Panel for their report which recommended some modest changes, and the report before Council proposes that they should take effect from last May. In conclusion he added that Council should accept the work done on the revised code of conduct by the Ethics and Standards Committee and support its adoption.

The proposals were seconded by the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning & Capital Investments.

A discussion ensued. Councillor Hart said that he and his group fully endorse and support the Executive Cabinet style of governance and looked forward to future invitations to work with the Cabinet on policy development work. He added that whilst he may not personally agree with the recommendations of the IRP, they would be supported along with the recommended changes to the Code of Conduct.

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Councillor Desmond welcomed the decision to remain with the Cabinet style structure; he said it was the right structure for the authority as it gave strong leadership.

Upon a show of hands the recommendations as set out in the report were carried unanimously.

Decision: Council

- 1.1.1** **AGREED that the Council should not make a formal change to its governance arrangements at this time, as recommended by the Group Leaders and Deputy Group Leaders in the report in Appendix 1;**
- 1.1.2** **ENDORSED the recommendation that Cabinet should be mindful of formal and informal opportunities to involve other members in policy development work, prior to reports coming before the overview and scrutiny committee and Cabinet;**
- 1.1.3** **ADOPTED the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel with effect from 7 May 2019, as set out in its report in Appendix 2;**
- 1.1.4** **ADOPTED the revised Member Code of Conduct set out in Appendix 3, as recommended by the Ethics and Standards Committee.**

C.72

Review of the December 2019 UK Parliamentary election and Review of Polling districts and polling places

Council considered a report from the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer which dealt with a report on 12 December general election, and the Polling districts and polling places review.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being & Democratic Services presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. She said that the report set out the key statistics and information about the General Election, the third major election that Wyre Forest's electoral team had to administer in 2019. She said she felt she could speak on behalf of all parties in complimenting the electoral team and the Acting Returning Officer for a well-run election process, which had to be undertaken at a challenging time of year and at the same time as the concluding phases of the annual canvass.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being & Democratic Services explained that the review of polling districts and polling places was due to have been reported to our meeting in December but that was postponed because of the general election. There was a good level of response to the public consultation last autumn. Generally, respondents seem content with the current arrangements and it is certainly the case that they have been operated successfully for a number of elections, including

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the three major elections held in 2019. However the consultation also revealed concerns about the location of polling places in a number of areas, with the most frequent comment being about the absence of a polling place on the Habberley Estate

In conclusion she said it would be inappropriate for council to ignore these comments and therefore the report proposes a further specific review of polling districts and polling places in Franche & Habberley North and Blakebrook & Habberley South, as set out in paragraphs 10.6 and 10.7. She added that the outcome of the further specific review would be reported to the Council meeting in July and would allow any changes to be implemented for the autumn of 2020.

Councillor Whitehouse said he was absolutely delighted to second the proposals; having spoken to residents during his election campaign, he said it was only right that there is a polling station on Habberley estate.

Councillor Hart formally moved an amendment to delete recommendation 2.3 of the report to agree to undertake a further review of polling districts and polling places in Franche & Habberley North and Blakebrook & Habberley South. He said we should take the lead from the response of the Acting Returning Officer who, as part of the consultation, stated he was content with the set of arrangements that we currently have.

Councillor Onslow seconded the amendment. She said four people out of in excess of 3100 had asked for the review; she felt that we shouldn't change things unless there is strong consensus in favour of it.

Councillor Oborski spoke against the amendment. She said there is a lack of a regular and proper bus service on the estate and, whilst it was acknowledged that postal votes are available, for some residents they do not have a post box within reasonable walking distance. She added that there may not have been a very big response to this survey; a detailed review is needed to ensure that everybody affected can have their say and it was a perfectly democratic thing for the authority to do.

A vote on Councillor Hart's amendment was taken and defeated.

In summary the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being & Democratic Services said just as the public consultation showed, there will be a variety of views around this chamber on specific issues and it will probably never be possible to please everyone all of the time. She said she believed the proposals in the report are the best way forward and sought Council's agreement to the recommendations set out in section 2.

Upon a show of hands, the vote on the substantive recommendations was carried unanimously.

Decision: Council

- 1.1 NOTED the report on the UK Parliamentary election in December 2019;**

- 1.2 **APPROVED** that the existing polling districts and polling places should remain unchanged at present;
- 1.3 **AGREED** to undertake a further review of polling districts and polling places in Franche & Habberley North and Blakebrook & Habberley South, as set out in paragraph 10.7 of the report.

C.73 Policy and Budget Framework

Recommendations from the Licensing & Environmental Committee

(a) 7th October 2019 - Licensing Act 2003 Review of Statement of Licensing Policy Consultation Results

The Chairman of the Licensing & Environmental Committee, Councillor P Dyke presented the recommendation for approval. Councillor M Rayner seconded the proposal.

Decision: The revised Statement of Licensing Policy attached at Appendix 1 of the report be approved and published.

(b) 2nd December 2019 – Review of Fees and Charges for the Council’s Licensing and Regulatory Services Function 2020/21

The Chairman of the Licensing & Environmental Committee presented the recommendations for approval. Councillor M Rayner seconded the proposal.

Decision:

- 1.1 **The proposals for fees and charges within the Council’s Licensing, Food, Health, Safety and Pollution Control functions for 2020/21, as detailed in the report, be included in the Council’s 2020/21 budget strategy.**
- 1.2 **Direct Officers to advertise the hackney carriage and private hire vehicle and operator fees as detailed in this report and recommend that, subject to consideration of any objections received, Council approves the increases as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report**

Recommendations from Cabinet

(c) 12th November 2019 – Conversion of Property in Stourport on Severn

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments presented the recommendations for approval. The Leader of

the Council seconded the proposal.

