

Open

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

6pm
Thursday, 1 September 2022
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Members of Committee:

Chairman: Councillor M J Hart
Vice-Chairman: Councillor S E N Rook

Councillor J Aston

Councillor N J Desmond

Councillor C Edginton-White

Councillor T L Onslow

Councillor D Ross

Councillor V Caulfield

Councillor P Dyke

Councillor S Miah

Councillor C Rogers

Councillor D R Sheppard

Would Members please note that, to ensure continuity in scrutiny, substitutes should only be appointed for the Scrutiny Committee in exceptional circumstances.

Information for Members of the Public:

Part I of the Agenda includes items for discussion in public. You have the right to inspect copies of Minutes and reports on this Agenda as well as the background documents used in the preparation of these reports.

Part II of the Agenda (if applicable) deals with items of "Exempt Information" for which it is anticipated that the public may be excluded from the meeting and neither reports nor background papers are open to public inspection.

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.

Co-opted Members

Scrutiny Committees may wish to appoint Co-Opted Members to sit on their committee in order to add value to the scrutiny process. To appoint a Co-Opted Member, a Committee must first agree to appoint either a specific person or to approach a relevant organisation to request that they put forward a suitable representative (e.g. the local Police Authority). Co-Optees are non voting by default but Committees can decide to appoint voting rights to a Co-Optee. The Co-Option of the Member will last no longer than the remainder of the municipal year.

Scrutiny Committees can at any meeting agree to terminate the Co-Option of a Co-Opted Member with immediate effect. Where an organisation is appointed to put forward a Co-Opted Member, they are able to send a substitute in exceptional circumstances, provided that they notify Democratic Services in advance. Co-Opted Members must sign up to the Members Code of Conduct before attending their first meeting, failure to sign will mean that they are unable to participate. This also applies to substitute Co-Opted Members, who will need to allow sufficient time before a meeting in order to sign the Code of Conduct.

The following will apply:

- i) The total number of voting co-opted members on any Scrutiny Committee will not exceed 25% at any one time.
- ii) The total number of voting Co-opted Members on any Review Panel will not be limited.
- iii) Those Co-opted Members with voting rights will exercise their rights in accordance with the principles of decision making set out in the constitution.

For Further information:

If you have any queries about this Agenda or require any details of background papers, further documents or information, you should contact Louisa Bright, Principal Committee and Member Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF. Telephone: 01562 732763 or email louisa.bright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Wyre Forest District Council
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 1 September 2022

Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster

Part 1

Open to the press and public

Agenda item	Subject	Page Number
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Appointment of Substitute Members To receive the name of any Councillor who is to act as a substitute, together with the name of the Councillor for whom he/she is acting.	
3.	Declarations of Interests by Members In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's) and / or Other Disclosable Interests (ODI's) in the following agenda items and indicate the action that they will be taking when the item is considered. Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's Constitution for full details.	
4.	Minutes To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the sub-committee held on 30 June 2022 and the Minutes of the meeting held on the 7 July 2022.	6
5.	Stourport Sports Club: Consideration of call-in request To consider the call-in request signed by Councillors D Ross, P Harrison and F Oborski MBE.	10
6.	Performance and Budget Monitoring Q1 update To consider a draft of a Cabinet report from the Head of Resources on the Council's financial and other performance at the end of Quarter 1 ending 30 June 2022 and presents the current projected outturn position for the 2022-23 financial year.	23
7.	Worcestershire's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2022-2025 To consider a draft of a Cabinet report from the Head of Strategic Growth to agree that the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2022-25) is publicly consulted on in advance of adoption.	60

8.	<p>Report on the progress around the Top Ten Actions in the Climate Change Strategy Action Plan</p> <p>To consider a draft of a Cabinet report from the Head of Strategic Growth which provides an update on action to tackle climate change, including an update on the 'Top Ten Actions' of the Green Advisory Panel.</p>	117
9.	<p>Work Programme</p> <p>To review the work programme for the current municipal year with regard to the Corporate Plan Priority, Annual Priorities and the Forward Plan.</p>	133
10.	<p>Press Involvement</p> <p>To consider any future items for scrutiny that might require publicity.</p>	
11.	<p>To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor of 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>	
12.	<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 paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act”.</p>	

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

13.	<p>To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor of 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>	
-----	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 30 JUNE 2022 (4.30PM)

Present:

Councillors: M J Hart (Chairman), N J Desmond, P Dyke and C Edginton-White.

Observers

Councillors: G W Ballinger, I Hardiman and F M Oborski MBE.

Observed remotely: Councillor H E Dyke

OSSC.01 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

OSSC.02 Appointment of Substitutes

No substitutes were appointed.

OSSC.03 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

OSSC.04 Exempt Information

Decision: 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 items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of “Exempt Information” as defined in paragraphs 2, 6 and 7 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

OSSC.05 Acquisition of Property in Kidderminster

The Sub-committee considered a draft of a confidential Cabinet report from the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWedR) which sought the Cabinet’s agreement to proceed with purchase of property in Kidderminster in order to deliver the project that is being funded from the Government’s £17.9m Levelling Up Fund (LUF) grant.

Councillor H Dyke joined the meeting remotely at 4.42pm.

The Head of NWedR presented the report. He gave a comprehensive and thorough explanation of the proposal. The Head of NWedR explained that the proposal was a key element of the LUF bid.

Agenda Item No. 4

The Sub-committee fully scrutinised the report and took the opportunity to question the Head of NWedR on several issues where further clarification was needed.

Several members raised concerns about the proposal. It was felt that the level of risk that the Council would be exposed to was too high.

Councillor G Ballinger joined the meeting at 5.29pm.

As a result of the concerns raised, a proposal to recommend not to proceed with the acquisition was moved and seconded. Upon a show of hands, the majority of the Committee voted in favour of the motion, which was therefore carried.

Decision: The Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee recommend to Cabinet not to proceed with the proposal.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 5.29pm.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 7 JULY 2022 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: M J Hart (Chairman), S E N Rook (Vice-Chairman), R H Coleman, N J Desmond, P Dyke, C Edginton-White, S Miah, T L Onslow, C Rogers, D Ross and D R Sheppard.

Observers

Councillors: H E Dyke and F M Oborski MBE

Observed remotely: Councillors G W Ballinger, J F Byng and M Rayner.

OS.08 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor: V Caulfield.

OS.09 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor R H Coleman was a substitute for Councillor V Caulfield.

OS.10 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

OS.11 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS.12 Treasury Management Review Panel

The Committee received the dates for the review panel meetings and training sessions for the current municipal year. The Chairman invited nominations for the panel; Councillors S Miah, F Oborski MBE, N Desmond, B Dawes, R Coleman and P Young were put forward. Councillor S Miah was appointed as Chairman of the panel.

Further nominations for membership of the panel would be sought via Group Leaders.

Agreed:

- 1. Councillor S Miah was appointed as Chairman of the Treasury Management Review Panel for the current municipal year.**

2. The Principal Committee and Member Services Officer to request nominations for membership of the panel from Group Leaders.

OS.13 Work Programme

The Committee reviewed and noted the work programme for the remainder of the municipal year.

OS.14 Press Involvement

There were no further items for scrutiny that might require publicity.

OS.15 UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Investment Plan 2022-25

The Committee considered a draft of a Cabinet report from the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWedR) which sought the Cabinet's agreement to approve the investment plan prior to its submission to Government.

The Head of NWedR presented the report and outlined the key issues. Members were advised that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) prospectus highlighted three investment priorities for the fund: Community and place, Supporting local businesses and People and skills.

The Head of NWedR said that the ReWyre Board, which is made up of private, public and voluntary sectors that focuses on the economic regeneration of the district, will act as the local partnership group for the UKSPF. The Board will advise on which projects should be included within the plan. The deadline for the submission of the plan is 1 August 2022.

OS.16 Exempt Information

Decision: 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 items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in paragraphs 2, 6 and 7 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

OS.17 UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Investment Plan 2022-25 – Appendix 2 List of submitted projects.

The Committee fully scrutinised the report and appendices. The Committee took the opportunity to question the Head of NWedR on several issues where further clarification was needed. Upon a show of hands, the Committee unanimously supported the recommendations.

Agreed: Recommendation to Cabinet: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee support the proposed recommendations as set out in the draft Cabinet report.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6.44pm.

CALL IN REQUEST

Cabinet Decision Minute No. Cabinet decision List 13/7/2022 7.1.
Decision Date 13th July, 2022
Decision Subject: Stowport Sport Club

For consideration by the relevant Scrutiny Committee

REASON FOR CALL IN (please tick as appropriate)

- Three checkboxes for reasons: significant change in policy, budgeting impact, public interest, and legal issues. The third checkbox is checked.

Specify below why you feel the above is a valid reason for the item to be 'called in'

This is the disposal of an asset to a third party, which has not been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Given the involvement that WFOC has had historically with the sport club together with the use of we feel this disposal should be fully considered.

Please state your alternative proposal. (N.B. There is no requirement for you to have considered/developed an alternative proposal)

It is difficult to say specifically, what alternative proposal there may be without full investigation of the facts, but one may be simply the status quo given the decisions left to the Council.

To assist the efficient operation of the meeting, please set out below specific questions that you would like the Cabinet Member to address at the meeting. Is there any information that you would like to be obtained/researched by the Cabinet Member before the meeting?

(N.B. This will not prevent you raising other questions/issues at the Scrutiny Committee itself)

- Handwritten questions: Why dispose of this land at all? What steps have been made to grow the income of the sport club? Why dispose to SAET as opposed to another 3rd party? What public use would there be post any disposal?

1. Non-Cabinet Member

Signed [Redacted] Name (Printed) DAVID ROSS

2. Non-Cabinet Member

Signed [Redacted] Name (Printed) PAUL HARRISON

3. Non-Cabinet Member

Signed [Redacted] Name (Printed) FRAN OBORSKI

4. Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Signed [Redacted] Name (Printed) Marcus J. Hart

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
13 JULY 2022

LOCALISM: STOURPORT SPORTS CLUB

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Graham Ballinger, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Safety
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Chief Executive
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kathryn Underhill, Community Services Manager Ext 2956
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 – background note on Stourport Sports Club Appendix 2 - land owned by WFDC at Stourport Sports Club Appendix 3 – land owned by WFDC under the highway

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree support for a proposal that the Severn Academies Educational Trust should assume responsibility for the Stourport Sports Club, a registered company in which the Council is involved, and, as part of that process, to agree disposal of the land specified in the report to the Trust.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **The Cabinet is asked to agree in respect of Wyre Forest District Council that the management agreement for Stourport Sports Club should be terminated and the rights and liabilities of the Club should be transferred to the Severn Academies Educational Trust.**
- 2.2 **The Cabinet is asked to agree the transfer of the freehold of the land set out in the maps in Appendices 2 and 3, which comprises a total of five registered titles as set out in paragraph 3.5, to Severn Academies Educational Trust, for £1 consideration each. This recommendation is subject to:**
- a) **the parties involved in the management agreement agreeing that it should be terminated and that the lease of WFDC land should be surrendered;**
 - b) **the Stourport Hockey Club agreeing to transfer its interest in land registered as WR46725 to the Severn Academies Educational Trust;**
 - c) **the consent of the British Cycling Federation being obtained in respect of the land comprising the cycle track.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The current arrangements for the Stourport Sports Club are complex and were set out in a management agreement involving the District Council and a number of other parties, the latest version of which dates from 2011. Background information is in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 In recent years, the arrangements for day-to-day and long-term management of this important multi-use facility have not operated successfully. In particular there has been concern about whether adequate investment in repairs and refurbishment of facilities has been made under the existing management agreement which provides for a sinking fund; and the Club has struggled with its small team of staff to discharge the full range of functions that are necessary, including asset maintenance. For its part, the Council's medium term financial strategy for 2022-2025 which was approved by full Council in February 2022 contained the following "Approval to end discretionary support of sport and leisure facilities from April 2023 namely, phasing out involvement in Stourport Sports Club". The preceding report approved by Cabinet in December 2021 explained: "Sport and leisure facilities. The administration intends to focus future WFDC provision and funding on the Wyre Forest Leisure Centre and therefore phase out.... the Council's involvement in the Stourport Sports Club Ltd which costs £14k a year".
- 3.3 The Council's localism strategy has generally focussed on transfer of assets and services to town and parish councils but other community groups and organisations can play their role too.
- 3.4 The Severn Academies Educational Trust has developed a proposal and presented it to the Board of Directors of the Club in March 2022, under which the Trust would take over the running of the Club. New arrangements are proposed for working with the various sports clubs that use the facilities in addition to the schools. In summary:
- SAET would be willing to take on the strategic, financial, and operational management of SSC.
 - this would then allow the trust to provide investment to support the regular maintenance of facilities, as well as potential capital development in the future. The trust would also manage exploration of additional funding streams from third parties to further enhance facilities as it does across its estate;
 - the trust will take on all marketing and promotional aspects, and support clubs with community engagement activities. The trust will utilise its relationships with the Wyre Forest Schools Sports Partnership, to promote SSC with families across the Wyre Forest, as well as in its own schools. The trust views the site as potential for further investment in provision and facilities;
 - the trust will bring SSC into its current management and support structures and put in place an appropriate staffing model to ensure the effective development / operation of the club. This would include SSC benefitting from professional support in all the key areas of finance, estates management, marketing and hospitality.
 - the trust will guarantee the retention of clubs' current usage. All existing partners would become 'preferred partners' maintaining current access and terms for the contributions made.

The Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee (registered number 07633402) and is an exempt charity. It is responsible for two secondary schools and six primary schools in Wyre Forest and immediately adjacent areas.

- 3.5 The steps proposed by the Trust would require all the parties involved in the management agreement deciding that it should be terminated and that the lease of WFDC land described below should be surrendered. This report seeks the Cabinet's agreement to that process so far as it involves the Council. In order to enable and cement the Trust's role, it is proposed that the Council's land holdings should be transferred to the Trust for consideration of £1 each. The relevant land is comprised in a lease dated 25 March 2011 and comprises four registered titles of land:

WR104494

WR104495

WR46725 (jointly as Tenants in Common with the Stourport Hockey Club – WFDC 92% and Hockey Club 8%)

WR104463 (a small part only). These are shown on the map in Appendix 2.

In addition, and while not part of the land leased in 2011, the Council owns a small area of land in title WR104495. This is shown on the plan in Appendix 3 and is the strip of pink land immediately to the south of the area shown in green. This is all believed to be adopted highway, in which case the Council's residual interest is only in the subsoil. So that the Council is not left with a piece of "orphan" land which is of no practical benefit to the Council, it should be included in the transfer. The vast bulk of WR104463 comprises Burlish Meadows, which have been developed from the former golf course, and is not affected by the transfer proposed in this report. The freehold title number WR46725 must first be offered to Stourport Hockey Club for purchase, which then has a two month window in which to decide whether or not it wants to purchase the 92% share of title WR46725. There is reference to the price to be agreed as being not more than the open market value.

- 3.6 Any section 106 contributions arising from planning applications approved by the Council and negotiated by the Council for the benefit of Stourport Sports Club will continue to be available for investment in facilities at the club. They would not therefore be available to be spent on the school estate within the Severn Academies Educational Trust.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Council has a funding gap estimated to be £1.68 million by 2024-2025. Work to preserve and protect assets by working with partners to share costs and/or take over responsibility for services is a priority. Without bold and ambitious plans to deliver on this strategy, services most valued by people could be lost e.g. parks, play areas, public conveniences, community development and events.
- 4.2 The medium-term financial strategy identified the intention for WFDC to withdraw from its role in the Stourport Sports Club and to cease providing funding to the club. The Council provides no funding for sporting facilities elsewhere in the district (other than in respect of its contract with Places for People to maintain and operate the Wyre Forest Leisure Centre) The MTFs also identified the intention to withdraw

from a role in respect of Bewdley Leisure Centre and this will be progressed once arrangements for Stourport Sports Club have been confirmed.

- 4.3 The Council receives free usage of the site for certain activities but the cost of hiring for that usage would be lower than the grant WFDC pays (estimate £3k) – in other words, the direct benefits to WFDC for its own activities are lower than the value of the contribution. This is anomalous when WFDC provides a direct financial subsidy to no other sports clubs or sports associations in the district. It is the result of the history of the facility and the requirement for the WFDC contribution arises from the Management Agreement. The contribution provides district residents with accessible sports facilities, many of which are not available elsewhere (e.g., Athletics track, cycle track, netball dome, high quality hockey astro turf surface).
- 4.4 The Council is successfully implementing a multi-phase “Wyre Forest Wild” project to develop the land on the old golf course site (which sits adjacent to SSC), now known as Burlish Meadows, and has extended the existing Burlish Top Nature Reserve. Part of this project includes a proposal to work with British Cycling and Stourport Sports Club to provide safe off-road cycling routes for all abilities. These and other potential linkages between the two facilities depend on SSC being on a sustainable footing. The Council would continue to work with the Trust to exploit mutually beneficial joint working opportunities with the Wyre Forest Wild project.
- 4.5 The section on legal implications below deals with the detailed legal background. In simple terms, the Council has the power under Section 123(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to dispose of land at less than best consideration (in this case for £1 consideration). The Stourport Sports Club land is let to a third party for the uses set out in the lease – it is managed as a sports facility and therefore is not public open space, the disposal of which has to be advertised and any comments considered before a decision on disposal is taken.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 WFDC’s revenue contribution to Stourport Sports Club is £14k a year and the proposed approach would allow this to be brought to an end by the end of 2022-23, in line with the adopted MTFs. The assets are being transferred on the basis that WFDC will not be making a financial contribution towards them after the current financial year.
- 5.2 The cost of implementing the decisions primarily relate to staff time and will therefore be absorbed within existing budgets.
- 5.3 For completeness, Stourport Sports Club purchases grass-cutting and waste collection services from the Council, with total annual income being £11k . Just as the Club could make alternative arrangements for these services at any time, the Trust will not be bound to use the Council’s services. Any change in these arrangements is not an implication of this report.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Under section 123 of Local Government Act 1972, the approval of the Secretary of State is required for disposal of land at an undervalue unless the disposal falls

within the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 (“the Consent”). In order to fall within the Consent, the disposal must assist in the promotion of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area and the difference between the unrestricted value and the consideration accepted must be £2 million or less. The Consent provides that the Authorities should “not divest themselves of valuable public assets unless they are satisfied that the circumstances warrant such action”. The £2m figure in the consent bites on each separate property. The land holdings that are the subject of this report are each below the *de minimis* value of £10k which means that they do not feature in the balance sheet in the Council’s accounts. The valuations recognise the long lease and limited purpose for which the land might be used.

- 6.2 The Consent states that councils “are strongly advised in all cases to ensure that they obtain a realistic valuation of that interest, following the advice provided in the Technical Appendix”. That Appendix relates to the valuation principles to be followed when an application needs to be submitted to the Secretary of State, which is not relevant to this proposed disposal. In any case the Consent does not require that a valuation is obtained on a particular basis.
- 6.3 It is considered that the proposed disposal to the Severn Academies Educational Trust is the only proposal that will protect the assets for the benefit of the sports clubs and wider public, and therefore promote the social and environmental well-being of the area by maintaining access to a range of sporting facilities, many of which are not available elsewhere in Wyre Forest. Notwithstanding the charitable nature of the Trust, the transfer would contain the normal provisions to protect the financial interest of the District Council by an overage agreement in the event of redevelopment of the site in the first 20 years. While no such redevelopment is envisaged or proposed, it is also relevant that redevelopment other than for sporting facilities would be highly unlikely to comply with the policies in the recently adopted local plan for 2016-2036. The area lies in the green belt and is described as Minster Road Outdoor Sports Area: it is subject among other things to policy SA.S17 which provides that “proposals for the development of outdoor sports facilities will be encouraged within this area subject to compatibility with Green Belt and landscape and nature conservation policies” and “proposals will be informed by the Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Sports Facilities Strategy”. The Council therefore has clear powers to control the future use of the site through the local plan.
- 6.4 The land is not being transferred to another local authority or public body, and therefore the Council needs to satisfy itself that Subsidy Control measures are not relevant to the “undervalue” aspect of this transaction. It is not considered that, even if the disposal at an undervalue represents a subsidy, it would result in any negative effects on competition or investment within the United Kingdom.
- 6.5 Part of the property (the area of the cycle track) cannot be transferred without the written consent of The British Cycling Federation.
- 6.6 The Council will enter into appropriate discussions with the other parties to the management agreement and in particular any other bodies that have rights in respect of the land proposed for transfer.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This report relates to disposal of land: it is not considered that an equality impact assessment is required, as no change is envisaged to the use of the land at the point of transfer.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 Appropriate provision will be included in the terms of disposal to protect the District Council's fiduciary interest, although the local plan provides a strong policy context that makes redevelopment for alternative uses unlikely.
- 8.2 The principal risk relates to whether the other parties in the management agreement will all agree to its termination and whether Stourport Hockey Club will agree to transfer its land interest in one parcel of land which is held with the Council as tenants in common. In addition the Council needs to comply with legislation of disposal of land at less than best value. The Council's officers will work closely with the range of bodies involved in the current arrangements (including funding bodies that have provided grants in the past), as set out above.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposed transfer supports the Council's policy on asset transfers and localism. The Cabinet is asked to decide to support, on behalf of the Council, the proposal that the Severn Academies Educational Trust assumes responsibility for the Stourport Sports Club and to agree the principle of the transfer of the land specified in this report to the Trust.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Cabinet
10.2 Corporate Leadership Team

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Circular 06/03 Local Government Act 1972: General Disposal Consent 2003
11.2 Management agreement for Stourport Sports Club, 25 March 2011
11.3 Lease to Stourport Sports Club Ltd, 25 March 2011

Appendix 1 – background information about Stourport Sports Club

Land ownership

The Club is situated in the green belt between Stourport and Kidderminster and therefore subject to rigorous control through the planning system.

12.5 acres split across two sites, divided by the Kingsway. The facilities include 3 floodlit astro turf pitches, 2 covered and 3 outdoor netball courts (all also used for tennis), an 8-lane floodlit 400m athletics track with jumping and throws areas, a 1.5km floodlit closed road cycle circuit, a clubhouse and associated car park plus 2 storage buildings.

Land on the Kidderminster side of the Kingsway is leased by WFDC and Stourport Hockey Club Ltd to SSC on a 125-year lease with just over 100 years remaining, expiring on 30 March 2123. The Council is the owner of the freehold estate of the land described as Sports Field. The Council and the Hockey Club are the owners of the freehold estate of the land described as the clubhouse. The annual rent is £5 per annum. There is also a standalone training facility on this part of the site owned by Stourport High School with a separate sub lease from SSC.

Land on the High School side of the Kingsway is owned by Stourport High School and is leased to SSC on a 125-year lease with about 100 years remaining. The annual rent is £5 per annum.

There are no legal charges registered against the freehold of the titles to the WFDC property. There are restrictions – one in favour of The British Cycling Federation as referred to in paragraph 6.5 of the report and another one for the benefit of the English Sports Council – but that on behalf of the ESC expired on 15 January 2022.

Constitution arrangements & partners

Stourport Sports Club Ltd (3092063) is a Company limited by guarantee governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association. The four Members of the Limited Company are Stourport High School, Stourport Hockey Club, Kidderminster and Stourport Athletic Club and Wyre Forest District Council. Each Member can appoint 2 Directors to sit on the Board.

In addition, there is a Management Agreement in place which includes additional partners' sport's governing bodies. This is a legal document which sets out the financial contribution of partners and their priority use of the facilities as well as how the Sports Club will be operated and managed. The organisations that are part of the Management Agreement are Wyre Forest District Council, Stourport Hockey Club Ltd, Stourport High School, Kidderminster and Stourport Athletic Club, England Netball, Kidderminster and District Netball League, Wyre Forest Cycle Racing Club, Stourport Sports Club Ltd and Sport England. The latest version of the Management Agreement was dated 25/03/11 and is for 114 years.

The Board of Directors delegate the day-to-day operation and management of the facilities to employees.

Sporting outcomes

SSC is a unique sporting hub and has been recognised nationally as an example of a voluntary sector multi sports venue delivering good practice. Governing bodies have

invested considerable grant funding into the club to develop the facilities over the years based on its track record and success.

During curriculum/extra-curricular time all of the sports facilities are used by Stourport High School and their feeder schools.

Participation at the Club is considerable, and it is extensively used for sport by the partner organisations during their priority hours. Outside of these hours the facility is used by local, regional and national groups/organisations for training, competition, and sports courses. These activities cater for all ages, genders and abilities. The facility is near capacity in terms of use.

There is a wide range of sports on offer at SSC and this is continually evolving. For example a triathlon club has become established as well as different cycling disciplines and range of disability opportunities. Regular football bookings are taken through the season for training and 5-a-side leagues.

The local community has incredible access to the sports facilities and clubs at SSC. All the sports sections welcome new members from beginners to elite performers. Junior sections are thriving.

All of the sports sections have current elite performers and have a long track record of member athletes representing their county, region and country. This excellence also extends to coaching where a number of our coaches have received awards and recognition at all levels.

Other outcomes of SSC include improved health and wellbeing activities; hirers such as Slimming World, Diabetes classes, meeting & conference facilities, wakes, parties, mother & baby group: Moo Music. SSC has developed a natural environment for birds and a wildflower meadow to link habitats with local nature reserves.

Role of Directors

Each Director has an area of responsibility and may be required to offer support to the Management team at the Club. Each Member is required to act as Chair of the Board of Directors once every 4 years as this responsibility rotates around Members.

Directors have a fiduciary duty to the Company. This is set down in legislation:

- A Director must only act within the powers as granted by the Company's constitution.
- A Director has a prime duty to promote the Company's success (unless insolvent).
- A Director must exercise independent judgment.
- A Director must exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence in his/her role.
- A Director must avoid conflicts between his/her role and his/her personal interests.
- A Director cannot accept benefits from third parties which arise from his/her role.
- A Director must always declare to other director his/her personal interest in any transaction or arrangement which the Company proposes to enter into.