Decision: The funding within the Capital Programme currently set aside for Comberton Place (as per the report of 11/07/17) is removed from the Capital Programme and that £60k is reallocated to the Raven Street refurbishment and the remainder returned to the Evergreen Investment Fund as unallocated.

Recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

(d) 7th November 2019 - Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Mid-year Review Report 2019-20

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor M Hart presented the recommendation for approval. Councillor N Desmond seconded the proposal.

Decision: The Treasury Management Mid-year Review and updated Prudential Indicators & Ratios be approved.

(e) 6th February 2020 - Treasury Management Strategy 2020-21

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee formally moved the recommendations for approval. He said that the item had been fully considered by both the Treasury Management Review Panel and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. He said he was very grateful to the Professional Officers for all their hard work in this area. Councillor N Desmond seconded the proposal.

Decision:

- 1.1 The restated Prudential Indicators and Limits for the financial years 2020-21 to 2029-30 included in Appendix 3. These will be revised for the February 2020 Council meeting, as per paragraph 7.2 of the report, following any changes to the Capital Programme brought about as part of the budget process.**
- 1.2 The updated Treasury Management and Investment Policy and Strategy Statements for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 (the associated Prudential Indicators are included in Appendix 3 and the detailed criteria is included in Section 10 and Appendix 5) be approved.**
- 1.3 The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement that sets out the Council's policy on MRP included in Appendix 1 be approved.**
- 1.4 The Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator included in Appendix 3 be approved.**

- 1.5 Council noted that the separate, but intrinsically linked, Capital Strategy 2020-30 to be approved separately by Council, sets out the policy statement covering non-treasury investments including the related suite of prudential indicators.**

C.74 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2023

A report was considered from the Corporate Director: Resources which sought approval of the Council's budget for 2020-2023 having considered the proposed decision and budget reports recommended to Council by Cabinet on 11th February 2020 including:

- Base Budget Projections 2020-23 including Cabinet Proposals
- Fees and Charges
- Capital Strategy 2020-2030
- Report of the Chief Financial Officer in respect of Sections 25-28 Local Government Act 2003

The Leader of the Council presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. He thanked the Corporate Director: Resources and her team for all the hard work they had put into producing the document.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning & Capital Investments seconded the proposals.

Councillor Desmond moved a suite of amendments, as set out on pages 99 and 100 of the report, on behalf of the Conservative Group. He said that the amendments were built on the principles of efficiency and value for money and had a clear focus on a mixture of internal savings with a continued transformation of services. The proposals were seconded by Councillor M Hart.

A lengthy debate ensued. Several Members spoke about the importance of the Council being more commercial in its approach to income generation. The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection assured Members that, under the new Administration, the Member and Officer Income Generation Group continued to meet and discuss ideas and proposals put forward.

Named votes on the Conservative Group proposals were recorded as follows and the amendment was defeated:

For (14)

Councillors: 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, T L Onslow and C Rogers.

Against (19)

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Councillors: J Aston, G W Ballinger, C J Barnett, V Caulfield, H E Dyke, P Dyke, C Edginton-White, S Griffiths, A L L'Huillier, 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

The Leader of the Council said that when you freeze council tax you never catch up. The authority has a large financial deficit and closing it will depend on the Localism agenda. He said the District Council cannot go on funding services year on year that are not its duty. The District Council will continue to work with Town and Parish Councils, and other local organisations wishing to take on services for the people of Wyre Forest. He urged all Members to support the budget.

A named vote on the substantive budget proposals was recorded as follows and was agreed:

For (19)

Councillors: J Aston, G W Ballinger, C J Barnett, V Caulfield, H E Dyke, P Dyke, C Edginton-White, S Griffiths, A L L'Huillier, 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 (14)

Councillors: 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, T L Onslow and C Rogers.

Decision:

- 1.1 Council APPROVED the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2023;**
- 1.1.2 APPROVED the revised Cabinet Proposals – taking into account the impact on the Council’s Capital and Revenue Budgets for 2020-2023 as shown in the table in paragraph 3.9 including:**
 - a. Approval of the Community Leadership Fund for 2020-2021 of £33k;**
 - b. Approval of a programme of phased savings from Localism partnership working with our Town and Parish Council colleagues as outlined in paragraph 5.13 of the December Cabinet report of £135k in 2020-2021, £245k in 2021-2022, £350k in 2022-2023, £525k in 2023-2024 and £700k in 2024-2025. The savings include assumptions of transfers of activities and staff posts which, if not realised will be ended or deleted as set out in paragraphs 8.2.4 and 8.2.5 of the December Cabinet report. To also approve the top-up of the single Localism Fund by a further £30k in**

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2020-21 to continue the good work done so far with Parish and Town Councils and other organisations.

c. Approval of additional capital resource to facilitate ongoing delivery of the ICT Strategy of a total of £653k phased over the MTFS as set out in paragraph 8.2.6 of the December report, proposed to be funded by prudential borrowing. The associated revenue costs are £4k in 2020-2021, £63k in 2021-2022 and £126k in 2022-2023;

d. Approval of the removal of funding for Kidderminster Town Centre, Bewdley Development Trust and Stourport Forward saving a total of £30,520 in 2020-2021 onwards;

e. Approval of a schedule of improvements to Stourport Riverside in line with the Master Plan to be funded as set out in paragraph 8.2.8 of the December Cabinet report. The gross capital investment proposed is £150,000 of which £103,580 can be funded from S106 contributions so leaving £46,420 to be funded from prudential borrowing. The ongoing net revenue implications are £24,510 in 2020-2021, £23,010 in 2021-2022 and £23,010 in 2022-2023;

f. Approval to undertake health and safety capital works to the whole of the Depot Block E so it is fully operationally functional to meet business need. This includes extra provision of work/meeting space to provide future proofing/additional flexibility with no parts of the building mothballed. Funding of £85,000 in 2020-2021 from prudential borrowing with revenue financing costs £1,830 in 2020-2021, £7,910 in 2021-2022 and £7,910 in 2022-2023; no additional income from external use is assumed although opportunities may arise to achieve this in the future.