Annual Financial Contribution

The Management Agreement sets out the provision for an annual financial contribution for each partner organisation. This is set and agreed by the Board of Directors and is in reference to the previous year's contribution and taking account of the costs incurred by

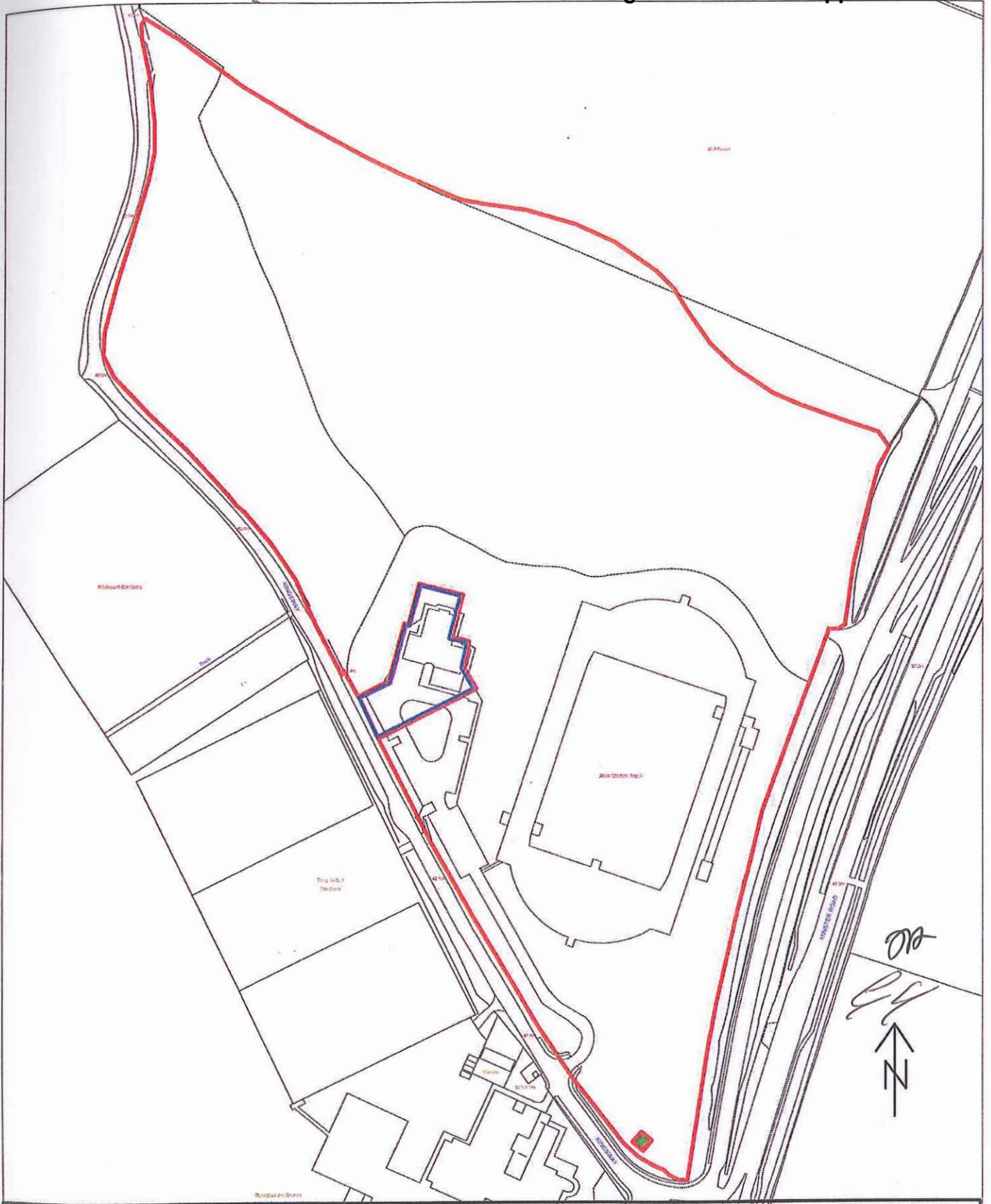
Agenda Item No. 5

the Company in complying with the provisions of the Management Agreement. The annual financial contribution of WFDC in 2021-22 will be £14,080.

The most recent accounts filed with Companies House, for the period to August 2021, show reserves of £92k (£69k, 2020) but give no information about turnover and sources of income.

This fulfils the statutory requirement for abbreviated accounts. Full accounts are submitted to HMRC along with a corporation tax return and full management accounts are available to Directors through the year setting out the performance of the Company. Total turnover in recent years has been £300k, ignoring depreciation.

All prices/charges and annual financial contributions are increased annually in order for the Company to remain viable and pricing is currently at a comparable market rate with regular benchmarking of facilities taking place. There are some pricing restrictions imposed by governing bodies (in relation to grants received) to ensure that the facilities remain accessible to all. The Company is governed by a Management Agreement and has entered into many grant agreements which state that community access must be maintained, and that the facility is accessible to all. Affordable pricing is also part of this accessibility. To secure grant funding for the various facilities, grant agreements committing to use the land for the purpose of the grant were entered into. If the club is unable to continue in a sustainable position, the leases would be forfeit, but there would be no freedom to use the land without financial penalty.



Legal and Democratic Services
Wyre Forest District Council
Civic Centre
Stourport on Severn
Worcestershire, DY13 8UJ

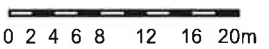
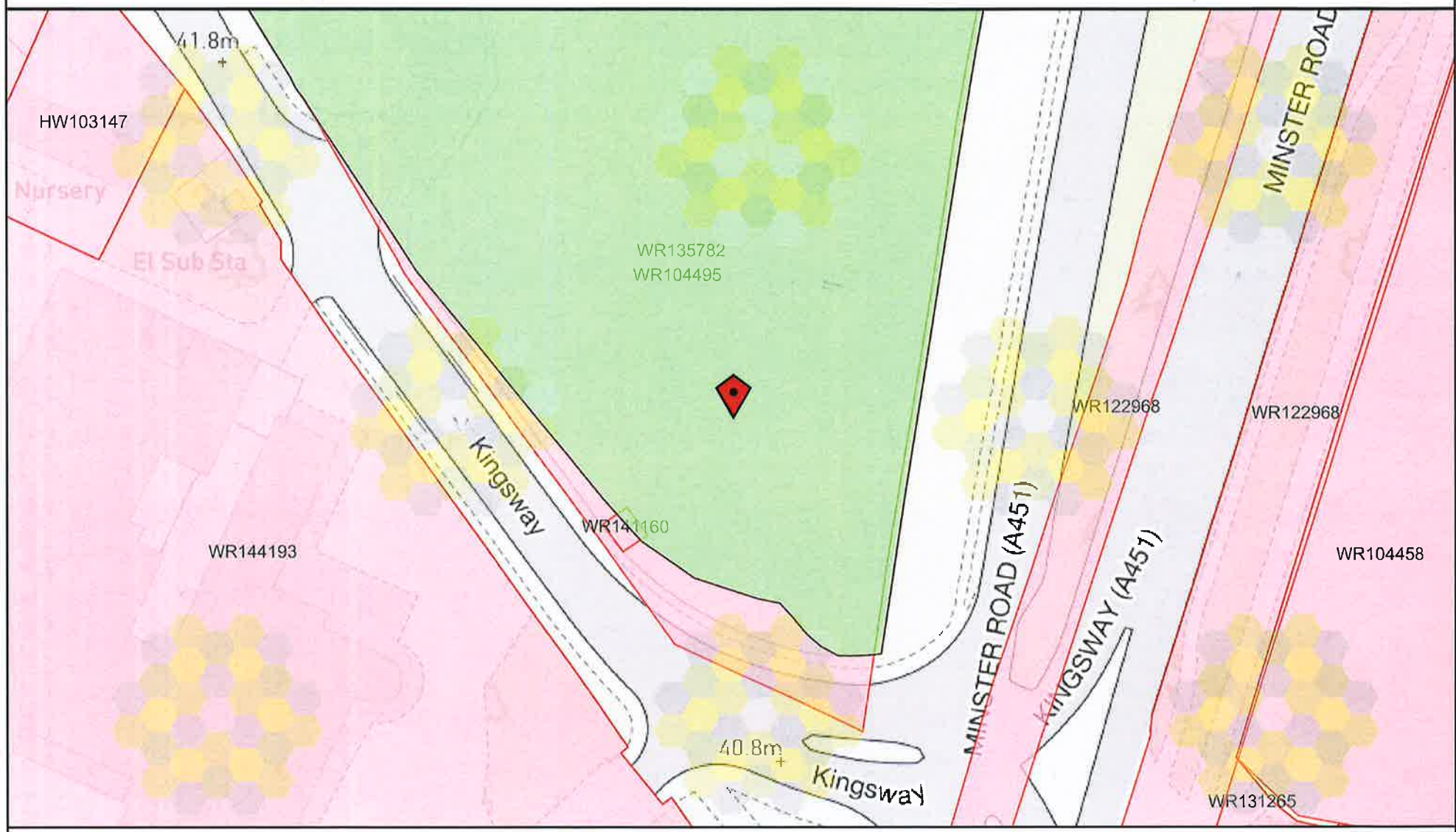
Stourport Sports Centre
Kingsway
Stourport
Worcestershire



This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office (C) Crown Copyright. Unauthorized reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Wyre Forest District Council Licence Number 100018317.

Scale:- 1:2500

"This document is for identification purposes only"



Map scale 1:625

© Crown copyright and database rights 2022 Ordnance Survey 100026316
 This map is for reference purposes only. You are not permitted to copy, sub-license, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.
 Data last updated 10:00pm 28 JUNE, 2022



Title number	Estate information	Address
WR135782	Leasehold	STOURPORT SPORTS CLUB KINGSWAY, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN DY13 8BQ LAND ON THE EAST SIDE OF KINGSWAY, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN
WR104495	Freehold	STOURPORT SPORTS CLUB KINGSWAY, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN DY13 8BQ

Report of: Helen Ogram, Head of Resources and s151 Officer

Date

01/09/2022

Open

Budget and Performance Monitoring First Quarter 2022-23

Summary

Attached is a draft of a Cabinet report on this subject, which Cabinet is expected to consider on 13 September 2022.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the report and provide recommendations to Cabinet.

Officer contact details

Name: Helen Ogram

Title: Head of Resources and s151 Officer

Contact number: 01562 732907

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

13 SEPTEMBER 2022

Budget and Performance Monitoring First Quarter 2022-23

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor M Rayner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Head of Resources and s151 Officer
CONTACT OFFICERS:	Helen Ogram Ext. 2907 Helen.Ogram@wyreforestdc.gov.uk Kath Pearsall Ext.2165 Kathryn.pearsall@wyreforestdc.gov.uk Lisa Hutchinson Ext. 2120 Lisa.Hutchinson@wyreforestdc.gov.uk Rhiannon Foxall Ext. 2786 Rhiannon.foxall@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 - Wyre Forest District Council Revenue Budget Total Requirements - District Council Purposes Appendix 2 - Capital Programme Appendix 3 - Budget Risk Matrix Appendix 4 – Analysis of Outstanding Debt Appendix 5 – Organisational Health/Wyre Forest Forward measures not associated with corporate priorities <i>The appendices to this report have been circulated electronically and a public inspection copy is available on request. (See front cover for details.)</i>

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to brief members on the Council’s financial and other performance at the end of Quarter 1 ending 30th June 2022 and to present the current projected outturn position for the 2022-23 financial year.
- 1.2 The report sets out the current forecast of income and expenditure against budget for 2022-23 for revenue expenditure. In addition to the usual information presented in the Quarterly Budget Monitoring Reports, the report provides key information relating to estimates of the Council’s financial position for the next three years, highlighting the revised Funding Gap that will need to be closed to bring expenditure into line with income.

Revenue - the year-end position on services is forecast to be £998k worse than the position forecast in the 2022-25 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Capital – the forecast outturn is currently £54.0m in-line with the approved capital programme and the reprofiled slippage from 2021-22. It is likely that the spend on the Capital Portfolio Fund, Future High Street Fund programme and Levelling Up Fund programmes will be reprofiled during the year. The balance includes £15.7m re-profiled (slipped) from previous financial years.

- 1.3 The 2022-23 revenue budget was set to accommodate additional costs and losses of income arising as the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic progresses. The bounce back has been more rapid and stronger the central case that we budgeted for, but new and emerging cost pressures are expected to exceed these gains.
- 1.4 The report also briefs members on current progress against the savings and efficiency targets being delivered by the Wyre Forest Forward Programme and the Localism agenda. Only limited progress against meeting the Wyre Forest Forward target of £0.786m and Localism savings of £0.125m for 2022-23 has been achieved. A review of recurring final account savings will be undertaken during Quarter 2 to capture and record efficiencies made.
- 1.5 In an innovation commencing from this quarter, the report also includes the quarterly “How are we doing?” performance report (which was previously provided only to the overview and scrutiny committee). This report allows that committee and the Cabinet a rounded view of the Council’s performance including its financial position.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to NOTE:

- 2.1 **The projected budget variations and comments within this report and appendices 1 to 4.**
- 2.2 **The performance against measures and actions as set out in the report and appendix 5.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Budget projections are reviewed regularly and reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. The 2022-23 Original Budget was approved as part of the 2022-25 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) by Council on 23rd February 2022. Performance is measured against the Original Budget presented within the 2022-25 Strategy (Appendix 1). The current forecast shows an overspend against the Revised Budget of £551k before the impact of the pay award is considered. The current employer’s offer will add a further cost pressure of £447k, a total variance of £998k. The assessment is based on a wide range of assumptions, predicted patterns of cost, service demand and behaviours and the forecasts will be refined as part of preparation of the MTFS 2023-26.
- 3.2 The balanced budget approved by Council focuses on ensuring that the Council optimises the full range of income sources that affect its overall budget including Council Tax and Business Rates revenue, Government funding and other external specific grants, fees and charges and other elements of income from activities including returns from property and treasury investments.
- 3.3 Wyre Forest District Council is a member of the Pan Worcestershire business rates pool and receives a share of any growth in rateable value achieved. Any gain is shared between the County Council, the Fire authority and the 6 District Councils.
- 3.4 Year-to-date monitoring shows that income from business rates payers will be in line with the position previously estimated with no noticeable increase in empty reliefs. Collection rates at the end of the first quarter are much improved compared to the last 2 years and are consistent with pre pandemic rates. The MTFS took a prudent assessment of growth above baseline, recent experience suggests that a more optimistic level of growth will be maintained in 2022-23. The position will be closely monitored and assumptions revised when the MTFS 2023-26 is prepared. The position in relation to the 2022-23 year-end provisions for appeals cannot be

Agenda Item No. 6

estimated with accuracy at this time so this could result in variances. Any variation in appeals provision will impact on the surplus/deficit position and carried forward to future years.

- 3.5 The 2022-25 Medium Term Financial Strategy makes prudent assumptions about the income stream that is expected to be generated from the Capital Portfolio Fund. Covid-19 had a significant impact on some of our tenants and we are currently pursuing large arrears balances with a very small number of tenants. To recognise the possibility that a proportion of these debts will never be recovered we made allowance in previous financial years with an increased contribution to the bad debt provision. Discussions with tenants are on-going and we are optimistic that we will be able to recover a significant proportion of the current arrears. The uncertainty and ongoing risk inherent in income streams is recognised. We continue to work to ensure that current financial performance, specifically the impact on the MTFs, of the fund is clearly presented.
- 3.6 A revised Capital Strategy 2022-32 was presented to Cabinet in December 2021 with further amendments made on 8th February to reflect the 2021 revisions to the CIPFA Prudential and the Treasury Management Codes of Practice. The revised Strategy was approved by Council on 23rd February 2022. The revised Strategy covers all capital expenditure and sets out reporting and planning for financial risk implications in relation to non-treasury investments.

4. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

4.1 Revenue Overview

The quarterly budget monitoring includes the forecast position for the current financial year. The Revenue Summary shows net expenditure by reporting group and where some costs are funded by reserves this is incorporated.

The following table details an early projected outturn position with variances against the budget approved by Council on 23rd February 2022. The projection is based on known and emerging cost pressures and cost reductions or income growth:

SERVICE REPORTING GROUP	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Variance Original to Outturn (excl. Pay)	Variance Original to Outturn - Pay award	Total Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council	1,294	1,339	25	20	45
Community and Environment	4,660	5,315	444	212	656
Economic Development and Regeneration	(94)	122	194	22	215
Resources	2,940	3,033	55	38	93
Revenues Benefits and Customer Services	978	1,108	65	65	130
Strategic Growth	1,894	2,118	133	90	224
Capital Account	355	(10)	(365)	0	(365)
GRE TOTALS	12,027	13,025	551	447	998

The assessment is based on a wide range of assumptions, and the forecasts will be refined and reset as preparation of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-26 progresses.

4.2 **Capital programme** – progress of spend against capital programme is summarised below:

REPORTING GROUP	2022-23 Capital Programme (including slippage)	Quarter 1 Actual
	£	£
CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL	413,610	0
COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL	2,380,900	-26,189
STRATEGIC GROWTH & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION	49,180,490	581,829
RESOURCES AND REVENUES, BENEFITS AND CUSTOMER SERVICES	784,140	54,821
VEHICLE, EQUIPMENT AND SYSTEMS RENEWAL SCHEDULE	1,294,850	150,816
Total	54,053,990	761,277

Supply and inflationary pressures have created some significant risks for the Council’s capital programme, such as increasing costs for construction and equipment renewals. Full detail of scheme progress is provided in Appendix 2 to this report.

The majority of the Council’s Capital Programme is financed from either borrowing or capital grants. There are revenue implications from capital expenditure funded from borrowing through interest charges and the statutory Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP).

Reprofiling (slippage) of the 2021-22 spend to 2022-23 will reduce the MRP charge in 2022-23 by circa £65k.

5. RESERVES POSITION AND FUNDING GAP

General Reserves

- 5.1 The tables below provide key information relating to early estimates of the Council’s financial position through to 2025-26, taking into account the impact of new and emerging cost pressures and the Quarter 1 Budgetary Control projections presented in this report.
- 5.2 In the years up to the pandemic the Council had done exceptionally well in generating additional income and implementing efficiency savings that have put back the date at which it has to bring its expenditure into line with income. However, in the absence of additional Government funding, unless further savings and efficiency are achieved, the Council will exhaust its general fund balances at the end of the current MTFS , likely to be at the end of 2026-27.
- 5.3 The tables below update the reserves position with the draft outturn 2021-22 and the current projected outturn position for 2022-23

Agenda Item No. 6

Reserves Statement	Revised 2021-22 £	2022-23 £	2023-24 £	2024-25 £	2025-26 £
Reserves as at 1st April	4,400,190	3,318,420	3,296,670	2,590,300	2,418,230
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	(1,081,770)	(21,750)	(706,370)	(172,070)	210,590
Reserves as at 31st March	3,318,420	3,296,670	2,590,300	2,418,230	2,628,820

Revised Reserves Statement	Outturn 2021-22 £	2022-23 £	2023-24 £	2024-25 £	2025-26 £
Reserves as at 1st April	4,400,190	3,840,860	3,045,760	2,250,930	1,600,810
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	(559,330)	(21,750)	(706,370)	(172,070)	210,590
Estimate of major variances		(773,350)	(88,460)	(478,050)	(478,050)
Reserves as at 31st March	3,840,860	3,045,760	2,250,930	1,600,810	1,333,350

Impact on MTFS	(522,440)	250,910	339,370	817,420	1,295,470
-----------------------	------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	------------------

Earmarked Reserves

- 5.4 The Council's earmarked reserves held at 1st April 2022 totalled £15.292m. The balance includes some exceptional balances in relation to Covid grants from DLUHC and Business Rates reserves including those held in respect of the time lag inherent within the current Business Rates Retention (BRR) system.
- 5.5 A General Risk Reserve is held to meet one-off unexpected costs and to manage most future operational risks. Allocations against the reserve are approved by the Corporate Leadership Team. Following in year allocations and top-ups the current level of the General Risk Reserve is £1.820m.

Earmarked Reserves	Reseves b/f at 01/04/2022	Quarter 1 Spend	Comitments outstanding	Balance available
	£000	£000	£000	£000
External Funding	2,099	27	612	1,460
Shared Service	480	0	243	237
WFDC Budget	2,539	1	564	1,974
Innovation Fund	1,054	16	511	527
General Risks	1,820	50	90	1,680
Sub Total	7,991	93	2,020	5,878
Covid Reserves	239	0	239	0
Business Rates Reserves	7,085	0	3,185	3,900
Total	15,314	93	5,443	9,778

5.6 The Funding gap – Starting position MTFS 2022-25

	2022-23 £	2023-24 £	2024-25 £
Financial Gap			
Wyre Forest Forward Savings not yet achieved	794,150	1,043,500	1,016,190
Generic Localism Savings target	125,000	353,460	526,280
New Cabinet Proposal for further Savings	0	(38,000)	(38,000)
SUB- Total	919,150	1,358,960	1,504,470
Use of reserves from proposed 2022-25 Strategy	21,750	706,370	172,070
TOTAL	940,900	2,065,330	1,676,540

5.7 Major variations

Estimate of major variances compared to approved budget assumptions			
	2022-23 £	2023-24 £	2024-25 £
General Inflation	370,000	381,100	392,500
Pay inflation (initial employers offer)	447,350	460,750	474,550
Utility bills – gas and electricity	300,000	309,000	318,300
Leisure centre utility benchmarking	150,000	154,500	159,100
Fuel	100,000	103,000	106,100
Other Cost Pressures	250,000	257,500	265,200
Treasury investment income/debt charges	(300,000)	(309,000)	(318,300)
Other income growth	(254,000)	(261,600)	(269,400)
Pension Fund deficit	0	(250,000)	(250,000)
MRP saving due to Capital Programme Slippage	(65,000)	0	0
Total Service Variances	998,350	845,250	878,050
Business Rates Growth and CPI uplift	(225,000)	(400,000)	(400,000)
Negative RSG		(356,790)	
Total Variances	773,350	88,460	478,050

5.8 Revised Funding Gap analysis

	2022-23 £	2023-24 £	2024-25 £
Financial Gap			
Wyre Forest Forward Savings not yet achieved	794,150	1,043,500	1,016,190
Generic Localism Savings target	125,000	353,460	526,280
New Cabinet Proposal for further Savings	0	(38,000)	(38,000)
SUB- Total	919,150	1,358,960	1,504,470
Revised use of reserves based on Quarter 1	795,100	794,830	650,120
TOTAL	1,714,250	2,153,790	2,154,590

Information and Analysis – Financial Performance Summary

6. REVENUE DETAIL

- 6.1 This report draws attention to new and emerging budget pressures that will potentially have a significant impact on the council’s ability to deliver services within the budget envelope approved February 2022 Council. The report is produced in consultation with CLT, Heads of Service and Service Managers.
- 6.2 The following table presents an overview of the new and emerging budget pressures:

Estimate of major variations – New and Emerging Cost Pressures

Area	MTFS Assumption	Current Estimate	Impact	Early Estimate £000	Detail
Pay Inflation	3%	7.25%	£££	447	Initial employers offer based on a flat increase of £1,925 across all pay points
General Inflation	2%-3%	9.80%	£££	370	The 2022-23 Budget included an uplift of £159k for inflation
Utility bills – gas and electricity	30%	100% -150%	££	300	Total combined budgeted sum for gas and electricity is £282k
Leisure centre utility benchmarking	Nil	100% -150%	££	150	The allowance for utility costs included within the management fee is £127k (pre benchmarking)
Fuel	3% + £36k	30%	££	100	Total fuel bill 2021-22 was £290k latest projection £370k
Planning Appeals	NEW		££	100	Creation of risk reserve
Demand led services - cost of living crisis	NEW		££	100	Welfare support - homelessness support
Insurance renewal	3%	8% -10%	£	35	Renewal - Total cost increase £15k to £20k (plus £25k cyber)
My Council Services	NEW	£14k	£	15	License fees
Estimated Cost pressures TOTAL				1,617	

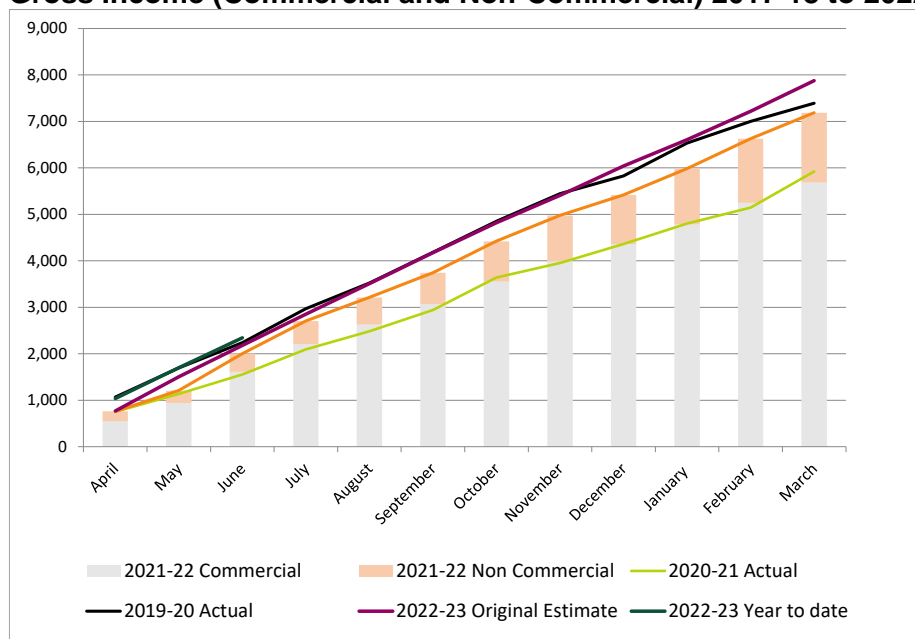
- 6.3 The following table shows the most up to date estimates of cost savings and income growth projections:

Major Variances - Income growth and cost savings	Quarter 1 Estimated 2022-23 variance
Service Expenditure and Income	£000
Pension deficit	(30)
Unfunded pension benefits (former employees)	(20)
Historic income growth/underspends (initial estimate)	(100)
Planning Income	(60)
Management of vacancies	(44)
Investment income and debt interest charges	(300)
Reduce MRP due to programme slippage	(65)
Total Service variance	(619)
Funding	
Business Rates growth	(200)
Business rates CPI uplift	(25)
	(225)
TOTAL	(844)

7. REVENUE DETAIL - External Income

- 7.1 External Income is an important element within the finances of the Council, it affects the level of resources available to fund services and makes an important contribution to a balanced budget. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on demand led income streams and on the revenue received from the management agreement for Wyre Forest Leisure Centre. The pandemic made income losses difficult to predict and there was an unexpectedly large bounce back in demand following the lifting of restrictions at the start of the year. Income in the first quarter of 2022-23 is in-line with the target set and contained within the budget approved by Council in February.
- 7.2 The previous success of the income generation work and the extent of the shortfall against previous targets is shown in the graph below.