g. Approval of the HLF Brinton Park Project gross capital expenditure of £2.4m subject to HLF approval of the substantive funding and the final business case. This includes approval of a commitment to meet a maximum shortfall of £100k in capital partnership funding for the project, to be funded from prudential borrowing.

h. Approval of an additional capital allocation of £1.5m for Capital Portfolio Fund property acquisitions funded by prudential borrowing. This is to provide headroom to cover a potential shortfall for further purchases within the district, that are currently in the early stages of consideration for which early viability indications are favourable. This proposal is assumed to be revenue neutral at this early stage, progression will be dependent on the ongoing due diligence and reports to Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet Sub Committees in accordance with normal protocols when

the financial business cases will be confirmed.

- 1.1.3 APPROVED the fees and charges in line with this Strategy and in line with the recommendations of the Licensing and Environmental Committee of 2nd December 2019, and the impact on the Council's Revenue Budget for 2020-2023, as shown in Appendix 3;**
- 1.1.4 APPROVED the Council's updated Capital Strategy including the following Indicators and limits that have been further revised for the February 2020 Council Meeting following any changes to the Capital Programme brought about as a result of the budget process:**
- a) Approval of the Capital Strategy 2020-2030 including the associated Quantitative Indicators in Appendix 2 of the December Cabinet report now updated for Cabinet Proposals as set out in Appendix 2/2 of the report;**
- b) Approval of variations to the Capital Programme and Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewals Schedule as set out in Appendix 2 of the report (which updates Appendix 1, Appendices A and B of the Capital Strategy report to December 2019 Cabinet);**
- c) Approval of the limits for gross debt of non-treasury investments compared to net service expenditure and for commercial income as a percentage of net service expenditure as set out in Appendix 2 of the December report now updated for Cabinet Proposals as set out in Appendix 2/2 of the report;**
- d) Approval of the limits for loan investments as set out in paragraph 5.1 of the 17th December 2019 report.**
- 1.1.5 APPROVED that any Final Accounts savings arising from 2019-2023 over and above the target allowed for in the Council's Financial Strategy, together with surplus Earmarked Reserves, be allocated by the Corporate Director: Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategy and Finance;**
- 1.1.6 The General Fund Revenue Budget be APPROVED including all updates from the position in December 2019 as set out in the report.**
- 1.2 COUNCIL TAX**
- 1.2.1 Council SET the Council Tax for Wyre Forest District Council on a Band D Property at £219.34 for 2020-2021 (£214.34 2019-2020) which represents an increase of 2.33% on**

Council Tax from 2019-2020.

- 1.2.2 ENDORSED the provisional Council Tax on a Band D Property in 2021-2022 of £224.34 and £229.34 in 2022-2023, being increases of 2.28% and 2.23% respectively.**
- 1.2.3 NOTED the Corporate Director: Resources (as Chief Financial Officer) opinion on the budget proposals, recommended by the Cabinet in the report, as detailed in Appendix 4 of the report.**

C.75 Council Tax Setting 2020-2021

Council considered the formal resolution for setting the Council Tax for 2020-2021. This includes the 2.33% increase in the District Council's element of Council Tax, as recommended by Cabinet on 11th February 2020, and the precepts and council tax increases in the elements of Council Tax set by the following bodies: Worcestershire County Council (+3.99%); The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia (+3.94%), and, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority (+1.96%).

The Leader of the Council formally moved the recommendations for approval. The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning & Capital Investments seconded the proposals. She acknowledged the Town and Parish Councils that had made substantial increases to their precepts in order to take on services under the Localism agenda.

A named vote on the Council Tax resolution was recorded as follows and was agreed:

For (31)

Councillors: J Aston, G W Ballinger, C J Barnett, J F Byng, V Caulfield, S J Chambers, A Coleman, B S Dawes, N J Desmond, H E Dyke, P Dyke, C 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

Abstained (1)

Councillor: R H Coleman.

Decision: The formal Council Tax Resolution 2020-21 at Appendix 1 of the report, taking into account information contained in Appendices 2 to 5 be approved.

The Chairman announced that this was the last Council meeting for the Corporate Director: Community Well-being & Environment, Linda Draycott. He thanked Linda for supporting Members in their roles and for her service and contribution to the authority and he wished her well for the future.

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Councillor Oborski said that Linda had done a fantastic job for the Council. She had always remained cheerful even when things have looked grim and Members were really grateful to Linda for her hard work. She said that Linda would be missed but was sure that she would have a really exciting future.

Councillor H Dyke said that it was her second time on Cabinet and both times she had been lucky enough to have Linda as her Head of Service. She said Linda had been amazing; she always smiles and remains happy when dealing with Councillors, she can make you feel like your suggestions are brilliant, then she can tactfully tell you if its not! She said that Linda was one of the nicest people she had met and will miss her dearly. She thanked Linda for everything she had done.

Councillor Onslow said that she and Linda had arrived at the Council at the same time and they had a bit of a 'bonkers' history together. She said that she would miss Linda and thanked her for everything she had done for the District. She said Linda was the Officer that had instigated the Leisure Centre project and had helped her succeed in delivering an outstanding facility.