Gross Income (Commercial and Non-Commercial) 2017-18 to 2022-23



- 7.3 The Council expanded its commercial activities to generate revenue from fees and charges that reduces net cost to help close the funding gap.
- 7.4 Income from the leisure management contract has returned to the pre-pandemic level. In general, the Centre appears to have recovered well, and in some cases activities and headcounts are out performing that achieved in 2019 (pre-pandemic) however recovery in gym and fitness membership remains challenging. The risk of increases to the cost of utility bills is borne by the Council. Initial estimates suggest that the full year impact of this increase in cost could be £150k.
- 7.5 **Capital Portfolio Fund** - The Capital Portfolio Fund supports regeneration, economic growth and housing and is allied to the Council’s income generation/commercialism objectives and is financed from borrowing.
- 7.6 The table below summaries the current projection of the revenue impact of the Capital Portfolio Fund in 2022-23. The Quarter 1 outturn projection shows that the target included within the original budget is unlikely to be achieved. The pandemic has resulted in vacant office accommodation proving more difficult to relet leading to longer void periods than expected when the budget was set. The quarter has seen an improvement in relet rates and the number of vacant units has fallen. There are now very few void units and once the rent incentives in respect of newly granted leases have expired the portfolio will show a much stronger position. There are a number of

rent reviews due to be concluded and it is anticipated that once complete the shortfall against target will be reduced.

Property Portfolio Fund Net Impact on Council Tax after Statutory Charges		2022-24 MTFS		
		2022-23 Budget £	Q1 Outturn projection £	Variance £
R276	High Sreet/Worcester Street	(11,190)	(8,942)	2,248
R277	Stratford Court	(22,770)	(8,536)	14,234
R278	Buntsford Gate	(8,760)	23,760	32,520
R279	Forest House	13,800	13,800	0
R280	Riverside	(43,400)	(4,650)	38,750
R281	Goldthorn Road	(48,310)	(68,310)	(20,000)
R282	Unity Park	(1,470)	(16,470)	(15,000)
R275	Property Portfolio Fund Admin account	0	0	0
Total		(122,100)	(69,348)	52,752

7.7 **Capital Portfolio Fund Debt** - The total overdue debt at 30th June 2022 is £95k which represents 11.6% of the overall balance collected each year. The majority of the arrears older than 3 months relates to a single tenant. Significant progress has been made in recovering rents and service charges outstanding and the position is closely managed and monitored.

8. WYRE FOREST FORWARD SAVINGS PROGRAMME AND LOCALISM TARGETS

8.1 The 2022-25 MTFS projects a funding gap in 2024-25 of just under £1.7m and the new and emerging cost pressures outlined above will, in the absence of additional government support, widen the gap further. Against this background it is essential that expenditure is kept within the overall approved budget and that savings proposals continue to be developed so that the Council has as much flexibility as possible to meet the challenges which lie ahead. The refreshed funding gap at paragraph 3.8 shows that the 2024-25 funding gap is likely to increase to £2.155m

8.2 Achieving financial sustainability is still the most significant challenge facing the Council. Since 2009 the Council has had a track record of continuously identifying opportunities to make savings however savings targets are proving increasingly challenging to achieve and are now focussed almost exclusively on the transformation program introduced in the 2021-24 MTFS to review and reassess how we deliver services with the objective of reducing net cost by making Wyre Forest a smaller Council.

8.3 The Council has done exceptionally well in generating additional income and implementing efficiency savings that have put back the date at which it has to bring its expenditure into line with income. However, in the absence of additional Government funding the legacy impact of COVID-19 and price inflation will result in the Council exhausting its general balances at the end of the current MTFS, unless savings and efficiency targets are met.

8.4 The Wyre Forest Forward savings programme was established to review all aspects of the Council to ensure we deliver a balanced budget and services of real value to our residents. Substantial savings have already been achieved.

8.5 The budget approved for 2022-23 is summarised in the table below. Good progress was made in 2021-22 towards achieving the target with items of a recurring nature, with the outstanding savings target for 2021-22 was achieved from one-off final accounts savings. No new savings have been scored against the target during the first quarter of 2022-23.

Wyre Forest Forward Savings summary	2022-23 £000	2023-24 £000	2024-25 £000
Savings Target	4,390	4,682	4,682
Savings achieved at 31/03/2022	3,604	3,685	3,751
Savings Target at 01/04/2022	786	997	931
Savings achieved 2022-23 <i>No savings recorded during Quarter 1</i>			
Savings identified in year	0	0	0
Total WFF Savings not yet achieved	786	997	931

Note that this table only considers WFF savings and income targets and is only part of the funding gap. Localism savings are reported separately below.

Localism Partnership Target

8.6 Significant progress was made in 2021-22 Localism target and further progress has been made during Quarter 1. The savings achieved to date are summarised below. Achievement of future targets is progressing and future budgets will be adjusted subject to the savings being achieved. Details are provided below:

LOCALISM PARTNERSHIP SAVINGS	2022-23 £000	2023-24 £000	2024-25 £000
Savings Target	350	525	700
Slippage approved MTFS 2021-24	15		
Savings achieved at 31/03/2022	169	172	174
Balance b/f 2021-22	196	353	526
Reduction/Increase of Target Savings	-71	0	0
Savings Target at 01/04/2022	125	353	526
Savings achieved 2022-23			
<i>Britannia Gardens (TBC)</i>	50	52	54
<i>Riverside Meadows Toilets</i>	8	9	9
<i>Load Street Toilets</i>	6	7	7
<i>Blakedown Shopper's car park (TBC)</i>	5	5	5
Savings identified in year	69	73	75
Total Localism Savings not yet achieved	56	280	451

9. Supplementary Estimates and Virements

9.1 Service managers who wish to incur expenditure that falls within approved Council Policy for which either there is no or insufficient provision within approved estimates, may incur that expenditure by virement (transferring from one approved budget cost centre to another) or by supplementary estimate, subject to specified conditions as set out in the Financial Regulations – 6.7 and 6.8.

9.2 There are no requests for a Supplementary Estimates to be considered by Cabinet this quarter.

10. REVENUE DETAIL – Central Items Business Rates and Council Tax

10.1 **Council Tax** - The level of discounts and awards, together with collection rates, and write-offs are being closely monitored. There is continued risk that assumed growth in the tax base might not be achieved in year.

10.2 **Business Rates** – Officers continue to liaise closely with the Valuation Office Agency to monitor developments in the sector particularly around material changes of circumstance and new applications lodged in the Check, Challenge, Appeal system.

The overall impact of transactions in the collection fund will continue to be monitored to assess the impact on the council's MTFS.

10.3 Collection Rates

Council Tax: As at 1st July 22, Council Tax in year collection rates are at 29.55% compared to 29.74% last year.

Business Rates: At the end of Q1 2022-23, collection rates for NNDR show a significant improvement over the last 2 years and are back to pre pandemic levels.

11. TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

Investments

11.1 As at 30th June the council held £31.5m in investments. The level of funds available was mainly dependent on the timing of precept payments and receipt of grants in advance of progress on the Capital Programme. The average interest rate achieved was 0.802%, exceeding the 90 day benchmark rate of 0.64%.

11.2 The approved limits as set out in the Treasury Management Strategy report to Council 23rd February 2022 within the Annual Investment Strategy were not breached during the first quarter of 2022-23

External Borrowing

11.3 The Council had borrowing of £34m as at 30 June 2022. The Council's Capital Financing Requirements (CFR) as at 30th June 2022 is £40.3m. The CFR denotes the Council's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. If the CFR is positive the Council may borrow from the PWLB or the market (External Borrowing) or from internal balances on a temporary basis (Internal Borrowing); an internal borrowing position of circa £6m is currently being held.

Compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits

11.4 The Council's approved Treasury and Prudential Indicators are outlined in the approved Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS). The Council has a duty to determine and keep under review the "Affordable Borrowing Limits".

11.5 During the period to 30th June 2022 the Council has operated within treasury limits and the prudential indicators set out in the Council's TMSS and with the Council's Treasury Management Practices. The Prudential and Treasury Indicators are shown below:

Prudential Indicator as Per Original Budget (to be updated during revised budget process)	2022-23 Budgeted Indicator	Actual as at 30 June 2022
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	61,551,000	40,299,000
Gross Borrowing	61,000,000	34,000,000
Internal Borrowing	551,000	6,299,000
Internal Borrowing as % of CFR	0.90%	15.28%
Authorised Limit for external debt	75,000,000	34,000,000
Operational Boundary for external debt	65,000,000	34,000,000
Limit on Principal sums invested > 365 days	2,000,000	0
Maturity structure of borrowing limits		
Under 12 months	100%	0%
12 months to 2 years	100%	6%
2 years to 5 years	100%	6%
5 years to 10 years	100%	18%
10 years and above	100%	71%

12. HOW ARE WE DOING PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

12.1 Performance management is instrumental in all council activities as it helps us to keep track of how well we are performing and enables any potential issues to be identified at an early stage so remedial action can be taken. It also informs our decision making processes which underpin the delivery of our Corporate Plan 2019-23, as amended

12.2 The Council has a number of processes in place to monitor our performance including:

- Corporate Plan Actions
- Corporate Risks and associated actions
- Leading Measures
- Lagging Measures

12.3 The Corporate Plan 2021-23 is being delivered through the following strategic actions:

- Adopt the new Local Plan (now completed)

Agenda Item No. 6

- Implement measures to increase affordable housing (Supporting a successful local economy)
- Work with partners to protect our environment, to address air quality issues and to help to tackle climate change (Safe, clean and green living environment)
- Work with partners to secure external funding and investment to support the economy (Supporting a successful local economy)
- Oversee regeneration of central Kidderminster including Future High Streets projects (Supporting a successful local economy)
- Support the visitor economy in Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley (Supporting a successful local economy)
- Work with partners to tackle abuse of vulnerable people and environmental crimes (Safe, clean and green living environment)
- Work with town and parish councils so that they have local control over assets and services (Safe, clean and green living environment)
- Seek a sustainable future for Bewdley Museum (Supporting a successful local economy)

Progress against the corporate plan priorities and our strategic actions is summarised below:

12.4 Corporate Plan – **A safe clean and green living environment**

- a) The Council's enforcement team continues to tackle environmental crime. The team has led a successful bid alongside our North Worcestershire partners for an initiative to tackle fly tipping on private land. An award from the West Mercia PCC of £22,000 has been secured to procure specialist CCTV equipment and fund work to support landowners. A joint initiative across the North Worcestershire area is seeing the team implementing a smart water tagging scheme across garages to "specially mark" waste vehicle tyres. This initiative will help identify dumped tyres and track them back to their source. Parking enforcement and other environmental and civil enforcement activity continues across the district.
- b) The private sector housing team has been undertaking focussed work with landlords regarding energy performance certificates and other Housing Act 2004 related activities continues.
- c) Work is on-going to encourage good recycling practices in collaboration with partners across Herefordshire and Worcestershire to maximise the region's recycling rate and reducing the amount of residual waste (rubbish). The region's recycling rate for last year was 41.8%. Analysis is on-going around the amounts and types of waste that are disposed of across the region to inform the design of future service provision.
- d) We continue to progress our climate change agenda through the Climate Change/Green Advisory Panel action plan. This includes developments in alternative fuelled fleet vehicles and looking at ways we can create renewable energy in the district. The feasibility work is complete and capital funding agreed for Electric vehicle charging infrastructure on Council owned land; the procurement process is underway. A full update on the Green Advisory Panel Top Ten Actions can be found in a separate report on tonight's agenda.
- e) flood prevention grants – we paid 10 property flood grants for resilience measures in quarter 1 to help householders across the District.
- f) Work around Community Safety continues with secured funding of over £100,000 from the West Mercia PCC for North Worcestershire Community Safety Projects,

Agenda Item No. 6

with £32,000 dedicated to Wyre Forest. Kidderminster & District Youth Trust has been commissioned to provide a district wide detached youth team to commence in September with a focus on preventing anti-social behaviour (ASB). Mobile CCTV cameras have been deployed in hot spot areas around the district and the section continues to lead on the management and operation of those cameras on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, additional funding has been secured from the PCC to support a mobile deployable cameras initiative. Work continues with partners to tackle crime and ASB at a local level through the Safer Wyre Forest Tasking, a subgroup of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership. The section will continue to collaborate with partners in the year ahead particularly with the onset of new statutory duties including tackling serious violence, the Protect Duty (Counter Terrorism) and Combating Drugs Partnership work.

- g) An exciting and ambitious open space project is being developed that will, given the necessary external funding, provide a network of pathways and cycle tracks across all the district's nature reserves and key open spaces. The project - called "Wyre Forest Wild" - plans to take advantage of the district's outstanding natural assets in terms of its nature reserves and open space and develop this for the health & wellbeing of our communities and visitors alike. External funding is currently being sourced.
- h) Work on the Brinton Park Heritage Lottery Project continues with the team awaiting final authority from HLF to proceed with formal procurement of contractors.
- i) The time-limited financial package to support the transfer of St George's Park, Springfield Park and Baxter Gardens to Kidderminster Town Council has been agreed and the transfer is expected to take place no later than 1 December 2022. A proposal for Bewdley Town Council to take over the ownership and running of the museum and QE2 jubilee gardens is being prepared for discussion in the autumn.
- j) A large amount of work is ongoing with local community volunteer groups to engage and support these people with the council's priority of keeping the place safe clean and looking good. We recognise the value that these groups bring, and every effort is being made to equip and assist them in this process. A special networking meeting is being held in September to widen networking, encourage membership, and thank the people involved.

12.5 Corporate Plan – Supporting a successful local economy

- a) Work continues to support and develop the visitor economy in Stourport and Bewdley through work with Visit Worcestershire, the destination management organisation (DMO) for the County.
- b) Business grants – we continue to work with partners to secure external funding to support local businesses and the local economy. During the quarter, 2 new grants were secured to the value of £12,361. As we move towards the end of the EU Structural Funds funding cycle many of the programmes that have been accessed previously are now closed or closing. This measure will be reviewed as we move towards the UK Shared Prosperity Fund as the mechanism for providing grants to businesses

Agenda Item No. 6

- c) We continue to support start-up businesses across the district with our incubator units (industrial and office) at Forest House. We achieved 94% occupation during the period.
- d) The projects to oversee the regeneration of central Kidderminster are progressing. The Levelling Up Fund programme aimed at re-kindling Kidderminster's heritage by making the canal and river a focus, encouraging visitors by making them special, vibrant places with cafes, arts and cultural activities is progressing. All three elements are behind the original programme, but the planning and listed building consent have now been submitted for the town hall improvements with the outcome expected in September 2022. During the quarter due diligence has continued and alternative delivery models explored for the Piano building, and the canal tow path works have been scheduled for quarter 4 of 2022-23.
- e) Good progress has been achieved across the Future High Street Programme comprising of the following projects: -
 - Kidderminster Creative Hub (Former Magistrates Court)
 - Worcester Street Connectivity Project and
 - Bull Ring Public Realm Project

Kidderminster Creative Hub

Stage 1 Construction Tender completed and the Pre-Construction Services Agreement due for execution. BAM Construction Midlands to be appointed as the preferred principal contractor. Contract documents currently being progressed by the Legal Department. Project kick off meeting was held on the 4th August 2022 and Stage 2 tender processes commenced 9th August with BAM expected to submit their proposals and CSA on the 30th September 2022.

Planning - Discharge of pre-commencement planning conditions in progress with some conditions discharged already.

Consultants - Deed of Variation and Consultant novation agreements finalised and due for execution. Contract documents currently being progressed by the Legal Department.

Looking forward Q2, construction phase October 2022 – March 2024

Worcester Connectivity and the Bull Ring Public Realm Projects

McBain's Consultancy appointed as the Architectural and Engineering Design consultants for both the Worcester Street Connectivity and Bull Ring Public Realm projects. The design processes have already commenced, and several meetings held with various stakeholders. Asbestos removal and air monitoring tenders completed recently and tender awards imminent.

Looking forward to Q2, asbestos removal works to commence with a circa 24-week programme. Detailed design to run concurrently with planning application scheduled to be submitted Dec/ January 2023.

- f) Preparation of a preferred development scheme for Parcel One of Lionfields (former Glades site) is being progressed. This will result in Parcel One being taken to market for development, subject to the outcome of the feasibility study, in 2023-24.
- g) We have contracted with consultants to confirm feasibility and are working with registered providers to identify appropriate end users on three sites in

Kidderminster to increase affordable housing in the district, including Radford Avenue and Clensmore Street. Council officers are working with County Council colleagues to identify funding streams for support provision in relation to one of the sites and with the Housing Benefits team regarding intensive management on a second site. The third site is likely to be for general housing need.

- h) The Castle Road housing scheme for temporary accommodation will be considered by Planning Committee in September.

12.6 Organisational Health - includes information on turnover of staff, sickness absence, organisational health related investment areas and other performance measures requested by committee. A full up date is provided in Appendix 5. There will continue to be a focus on investing in organisational health related areas, for example ICT infrastructure and related projects.

13. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The Local Government Act 2003 (sections 25–29) placed additional duties on Local Authorities on how they set and prioritise budgets.

13.2 Section 28 places a statutory duty on an authority to review its budget from time to time during the year. If the Budget Monitoring Report shows that there has been deterioration in the Authority's financial position, the Authority must take such action as it concludes necessary. The Cabinet currently reviews the Budget on a quarterly basis.

13.3 Our External Auditor Grant Thornton makes an assessment based on the annual programme of external audit work. The focus is on ensuring there are proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience and that the organisation has proper arrangements for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

14. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

14.1 This is a financial report and there is no requirement to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment.

15. RISK MANAGEMENT

15.1 A number of corporate risks are perceived to have increased in recent months. The inability to deliver a balanced budget is one of the Council's key corporate risks and has been adversely impacted by inflation in general and on construction costs in particular which will affect the Council's many capital projects. During the first quarter the Council has had a higher turn over of staff and recruitment and retention of suitably qualified staff is increasingly more difficult. This may have an impact on delivery or performance during remaining quarters. The Budget Risk Matrix has been reviewed to reflect the current assessment of risk. A copy is enclosed for information as Appendix 3 and further update on risks will be given to Audit Committee later in September.

16. CONCLUSIONS/ACTION

16.1 The information contained within Appendices 1 to 5 provides Members with an overview of financial trends and performance within the period to 30th June 2022.

16.2 The estimates and assumptions included in this report will continue to be updated and refined as more information becomes available particularly as more clarification on

government funding emerges, and the position will be clarified as part of the revised budget process. What is certain is the position will change but work to address the funding gap cannot be delayed.

17. CONSULTEES

Corporate Leadership Team
Cabinet
Service Managers

18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Budget setting papers Council 23rd February 2022
Strong Leader Report on Draft Final Accounts 2021-22
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-24
Corporate Plan action information is available on the Council's Performance Management System, Pentana Performance.

Hyperlink to Committee Reports
<http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/meetings/main.htm>

Wyre Forest District Council
Revenue Budget Total Requirements - District Council Purposes

SERVICE	2021/22		2022/23			2023/24			2024/25		
	Original Estimate	Revised Estimate	At Nov.21 Prices	Inflation	TOTAL	At Nov.21 Prices	Inflation	TOTAL	At Nov.21 Prices	Inflation	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL	634,470	1,746,620	886,150	34,430	920,580	491,700	69,050	560,750	246,700	104,560	351,260
COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	4,625,710	5,083,650	4,677,190	138,560	4,815,750	4,552,470	279,780	4,832,250	4,501,810	424,790	4,926,600
GROWTH	2,322,300	2,375,790	2,238,600	76,380	2,314,980	2,102,110	151,150	2,253,260	2,060,880	227,690	2,288,570
RESOURCES AND REVENUES, BENEFITS AND CUSTOMER SERVICES	4,640,280	3,822,180	3,879,190	38,360	3,917,550	3,674,760	78,940	3,753,700	3,522,350	121,170	3,643,520
LESS: CAPITAL ACCOUNT	12,222,760	13,028,240	11,681,130	287,730	11,968,860	10,821,040	578,920	11,399,960	10,331,740	878,210	11,209,950
INTEREST RECEIVED	99,920	102,700	273,870	1,550	275,420	457,020	3,080	460,100	656,630	4,800	661,430
CAPITAL PORTFOLIO FUND AND DEVELOPMENT LOANS FUND	(20,000)	(28,000)	(55,000)	0	(55,000)	(100,000)	0	(100,000)	(90,000)	0	(90,000)
INCREASES IN FEES AND CHARGES-CAR PARKS	(2,080)	0	(760)	760	0	(11,900)	1,620	(10,280)	(12,460)	2,180	(10,280)
INCREASES IN FEES AND CHARGES-OTHER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EFFICIENCY DRIVE SAVINGS	0	0	(162,600)	0	(162,600)	(299,950)	0	(299,950)	(445,600)	0	(445,600)
TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE ON SERVICES	12,300,600	13,102,940	11,736,640	290,040	12,026,680	10,866,210	583,620	11,449,830	10,440,310	885,190	11,325,500
LESS: REVENUE SUPPORT GRANT	0	0			0			356,790			356,790
BUSINESS RATES INCOME	(2,869,590)	(2,843,210)			(2,956,940)			(3,016,080)			(3,076,400)
BUSINESS RATES GROWTH	0	(400,000)			(400,000)			0			0
EXPENDITURE RELATED COVID SUPPORT GRANT	(563,800)	(563,800)			0			0			0
CO-FUNDING COVID SUPPORT GRANT	(383,940)	(234,000)			0			0			0
COLLECTION FUND (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT	146,000	146,000			(10,150)			105,250			0
NEW HOMES BONUS	(242,510)	(242,510)			(463,760)			0			0
LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT GRANT	(184,250)	(184,250)			0			0			0
LOWER TIER SERVICES GRANT	(121,190)	(121,190)			(130,070)			(100,000)			(100,000)
SHARE OF NEW £1.6BN GOVERNMENT GRANT	0	0			(196,000)			0			0
GENERAL EXPENSES -											
COUNCIL TAX INCOME	(7,578,210)	(7,578,210)			(7,848,010)			(8,089,420)			(8,333,820)
(SURPLUS) / DEFICIT FOR YEAR	503,110	1,081,770			21,750			706,370			172,070
COUNCIL TAX LEVY		224.34			229.34			234.34			239.34
COUNCIL TAX BASE		33,780			34,220			34,520			34,820

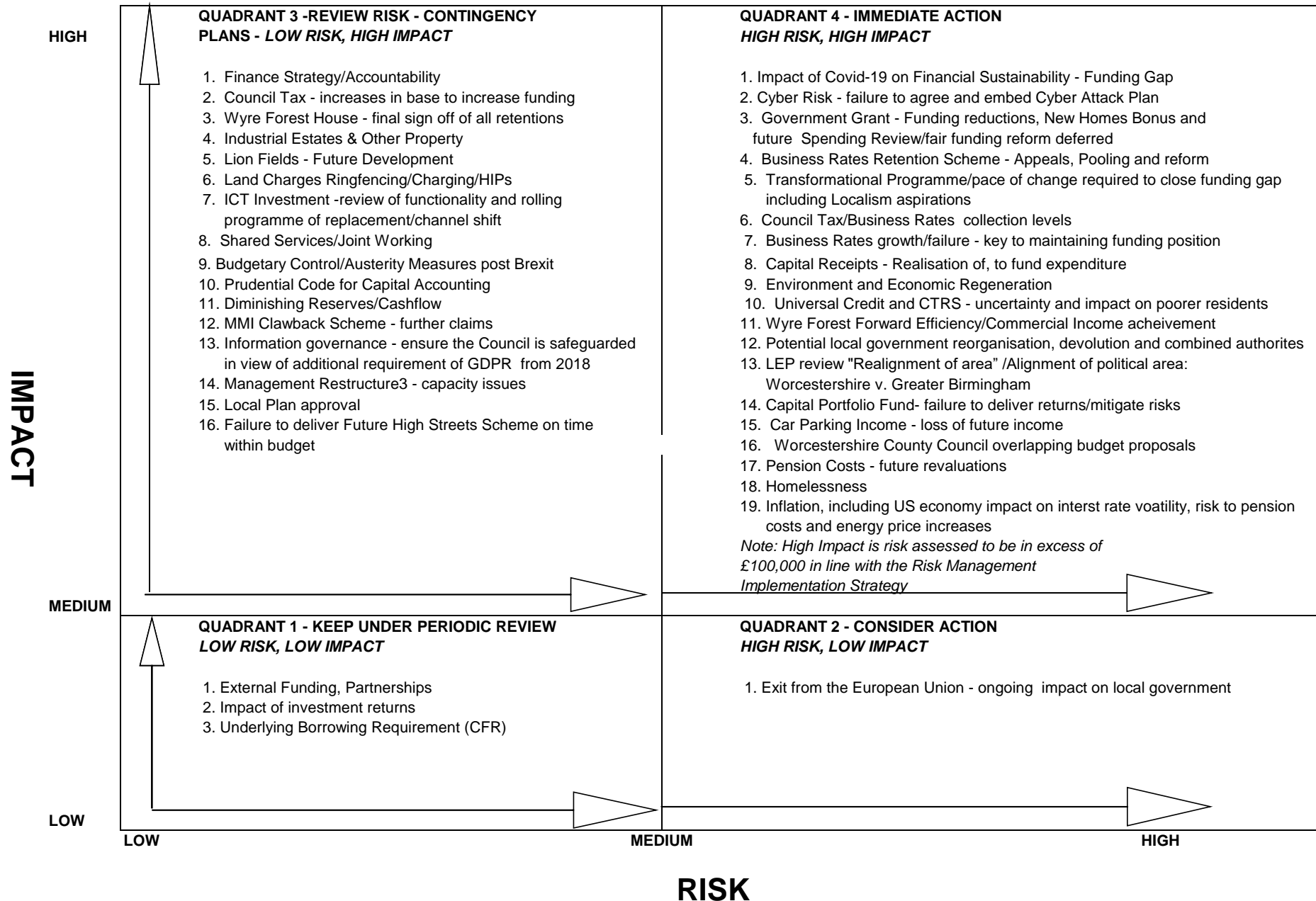
Q1 Budget Monitoring 2022-23 (to June 2022)
Capital Programme 2022-23 including slippage from 2021-22

	Slippage from 2021-22 to 2022-23	Original 2022-23	Total 2022-23 (including slippage from 2021-22)	2022-23 Q1 Actual Expenditure	Comments	CLT
COMMITTED EXPENDITURE		£	£	£		
CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL						
New Headquarters - Office Accommodation	0	413,610	413,610	-	Budget to slip to 2022-23	CN
SUB TOTAL	0	413,610	413,610	0		
COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES						
Parking Facilities: Improvement to Car Parks	0	54,530	54,530	-	LED Lighting upgrade specification currently in progress.	SB
Green Street Depot Investment	48,570		48,570	-	Scheme complete.	SB
Stourport Riverside	8,000	20,000	28,000	(25,183)	Scheme anticipated to complete in year.	SB
Community Safety CCTV Upgrade (Grant Funded)	5,460		5,460	-	PCC funded CCTV initiative to complete before end of year.	SB
Brinton Park HLF Scheme (subject to successful HLF bid)	961,430	887,520	1,848,950	(1,006)	Finalising tender specification. Expenditure in 2022-23 dependent upon commencement date. Any unspent budget will slip to 2023-24.	SB
Commercial Activity Capital Funding*	0	395,390	395,390	-	Expenditure dependent upon viable business cases. Any unspent budget will slip to 2023-24.	SB
* Subject to Business Cases & approval by the Commercial Activity Board						
SUB TOTAL	1,023,460	1,357,440	2,380,900	(26,189)		
STRATEGIC GROWTH & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION						
Housing Strategy:						
Disabled Facilities Grants (subject to confirmation 22-23 onwards)	403,210	2,055,460	2,458,670	223,842	Grant scheme progressing but underspend will roll forward to 2023-24.	KB
BCF Energy Efficiency	50,000	150,000	200,000	-	Will be run alongside the LADS3 Sustainable Warmth scheme to ensure maximum effective use of the resources together.	KB
BCF Disabled Adapted Units	150,000		150,000	-	Anticipated to complete sale of land and award of grant before end of financial year.	KB
Property Flood Grants	500,550		500,550	44,688	Anticipating total spend of around £200k, scheme end date extended to mid August 2022.	KB
Castle Road Development	100,000	3,353,360	3,453,360	49,760	Scheme is currently on target, subject to procurement of contractor.	KB
Housing Assistance - Private Sector Measures (including Decent Homes Grant)	63,800	106,000	169,800	-	Scheme details under review alongside other support and engagement mechanisms with landlords for accepting referred tenants.	KB
Flood Relief	28,410		28,410	-	Awaiting end of the Property Flood Grant scheme to determine gaps in provision for properties and schemes to be addressed.	KB
Flood Recovery Support (expenditure is conditional upon receipt of grant)	190,000		190,000	-	Awaiting end of the Property Flood Grant scheme to determine gaps in provision for properties and schemes to be addressed.	KB
Carbon Management Plan		20,000	20,000	-	Not allocated to a specific project - any balance will slip to 2023-24.	KB
Green Homes Grants Phase 1	271,750		271,750	-	No further spend to be achieved against this scheme.	KB
Green Homes Grants Phase 2	525,000		525,000	-	Will spend about £90,000 in Q2 and then no further spend likely.	KB
Future Investment Evergreen Fund (unallocated balance)*	444,650		444,650	-	Not allocated to a specific project at Q1. Any balance will slip to 2023-24.	OP/KB
Acquisition of Land at Horsefair, Kidderminster	49,590		49,590	-	Awaiting structural engineer report before agreeing to progress with purchase.	KB
Industrial Units Development - Silverwoods	130,160		130,160	-	Scheme complete & units operational.	OP

Q1 Budget Monitoring 2022-23 (to June 2022)
Capital Programme 2022-23 including slippage from 2021-22

	Slippage from 2021-22 to 2022-23	Original 2022-23	Total 2022-23 (including slippage)	2022-23 Q1 Actual Expenditure	Comments	CLT
Industrial Units Frenco Development - Silverwoods	49,040		49,040		- Scheme complete & units operational. Retentions fall due for payment in 2023.	OP
Electric Vehicle Chargepoints	271,000		271,000		- Procurement process underway so anticipate will complete end of financial year	KB
Levelling Up Fund	2,999,450	14,900,000	17,899,450	245,351	First drawdown to Kidderminster Town Council paid. Piano Building acquisition progressing. Towpath works may slip. Forecast expenditure for 2022-23 is circa £8.7m, so cash flow will be re-profiled during revised budget process.	OP
Capital Portfolio Fund*	6,050,830		6,050,830		- Expenditure dependent upon viable business cases. Any unspent budget will slip to 2023-24.	OP
Green Projects Fund*	267,750	8,000,000	8,267,750		- Expenditure dependent upon viable business cases. Any unspent budget will slip to 2023-24.	OP
Future High Streets Fund**	832,560	7,201,110	8,033,670	18,188	Tender process under way for former Magistrates Court. Architectural design & engineer services contractor appointed for Public Realm. Projects anticipated to be delivered before March 2024.	OP
* Subject to Business Cases & Due Diligence						
** Co-funding subject to full Business Case following the principles of the Capital Portfolio Fund						
SUB TOTAL	13,377,750	35,785,930	49,163,680	581,829		
RESOURCES & REVENUES, BENEFITS AND CUSTOMER SERVICES						
ICT Strategy	459,140	325,000	784,140	54,821	Several projects at the planning stage, including public-I webcasting, Network Switch upgrades and 8x8 new phone system. Currently anticipated to spend during 2022-23.	HO
SUB TOTAL	459,140	325,000	784,140	54,821		
VEHICLE, EQUIPMENT & SYSTEMS RENEWAL SCHEDULE						
Vehicles & Equipment & Systems Renewal Schedule	812,130	482,720	1,294,850	150,816	Lighting at WFH - Energy Consumption Report under way; expenditure anticipated to slip to 2023-24. Vehicle Renewals - Procurement of several vehicles under way.	SB
SUB TOTAL	812,130	482,720	1,294,850	150,816		
TOTAL COMMITTED EXPENDITURE	15,672,480	38,364,700	54,037,180	761,277		

BUDGET RISK MATRIX 2022-25



WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
13th September 2022

Budget Monitoring First Quarter 2022-23

ANALYSIS OF OUTSTANDING DEBT

This appendix details the Council’s income collection position at the end of Quarter 1 (30th June 2022)

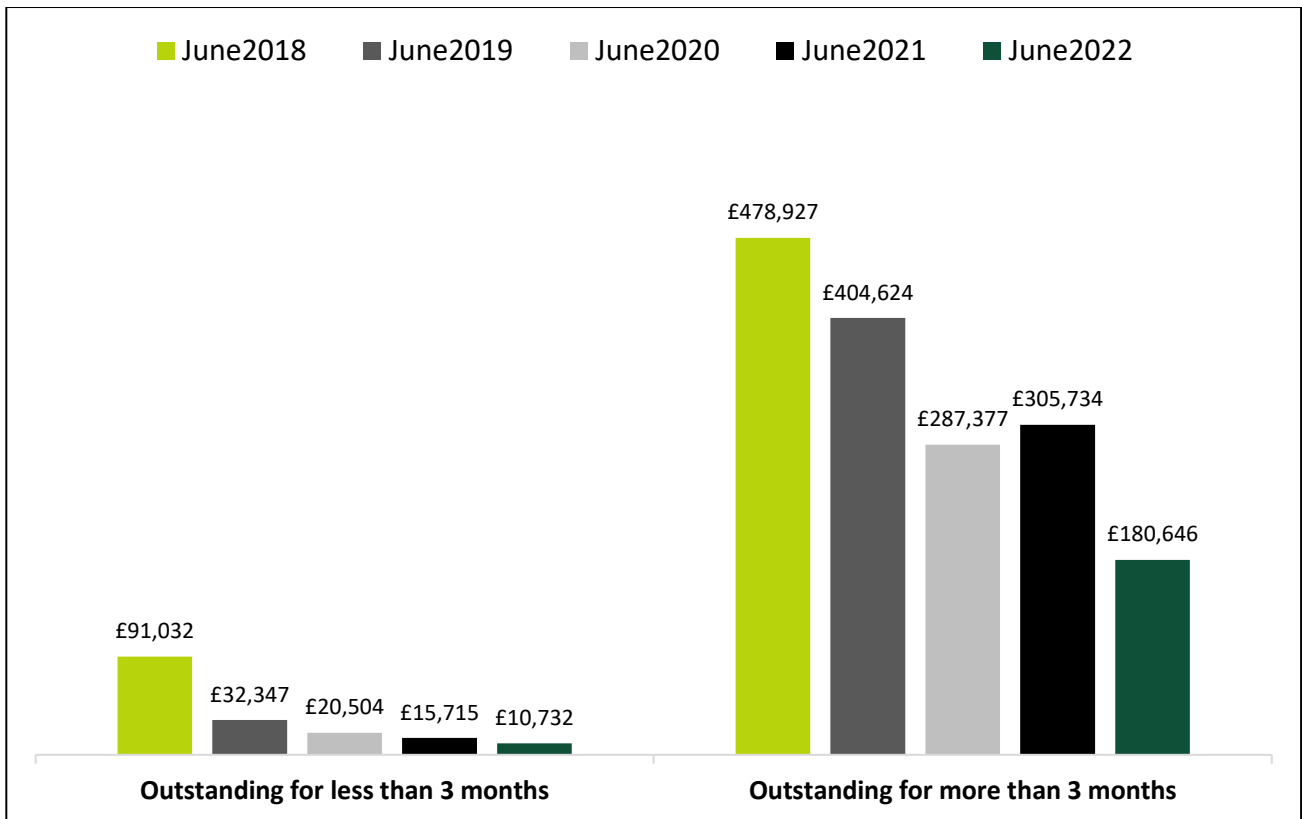
1.1. Housing Benefit Overpayment Recovery

Where customers have a change in their circumstances and we are later made aware of this, customers are expected to repay any Housing Benefit that has been overpaid.

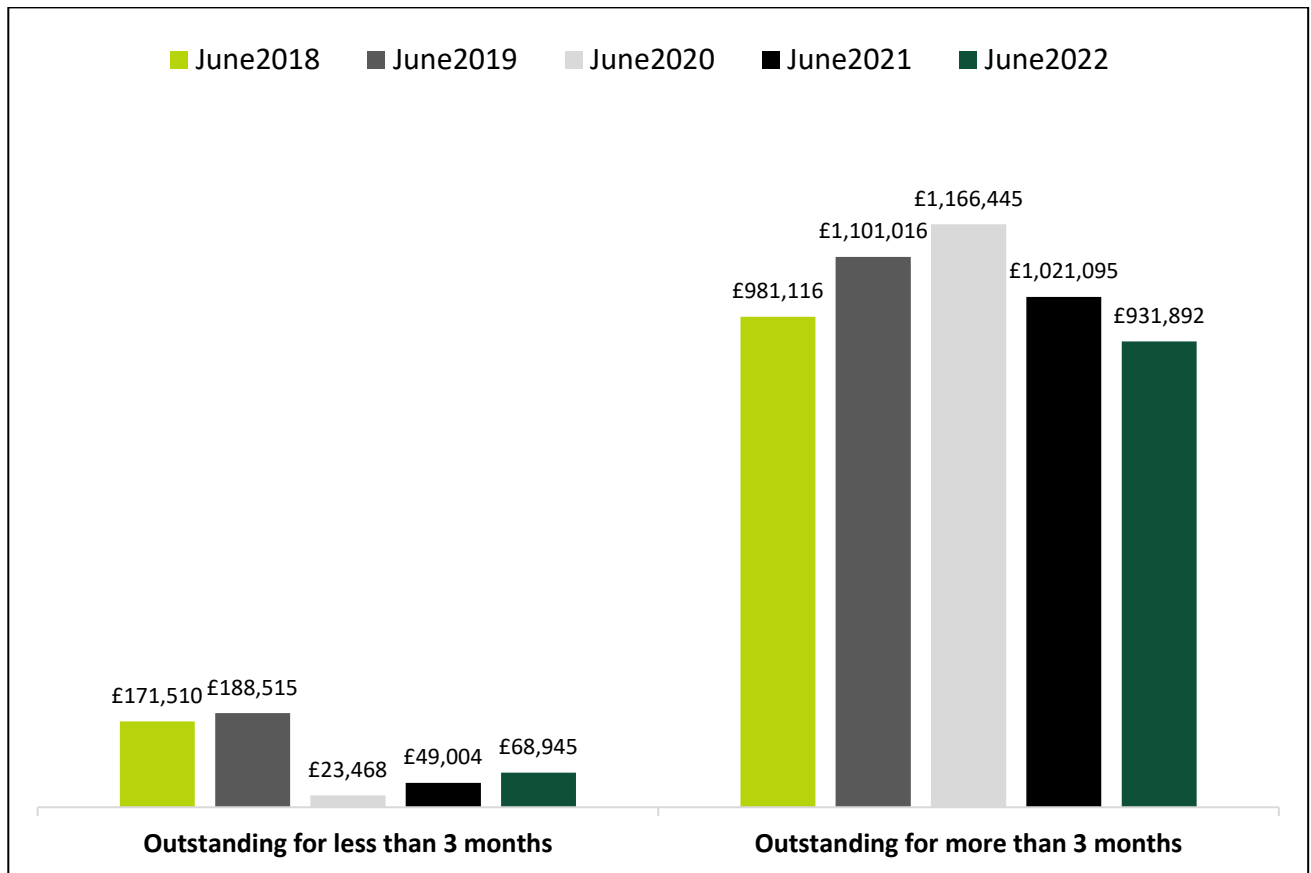
A change in circumstance transfers the customer to Universal Credit and the overpayment is via a customer invoice. Customers who remain on Housing Benefit and have received an overpayment, have a deduction from their on-going benefit.

The position relating to Housing Benefit overpayment is shown in the next two graphs:

Recovery by On-going Benefit

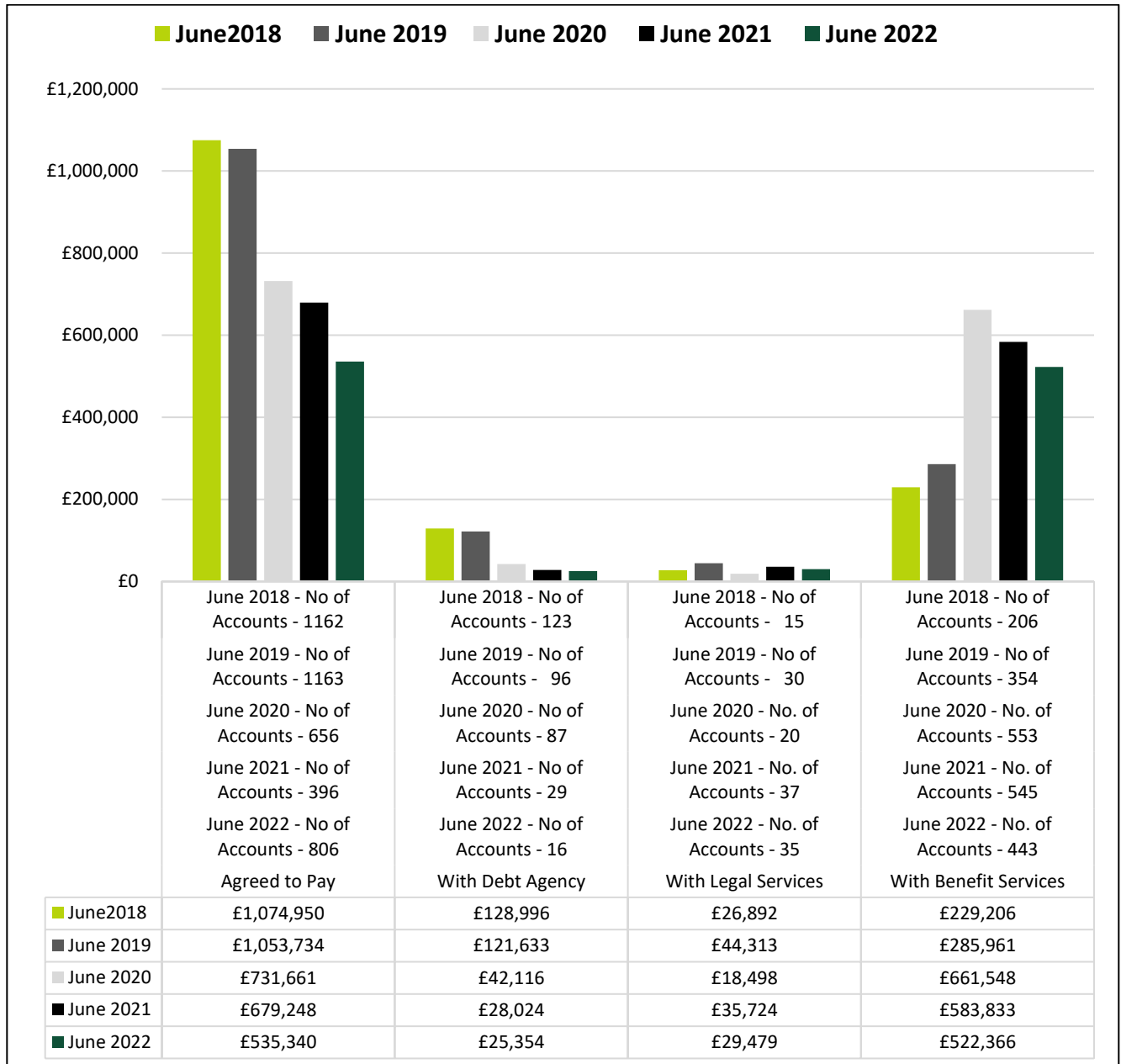


Recovery by Customer Invoice



Debts over three months old have either agreement in place to pay, have been referred to the Council’s Legal Services, or remain with the Benefit Service to pursue. The Council employs the Debt Collection Agency Dukes. Debts are referred as a last resort. As at June 2022 debts of £438 have been recovered at a cost of £66. The number of accounts, the value outstanding and how this will be collected is shown in the following graph:

Value and Number of Housing Benefit Overpayments over 3 months and Status



The total debt outstanding as at 30th June is £1,192,215 (including debt within payment terms) which represents a 14% decrease over the balance outstanding at the end of Quarter 1 2021-22 (including debt within payment terms). The number of cases where there is an agreement to pay or our Benefit/Legal Services are dealing with the case, have increased to 1,284 (978 in 2021-22) an increase of 306 cases. Cases referred to an external debt collection agency have reduced to 16 (29 in 2021-22).

The introduction of Universal Credit in November 2018 has reduced the number of customers claiming Housing Benefit and the occurrence of overpayment and its collection via on-going benefit. Collection of overpayments via customer invoice has seen an increase in overdue debt of less than 3 months as customers transfer to Universal Credit. However, collections rates on overdue debt for more than 3 months continues to improve as these debts are now collected via the DWP.

Appendix 4 – Analysis of Outstanding Debt

1.2. Sundry/ Property Debt

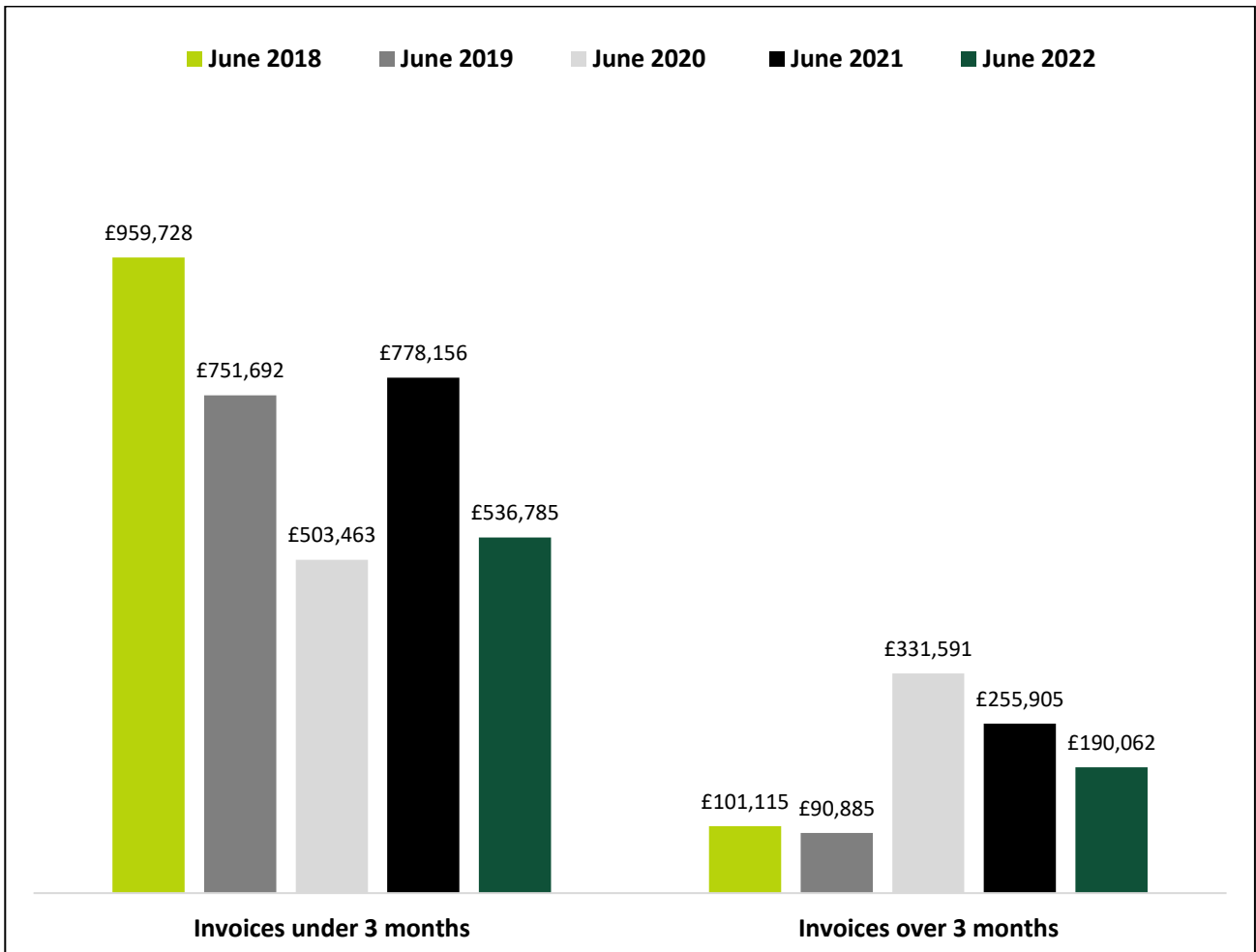
The total debt outstanding as at 30th June (including debt within payment terms) was £1,262,527 (Sundry Debt - £726,847 Property Debt - £535,679) which represents a 9.78% decrease over the balance outstanding at the end of Quarter 1 2021 of £1,399,338 (Sundry Debt - £1,034,061 Property Debt £365,277).

The 2022-23 Quarter 1 overdue debt (more than 3 months old) has reduced to £398,504 (2021-22 £419,412).