Councillor Hart said that he was on the interview panel when Linda was unanimously appointed to the post of Head of Community and Partnership Services (CAPS). He said that Linda had given sterling service firstly as Head of CAPS and latterly as a Director. On behalf of the Conservative Group he wished her all the very best for the future and thanked her immensely for all she had done for the Council and its residents.

Councillor Desmond said that he too was on the interview panel that appointed Linda. He said that she was head and shoulders above anybody else and we haven't looked back since. He said Linda has been a first class Officer and Director. She has a positive can-do attitude and has been a breath of fresh air in Local Government. She has given tremendous service to the authority and has overseen the creation of a thriving Leisure Centre facility, the Green Street Depot project and the transformation agenda. Whatever she has been linked to she has taken it on board and wholeheartedly delivered. He thanked her for her incredible contribution and said she can certainly leave the authority with her head held extremely high.

Councillor Ballinger spoke on behalf of the ICHC Group. He said that he can remember Linda coming to the authority from Birmingham City Council, and it was like a breath of fresh air. He said that her enthusiasm had been infectious; particularly with the staff group that she has led at the Depot. The frontline staff had a great deal to deal with and it is always with good spirit. Everybody will miss Linda and she will not be short of a reference.

Linda extended thanks to Members. She said that she felt humbled by their heartfelt and kind words. She said that she will miss everybody in the Chamber and in the staff teams. She wished everybody well for the future

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because it will be a huge challenge, and was sure that the staff would respond and provide the service Council and its residents need.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.08pm.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

HELD REMOTELY

21ST APRIL 2020 (5PM)

Present:

Councillors: S Miah (Chairman), P W M Young (Vice-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 Edginton-White, S Griffiths, I Hardiman, P Harrison, M J Hart, K Henderson, L J Jones, A L L'Huillier, N Martin, F M Oborski MBE, T L Onslow, M Rayner, C Rogers, S E N Rook, D R Sheppard, J W R Thomas, A Totty and L Whitehouse.

C.76 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence

Councillor M Rayner joined the meeting at this point (5.02pm)

C.77 Declarations of Interests by Members

There were no declarations of interest.

C.78 Coronavirus Act 2020 - Governance and Constitutional Issues

Council considered a report from the Chief Executive which proposed the making of arrangements to ensure continuity of the Council's decision-making functions during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Leader of the Council presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. He thanked the Chairman of the Council and Group Leaders for the discussion that they had on the detail of the proposals set out in the report and said that he was satisfied that the report reflected the outcome of those discussions. He added that, for the convenience of the Council, he would invite the Chief Executive to take Members through the main points of the report.

The proposals were seconded by Councillor F M Oborski MBE.

The Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor M Hart, said that as a group they would support the recommendations. He said that at this time of national crisis, it was important that politicians united and worked together and that we continued with the good governance of the Council. He added that the arrangements and proposed changes to the constitution were necessary and proportionate in the circumstances we regrettably find

ourselves in nationally.

The Chief Executive led Members through the main points of the report. He explained that the proposed delegation in point 2.4 of the report would only be used as a matter of urgency and any decisions taken would be reported to full Council for formal ratification.

Councillor Oborski said she hoped that we would not be in these exceptional circumstances for too long. However the authority must be absolutely certain that it is safe to hold normal meetings before we hold them. She expressed her thanks to those members of the Council staff who are doing a superb job in keeping everything going and felt very proud of exemplary work the Council was doing. She said she was delighted to second the proposals and hoped that all Members would support them.

The Leader of the Council paid tribute to the Chief Executive , Ian Miller, who had pulled the whole exercise together at break neck speed. He said that within days of having to deal with the flooding issues which affected the whole of the district, he and other staff were having to deal with the Coronavirus pandemic. He added that the demands that are coming on Chief Executives and Councils across the country from Government in these unprecedented times are remarkable; instructions and advice can be changed on a daily basis. He thanked the Chief Executive and his immediate team for their hard work. He said that the Chief Executive was a remarkable person; he had had to cope with many issues at the same time, and everybody appreciates the work that he does for this Council.

The vote was carried unanimously.

Decision: Council AGREED;

- 1.1 That the Council's annual meeting in 2020 is held on a date decided by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman to the Council, such date not to be before the lifting of restrictions on movement and social distancing measures in response to the COVID-19 outbreak; and subject to there being no annual meeting in 2020 if those restrictions are not lifted in time for the annual meeting to be held by 30 September 2020.**
- 1.2 That the temporary changes to the Constitution set out in the report and the delegations set out in paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5 below should apply until the earliest of:**
 - (a) A date decided by the Solicitor to the Council in consultation with the Chairman of the Council; or**
 - (b) The date of revocation of the section 78 regulations; or**
 - (c) 6th May 2021.**
- 1.3 The following temporary changes to its Constitution:**

- 1.3.1 the revised Section 7: Council Procedure Rules in Appendix 1;**
- 1.3.2 the revised scheme of delegation for planning in Appendix 2 to be included in Section 4: Responsibility for Functions, with delegation to the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place to update planning practice notes and/or associated practice protocols to the extent necessary to reflect the temporary changes in the procedures adopted by the Council;**
- 1.3.3 amendments to the scheme of delegation for licensing and registration functions in Section 4: Responsibility for Functions, as set out in paragraph 3.12 of the report;**
- 1.3.4 the revised provisions to Section 8: Access to Information set out at paragraph 3.13; and**
- 1.3.5 the revisions to Section 12: Contract Procedure Rules set out in paragraph 3.14.**
- 1.4 That delegated authority be given to the Solicitor to the Council in consultation with the Chairman of the Council, Chief Executive and Corporate Director: Resources, to make any additional temporary changes to the Constitution that are required as a matter of urgency between meetings of the Council, such additional temporary changes to be reported to the next meeting of the Council for formal ratification.**
- 1.5 That delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Council, Solicitor to the Council and Corporate Director: Resources, to make any temporary changes to policies that ordinarily require full council approval and that are required as a matter of urgency between meetings of the Council, such temporary changes to be reported to the next meeting of the Council for formal ratification.**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 5.27pm.