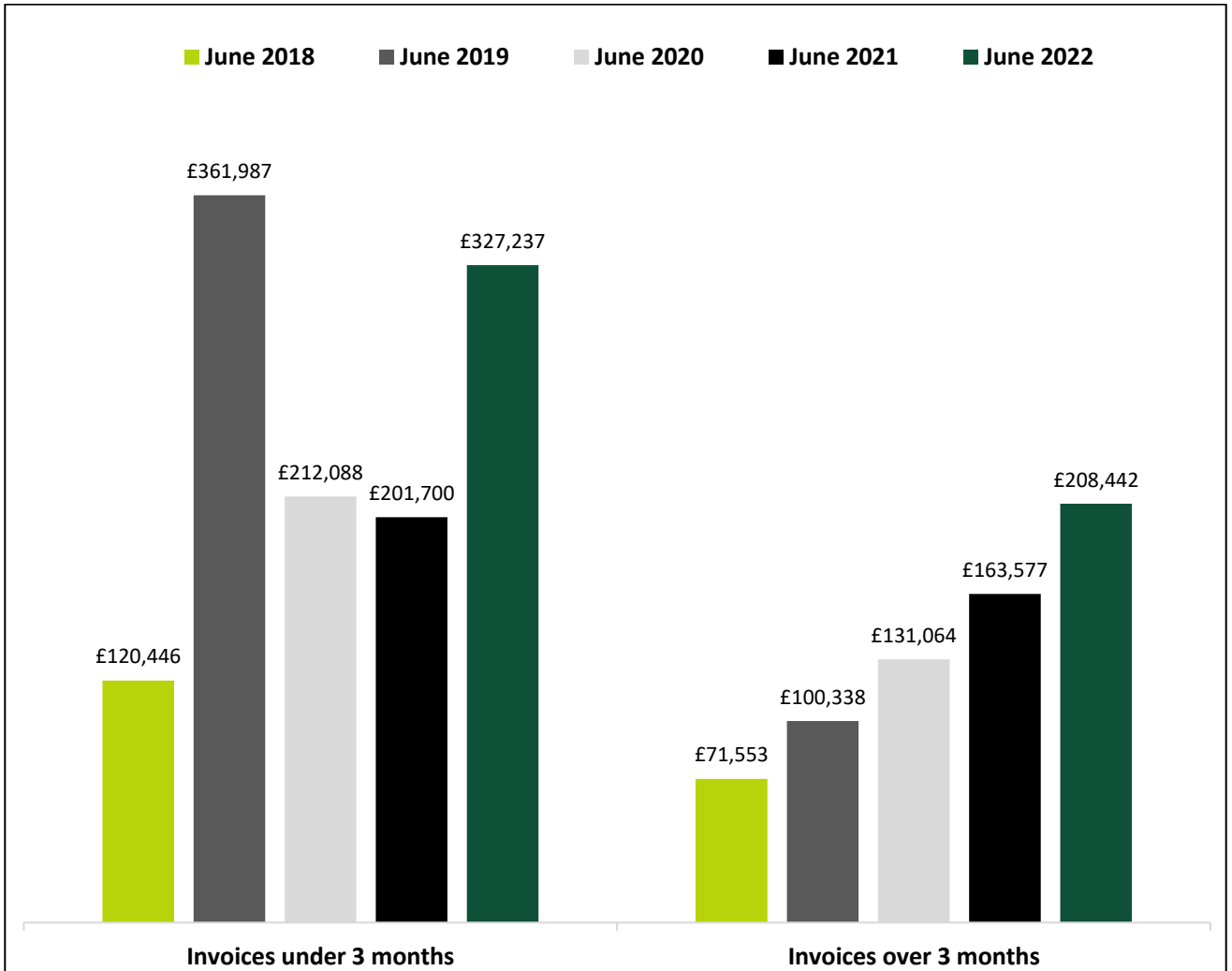
Invoices overdue (older than 3 months)	Quarter 1 2019	Quarter 1 2020	Quarter 1 2021	Quarter 1 2022	Movements
Sundry Invoices	£90,900	£331,600	£255,900	£190,000	-\$65,900
Property Invoices	£100,300	£131,100	£163,600	£208,400	44,800
Total Invoices	£191,200	£462,700	£419,500	£398,400	-\$21,100

1.4. The position relating to Sundry Debtor and Property Invoices are as follows:

Sundry Debtors



Property Invoices and Debt



Explanation of property debts required

Appendix 5 Wyre Forest Forward Actions

This report details the progress against Wyre Forest Forward actions that are not directly associated with a Corporate Plan Priority



Overdue - None

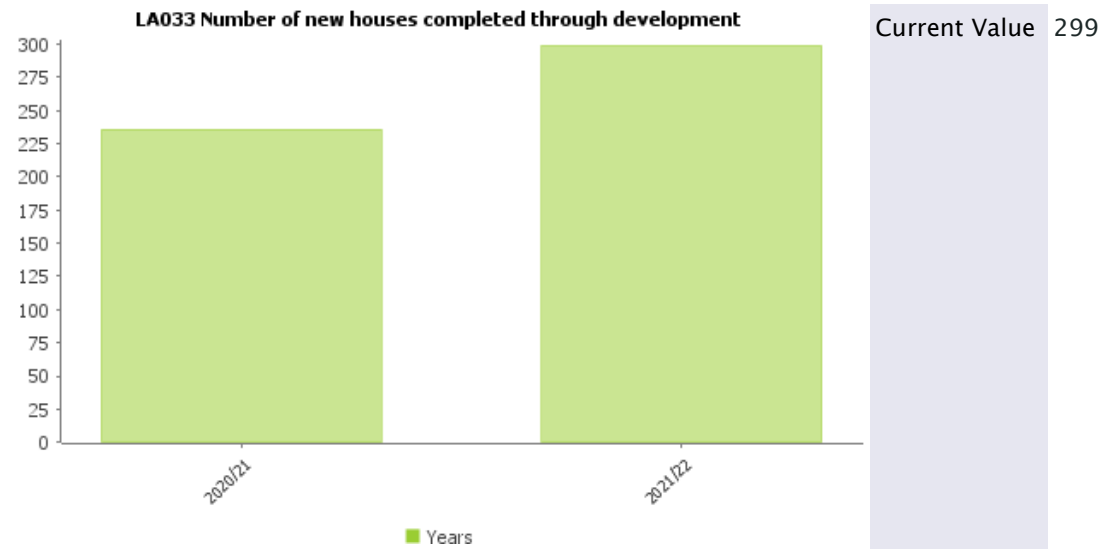
WFF 22/23 94 Review of operational floor space requirements at Wyre Forest House and Green Street

Due Date	Managed By	Latest Note	Latest Note Date
30-Sep-2021	Ian Miller	Review undertaken and further reduction in WFDC footprint at Wyre Forest House to be implemented in late Sept/Oct, including relocating some teams to Green Street.	18-Aug-2022

Measures

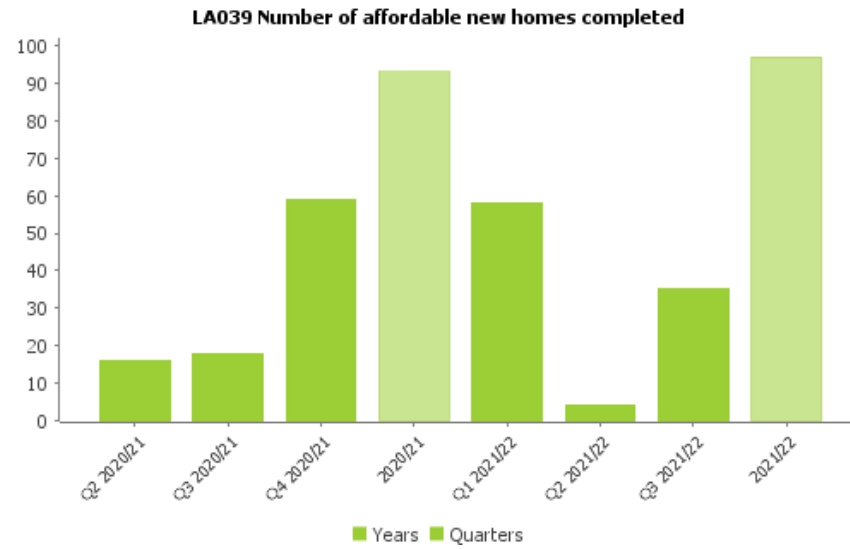
This report details the latest data for our measures that are not directly associated with a Corporate Plan Priority

LA033 Number of new houses completed through development



Managed By Kate Bailey

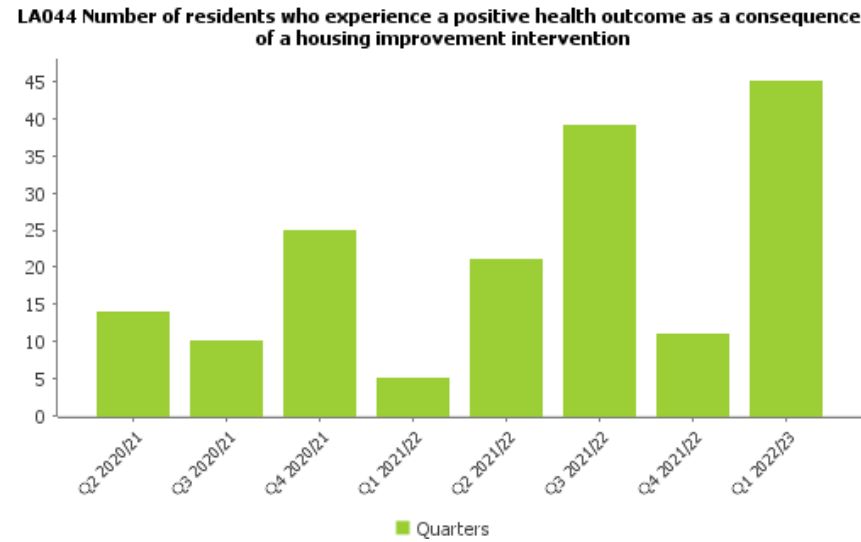
LA039 Number of affordable new homes completed



Current Value 35

Managed By Kate Bailey

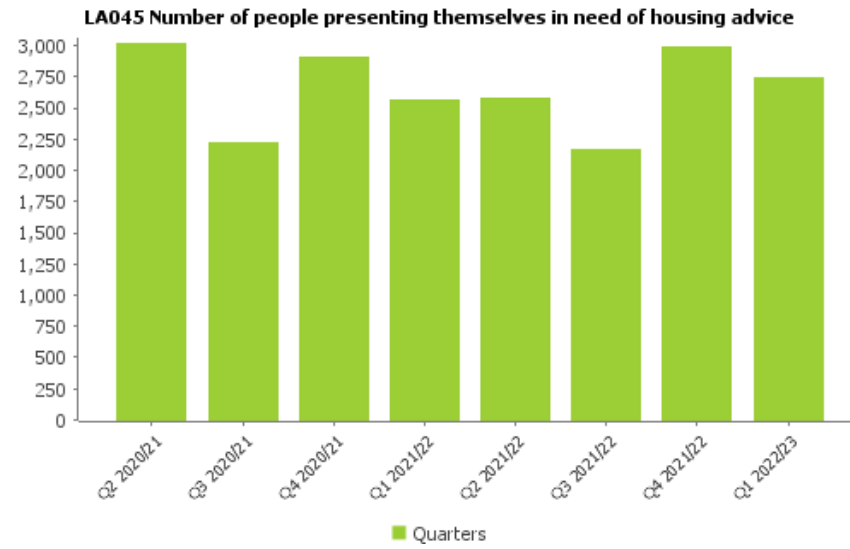
LA044 Number of residents who experience a positive health outcome as a consequence of a housing improvement intervention



Current Value 45

Managed By Kate Bailey

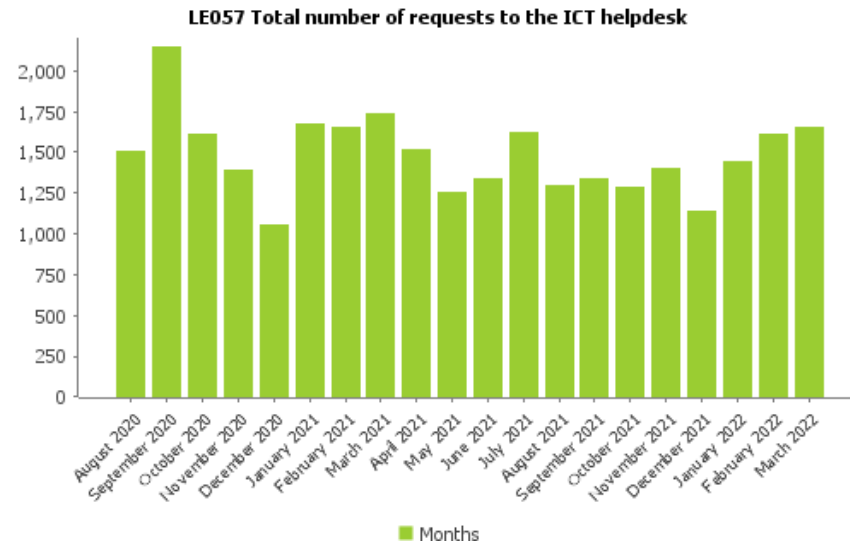
LA045 Number of people presenting themselves in need of housing advice



Current Value 2,736

Managed By Kate Bailey

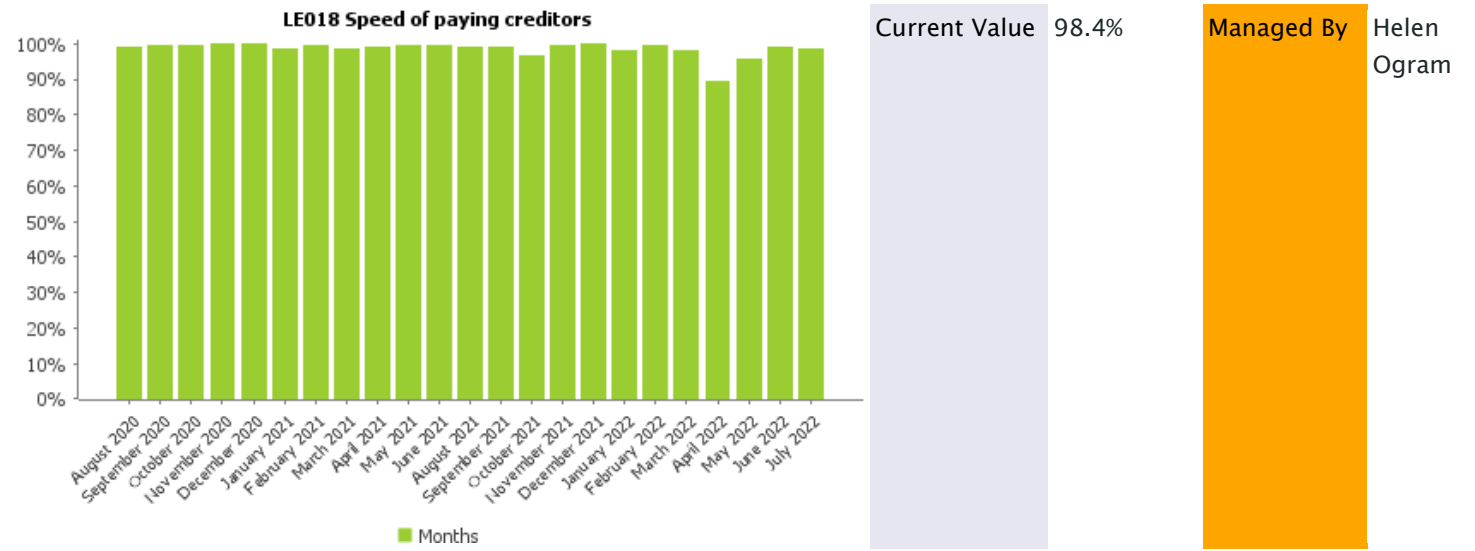
LE057 Total number of requests to the ICT helpdesk



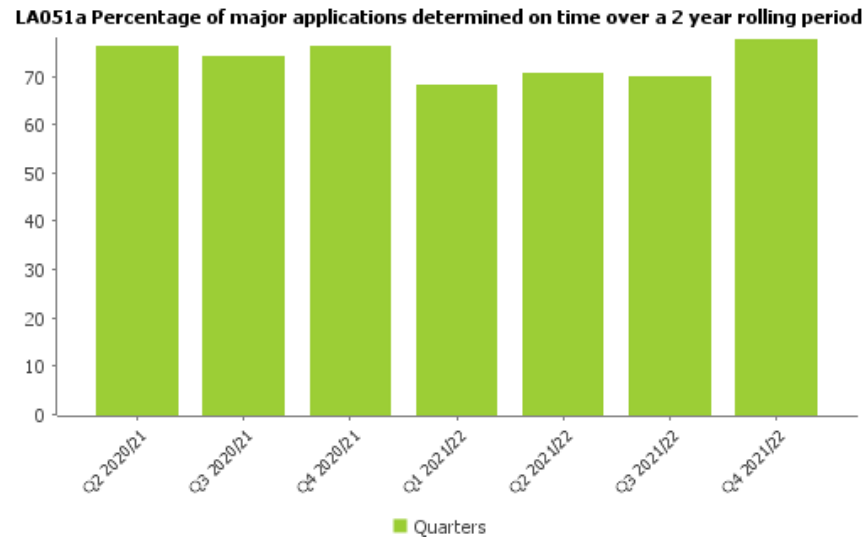
Current Value 1,654

Managed By Dave Johnson

LE018 Speed of paying creditors



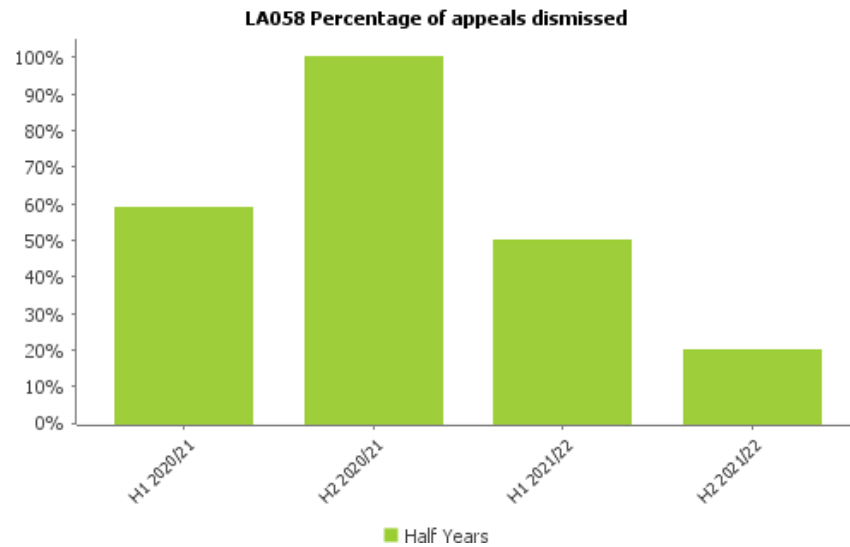
LA051 Percentage of major applications determined on time over a 2 year rolling period
a



Current Value 77.5

Managed By Helen Hawkes

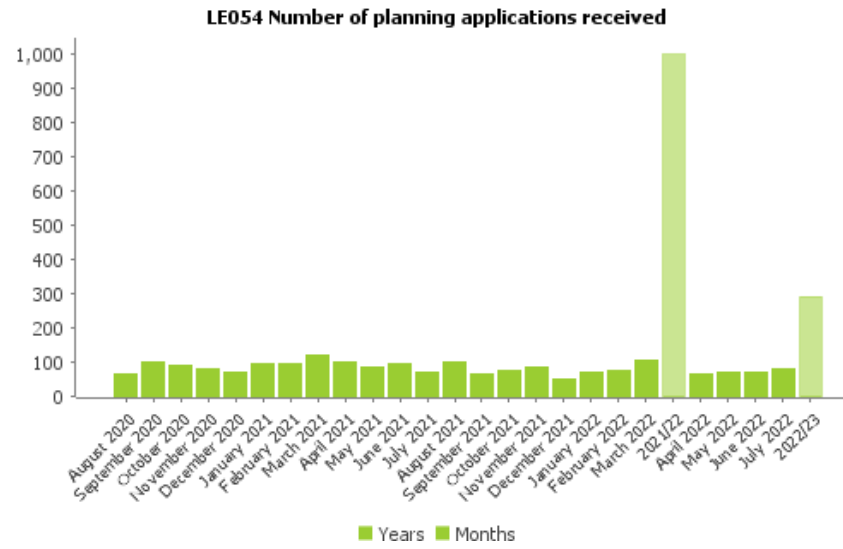
LA058 Percentage of appeals dismissed



Current Value 20%

Managed By Helen Hawkes

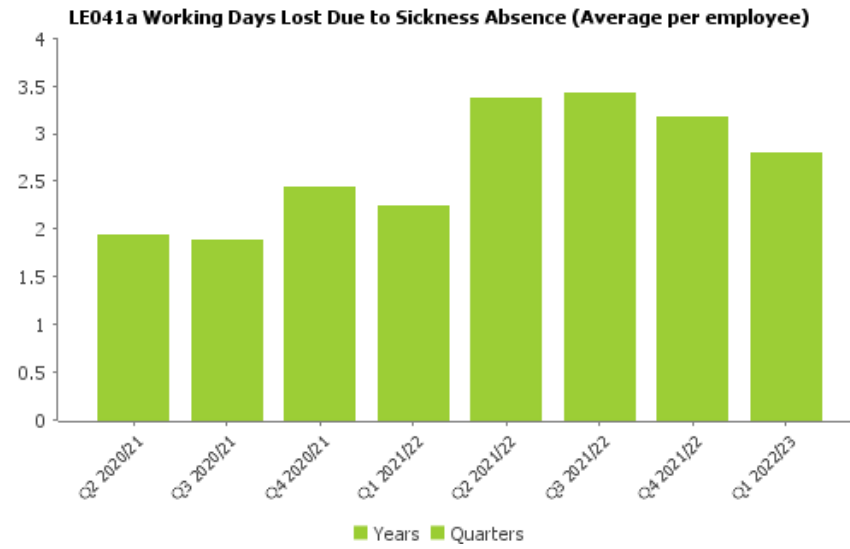
LE054 Number of planning applications received



Current Value 82

Managed By Helen Hawkes

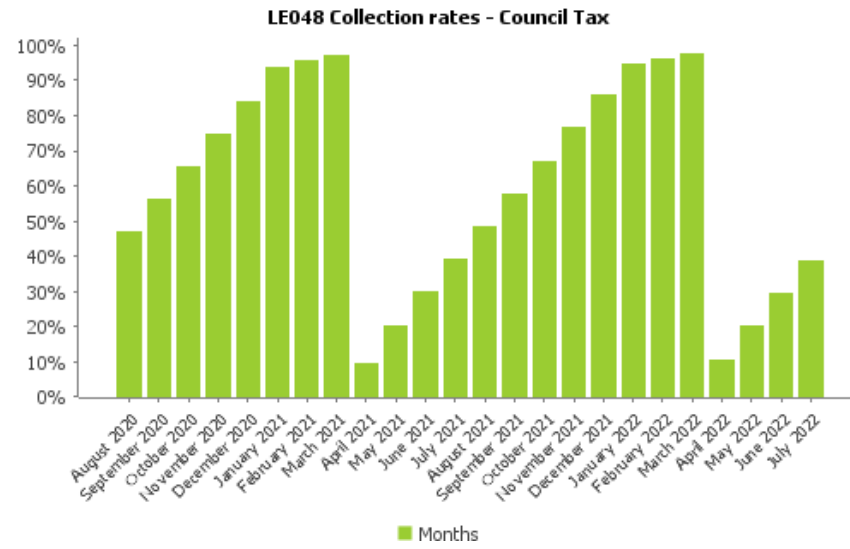
LE041 Working Days Lost Due to
a Sickness Absence (Average per
employee)



Current Value 2.79

Managed By Rachael
Simpson

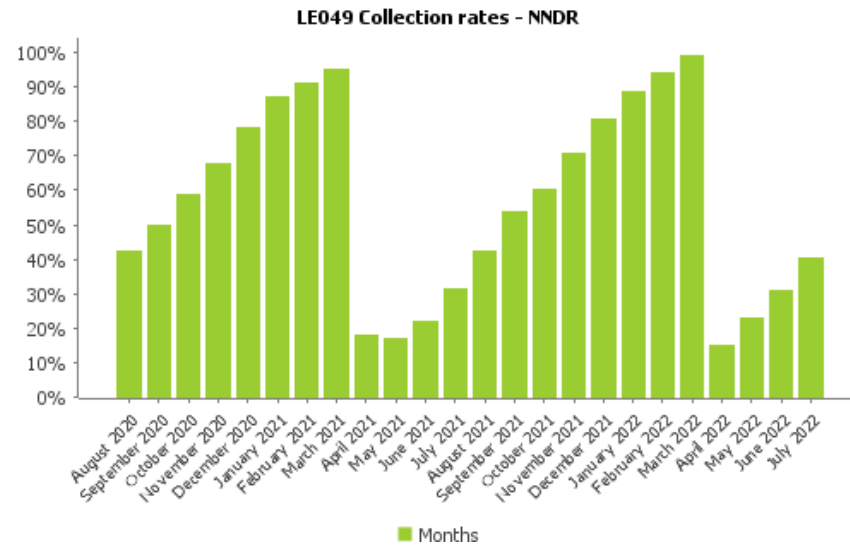
LE048 Collection rates – Council Tax



Current Value 38.78%

Managed By Lucy Wright

LE049 Collection rates – NNDR



Current Value 40.32%

Managed By Lucy Wright

Report of: Kate Bailey, Head of Strategic Growth

Date

01/09/2022

Open

Worcestershire's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2022-2025

Summary

Attached is a draft of a Cabinet report on this subject, which Cabinet is expected to consider on 13 September 2022.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the report and provide recommendations to Cabinet.

Officer contact details

Name: Kate Bailey

Title: Head of Strategic Growth

Contact number: 01562 732560

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
13th September 2022

Worcestershire’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2022-2025

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Nicky Martin – Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Wellbeing and Democratic Services
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Head of Strategic Growth
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kate Bailey ext 2560
APPENDICES:	Appendix One: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Appendix Two: Example consultation questionnaire Appendix Three: Wyre Forest District Council Action Plan 2022/23

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree that the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2022-25) is publicly consulted on in advance of adoption.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is invited to:

- 2.1 Agree the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 - 25 are publicly consulted on from October for 6 weeks.
- 2.2 Delegate to the Head of Strategic Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Wellbeing and Democratic Services to determine the final form of amendments to the strategy following any changes arising as a consequence of the consultation
- 2.3 Agree that the final amendments to the strategy determined in accordance with 2.2 above be adopted by the Council as soon as they are finalised.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Local Authorities have a duty to publish a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (Homelessness Act 2002 as amended by Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) every five years and must include the local authority’s plans for the prevention of homelessness and for ensuring that sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so. Prior to the publication, for new strategies the local authorities must undertake a review of homelessness in their area. The review is a comprehensive assessment of the nature and extent of homelessness, developed by analysing homelessness data and the views of customers and partner organisations.
- 3.2 During the pandemic the usual homeless approaches altered as households were sheltered from eviction and a substantial number of rough sleepers (and those at

- risk of rough sleeping were accommodated under “Everyone In”. In more recent months the Council has seen more of a return to more predictable types of homelessness and numbers are returning to pre-pandemic levels.
- 3.4 The supply of accommodation became very restricted during the successive lockdowns, with many Registered Providers and Landlords seeing a reduction in churn and ceasing to let properties that became vacant due to a combination of covid restrictions and staff shortages. This has lengthened households stay in temporary accommodation. Additional units of accommodation were bought online including under the Housing First or Housing Led schemes (where intense support is provided by specialist officers to very entrenched rough sleepers) and through private sector leased accommodation but demand for short term and permanent accommodation remains high.
- 3.5 The previous strategy was developed following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the primary focus was around increasing prevention services and the supply of accommodation. Unfortunately, the pandemic did prevent the delivery of some actions and some were prevented due to an inability to access additional funding. Further details are provided in the section titled “Update from previous strategy” in the document in Appendix One.
- 3.6 Local Authorities have a duty to improve the health of the people in the local area (Health and Social Care Act 2012) and should therefore be mindful of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment of homeless people. In Worcestershire the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is being renewed and officers anticipate it being published at the end of 2022.
- 3.7 The Council is also working with other organisations across the county to bring forward a Worcestershire Housing Strategy, which will come before members in Autumn 2022. Both these new strategies are relevant in relation to developing the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and must be taken into consideration.
- 3.8 The amended Strategy has been considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 September 2022 at which XXXX was recommended to Cabinet. (TBC)

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy focuses on prevention, intervention and recovery, following the national strategy and good practise. The effects of homelessness for families and individuals can be devastating and have significant negative impacts on health and wellbeing, on educational attainment and on employment opportunities. Prevention of homelessness is also more cost effective for councils and other public bodies but where it occurs the ambition should be that it is rare and short-term. The strategy is shown in appendix one.
- 4.2 The action plan is spread over three years and has actions split across prevention, intervention and recovery. The actions in year one are more substantial but the plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and additional actions will be added in as relevant to the circumstances at the time. This allows the actions to remain relevant and deliverable.
- 4.3 The strategy has been developed by an operational group of officers from across the county, including all the Local Housing Authorities, the county council and a representative from the voluntary sector. This work was supported by a wider stakeholder day held in Wyre Forest in June, that had attendance from over 60 people from a number of statutory and voluntary organisations. The stakeholder day covered workshops around homeless families, young people, domestic violence,

vulnerable households and the supply of accommodation and attendees were also given presentations on homeless policies at national and local level by Steve Barkess from Homelessness Link and council officers.