Chairman's List of Functions – 2019/20

FEBRUARY 2020

- 18th Guest of Honour at Wedding in Marigold Wedding Venue, Birmingham
- 22nd Armed Forces Breakfast Club/Fund Raising Event – Tesco's,
Stourport on Severn
- 22nd Mayor of Bewdley Charity Quiz Night
- 29th St Chads Arts Exhibition
- 29th Mayor of Bewdley Bingo Night

MARCH 2020

- 1st Worcestershire Civic Service*
- 6th Mayor of Kidderminster Charity Dinner
- 9th Commonwealth Flag Flying
- 11th 10 Year Wyre Forest Pledge – Kidderminster College
- 14th Chairman's Charity Dinner

APRIL 2020

- 30th Raising of NHS Flag at Wyre Forest House

A number of functions were cancelled due to Corona virus Outbreak

* Denotes attendance by Vice Chairman

MUNICIPAL CALENDAR 2020/21
MAY 2020

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
				1	2	3
4	5 CLT	6	7	8 Bank Holiday	9	10
11	12	13 6pm Council	14	15	16	17
18	19 CLT 6pm Planning	20 4.30pm Group Leaders 6pm Cabinet	21	22	23	24
25 Bank Holiday	26	27	28	29	30	31

JUNE 2020

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2 CLT Cabinet/CLT	3	4	5	6	7
8 10.30am Licensing & Environmental	9	10	11 6pm Overview & Scrutiny	12	13	14
15	16 CLT 6pm Planning	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 Cabinet/CLT	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 CLT					

JULY 2020

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1	2 6pm Overview & Scrutiny	3	4	5
6	7 4.30pm Group Leaders 6pm Cabinet	8	9 6pm Members Forum	10	11	12
13	14 CLT Cabinet/CLT	15 6pm Council	16	17	18	19
20	21 6pm Planning	22 6pm Audit	23	24	25	26
27	28 CLT	29	30	31		

AUGUST 2020

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
					1	2
3 10.30am Licensing & Environmental	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 CLT 6pm Planning	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 Bank Holiday						

SEPTEMBER 2020

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1 CLT Cabinet/CLT	2	3 6pm Overview & Scrutiny	4	5	6
7	8	9 6pm Audit	10 WCC Council 6pm Ethics & Standards	11	12	13
14 6.30pm Parish Forum	15 CLT 6pm Planning	16 4.30pm Group Leaders 6pm Cabinet	17	18	19	20
21	22 Cabinet/CLT	23 6pm Council	24 WCC Cabinet	25	26	27
28	29 CLT	30				

OCTOBER 2020

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
			1 6pm Overview & Scrutiny	2	3	4
5 10.30am Licensing & Environmental	6	7	8 6pm Members Forum	9	10	11
12	13 CLT	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 6pm Planning	21	22 WCC Cabinet	23	24	25
26	27 Cabinet/CLT	28	29	30	31	

* TMRP meeting to be programmed in (October / November)

NOVEMBER 2020

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						1
2	3 CLT	4	5 WCC Council 6pm Overview & Scrutiny	6	7	8
9	10 4.30pm Group Leaders 6pm Cabinet	11	12 WCC Cabinet	13	14	15
16	17 CLT 6pm Planning	18	19	20	21	22
23	24 Cabinet/CLT	25 6pm Audit	26	27	28	29
30						

* TMRP meeting to be programmed in (October / November)

DECEMBER 2020

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1 CLT	2	3 6pm Overview & Scrutiny	4	5	6
7 10.30am Licensing & Environmental	8	9 6pm Council	10 WCC Cabinet	11	12	13
14	15 CLT 6pm Planning	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 4.30pm Group Leaders 6pm Cabinet	23	24 Offices Closed	25 Bank Holiday	26	27
28 Bank Holiday	29 Offices Closed	30 Offices Closed	31 Offices Closed			

JANUARY 2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
				1 Bank Holiday	2	3
4	5 CLT	6	7 6pm Overview & Scrutiny	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 CLT 6pm Planning	20 6pm Audit	21	22	23	24
25	26 Cabinet/CLT	27	28	29	30	31

* TMRP meeting & training to be programmed in (January / February)

FEBRUARY 2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 10.30am Licensing & Environmental	2 CLT	3	4 6pm Overview & Scrutiny	5	6	7
8	9 4.30pm Group Leaders 6pm Cabinet	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 CLT 6pm Planning	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 Cabinet/CLT	24 6pm Council	25	26	27	28

* TMRP meeting & training to be programmed in (January / February)

MARCH 2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2 CLT 6 pm Ethics & Standards	3	4 6pm Overview & Scrutiny	5	6	7
8	9 Cabinet/CLT	10	11 6pm Members Forum	12	13	14
15	16 CLT 6pm Planning	17	18 6.30pm Parish Forum	19	20	21
22	23 4.30pm Group Leaders 6pm Cabinet	24 6pm Audit	25	26	27	28
29	30 CLT	31				

APRIL 2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
			1 6pm Overview & Scrutiny	2 Bank Holiday	3	4
5 Bank Holiday	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 10.30am Licensing & Environmental	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 CLT 4.30pm Group Leaders 6pm Planning	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 Cabinet/CLT	28	29	30		