4.3 As each council needs to take the strategy through its own decision making process it is anticipated the strategy will go out to consultation sometime in October for a six week period. Worcester City will go out to consultation at a slightly later time and will have their own action plan whilst fully endorsing the strategy. The consultation will be promoted through the Council's website and social media as well as through notification to Council partners and stakeholders. Consultation responses can be given through the questionnaire (Appendix Two), through Survey Monkey and/or electronic forms.

4.4 The council has developed its own local action plan for actions that related solely to Wyre Forest and this is shown in appendix one at the end of the document.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The costs of adopting and delivering the strategy will be met by a combination of existing financial resources and external grants.

5.2 The council has bid for additional financial support for rough sleepers but this decision is still with the minister awaiting formal announcement.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Local Housing Authorities have a legal duty to undertake a review of homelessness in their area and to publish a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy every five years.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

7.1 An Equality Impact Needs Assessment screening exercise will be undertaken once the strategy is finalised post consultation.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 The Council is required to have a strategy in place every five years and the current strategy expires in December 2022.

8.2 The strategy will support working collectively with other councils and partners to reduce statutory homelessness across the county. By focusing on early intervention and prevention where possible the strategy should reduce the risk of homeless crisis situations which are costly to the Council and homeless applicant.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The Covid pandemic has had a considerable impact on people's lives and an impact around homelessness, include the focus on taking "Everyone In". This has meant the Council and partners have changed models of service delivery. In addition, there will be a new Worcestershire Housing Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy published this year and it is therefore appropriate to take this opportunity to renew the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.

- 9.2 The strategy will seek to reduce homeless presentations with a focus on prevention and ensuring those that do become homeless are assisted through intervention and recovery work quickly to minimise the harmful effects of long term homelessness.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 CLT
- 10.2 Stakeholders from across the county through an event in June
- 10.3 Service providers and users through interviews and questionnaires done as part of the RSI bid and strategy development.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Not applicable.

Draft

Appendix One

Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 – 2025

Contents

Foreword by the Chair of Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership	4
Introduction	5
Executive Summary	6
Why prevention, intervention, and recovery?	6
1. Prevention	6
2. Intervention	7
3. Recovery	7
Update from previous strategy	9
National and Local Context	10
Welfare Benefits	10
Declining social housing supply and housing affordability	10
Incomes and the cost of living	11
Provision for rough sleepers	11
Survivors of Domestic Abuse	11
Domestic Act 2021 Part IV	12
Prison leavers	12
Health context	12
Health and Wellbeing Strategy	13
Analysis	14
Households affected by homelessness	16
Single People	16
Context	16
Data Collection	16
Achievements to date	16
Complex needs and Rough Sleepers	18
Context	18
Data Collection	18
Achievements to date	19
Families with children	22
Context	22
Data Collection	22
Achievements to date	22
Survivors of Domestic Abuse	24
Context	24
Data Collection	24

Achievements to date	24
Young People	27
Households in temporary accommodation and permanent housing	29
Temporary Accommodation	29
Permanent housing	30
Governance arrangements	32
Oversight and delivery	32
Monitoring	32
Funding the strategy	32
Action Plan	34
Appendix One – Legislation	35
Action Plan	39
Communication Plan	47

Foreword by the Chair of Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership

I am very pleased to introduce Worcestershire's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. This is Worcestershire's fourth homelessness strategy and as I reflect back over the life of the previous strategy I could not have predicted that we would have had to respond to a global pandemic, an economic crisis and the displacement of so many people through war. So it is with some trepidation that we look to the future to present this, our fourth strategy.

We anticipate that the cost of living crisis will be a huge challenge for those on lower incomes and that loss of accommodation, increases in relationship breakdown and domestic abuse and impact on peoples mental and physical health will be significant.

We saw at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic that a government injection of funding dramatically reduced rough sleeping, and we have developed more effective collaborations with partners such as health and social care to ensure that those who are threatened with homelessness or actually experience homelessness receive the support they need. We want to build on these new partnerships so that we can respond effectively and efficiently to the challenges ahead.

With the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act we have created specialisms within our teams to respond effectively to victims and survivors of domestic abuse to ensure they have safe supported accommodation when they are in crisis.

These statutory enhancements to our service do put additional pressures on local authorities and come at a time when the demand for housing across all tenures is outstripping supply and housing costs are increasing. However, we are always looking for innovative solutions to meet needs and increase options available.

The Homelessness Reduction Act has supported us in our aspiration to tackle homelessness in all its forms, from rough sleeping and sofa surfing to those who experience abuse and harm at home or are living in unaffordable or unsatisfactory housing. Anyone can be affected by homelessness and the effects for families and individuals can be devastating and can impact on health and wellbeing, employment, education, and crime.

We want to support people to be able to access good quality accommodation and lead dignified, fulfilling and rewarding lives that have purpose.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the organisations and individuals who worked with us during the pandemic to help others. I would like to also thank those who have contributed towards the development of this strategy. It sits at strategic partnership level within the umbrella of the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership - recognising that tackling homelessness not only benefits the individual but also benefits the economy, the health of our population, reduces crime and disorder, and reduces costs to the taxpayer.

This strategy will govern our approach for three years. However, given our experiences over the last two years, it is vital that it remains responsive and as such it will be kept under constant review.

Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive of Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils and Chair of the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership

Introduction

The Homelessness Reduction Act provided a catalyst for a change in our approach to homelessness and a framework to formalise and normalise upstream working in partnership with other services. In particular, the Duty to Refer has enabled a step change in early notifications of those threatened with homelessness and whilst there is more that can be done, we now have the structure within which to deliver on this approach. Our work with partners such as health, social care, department of work and pensions (DWP) and criminal justice has improved and become much more collaborative. Our pathways for key client groups have, or are being, strengthened.

We are also working to upskill officers working in homelessness to recognise how each individual or household experience of homelessness is different and will often require a bespoke solution. In particular officers need to understand how adversity in childhood may impact on a person's resilience and provide a trauma informed approach. In doing so we are recognising that more people who approach the service have more complex needs and in response to this we are investing more in support services to help people to get back on track.

We have made significant progress in tackling rough sleeping on the back of the Everyone In initiative and intensive housing support through Housing First and Housing Led initiatives are supporting entrenched clients to sustain accommodation and move away from a street lifestyle.

We continue to see a high demand for social and affordable housing that outstrips supply and we anticipate the cost of living crisis will exacerbate an already challenging private sector market making access to private rented housing more difficult.

We are also anticipating increasing demand from those fleeing wars and are gearing up to look for innovative solutions in response to these households.

This strategy sets out how we will continue to deliver services and respond to the changes that lie ahead.

Executive Summary

This strategy is the result of a collaboration between the local housing authorities, voluntary and community sector and statutory partners.

Why prevention, intervention, and recovery?

Worcestershire's strategy for preventing homelessness and rough sleeping is based around 3 priorities: prevention, intervention, and recovery.

This approach aligns with the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy, published in 2018 which is also based around the 3 principles of:

1. Prevention: timely support before someone becomes homeless.
2. Intervention: targeted support to get people off the streets.
3. Recovery: the need for accommodation and support.

Across all of the strategy themes it will be a priority to ensure that the safeguarding of all adults including those who sleep rough is explicitly stated and addressed within service aims, learning from the Worcestershire Rough Sleeper Thematic Review and embedding the recommendations throughout strategy and service delivery.

1. Prevention

The effects of homelessness for families and individuals can be devastating and can have significant negative impacts on health and wellbeing, employment, education, and crime. It can also have significant costs to communities, local authorities, and public services.

Preventing homelessness is much more cost effective than dealing with its consequences. A range of studies have been completed including by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government whose 2012 figures estimated that the average annual cost of homelessness was between £24,000 and £30,000 per person. More importantly, we also know that preventing homelessness and dealing with the root causes delivers far better outcomes for individuals and communities.

That is why we are so committed to preventing homelessness at the earliest possible opportunity and targeting support at those groups who are more vulnerable to becoming homeless. The large proportion of preventative actions within the strategy reflects this commitment.

Through this strategy we will undertake range of preventative actions, including:

- Raising awareness around homelessness and rough sleeping to support earlier intervention, particularly through the development and delivery of a communication plan
- Explore opportunities to reduce homelessness due to domestic abuse e.g. Sanctuary scheme, powers to remove perpetrators
- Explore further opportunities to co-locate housing staff with other organisations
- Develop, review and refresh protocols including 16 & 17 year olds, prison leavers, care leavers

- Improve intelligence to shape and inform commissioning of services
- Engage regularly with service users to enhance learning from lived experience
- Promote and encourage sign up to the Duty or Commitment to Refer.
- Review issues within the private rented sector following the rent reform legislation and end of the s21 notices to ensure homelessness from the PRS is reduced.
- Work with partners to explore opportunities for further outreach provision from their services e.g. GP drop ins, joint home visits, mental health outreach

2. Intervention

There will always be some people who find themselves homeless or threatened with homeless however good our homelessness prevention response is. We want to ensure that any homelessness is rare, fleeting and non-recurring.

Therefore, we must put in place comprehensive and rapid interventions to help those in crisis, and offer a range of accommodation and support choices to meet specific needs and complexities

We will strengthen our approach to tenancy sustainment across tenures by developing and embedding support services across the county through a community-based approach and ensuring that support is flexible to meet individual support needs.

In particular, we will explore opportunities to fund a specialist mental health role to work specifically with homeless households.

3. Recovery

We want to increase the supply of, and access to, affordable and supported housing, so that people can recover successfully from homelessness. Alongside this we will enable support for those who have multiple and complex needs to try to ensure that homelessness does not reoccur, and longer-term housing solutions are maintained.

Affordable and supported housing supply in Worcestershire is an on-going problem locally, as it is nationally. Demand far outstrips the supply. During the pandemic, government intervened in unprecedented fashion to ensure stability for millions of residents by effectively making it impossible to undertake evictions or repossessions in this country. As a result of this intervention activity levels around homelessness remained relatively stable nationally and locally new, creative ways of working across health services and housing services have developed around, for example, the needs of rough sleepers. However, we are now starting to see an increase in homelessness approaches as these interventions have ended.

This is also compounded by the fact that an overwhelming number of individuals presenting as homeless have multiple and complex needs resulting in exclusion from social rented tenancies and whilst accommodation in the Private Rented Sector (PRS) can be sourced, it has limited levels or no support and is difficult to sustain.

Through this strategy we will

- Explore opportunities for a greater range of supported and step-down accommodation, including accommodation for rough sleepers and safe accommodation for survivors of domestic abuse
- Review the provision of accommodation and support for young people to ensure no young person will be placed in emergency bed and breakfast with shared facilities, other than in exceptional circumstances
- Engage with landlords from the private rented sector to enable access to accommodation across the districts
- Work with partners to link households into meaningful activity and services, increase the take up of education and training, and review peer mentoring services
- Upscale our response to digital safety

Update from previous strategy

The previous Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy 2019 – 2022 was developed during the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the publication of the national Rough Sleeper Strategy in 2018. The primary focus was around increasing prevention services and the supply of accommodation and mirrored the national strategy by addressing prevention, intervention and recovery. During the strategy lifetime the Corona virus pandemic struck and the way services were delivered to homeless households and rough sleepers across the county changed profoundly, particularly in response to Everyone In. As a consequence, the strategy was given a refresh in 2021 and the action plan was revised.

This section outlines the principal aims and achievements of the strategy, including the revised actions from 2021.

1	Increased prevention services through developing toolkits and providing advice and assistance to over 4k households	6	Learn from those with lived experience to improve services- 24 service users interviewed as part of the RSI2022-25 and review process in North Worcestershire
2	Encouraged partners to use the Alert system and sign up to and use the Duty or Commitment to Refer through training sessions, local homelessness forums and county events.	7	Enhanced services to Rough Sleepers including a single service offer, motivational interviewing, Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) services, meaningful activities and Housing First
3	Greater information available to customers through social media posts, refreshed websites, face to face and written materials	8	Explored information sharing through protocols, panels and IT systems – rough sleeper, prevention and domestic abuse panels established
4	Raised awareness of homelessness through schools and GP (social prescribers) to support early intervention	9	Investigated joint funding opportunities with regards to Mental Health services for Homeless households and Rough Sleepers
5	Enhanced partnership working through drop-in sessions, regular joint events and meetings	10	Made better use of statistical data to inform service development in relation to Rough Sleepers

Unfortunately, the pandemic did prevent the delivery of some objectives including hosting annual partnership events and establishing a service user group. An unsuccessful funding bid, due to high levels of competition from other councils, meant mental health services specifically for homeless households have not been developed.

National and Local Context

The Homelessness Review includes a more detailed consideration of the national and local context but there are some specific issues that are highlighted below as they are significant pieces of legislation or due to their impact on homelessness.

Welfare Benefits

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 made changes to the rules concerning a number of welfare benefits including the introduction of Universal Credit which replaced a combined six benefits for working age people who have a low household income – Employment and Support Allowance, Income-based Job Seekers Allowance and Income Support, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit.

It also introduced an ‘underoccupancy penalty’ which reduced the amount of benefit paid to claimants in social housing if they are deemed to have more bedrooms than their household size required and limited the total amount of money available to benefit claimants and the total benefits paid to a single person may not now exceed £350pw, the maximum available to families is £500pw including housing costs. This created a number of challenges to existing tenants underoccupying social housing in making up the rent shortfall and for those with larger families to afford their rent. In the Spending Review 2021 the Government announced an adjustment to the taper rate of Universal Credit and the increase in the work allowance to support recovery from the pandemic and to help mitigate some of the impact of ending the Universal Credit uplift.

There were some mitigations including the Household Support Fund and one off Homelessness Prevention Grant to support vulnerable private renters which targeted those unable to work or facing additional financial pressures.

Declining social housing supply and housing affordability

Across the county there is very high demand for social housing with nearly 12,000 households on the housing registers. High employment levels and economic growth bring major opportunities for Worcestershire but also present significant challenges, including high housing costs and a shortage of accommodation which is affordable to local people especially those with low incomes.

There was a sharp reduction during 2021/22 in social housing lettings across the county due to pandemic down to 700 from a high of 1478 in 2018/19¹. There is also a mismatch between the social housing available for letting. For example approximately 50% of vacancies in Wyre Forest are for older people, and yet less than 10% of the households on the housing register are over 65. Part of the issue is the overall decline of social housing numbers as a consequence of the right to buy and right to acquire, for example in 2018/19 113 homes were sold across the county through the Right To Buy or the Right to Acquire.

In many parts of the county the supply of private rented properties at or close to local housing allowance levels is very restricted. In addition. most new social housing

¹ Worcester letting data not included

properties are at “affordable” rather than “social” rent trapping households into benefit dependency.

Incomes and the cost of living

Across the county there is a difference in household income. The average gross salary varies from £28.6k in Wyre Forest to £33.5k in Redditch but is well below the UK average of £38.1k. Affordability of housing is also an issue in parts of the county with only Wyre Forest and Worcester city median house price to median salary ratio lower than the England and Wales average of 7.69. The unemployment rate across the county is lower than the national average ranging from 3.5% in Wychavon to 4.7% in Redditch.

The impact of Covid-19, Brexit and the war in Ukraine has affected the cost of living (particularly food and fuel) and inflation is at it's highest since the 1970s. This will have an impact on household disposable income and is likely to lead to many more people experiencing economic hardship, including some of those who have previously been relatively well off. It will also exacerbate existing poverty and those who have no credit history or savings to fall back on are likely to be particularly affected.

In terms of protected characteristics, evidence from the Cabinet Office identifies that Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people are more likely than non-BAME people to experience housing issues in relation to quality of housing, cost of renting as a proportion of income and overcrowding. In Worcestershire female employees earn less than their male counterparts in every area.

During the pandemic the lockdowns led to a reduction in income for many households and a consequent increase in rent arrears in both the social housing and private rented sector. Additional funding was given to local authorities in 2022 to support those in rent arrears and those generally experiencing hardship through the Household Support Fund and Vulnerable Renters funding. The use of food banks (distribution of food parcels) nearly doubled between 2019/20 and 2021/22.

Provision for rough sleepers

The “Everyone In” initiative commenced in March 2020 during Covid restrictions to provide accommodation to everyone in need including those not normally entitled to assistance under homelessness legislation. This scheme enabled councils to work with clients who had previously not engaged with housing and support services. We have learnt lessons along the way, and this has resulted in different working practices, being more person focused with a greater understanding of the complexities behind rough sleeping and the cycle of repeat homelessness. In 2020/21 the county made a successful bid for Rough Sleeper Initiative funding. This was extended in 2021/22 and a further bid has been made for 2022-25. This has enabled the councils to enhance localised provision and housing supply for rough sleepers.

Survivors of Domestic Abuse

The Local Housing Authorities and County Council have well established partnership working including a recently established Domestic Abuse Partnership Board which is a successor to the longstanding Domestic Abuse Forum. The councils have

previously jointly commissioned services for survivors and there is partnership working with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and other partners around commissioning of “Drive” Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and training.

Domestic Act 2021 Part IV

This legislation has given local authorities (LAs) further duties in relation to homelessness, undertaking a needs assessment, providing appropriate accommodation (with a new accommodation standard) and the provision of Domestic Abuse support. It also imposes a duty on LAs to have a Local Partnership Board and to work in partnership with Local Housing Authorities (LHA) in areas where there are two tiers of local government.

The legislation states that local authority housing duties include offering ‘Safe Accommodation’ and this includes the offer of support from a local expert support service. ‘Safe Accommodation’ consists of self-contained supported accommodation or traditional refuge accommodation. Therefore ‘Bed and Breakfast’ is not considered to be Safe Accommodation.

The legislation also refers to assessing what other duties are owed to the survivor presenting as homeless, under other homeless legislation. Survivors should always be considered as homeless where there is a significant risk of harm should they remain in their property, and appropriate support should be offered.

The recent Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has enhanced the commissioning work with the County Council and they now also fund specialist Domestic Abuse housing staff within the Housing Advice teams and indirectly support the provision of safe houses.

Prison leavers

In Worcestershire the lack of suitable accommodation undermines the ability of individual involved in the Criminal Justice system to settle and increases the future likelihood of their reoffending. The Worcestershire housing authorities are in the process of conducting a review of the Criminal Justice Housing Pathway in partnership with Campbell Tickell.

Partners are committed to the development of a new model utilising existing services, assets, and capacity and to modify approaches as necessary to provide a more joined up pathway.

Our ambition for Worcestershire is that the Criminal Justice Housing and Support Pathway will bring together the full range of partners to provide a bespoke response to individuals that will enable rehabilitation and prevent or tackle homelessness.

Health context

The development of Primary Care Networks (PCN) has led to closer working relationships between GPs and District Councils including through the formation of Collaboratives.

The Health and Wellbeing Board acts as a forum in which key leaders from the local health and care system work together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population. In Worcestershire the Board also has representation from District

Council members and the Chief Executive of Redditch and Bromsgrove (in his role as Chair of the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership). The Board are currently overseeing the review and development of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy which was out for consultation in early 2022.

The population of Worcestershire is ageing, with 23% over 65 compared to 18.6% in England and Wales and this does put additional pressure on health services.

Average life expectancy in Worcestershire for males is 80.1 years and 83.8 for females. These levels are above England's worst life expectancy areas but not as good as its best areas.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy "Being Well in Worcestershire" has been out for consultation and a final version is anticipated in November 2022. This strategy has a particular focus on good mental health and wellbeing. Under this main priority are three sub-priorities of healthy living at all ages and stages of life; safe, thriving and healthy homes; communities and places and quality local jobs and opportunities. The second of these three sub-priorities is particularly relevant to this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, with its focus on tackling health inequalities.

Analysis

The implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) (2017) in 2018 led to a peak in applications in 2018/19 with the new duties owed. Please see Appendix One for more information about the statutory framework. However, this is not a trend that has continued and there has been a decrease in most Districts over the 4 year period. Redditch and Bromsgrove saw a small peak during 2019/20. The level of homeless applications in all districts remained lower in 2020/21 than in 2018/19 (except in Redditch).

Duties have been owed to over 95% of those approaching as homeless in 2018/19 increasing to over 98% in the subsequent years. More duties are owed to those already homeless, under the relief category. The total number of approaches under the relief category reached a peak of 54% in 2020/21 which is attributable to the Covid 19 pandemic and the “Everyone In” scheme.

Countywide the top four reasons for homelessness are end of Assured Shorthold Tenancies (AST), family and friends no longer willing to accommodate, other and relationship breakdown (non-violent). This is comparable throughout the county. More work needs to be done to identify the reasons for homelessness for those in the “other” category.

Table One: Reasons for homelessness at prevention and relief stage

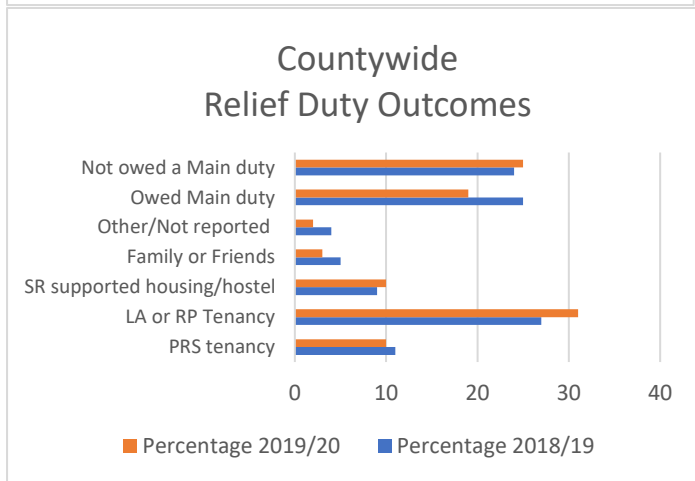
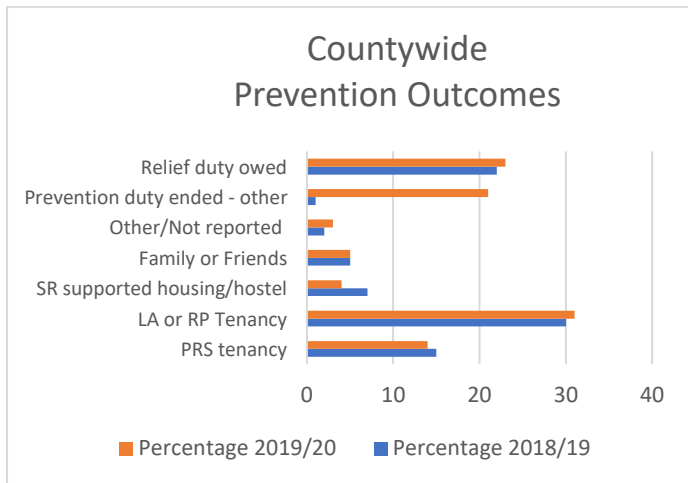
	Prevention %			Relief %		
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
End of AST	33.6	33.2	23.1	10.2	13.8	6.8
Family/Friends no longer willing to accommodate	26.6	27.1	31.9	21.1	27.8	27.9
Other	15.7	15.7	15.7	16.9	17.1	18.6
Relationship Breakdown (non-violent)	7.2	9	12	16.1	14.5	15.6

The pandemic saw more time spent with family and friends due to lockdown restrictions. Statistics countywide evidence the stress this had on relationships with the increase in homelessness due to family and friends no longer willing to accommodate and non-violent relationship breakdowns. More notably, the number of homeless presentations due to domestic abuse saw an 8-9% increase between 2018/19 and 2020/21, prior to the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Table Two: Homeless presentations due to Domestic Abuse

	Prevention %	Relief %	Total %
2018/19	4.5	12.7	17.2
2019/20	4.2	11.9	16.1
2020/21	8.2	17	25.2

In 2018-2020 55-60% of those who had a prevention duty owed and 56% owed a relief duty secured accommodation throughout the County.



Households affected by homelessness

This section considers some specific groups within the homeless cohort affected by homelessness. These are the groups that make up the majority of households that approach us and are often the most vulnerable to becoming homeless. The strategy will cover the context and data relating to the various groups and then illustrate what currently happens with an overview of current prevention, intervention and recovery elements of service delivery.

Single People

Context

Single people are often most exposed to changes to welfare benefits and cost of living rises. Affordability issues are likely to be an issue in this cohort. Reflecting this, single homeless people make up a large proportion of applicants on the districts housing registers with the highest age range of between 18 – 34.

Whilst services for single homeless people across the county may differ slightly to reflect the needs and demands specific to each district, the core objectives remain consistent.

Data Collection

In 2020/21 just over 50% of all homeless approaches across the county were from single people. The two most common causes of homelessness in Worcestershire are the loss of private rented accommodation and family or friends being no longer willing to accommodate. The support needs of this group vary but most common support needs across the homeless cohort include mental illness or disability, physical illness or disability and domestic abuse.

Achievements to date

Prevention

The districts are working directly with the private rented sector to prevent tenancies failing and support those in the private sector. This is being achieved by support officers working directly with both the resident and the landlord including through the establishment of Prevention Panels in some local authority areas. These panels meet regularly at a local level and work to find housing and rent arrears solutions as well as coordinated working and information sharing. As part of the role of the panels moving forward, councils will be clear about who is the lead professional for each case.

The Countywide Single Person and Childless Couples Homeless Prevention Support Service is currently provided by Caring for Communities and People (CCP) and is jointly funded by the six LHAs and the County Council. This service's remit is to help councils meet their obligations in providing the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEPE) provision, as well as providing a support service via drop-in sessions and home visits to individuals who are unlikely to be found in priority need.

Districts have various options to overcome any financial barriers including Rent Bond Schemes, Welfare Assistance applications, Discretionary Housing payments, Help to Stay, tenancy training, financial inclusion and CAB work and food bank referrals.

Early intervention is less easy to achieve when homelessness is predominantly caused by sudden personal crisis, going forward further work is required to engage private sector landlords, to embed approaches such as the 'Help to Stay' scheme and to promote the support and services we can offer.

Intervention

Where homelessness cannot be prevented, we work to act quickly to intervene by developing clear pathways for specific client groups. Where temporary accommodation is required, we have support officers in place who work with clients individually to develop a housing pathway into sustainable accommodation. Support will include help to identify and undertake meaningful activity, reconnections with friends and family or where this isn't an option then to connect to the People Like Us project (Plus) that helps tackle social isolation and loneliness across the county for 18+.

Recovery

The use of Private Sector Leasing Schemes is being developed across the county to ensure a supply of affordable housing which meets current standards and increases the options open to people. Applicants are also supported as part of this work to ensure a smooth transition into a sustainable tenancy.

Complex needs and Rough Sleepers

Context

The Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy was launched in August 2018. The Government is committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and announced in December 2019 a commitment to ending rough sleeping by 2024

Rough sleeping can be a dangerous and isolating experience. People who sleep rough are more likely to be victims of crime and violence. The longer a person remains on the streets or actively engages in street life culture the more likely it will have significant implications on their physical and mental health.

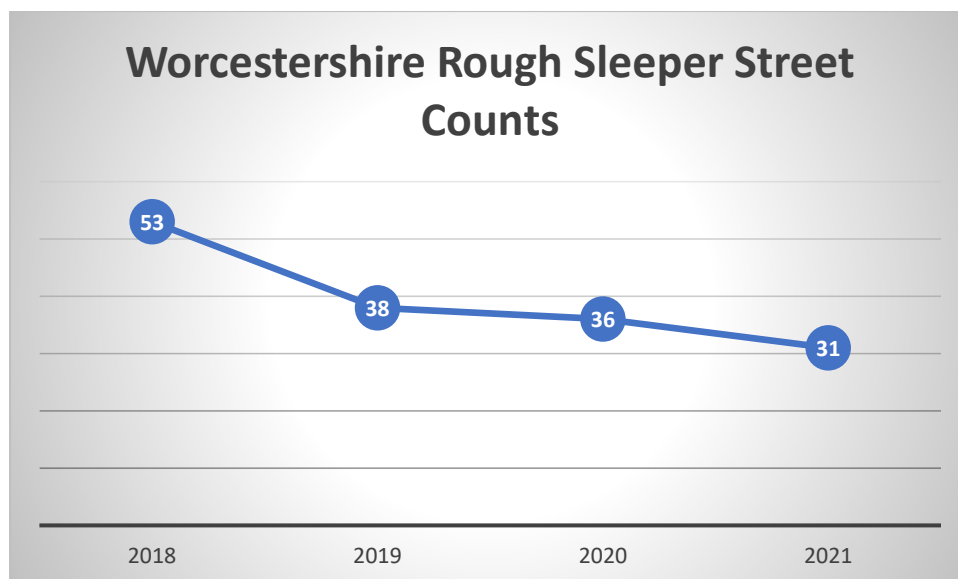
Safeguarding issues are particularly relevant to this group and certain actions in relation to safeguarding have been identified by the Thematic Review of Rough Sleepers, undertaken by the Adult Safeguarding Board in 2020. Those pertinent to the six LHAs are included in the action plan.

One of the positive outcomes of "Everyone In" was to embed the regular rough sleeper meetings. Having regular rough sleeper/prevention meetings at a local level enables the co-ordination of services and information sharing to develop partnerships with all organisations and individuals committed to ending rough sleeping and homelessness. This includes a consideration of any safeguarding issues that need to be flagged with partners or referred to the Adult Safeguarding Team.

Of the homeless population with complex needs or an offending background, there is limited availability of supported accommodation which can be accessed rapidly resulting in households only option of off the street or long term supported housing being outside of the county. Although Supported Housing providers in Worcestershire work within a trauma informed, person centred approach clients with substance misuse, serious mental health conditions and/or a history of arson may find themselves waiting for a suitable placement due to stringent criteria.

Data Collection

Worcestershire official street count held each year has seen a decrease in rough sleepers since 2018 (please see table below).



Rough sleeper data is collated each week improving our local intelligence of the flow, return, stock of households and the reason behind their homelessness.

In terms of “Everyone In”, across the county over 150 people were assisted in response to the first lockdown.

Data we collect is reviewed to identify trends and possible gaps in service delivery including in accommodation options for complex needs clients via the Supportive Housing Needs Assessment being led by Worcestershire County Council.

Achievements to date

Prevention

In each Local Authority a Rough Sleepers meeting has been established and attended by statutory organisations, voluntary sector, and local charities. This meeting shares information and agrees actions to reduce rough sleeping.

The Rough Sleeper Initiative funding has enabled the creation of localised provisions of No First Night Out (NFNO) /No Second Night Out (NSNO) settings offering “Off the Street” accommodation at an earlier opportunity, resulting in households new to the street or at high risk of rough sleeping being accommodated with a structured support package and move on options. It has also funded assertive outreach focusing on street-based responses both directly from the Housing Authorities but also in partnership with a local homeless charity, Maggs Day Centre who provide the Maggs Outreach and Assessment Team (MOAT)s and the commissioned Navigator services.

There are targeted prevention services including officers who focus on early intervention and prevention through regular meetings with social, private sector landlords and other services who encounter people who are at risk of homelessness. Homeless Support/Prevention Officers are working with clients at risk of rough sleeping through a person centred, strengths-based approach to maintain their accommodation. There are also tenancy sustainment services and those focused on the private rented sector, such as “Help to stay” in Wyre Forest and BDHT 360

Support in Bromsgrove which is aimed at private sector landlords who are considering ending tenancies. This helps to reduce homelessness caused by the ending of tenancies by providing tenants support and signposting to be able to stay.

We are working with people with lived experience of homelessness to provide a more personalised, inclusive approach to the overall quality of the services provided and more information on this is included in the Homeless Review.

Intervention

For people already rough sleeping there are services such as the Navigation Support Service who are working with our more complex rough sleepers from rough sleeping into accommodation/housing pathway plan. This is assisted by the MOATs floating support service working with rough sleepers who are disengaged with local services/housing options teams. For those rough sleepers who do engage with councils there are Homeless Support/Prevention officers working with former rough sleepers in accommodation or those vulnerable to rough sleeping onto an accommodation/housing pathway using a person centred, strength-based approach

To support rough sleepers during the colder months we have localised, countywide delivery of the Severe Winter Emergency Provision (SWEP). During Covid this moved from communal provision to self-contained rooms which led to greater levels of usage in some districts.

In parts of the County there are supported Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) accommodation used as a housing option for households who may require tenancy ready skills/support prior to accessing independent accommodation.

Worcester, Wychavon and more recently Wyre Forest have all been successful in Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP) bids to support people coming off the streets and receiving accommodation and tailored packages of support.

Recovery

The Rough Sleeper Initiative and Business Rates Retention Scheme funding has enabled Housing Authorities to implement Housing First (delivered in partnership with St Pauls Hostel) and Housing Led projects throughout Worcestershire. This has taken the most entrenched rough sleeper cohort, some of whom have been on the streets for more than ten years, to maintain social housing tenancies with intensive support.

In addition, there are a range of other accommodation schemes including Private Sector Leasing Schemes increasing options to access affordable, high standard housing, rent deposit schemes to help access the private rented sector and shared housing provision with individual support packages.

To support former rough sleepers in the longer term some councils have commissioned a Peer Mentor service, using those with lived life experiences working in conjunction with support workers to support rough sleepers.

A Worcestershire Communities of Practice has been established, facilitated by Homeless Link, that is attended by local authority housing options, homeless charities and voluntary sector partners with the focus on sharing good practices.

Finally, personalisation budgets have been set up enabling councils to fund specialist support packages such as access to counselling services and meaningful activities to reduce/break the cycle of homelessness.

Families with children

Context

Worcestershire is an attractive place to live and work, inevitably leading to high rents and house prices, from increasing demand. This means some families are unable to afford a home. The recent pandemic and changes to the benefits system together with the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and the number of people in low paid work has seen a rise in the number of families at risk of homelessness.

We want to prevent homelessness by identifying the key risk factors/triggers in families lives that can lead to a family being at risk of homelessness at the earliest possible stage.

Data Collection

Across Worcestershire there are currently 5518 families on the Housing register.

The data behind family homelessness in Worcestershire suggests that the immediate 'triggers' for family homelessness approaches are primarily relationship breakdown with partner (non-violent breakdown) which accounted for 16% of homeless approaches in 2018 to 15.6% in 2021; 12.7% of approaches were due to Domestic Abuse in 2018 raising to 17% in 2021; and the end of private rented tenancy (assured shorthold tenancy) which was 10.2% in 2018 and down to 6.8% in 2021, due to the eviction embargo during the pandemic.

Achievements to date

Prevention

Throughout the county there are online customer portals to encourage self-referrals at an early stage to obtain housing advice and access the housing register. Housing Authorities have also raised awareness of where to go for help through publishing of materials to promote services and support available and ensuring websites are regularly updated with local and national advice enabling customers to help themselves where possible.

The Duty to Refer (through ALERT) and Commitment to Refer has increased the referrals from a wider range of agencies for customers who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

There are different multi – agency groups established including prevention panels to provide meaningful advice, support and assistance to particular cases.

The Housing Authorities work with landlords in the private and social housing sector in developing and supporting pre-eviction protocols to ensure eviction is always the last resort and they have assisted with rent arrears payments to ensure evictions can be prevented where possible. This includes providing pre tenancy and tenancy sustainment training to support customers.

Housing teams are co-locating with some outside agencies such as the DWP for a proactive approach.

Families have been assisted to reduce rent and mortgage arrears through various funding streams including the Homeless Prevention Grant "Vulnerable Renters" fund. Across the county we received £365,612 to assist households remain in their current home.

Intervention

At the intervention stage the services aim to assist households into permanent housing as quickly as possible, whilst providing housing support and tenancy sustainment work if required, with targeted delivery in a family's temporary accommodation or homes. This is supported by changing to working practices to enable staff to work more agilely to enable greater access to services.

Homeless families are particularly hit by cost of living rises. Welfare assistance (including access to foodbanks and community kitchens) to meet basic household needs and financial inclusion measures such as budgeting advice, debt management, support and assistance with welfare claims are essential to help maintain temporary and permanent accommodation.

Recovery

We currently work in partnership with other agencies to provide additional support for families and the councils also directly provide floating and outreach services to provide support to families in their own localities. This has been enhanced throughout the Covid pandemic with housing teams having an increased presence in the community to provide comprehensive advice and support to areas where there is recognised deprivation and possible families at risk of evictions.

We recognise that there is an undersupply of accommodation, particularly for larger families and this may cause delays to households moving out of temporary and interim accommodation. Working closely with social and private sector landlords is critical to ensure households move through the rehousing pathway in an effective manner and enable those households to settle back into education and employment.

Survivors of Domestic Abuse

Context

Domestic Abuse remains one of the most significant reasons for households facing homelessness across the county and has a wider impact of the lives of survivors and the community.

Following the publication of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) the district authorities implemented a raft of changes and enhancements to services towards creating a more robust and responsive service for those fleeing abusive relationships.

Data Collection

With the Domestic Abuse Act providing a more focussed service for survivors of Domestic Abuse, there has been an increase in the recognition of Domestic Abuse in homeless presentations and this has been recorded in the data collected.

In Worcestershire in 2020-21, there were a total of 12,887 domestic abuse incidents (reported crimes and non-crimes) reported to the police. In addition to those who have reported domestic abuse, there is thought to be a large unmet domestic abuse need in Worcestershire. Prevalence data suggests that 43% of incidents go unreported to the police.

Across the County the number of homeless approaches due to Domestic Abuse accounted for 12.7% in 2018/19, 11.9% in 2019/20 and 17% in 2020/21 of all homeless approaches.

According to data collected via a Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) project, which ran from September 2020 to March 2022, of 162² homelessness approaches due to Domestic Abuse, 148 of those were owed a duty. 14 households were owed the prevention duty and 121 were owed a relief duty. As part of the DLUHC project, Worcester Community Trust were funded to develop and train a team of Domestic Abuse Community Champions, who would be volunteers based in community settings, trained to advise and signpost survivors. A total of 59 champions were trained and supported to make onward referrals for 195 service users, who were referred to services that would reduce the risk of re-entering an abusive relationship.

A new role of Research and Intelligence Officer has been developed in order to support the gathering, analysis and dissemination of data for this client group. This role will support more accurate data collection and will help to inform future resourcing of services.

Achievements to date

Prevention

The Domestic Abuse and Housing Co-ordinator role was introduced to start working on establishing services across the County in preparation for the act. The county housing authorities have been working with the co-ordinator to improve services available through the homelessness process, developing a Domestic Abuse

² some district data missing

Pathway and providing training and regular meetings in order to upskill staff in understanding and recognising Domestic Abuse and the need for risk assessments and safety planning.

Wyre Forest District Council have developed a joint working approach with West Mercia Womens Aid establishing a Domestic Abuse Panel. This is a meeting between a representative from Womens Aid and the Domestic Abuse Housing Officer to create links between housing and support services. It is an opportunity to make sure all involved are doing what is needed to offer support and to share best practice and learning between agencies. These Panels are now considered good practice and are likely to be rolled out across the county.

There is currently some provision of services in respect of educating children and young people and young people on healthy relationships in academic settings but this is not consistent across the county.

Housing authorities are expected to have domestic abuse pathway information accessible to potential victims and information is available on council websites. However information needs to be expanded upon to ensure a consistent approach and up to date list of services and information that can be easily accessed by those fleeing an abusive relationship.

Intervention

The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) requires that local authorities provide an offer of support to all victims of Domestic Abuse who are accessing 'Safe Accommodation' provision.

The Housing Authorities have recruited specialist Domestic Abuse Housing Officers, funded through the County Council, to work with and support those fleeing Domestic Abuse. These officers oversee the housing process for survivors creating a named contact who takes ownership of the case so that they don't have to keep re-telling their story and provides continuity in their journey. These officers will discuss the safest and most appropriate options, ensuring that any temporary accommodation is safe for them to occupy and will refer or signpost them for additional support.

Worcestershire County Council, in partnership with other commissioners including the District Councils and Police and Crime Commissioner, have commissioned a specialist support service known as the Domestic Abuse Support Service (DASS). This service will provide support to survivors both in their own homes and in the specialist "safe" accommodation.

Safe Accommodation, as referenced in the Domestic Abuse Act, covers any temporary accommodation that is made available by local authorities to those fleeing an abusive relationship. Housing authorities have worked in partnership with the County Council and social landlords to make more accommodation available to this group that meets the definition of being 'safe' under legislation. Housing authorities across the County have received grant funding to ensure these new units comply with these requirements.

A sanctuary scheme is a service designed to help keep survivors within their homes, if it is safe for them and they choose to do so. If the relationship has ended and the perpetrator is no longer residing at the permanent residence, then safety measures such as additional locks on doors and windows, security lights, and video doorbells are provided. More advanced measures may also be considered such as safe rooms built into the property. Work is being undertaken by the County Council to ensure that sanctuary schemes are available and consistent in all areas.

Recovery

The Freedom Programme helps survivors of Domestic Abuse to make sense of and understand what has happened to them and is delivered by West Mercia Women's Aid across Worcestershire to assist in the recovery process. Training is also delivered to services that work alongside survivors of Domestic Abuse.

The newly commissioned DASS, delivered by West Mercia Womens Aid, will support survivors in a number of different housing settings including refuges and safe houses to ensure they have access to advice and support to aid recovery.

Many victims/survivors of Domestic Abuse have never had the opportunity or freedom to take up a hobby or take part in an activity they enjoy due to their controlled and isolated environment. By investing in the right support that includes meaningful activities victims/survivors can be given the opportunity to improve their confidence and self-esteem and achieve a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives.

Tackling perpetrator behaviour is also key and the Drive Project aims to reduce the number of child and adult victims of domestic abuse by deterring perpetrator behaviour. Liaising closely with local police and support agencies, caseworkers deploy a two-pronged approach of disruption through the criminal justice system and/or support for unresolved personal issues to stop domestic abuse. The Drive Project pilot focuses on priority (high-risk or serial) perpetrators, as this group carries the greatest risk of serious harm and engage poorly with available services.

Young People

Across Worcestershire's housing authorities in 2020/21 there were 629 young people aged between 16-24 on the housing registers down from 697 in 2018/19. For young people the data indicates that most common causes of homelessness in Worcestershire are family or friends being no longer willing to accommodate, the loss of private rented accommodation and relationship breakdown with partner (non-violent breakdown).

The recent pandemic and changes to the benefits system together with the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and the number of people in low paid work has seen a rise in the number of young people at risk of homelessness.

Prevention-

Across the county we have raised awareness of homelessness and where to go for advice to encourage self-referrals at an early stage through improving customer portals, publishing materials to promote services and support available, keeping websites updated with local and national advice enabling households to help themselves where possible and the use of the Duty To Refer via ALERT for wider agencies to refer potentially homeless or homeless customers to us.

Many of the councils have well-established multi-agency working or prevention panels to develop meaningful support provision as required including the Care Leavers Panels.

The Councils work with social landlords to ensure a pre – eviction protocol is followed and that eviction is always the last resort and where possible provide assistance with rent arrears or additional outreach support. Partnerships with private sector landlords help to ensure an understanding of housing to aid a preventative approach

Some of the authorities and the Care Leavers service provide pre-tenancy sustainment training and in some parts of the county training is offered within schools to raise awareness of homelessness causes and tackle relationship breakdown.

Intervention -

If, despite all prevention interventions, young people become homeless the teams will continue to provide tenancy sustainment training, support and work with other services to ensure the homelessness is fleeting. Changes to the way officers work and the use of technology like video conferencing means the services are more agile and able to provide greater access to people. Support will include help with independent living and financial inclusion measures such as budgeting advice, debt management support and assistance with welfare benefit applications.

As both a prevention and intervention service, mediation is available to reduce relationship breakdowns and restore connections with family and friends where these have broken down.

Across the county currently there are jointly funded³ Young Persons Pathway Worker to ensure young people have support into accommodation and provide a person centred approach.

In the longer term we will work with young people and partners to overcome financial barriers to accessing accommodation through support into working programmes. Accommodation can be provided by both social and private sector landlords and many councils provide rent deposit schemes / charities to help young people to move into affordable, suitable accommodation.

Across the county the Councils have worked with Registered Providers (RPs) to provide suitable supported accommodation such as specialist young persons accommodation including Foyer or similar schemes, Nightstop, Crash pad emergency rooms and floating support from projects like Basement. In some cases this is in partnership with the County Council who provide funding for the specialist support services.

Recovery

Many young people will continue to have support needs beyond their homelessness and so part of the longer term recovery will be the ongoing development and embedding of support services across the county, in conjunction with the County Council (with Personal Advisors for example) and Voluntary and Community Sector.

The use of the Duty or the Commitment to Refer offers agencies who identify issues with households to refer into housing services through a clear signposting route. This is supported by having an easy to access, agile workforce in the community that can provide comprehensive advice and support to areas where there is recognised deprivation and possible young people at risk of evictions.

Young people often have the lowest incomes and are very vulnerable to cost of living rises so maintaining access to welfare assistance (including access to foodbanks and community kitchens) to meet basic household needs and financial inclusion measures such as budgeting advice, debt management, support and assistance with welfare claims are essential to help maintain permanent accommodation.

³ Local Housing Authorities and Worcestershire Childrens First

Households in temporary accommodation and permanent housing

Temporary Accommodation

Local Authorities (LAs) in England & Wales have duties to provide temporary accommodation under the following circumstances:

- Interim Duty

Provision of accommodation whilst homelessness enquiries are ongoing when the LA has reason to believe the applicant may be homeless, eligible for assistance and in priority need.

- Main Duty

The main housing duty is a duty to provide temporary accommodation until such time as the duty is ended, either by an offer of settled accommodation or by providing advice and assistance that is sufficient to secure accommodation. The main duty is owed when the LA is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for assistance, homeless, in priority need and not intentionally homeless.

Temporary accommodation (TA) provided under either duty must be suitable in terms of location, standards and cost. The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities states that while Bed & Breakfasts (B&Bs) may be used in an emergency, councils should avoid the use of B&Bs wherever possible and, in the case of families or pregnant women, should use B&Bs for a maximum of 6 weeks.

The availability of different types of TA across Worcestershire differs between districts. The councils have a range of types of accommodation available for their use; including B&B and self-contained, with some districts having formal arrangements with suppliers in place, some using TA on an ad-hoc basis, and some using a combination of the two arrangements.

The table below shows the number of TA units each Worcestershire LA has available to it, compared to the average number of households in TA at any one time (using the average number in TA at the end of each quarter in 2021/22).

Table three: TA units in Worcestershire

District	Average No. in TA at end of Qtr 21/22	Shared/ B&B	Self-contained	Gap/ Surplus
Bromsgrove	18	Ad hoc B&B	10 designated units	-8 units
Malvern Hills	8	Ad hoc B&B	4 designated units	-4 units
Redditch	49	Ad hoc B&B	25 designated units	-24 units
Worcester City	57	16 designated B&B rooms Plus ad hoc	26 designated units	-7 units

		8 rooms at LA owned shared TA		
Wychavon	17	Ad hoc B&B	16 designated units	-1 units
Wyre Forest	26	3 designated B&B rooms 11 rooms at LA owned shared TA	7 designated units	-5 units

The above table shows that the average TA gap differs significantly across the districts and reflects the difference in demand for TA across the county.

Whilst the majority of the districts only use B&B accommodation on an ad-hoc basis, Worcester City, Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest have contracts with B&B providers in place to ensure the availability of this type of accommodation in order to fulfil their statutory duties to homeless households. Although contract arrangements mean that these units can be provided at a lower rate than ad hoc use, this type of accommodation is still significantly more expensive than other types of TA. In addition, as the Code of Guidance states, B&B is not suitable for families and should be avoided for other households wherever possible. Studies have shown that moving home many times in early life affects child behaviour and mental health. Specifically:

- Homeless children are more likely to be in poor health than non-homeless children
- Children who have been in temporary accommodation for more than a year are over three times more likely to demonstrate mental health problems such as anxiety and depression than non-homeless children
- Living in temporary accommodation puts children at greater risk of infection and accidents

The Worcestershire councils have therefore committed to reducing the use of B&B and replacing it with alternative accommodation which is less expensive and of better quality. As this forms part of their 'business as usual' work it doesn't feature as a specific countywide action.

Permanent housing

In terms of permanent housing all the councils work with developers and registered providers to deliver market and affordable housing across the county. This work is underpinned by the council's Local Plans which identify a wide range of tenures and types of housing including low cost home ownership and social / affordable rent properties.

Local Plan numbers are informed by a combination of the standard methodology requirement, Housing Market Assessments and Housing Needs Surveys to determine the required mix of housing. The councils also work with registered

providers to ensure best use is made of existing stock including tackling underoccupation and low demand schemes.

Work with private sector landlords and letting agents also enable councils to meet some housing needs in parts of the county although local housing allowance rates do make this challenging. The councils have been innovative in attracting landlords to provide accommodation through landlord forums, the use of rent bonds and deposits, social letting agencies and private sector leasing schemes and this will continue during the lifetime of the strategy.

Governance arrangements

Oversight and delivery

Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership (WSHP) is responsible for ensuring that the commitments within the Housing Strategy are realised and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is a sub-strategy. The partnership is a multi-agency and cross sector partnership, ensuring delivery of the strategy is supported across relevant organisations.

Sitting under this group will be the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Group, a public and voluntary sector partnership, who have a specific focus on strategy delivery. In addition, the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Officers Group (WSHOG) will be responsible for the operational delivery of the councils elements of the strategy.

The Local Homelessness Forums, made up of local partners, will also support the oversight and delivery of the strategy.

Monitoring

WSHOG will report progress against local strategy implementation plans to Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Group who will undertake a review of progress on an annual basis up to and including 2025.

Each council will also be responsible for reporting back on its local action plan on a quarterly basis to its Local Homelessness Forum.

Funding the strategy

Homelessness services are funded through a variety of funding streams including the individual councils general fund budgets as well as additional funding received from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) called the Homelessness Prevention Fund (HPF)

Homeless Prevention Fund

Homelessness Prevention Fund is ringfenced and should be utilised to::

- Fully embed the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness.
- Reduce the number of families in temporary accommodation by maximising family homelessness prevention.
- Reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families and eliminate family B&B placements beyond the statutory six-week limit.

In 2022/23 it also includes an element for new burdens due to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

The allocations in 2022/23 are as follows;

Housing Authority	Grant (£)
Bromsgrove District Council	163,348
Malvern Hills District Council	140,582
Redditch Borough Council	322,383

Worcester City Council	474,097
Wychavon District Council	362,524
Wyre Forest District Council	351,898

However, there is currently a consultation into how this funding is allocated across the country with some of the Worcestershire councils potentially losing out, which will put prevention services at risk.

Domestic Abuse Act 2022/23

Housing Authority	Grant (£)
Bromsgrove District Council	32,859
Malvern Hills District Council	31,912
Redditch Borough Council	32,788
Worcester City Council	32,943
Wychavon District Council	32,015
Wyre Forest District Council	31,078

Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme 2021/22 - 2023/24

Local Authority	Grant			
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2023/24
Worcester	Capital - £440,000 Revenue £147,667			
Wychavon & Malvern (18 units)	£28,330	£49,420	£50,420	N/A
Wyre Forest	N/A	£29,023	£30,622	N/A

Wyre Forest awaiting confirmation of funding.

Rough Sleeper Initiative 2022-25

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Worcestershire	£927,451	£1,079,229	£1,002,282

Awaiting confirmation of funding

Action Plan

Through the course of developing the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy we have worked with service users, stakeholders and our housing advice teams to identify gaps in service delivery or provision.

As part of developing the strategy we undertook a review of provision across the county, reviewed statistics from a variety of data sets, interviewed stakeholders and service users (in relation to rough sleeping) and held a stakeholder day in June 2022. This information helped identify gaps and future actions for the strategy. There were a number of suggestions from the stakeholder day that are business as usual and as such don't feature in the action plan but will still be delivered including the revision of protocols already in place, delivering on the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding proposals and co-location of officers with partners such as the DWP.

The strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis and this will include the review of current actions and identification of any new actions required for years two and three.