MAY 2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
					1	2
3 Bank Holiday	4 CLT	5	6 WCC, PCC and Kidderminster Town Council Elections	7 WCC elections - count	8	9
10	11	12 6pm Council	13 6pm Overview & Scrutiny	14	15	16
17	18 CLT 6pm Planning	19 4.30pm Group Leaders 6pm Cabinet	20	21	22	23
24	25 Cabinet/CLT	26 6pm Audit	27	28	29	30
31 Bank Holiday						

JUNE 2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1 CLT	2	3 6pm Overview & Scrutiny	4	5	6
7 10.30am Licensing & Environmental	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 CLT 6pm Planning	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 Cabinet/CLT	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 CLT	30				

JULY 2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
			1 6pm Overview & Scrutiny	2	3	4
5	6 4.30pm Group Leaders 6pm Cabinet	7	8 6pm Members Forum	9	10	11
12	13 CLT Cabinet/CLT	14 6pm Council	15	16	17	18
19	20 6pm Planning	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 CLT	28 6pm Audit	29	30	31	

Cabinet

Annual Report 2019/2020

Report from the Leader

It gives me great pleasure to produce my first report as Leader of Wyre Forest District Council.

Following the elections on 2nd May 2019 three political groups joined together as a “Progressive Alliance” to form the administration following the Council’s Annual General Meeting on 22nd May 2019. They supported my appointment as Leader for the period to May 2023.

Following my election as Leader, I took the decision to reduce the Cabinet from six to five members, which produced a financial saving of £7,000 for the Council. I was delighted that, reflecting the higher proportion of women elected to the Council on 2nd May, 60% of the Cabinet are women.

All the Councillors I appointed had extensive experience as members of the District Council, either immediately before the May 2019 elections or in the past. In addition, three of us are or had been members of Worcestershire County Council. Together, we had built up over 100 years of service to the District Council and we were able to call on this experience as the Progressive Alliance shaped its plans for the future of the Council.

The municipal year 2019/2020 has yet again been a very busy year for Wyre Forest District Council.

In September our new Corporate Plan was agreed by Council which sets out our vision and priorities for the district over the next four years. The Corporate Plan was produced following a public consultation. More than 1700 people responded to a questionnaire asking for views on what they thought the council should be focusing its energies on. A number of focus groups with businesses and other sectors of the community also took place. The feedback from all of these was used to form the Corporate Plan and I thank everybody for their input.

I am pleased to report that in February the Council gave the go-ahead for a new draft Local Plan to be submitted to Government. The Local Plan will provide a clear direction for future development, creating the right balance between protecting those parts of the district that are important in spatial or heritage terms while accommodating growth to meet the housing needs of present and future residents and space for businesses to ensure that we are a prosperous district going forward.

The plan proposes to deliver just over 6000 new houses over the period 2016-2036 and 29 hectares of employment land. The documents include a number of Statements of Common Ground which have been reached with neighbouring authorities and with key stakeholders.

The financial landscape faced by this authority and many other local authorities across the country remains exceptionally challenging. In February the Administration’s first medium term financial strategy was approved at full

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council. I would like to thank the hundreds of residents who took time to comment and give their views on our budget proposals. We believe our new financial strategy very much reflects what people told us.

During 2020, we have been faced with many unprecedented events both across the district and nationally; the damage and destruction caused by flooding as a result of Storms Ciara and Dennis, and the current Coronavirus pandemic.

I am very proud of the way that Officers across the Council have come together as a whole to continue to provide a first class service to its residents and businesses across the district.

I would like to thank my Cabinet and Progressive Alliance colleagues for their support throughout the year.

I also give my grateful thanks to the Chief Executive and the Corporate Leadership Team for all the advice, support and guidance they continue to give to me and other Council colleagues.

Councillor Graham Ballinger
Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Finance

Wyre Forest District Council
Annual Scrutiny Report
2019/2020



Foreword of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

I write this still feeling like the 'new boy' in this role as this is my first annual report as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. I of course follow in the footsteps of a very hard act to follow, as Cllr. Helen Dyke has chaired the overview and scrutiny committee for many years, save for a year off to be in the cabinet in 2014-2015.

It feels a bit like game keeper turned poacher undertaking this role, having been a member of the executive for the previous 15 years and so it is definitely an interesting experience sitting on the other side of the table.

I very much feel that scrutiny should be professional and inclusive debate, discussion and interrogation of and with the executive on policy decisions. Indeed, scrutiny should also not be just about the opposition or indeed members of the administration opposing things for opposition's sake as indeed there are many policy proposals that come before scrutiny that are often unanimously supported.

Wyre Forest has a rich history of involving the scrutiny committee in advance of decision making to allow recommendations to go on and be considered by the executive decision makers in advance as opposed to retrospectively. I am very pleased that, by and large, this convention is being continued.

It has been a busy year, and of finding our feet, with those of us who used to be in the administration now adjusting to opposition and indeed those who used to be in opposition now having to adjust to being the decision makers.

I am very pleased that our meetings which are, of course, made up of a cross party membership and politically balanced as the legislation requires are good natured with all members of the committee actively participating. The committee is made up of 10 councillors; 4 Conservative members, 2 ICHC members, 1 Labour member, 1 Liberal Democrat member, and 2 Independent members.

I am also very pleased that the new administration are keeping with the convention of the committee having a non-administration chairman and vice-chairman for the good governance of the council.

Our workload this year has been a busy one; it has been wide and varied and has considered matter such as housing policies, treasury management and financial matters, policies in respect of our capital portfolio fund and investment strategy and also the very important matter of our local plan. We have considered 33 reports in all.

The committee meets monthly and has met 7 times this municipal year. There have been 2 sub-committee meetings which have largely been held in exempt as they have been discussing commercially sensitive information regarding potential property acquisitions for the council.

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There have been meetings cancelled – as there were no items to be considered, and therefore to ensure that officer resource and member time is used most efficiently and not wasted, the Chairman in consultation with the Committee members decided to cancel the meetings.

I do not wish to cancel meetings lightly but as stated I do not wish officer and member resource to be unnecessarily wasted. Furthermore, I write this report at an unprecedented time and members will recall the notice of motion from February Council which was unanimously supported requesting our committee to look at the flooding that the district encountered in the middle of February this year, with a view to reporting back to Council in July.

Clearly, as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, the March meeting had to be cancelled and whilst we could have held the April meeting virtually there seemed no discernible reason as we would not have been able to carry out a thorough scoping exercise with any certainty as we would wish to invite statutory partners such as Police, Fire and Ambulance who are clearly targeting, quite properly, all of their resources to assisting with the national effort in respect of the Coronavirus pandemic. It is therefore likely to be sometime yet before we can commence and indeed complete this piece of work.

I do, however, look forward to us getting back to normal as best we can and as soon as we can to have a busy 2020-2021.

Finally I would, on behalf of myself and the entire committee, wish to thank all of the officers who have presented reports and taken questions and in particular to Sian Burford and Louisa Bright, our committee clerks.

Councillor Marcus Hart



Scrutiny at Wyre Forest

For this municipal year, the Council’s scrutiny function was carried out through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee consisted of 10 cross party Members. The workload included scrutinising proposals for new or amended policies before their consideration by the Cabinet and Council, undertaking detailed reviews into existing procedures and policy, and monitoring the schedule of proposed decisions as set out in the Council’s Forward Plan.

Review Panels

Review Panels are in depth investigations into issues conducted by Members outside of the formal Scrutiny Committee setting. Only a Member of the Scrutiny Committee may Chair a review panel established following a request from the Committee. They allow more detailed work on particular topics and make recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which in turn make recommendations to Cabinet. Their flexibility allows for a wide range of evidence sources, guests and methods of evidence gathering to be considered.

The following Panels have taken place during the 2019/2020 year:

Name	No. of meetings	Purpose
Treasury Management	3	Allowed detailed scrutiny and training in respect of treasury management.
Local Plans Includes co-opted Members from Town Councils	2	Detailed scrutiny of the draft policy documents relating to the local development framework, helping to shape them before the formal process of consultation or adoption.

Recommendation Tracking

As Scrutiny Committees can only make recommendations and do not take decisions, it is important to keep track of what has happened to the recommendations made by Scrutiny.

After recommendations have been made, the Committee have considered feedback from Cabinet regarding their recommendations so that there was a clear means of tracking the outcome of recommendations.

In addition, the Committee looked back at the recommendations made in the previous year, so that they were able to examine the progress made in implementing the recommendations. There were no concerns raised over outstanding recommendations. The tracking recommendations from this year's Committee will be reviewed at the first meeting of the Committee of the new municipal year.

Public and Stakeholder Involvement in Scrutiny

Scrutiny is an important means of involving the community in the Democratic Process. If you have any suggestions or comments for issues affecting your area which you feel Scrutiny could consider, please contact the Democratic Services Team via email: CommitteeSection@wyreforestdc.gov.uk telephone: 01562 732763, or in writing to Democratic Services, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster DY10 7WF.

More information on Scrutiny at Wyre Forest District Council can be found at <http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/cms/your-council-and-elections.aspx>

Terms of Reference - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1. Reviews the policies of the Council and the Cabinet and recommends to the Council or the Cabinet:
 - (i) Whether any new policies are required.
 - (ii) Whether any existing policies are no longer required.
 - (iii) Whether any changes are required to any existing policies.
 - (iv) Whether any action is required to make the policies more effective.
2. Reviews the discharge of Cabinet functions, and recommends to the Council or the Cabinet:
 - (i) Whether any action should be taken to improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of those functions.
 - (ii) Whether any action should be taken to improve the co-ordination of the various functions within the Authority, or with any other person or body.
 - (iii) Whether the function should continue to be discharged or be



discharged in another way.

3. Reviews any decisions or proposed decisions of the Council and of the Cabinet. In undertaking such reviews, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall in particular consider:
 - (i) Whether the relevant criteria were used.
 - (ii) Whether the decision is in accordance with the budget and policy framework of the Council.
 - (iii) Whether the decision or action was within the powers of the Authority.
 - (iv) Whether the decision was lawful.
 - (v) Whether the decision contributes to the efficient, effective and economic discharge of the function.
4. Recommendations should all take account of the following:
 - (i) Whether the decision should be reconsidered, and if so, what alternative decision should be taken.
 - (ii) Whether the proposed decision should be taken or taken in a different form.
 - (iii) Whether any further action should be taken in the experience of that decision to ensure proper or better implementation of decisions.
 - (iv) Whether any further actions should be taken in the experience of that decision to improve the manner or quality of decision-making for the future.
5. Considers any matters which affect the Council or its administrative area or the inhabitants of that area and makes recommendations to the Council or the Cabinet arising from that consideration.
6. External Partners

Reviews the performance and effectiveness of the Council's external partner organisations, including the duty to scrutinise the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.
7. Review Panels

Establishes time limited Review Panels which focus upon specific issues of concern raised by Members through a Scrutiny Proposal Form, consider evidence, and subsequently make recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A protocol for the establishment of Review Panels is attached as Appendix C at section 10 of the Constitution.
8. Review the Forward Plan

Regularly reviews the Forward Plan with a view to deciding which, if any, forthcoming items require consideration.
9. Sets and agrees an Annual Work Programme and prioritises the work of the Committee.



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10. Ensures consideration is given to encouraging public participation and engagement in functions of the Committee.
11. Ensures that the views of any invitees and co-opted Members (where appropriate) are taken into account when conducting investigations.
12. Monitors the implementation of scrutiny recommendations.
13. Reviews and scrutinises relevant public bodies and partners in the District, including the Council's contribution and relationship with them. Where necessary, requesting them to address overview and scrutiny about their activities, performance, particular decisions, initiatives or projects.



Wyre Forest District Council
Ethics and Standards Committee
Annual Report 2019/2020

The Ethics and Standards Committee has met once during the 2019-2020 municipal year. However we continue to work closely with the Monitoring Officer, Independent Persons and public to ensure that any conduct issues are dealt with as quickly as possible.

Councillor Shazu Miah

Chairman – Ethics and Standards Committee

Role of the Standards Committee / Terms of Reference

1. Promotes and maintains high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members.
2. Assists the councillors and co-opted members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct.
3. Advises the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct.
4. Monitors the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct.
5. Advises, trains or arranges to train councillors and co-opted members on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct.
6. Considers complaints against any member relating to alleged breach of the Code of Conduct, to make findings of fact and decisions in respect of the action to be taken, and where necessary to make recommendations to full Council.
7. Grants dispensations, if necessary, to councillors and co-opted members from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct.
8. Exercises (1) to (6) above in relation to the parish councils' wholly or mainly within the Wyre Forest District area and the members of those parish councils'.
9. Recommends approval and adoption of relevant codes, plans and policies.
10. Oversees the Whistle Blowing Policy.
11. Oversees the complaints handling and Ombudsman investigations.
12. Keeps the operation of the constitution under review so far as it relates to ethics and standards of behaviour.

Member Activity Reports

Members continue to submit an annual activity report which outlines their activities during the municipal year, significant work has been undertaken to

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ensure that the reports are detailed and are a useful tool for Members of the electorate to see the activities their elected Member have been undertaking during the municipal year.

Membership of the Ethics and Standards Committee

(6 Councillors, 3 co-opted Independent Members non-voting,
3 Parish Councillors non-voting)

Chairman: Councillor S Miah

Vice-Chairman: Councillor A L'Huilier

Councillor B Dawes, Councillor N Gale, Councillor S Griffiths and Councillor I Hardiman

Independent Members – R Reynolds and Rev J A Cox

Parish Council representatives – Councillors R Drew, D Killingworth and W Mack

Index of Members' Activity Reports Received as of the date of publication of the Council Agenda

Electronic Copies of all reports are available on the Internet

Name	Attendance Percentage for 2019/20	Number of Meetings Attended
Cllr John Aston	70%	14/20
Cllr Graham Ballinger	100%	23/23
Cllr Claire Barnett	80%	16/20
Cllr John Byng	100%	14/14
Cllr Vicky Caulfield	88%	22/25
Cllr Sally Chambers	89%	24/27
Cllr Anna Coleman	95%	21/22
Cllr Roger Coleman	93%	13/14
Cllr Berenice Dawes	100%	18/18
Cllr Nathan Desmond	91%	29/32
Cllr Helen Dyke	95%	21/22
Cllr Peter Dyke	86%	12/14
Cllr Calne Edginton-White	94%	30/32
Cllr Nicky Gale	53%	9/17
Cllr Susie Griffiths	96%	22/23
Cllr Ian Hardiman	94%	17/18
Cllr Paul Harrison	100%	23/23
Cllr Marcus Hart	97%	29/30
Cllr Ken Henderson	71%	10/14
Cllr Lisa Jones	100%	21/21
Cllr Anna L'Huillier	94%	15/16
Cllr Nicky Martin	86%	19/22
Cllr Shazu Miah	90%	19/21
Cllr Fran Oborski	95%	35/37
Cllr Tracey Onslow	76%	13/17
Cllr Mary Rayner	93%	25/27
Cllr Chris Rogers	91%	29/32
Cllr Sarah Rook	89%	24/27
Cllr Dixon Sheppard	79%	15/19
Cllr John Thomas	97%	31/32
Cllr Alan Totty	71%	15/21
Cllr Leigh Whitehouse	92%	24/26
Cllr Peter Young	83%	19/23

In 2019/20 four members' forums were held. Because one was a later addition in October, not on a date for the three meetings in the adopted municipal calendar, the approach taken has been to treat attendance at either of the forums in October as counting towards the original quota of three meetings. However 11 members in fact attended all four meetings of the members' forum: this is *not* reflected in the statistics.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
13TH MAY 2020

Extension of the timetable for Overview and Scrutiny Committee to report on Flooding

Council agreed a motion at its meeting in February that requested the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigation issues relating to the floods in February and to report back in July.

Current circumstances were not foreseeable when Council met in February. As explained in the annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, there is no prospect at the present time of being able to progress this work when the efforts of all organisations are directed elsewhere.

Council is therefore invited to **AGREE** an extension, to December 2020, to the deadline for the Committee to report back about the flooding issues.

If it is possible for the Committee to undertake the work and report in September, that would be done.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
13TH MAY 2020

POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK
MATTERS WHICH REQUIRE A DECISION BY COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET –
31st March 2020

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 2 of the pdf at this link:

http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/docs/doc55707_20200331_cabinet_decisions_report.pdf

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	CABINET MEMBER
<p>Kidderminster Town Centre Acquisition Strategy</p> <p>Recommend to Council that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approves an amendment to the Capital Programme for a Future High Street Property Acquisition Fund of £4.275m to be funded from external grant and to be conditional on award of such grant. 	<p>Councillor F M Oborski MBE</p>