To summarise the key actions for the strategy, identified from gap analysis, are:

- Increasing the range of accommodation available to a number of client groups and ensure distribution throughout the county including for survivors of domestic abuse through provision of “safe accommodation” and development of a countywide sanctuary scheme and increasing access to the private rented sector
- Working with the Research and Intelligence Officer to improve data collection and quality
- Increase the level of homeless prevention through a variety of actions including:
 - Undertake joint working and training with Registered Providers, Mental Health teams, Criminal Justice, Substance Misuse etc
 - Raising awareness of homeless services to stakeholders and the public through the communications plan and the ability to refer cases in through the Duty to Refer or Commitment to Refer
 - Developing prevention panels across the county
- Work with those with lived experience to bring about service improvements where required
- Completing actions for councils identified in the Rough Sleeper Thematic Review
- Develop / enhance opportunities for meaningful activities

See the full action plan in Appendix Two

Appendix One – Legislation

Legal duties

The primary homelessness legislation – Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 – provides the statutory under-pinning for action to prevent homelessness and provide assistance to people threatened with or actually homeless.

In 2002, the Government amended the homelessness legislation through the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002 to ensure a more strategic approach to tackling and preventing homelessness and to strengthen the assistance available to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness by extending the priority need categories.

In 2017 the Housing Act 1996 was amended by the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. This brought in additional duties to all households, namely the prevention and relief duties which apply regardless of priority need or intentionality.

In making decisions local authorities must take into consideration the Public Sector Equality Act 2018 and give consideration to individuals protected characteristics.

Local authorities also need to consider section 11 of the Children's Act 1989 and the duty to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children when making decisions.

Homeless duties

Housing authorities have a legal duty to provide advice and assistance to anyone that is eligible and homeless or threatened with homelessness. If a housing authority has reason to believe that someone may be homeless or threatened with homelessness, they must investigate what duty they owe to them under the homelessness legislation.

A person will be eligible depending on their immigration status. This is a complex area of law, though generally, UK nationals with a right to reside, those with settled status, pre settled status and exercising their worker rights, or those with limited or indefinite leave to remain with recourse to public funds would be eligible.

To establish if the applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness, the following needs to be established:

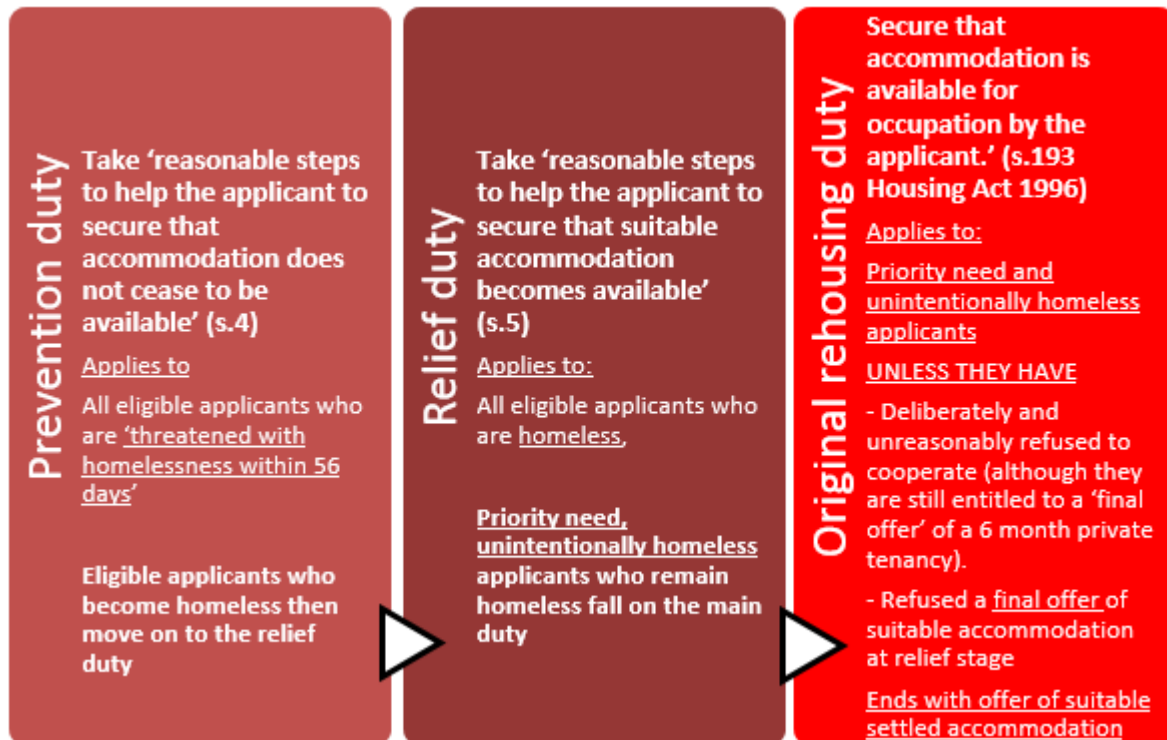
- Do they have the legal right to occupy accommodation that is available to them and their household for the next 56 days?
- Is the accommodation reasonable to occupy?

When assessing whether the accommodation is reasonable to occupy, the following should be considered:

- Is there a probability of violence? Violence has a broad definition here and includes emotional, financial, psychological abuse and controlling/coercive behaviour.
- Is there a probability of threats that are likely to be carried out?

- If the above are met the property is unsuitable, otherwise the local authority will need to consider all other matters in relation to the house to determine if suitable. The local authority will factor in the prevailing housing circumstances in the area when assessing whether a property is reasonable to occupy.

The duties are outlined below:-



If satisfied a household is homeless or threatened with homelessness, they have a duty to:-

- Assess their circumstances and how they became homeless
- What support they need to sustain accommodation
- What accommodation would best suit their needs
- Develop a personalised housing plan setting out reasonable actions for the authority and customer to undertake to address the housing situation

If a household is threatened with homelessness, they will be owed a prevention duty.

If a household is actually homeless they will be owed a relief duty.

These are collaborative duties and the authority should seek agreement from the client in regards to actions set.

These duties can end if:-

- A suitable offer of accommodation that is likely to last for 6 months is accepted
- A suitable offer of accommodation that is likely to last 6 months is refused, if the offer was a 6 month private tenancy or social tenancy the local authority would not need to consider if a main housing duty is owed

- If a prevention duty is owed, and someone becomes homeless, this will end the prevention duty and a relief duty will begin
- If a relief duty is owed and 56 days pass, this can end the relief duty and a main housing decision should be made
- If a household ceases to be eligible for assistance
- If someone deliberately refused to co-operate with their housing plan and the local authority has an approved policy on when duties should be ended in such instances. Worcestershire authorities are not currently ending duties due to deliberate refusals to co-operate with housing plans.

Main duty decisions

If the relief duty ends and the applicant has not been housed, and they have not refused a 6 month private or a social tenancy, the local authority will need to make a main housing duty decision.

A 'main homelessness duty' is owed where the authority is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a specified 'priority need' group.

The 'priority need groups' include households with dependent children or a pregnant woman and people who are vulnerable in some way e.g. because of mental illness or physical disability. In 2021 this was expanded to include those fleeing from domestic abuse to have an automatic priority need for housing. In 2002 the priority need categories were extended to include applicants who are aged 16 or 17, care leavers aged 18-20, people who are vulnerable as a result of time spent in care, in HM Forces, in prison or custody, and those who are vulnerable as a result of having to flee their home because of non-domestic violence or the threat of violence. Guidance on factors local authorities should consider when looking at vulnerability can be found in the Code of Guidance for local authorities.

If someone does not fall within these categories or is not deemed vulnerable, they will not be owed a main duty due to not being in a priority need.

If someone is in a priority need the local authority will need to consider if they are intentionally homeless. A household is intentionally homeless if they have:-

- Deliberately done...
- ...an act or omission...
- ...in consequence of which...
- ...they cease to occupy accommodation...
- ...that was available and reasonable to occupy...
- And the act of omission was not done in good faith

All of these tests need to be satisfied for a household to be intentionally homeless. Acts or omissions should not be deliberate if the applicant was not capable of managing their affairs due to age, mental health or infirmity or due to a temporary

aberration of the mind, or if under duress or benefit delays beyond the applicants control.

If someone is intentionally homeless there will be a duty to provide accommodation for a reasonable period of time for the household to make their own arrangements.

Homelessness Households not owed the rehousing duty

Homeless people not owed the full rehousing duty are typically single people or childless couples who are not assessed as being in 'priority need' or those deemed to be intentionally homeless. These groups are only entitled to advice and assistance if homeless, not the "main housing duty". Some non-priority homeless people are offered access to Local Authority commissioned housing support services.

The local authority can utilise its discretion to assist certain households in exceptional circumstances.

Street Homelessness

DCLG defines street homelessness as: "People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bashes").

Action Plan

Year One (Dec 2022 – November 2023)

High level action	Action	Client group	Responsible Organisation	Lead organisation (if county action)	Timescale
PREVENTION					
Reducing homeless approaches	Explore opportunities with Worcestershire County Council to develop a county wide Sanctuary Scheme to enable survivors of Domestic Abuse to remain safe in their own home	Domestic Abuse	WCC	RBC&BDC (Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator)	March 2023
	Work with the Research and Intelligence Officer to improve quality, understanding and utilisation of data including on adverse childhood experiences to assist with shaping homeless prevention services	All client groups	RBC&BDC	RBC & BDC	March 2023
	Targeted domestic abuse training and joint working with registered provider teams to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce risk of financial abuse for tenants Enhance understanding of tenancy law/policies to remove perpetrators 	Domestic Abuse	RBC&BDC	RBC&BDC (Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator)	March 2023
Partnership working	Ensure health collaboratives have a housing rep or housing issues fed into the collaboratives	All client groups	All councils	WSHOG	March 2023
	Explore further opportunities to co-locate housing staff with other organisations e.g. DWP, Care leavers team	All client groups	All councils	WSHOG	March 2023
	WSHOG to discuss with WCF the issues around the transition from young people to adult services (where learning or physical disability or mental health need) so that a coherent and consistent pathway is in place that avoids homelessness occurring	Young people	WCF	WSHOG	March 2023
	Develop protocol with criminal justice and develop action plan following on from the independent report	Prison leavers	All Councils	Reducing Re-offending Group	March 2025
Customer Involvement	Engage regularly with service users using a variety of methods including face to face interviews and surveys to	All client groups	All Councils	WSHOG	March 2025

	enhance learning from lived experience and consider whether actions from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy are making a difference to households				
Raising awareness – customers and other organisations	Explore opportunities to work with Here2Help to have a community directory of homeless related services.	All client groups	All Councils & WCC	WSHOG and Nicki Breakwell	March 2023
	Deliver communication plan to raise awareness and have a consistent message around homelessness across the county (see separate plan appendix three)	All client groups	All councils	Worcestershire Strategic Partnership Officer	March 2025
Early Intervention	Explore the opportunity to establish prevention panels for domestic abuse across the county	All client groups	BDC, MHDC, RBC, WC & WDC	N/A	March 2023
	Work with Ukrainian hosts and guests, asylum seekers and refugees in partnership with other organisations to reduce homelessness	All client groups	All councils	WSHOG / WSHP	March 2023
	Promote and encourage sign up to the Duty or Commitment to Refer especially from the Police (DA), Voluntary and Community Sector and registered providers.	All client groups	All councils	WSHOG to agree individual organisations	March 2023
	Work with the Early Help Partnership to ensure family homelessness is prevented at the earliest stage.	Families with children	All councils	WSHOG	March 2023
Commissioning	Work in partnership with the County Council, service providers, the Police and Crime Commissioner and other organisations to commission, deliver and review services to ensure they satisfy objectives	Domestic Abuse	All councils	WFDC	March 2023
Thematic review of rough sleepers (where actions not already)	Local Homeless Forums to consider the development of a set of principles for organisations providing services for the homeless.	Rough Sleepers	Adult Safeguarding Board and councils	WSHOG	March 2023
	Members of the local homeless forums to consider how the voluntary sector and other smaller organisations	Rough Sleepers	Adult Safeguardi	All councils	March 2023

picked up elsewhere in the action plan)	providing homeless services may be able to work collaboratively to deliver and access training		ng Board and councils		
	Consider outcomes of the supported housing joint strategic needs assessment and the Housing First UofW evaluation in identification of further types of accommodation for the rough sleeper client group	Rough Sleepers	Adult Safeguarding Board and councils	WSHOG	June 2023 tbc
	Monitoring of outcomes from the RSI2022-25 and the Rough Sleeper Action Plan to see how effective the interventions are into rough sleeping across the county	Rough Sleepers	Adult Safeguarding Board and councils	WSHOG	March 2025
	Consider local evidence of need which supports (including female rough sleepers) any specific actions.	Rough Sleepers	All councils	Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy oversight group	March 2023
Data and intelligence	Monitor and gather intelligence around debt and other impacts from the cost of living including with voluntary sector working with the homeless and rough sleepers	Rough Sleepers	All councils	Local homeless forums	March 2023
INTERVENTION					
High level action	Action	Client group	Responsibility	Lead organisation (if county action)	Timescale
Tenancy sustainment	Ensure officers link to harm reduction service where client not fully engaged with drug and alcohol services, through joint working and training	All client groups	Cranstoun	WSHOG	March 2023
	Develop and embed support services across the county – community based led approach – to meet needs	All client groups	All councils	WSHOG	March 2023
	Ensure any available support provision is flexible to the clients needs as they progress along the pathway	All client groups	All councils	WSHOG	March 2025
Training	Staff training in Psychological Informed Environment (PIE)	All client groups	All councils	WSHOG through WDC (training budget)	March 2023

	Awareness of the MCA and the CARM process within councils for those who have capacity but have complex needs to include circulating CARM resource pack to housing advice teams.	Complex needs / Mental Health	Adult Safeguarding Board	All councils	March 2023
RECOVERY					
High level action	Action	Client group	Responsibility	Lead organisation (if county action)	Timescale
Tenancy sustainment	Explore opportunities to link homeless households into meaningful activity and services to reduce social isolation and loneliness such as Plus (Onside Advocacy).	Rough Sleepers	All councils	Rough Sleeper Co-ordinators	March 2025
	Increase take-up of education, training and employment support available across the county	All client groups	All councils	Building Better Opportunities / WSHOG	March 2023
	Review the existing peer mentoring services and consider whether this should be widened out across Districts / Clients	Rough Sleepers	All councils	WDC, MHDC, BDC & RBC	March 2023
Early Intervention	Work with those in safe accommodation to ensure digital safety including around local settings, use of social media etc	Domestic Abuse	All councils	Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator / Domestic Abuse Housing Officers	March 2023
SUPPLY OF ACCOMMODATION					
	Explore opportunities for a greater range of supported and step-down accommodation available, before settled accommodation, for those that need an interim step, following the supported housing needs assessment	All clients	All councils	ASC / PH / WSHOG	March 202
	Explore the housing demand for rough sleepers to identify whether any further supported accommodation is required and where that should be located e.g. Housing First, Direct access Hostel	Rough Sleepers	All councils	Research and Intelligence Officer	March 2023
	Develop / retain 35 units of safe accommodation across the County for victims/survivors of domestic abuse	Domestic Abuse	All councils	WFDC	March 2023

Year Two (Dec 2023 – November 2024)

High level action	Action	Client group	Responsible Organisation	Lead organisation (if county action)	Timescale
PREVENTION					
Reducing homeless approaches	Explore the funding opportunities available to employ a countywide Young People’s Co-ordinator (YPC)	Young People	All councils	WSHOG	March 2024
	Review issues within the private rented sector (PRS) following the rent reform legislation and end of the s21 notices to ensure homelessness from the PRS is reduced.	All client groups	All councils	WSHOG	March 2024
Partnership working	Work with partners to explore opportunities for further outreach provision from their services e.g. GP drop ins, joint home visits, mental health outreach	All client groups	All councils	Health and Housing Partnership Officer	March 2024
	Work with partners to explore joint training and job shadowing to improve understanding of care act, homelessness and mental health assessments to support the prevention of homelessness	All client groups	All councils	Health and Housing Partnership Officer	March 2024
Customer Involvement	Explore opportunities to develop a youth homelessness snapshot survey with YPC	Young People	All councils	Young People Co-ordinator	March 2024
Raising awareness – customers and other organisations	Deliver communication plan to raise awareness and have a consistent message around homelessness across the county (see separate plan appendix three)	All client groups	All councils	Worcestershire Strategic Partnership Officer	March 2025
Early Intervention	Work with school/education settings to explore homelessness / healthy relationships targeting schools in areas where homelessness is more prevalent	Young People	All councils	Young People Co-ordinator	March 2024
INTERVENTION					
High level action	Action	Client group	Responsible Organisation	Lead organisation	Timescale

			Organisation	(if county action)	
Reducing rough sleeping	Review outcomes from Rough Sleeper Initiative 2022-25 funding / Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme ⁴ to reduce rough sleeping	Rough Sleepers	All councils	Rough Sleeper Coordinators	March 2024
Tenancy sustainment	Ensure any available support provision is flexible to the clients needs as they progress along the pathway	All client groups	All councils	WSHOG	March 2025
RECOVERY					
High level action	Action	Client group	Responsibility	Lead organisation (if county action)	Timescale
Raising awareness	Work with schools and education settings to ensure digital safety and healthy relationships is delivered	Young People	All councils	YPC	March 2024
Tenancy sustainment	Explore opportunities to link homeless households into meaningful activity and services to reduce social isolation and loneliness such as Plus (Onside Advocacy).	All client groups	All councils	WSHOG	March 2025
SUPPLY OF ACCOMMODATION					
Increasing accommodation	Explore opportunities for a greater range of supported and step-down accommodation available, before settled accommodation, for those that need an interim step	All client groups	All councils	WSHOG / ASC	March 2024
	Explore opportunities presented by re-purposing older peoples accommodation surplus to requirements	All client groups	All councils	WSHOG	March 2024
	Review the provision of accommodation and support for young people to ensure no young person will be placed in emergency bed and breakfast with shared facilities unless no other accommodation available (to avoid rough sleeping) including working with RPs on new build and accessing existing stock and other specialist housing providers	Young People	All councils	YPC	March 2024
	Support the recommissioning of YP accommodation and support services to ensure it meets need	Young People	All councils	YPC	March 2024

⁴ In Wychavon, Worcester and Wyre Forest only

Year Three (Dec 2024 – November 2025)

High level action	Action	Client group	Responsible Organisation	Lead organisation (if county action)	Timescale
PREVENTION					
Reducing homeless approaches	Explore opportunities for localised counselling services specifically for homeless households	Mental Health	All councils	Health and Housing Partnership Officer	March 2025
Partnership working	Explore Greater Manchester Combined Authority around co-ordinated bids across statutory and voluntary sector partners to address gaps	All client groups	All councils	Homelessness Link / WSHOG	March 2025
	Explore opportunities to engage PRS landlords through prevention panels to increase prevention in the PRS.	All client groups	All councils	WSHOG	March 2025
Raising awareness – customers and other organisations	Deliver communication plan to raise awareness and have a consistent message around homelessness across the county (see separate plan appendix three)	All client groups	All councils	Worcestershire Strategic Partnership Officer	March 2025
INTERVENTION					
High level action	Action	Client group	Responsibility	Lead organisation (if county action)	Timescale
Tenancy sustainment	Explore opportunities with the MH Trust around a specialist MH funded post to work with homeless households	Mental health	All councils	Health and Housing Partnership Officer	
RECOVERY					
High level action	Action	Client group	Responsibility	Lead organisation	Timescale

				(if county action)	
Tenancy sustainment	Explore opportunities to link homeless households into meaningful activity and services to reduce social isolation and loneliness such as Plus (Onside Advocacy).	All client groups	All councils	WSHOG	March 2025
SUPPLY OF ACCOMMODATION					
PRS accommodation	Engage with landlords from the private rented sector to enable access to accommodation across the districts post rent reform act	All client groups	All councils	WSHOG	March 2025

Communication Plan

Homelessness is a complex issue. People find themselves without a home for many reasons. There has been a steady increase in the number of people seeking help and there are many factors contributing to this including public sector austerity, welfare reform, cost of living rises and an undersupply of suitable, affordable accommodation. We provide a number of services across the county to try to prevent homelessness from occurring and to provide assistance to those that become homeless. In 2020/21 the county had approaches from over 2214 households, that we owed a duty to. There are also a much smaller number of people who sleep rough every year and across the county there are tailored services to address these needs including No First and No Second Night Out accommodation, support via the HOPES commissioned service, Navigators and in-house support teams and bespoke accommodation schemes for move-on including Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP) funded projects. The Voluntary and Community Sector also support people facing homelessness with food, clothing and advice etc. However, not all those on the streets are Rough Sleeping, some will also be begging or street drinking for example and this message should be highlighted as well.

This communications plan has been developed by the District Councils to raise awareness around homelessness (an action in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2022) and to deliver on the recommendations of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Thematic Rough Sleeping Review.

Objectives of the plan:

- To ensure that the public, organisations and people who are potentially homeless are aware of the help that is available
- To communicate how important it is for people to act early if they are having difficulties that may lead to homelessness
- To highlight the important work of the councils and their commissioned partners to raise awareness and reduce the misinformation circulated on social media
- Have some clear, jargon free key messages that highlight activity or actions for the councils, stakeholders and the public

Action	Outcome	Communication Channels	Target Audience	Responsible	Due date and frequency
To re-promote the Duty to Refer / Commitment to Refer message.	To increase the number of referrals to Homeless Teams through Duty to Refer from a wider range of agencies.	Existing joint meetings and publicity materials with public organisations.	Public organisations who may meet people who are potentially homeless.	District Councils	Dec-22

For organisations and agencies who have an interest in preventing homelessness to continue to meet on a regular basis to share information, develop best practices and current policy developments.	To have a cohesive and coordinated approach and response to homelessness.	Regular local homeless forums	Organisations and agencies who are involved in homelessness.	District Councils and voluntary/statutory agencies	Quarterly or Bi-annually depending on local arrangements
To continue to review information on housing and homelessness on the district council websites to make sure it is up to date and accessible including through obtaining views on the information from People With Lived Experience (PWLE) To include case studies or videos to make messages more impactful.	For the public, organisations and people who are homeless or may become homeless to have easily accessible online information.	District Councils' Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who are homeless or may potentially become homeless General Public 	District Councils	Sep-22 and a six monthly review
To promote the services available to rough sleepers including Streetlink, Cold/Hot Weather Emergency Provision, new services plus the existing services both statutory and voluntary.	For the public to have an increased awareness of the services available for people who are homeless. All organisations to promote a jargon free, cohesive message.	Regular media campaigns to include local newspapers, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who are homeless or may potentially become homeless General Public 	District Councils, WSHOG and Homeless organisations	Quarterly as a minimum

Channels to be used (subject to local arrangements)

- Local Homeless Forums
- Websites
- Social media (depending on local policies)
- Members and staff briefings
- Newsletters

Resources (subject to local arrangements)

- Website and media teams
- Relevant Housing Managers (Operational / Strategic)
- Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Officer
- Worcestershire Strategic Housing Officers Group (for annual review)

Appendix Two: Example questions for the strategy consultation

Q1 Does the strategy address all the issues around homelessness and rough sleeping in the county	
Q2 If no what do you think there is missing from the Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy?	
Q3 Do you support the focus on prevention, intervention, recovery and increasing the supply of accommodation in relation to the Homelessness	
Q4 If no what other issues would you want to include?	
Q5 Thinking about the Action Plan - do you agree with our plans to tackle homelessness? If not, please tell us why	
Q6 Do you have any further comments to make on the document, which are not covered in the previous questions?	

Appendix Three: Wyre Forest District Council Action Plan 2022/23

High level action	Action	Client group	Responsible Organisation	Timescale
PREVENTION				
Joint working between housing and health	Develop a charter with Primary Care Networks in Wyre Forest around homelessness and health, with an initial focus on Rough Sleepers in Year One	All groups	WFDC & PCNs	December
Reducing youth homelessness	Continue to commission WF Nightstop and Mediation Service to provide Schools Education Programme (where funding available)	Young people	WFDC & Nightstop	March
Reducing homelessness due to financial hardship	Work with officers across the council and the voluntary sector to develop a cohesive approach to supporting those in financial hardship due to cost of living rises	All groups	WFDC & VCS	December
INTERVENTION				
Increase the supply of affordable temporary accommodation	Secure sufficient units of private sector leased and council owned accommodation to meet needs and reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast	All groups	WFDC	October
	Evaluate the use of crash pads and no first night out to ensure suitable supply and provision	Young people Rough Sleepers	WFDC	March
Increase the supply of supported accommodation	Work with a Registered Provider to identify a site for self-contained accommodation for survivors of domestic abuse	Domestic Abuse	WFDC & RPs	March
	Explore opportunities with a Registered Provider to identify a site for move on for single homeless households to speed up throughput in temporary accommodation	Single people	WFDC & RPs	March
	Work with Reducing Re-offending group to ensure sufficient provision of accommodation for prison leavers across county	Prison leavers	Reducing Re-offending Group	March
Increase the supply of	Work with private sector landlords to improve the supply available for homeless households	All groups	WFDC & Private Landlords	October

permanent accommodation	Work with Registered Providers to increase the supply of affordable housing	All groups	WFDC & RPs	March
RECOVERY				
Support to households	Evaluate role of Domestic Abuse Housing Officer and provision of safe accommodation to ensure reduction in homelessness	Domestic Abuse	WFDC	March
Support to households	Explore the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation to improve the councils offer to victims of domestic abuse	Domestic Abuse	WFDC	December

Report of: Jenny Moreton, Principal Health and Sustainability Officer

Date

01/09/2022

Open

Report on the progress around the Top Ten Actions in the Climate Change Strategy Action Plan

Summary

Attached is a draft of a Cabinet report on this subject, which Cabinet is expected to consider on 13 September 2022.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the report and provide recommendations to Cabinet.

Officer contact details

Name: Jenny Moreton

Title: Principal Health and Sustainability Officer

Contact number: 01562 732569

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Report on the progress around the Top Ten Actions in the Climate Change Strategy Action Plan

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Safety
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Kate Bailey
CONTACT OFFICER:	Jennifer Moreton
APPENDICES:	Appendix One – Climate Change Action Plan 2021/22 Appendix Two – Climate Change Action Plan 2022/23

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides Members with an update on action to tackle climate change, including an update on the ‘Top Ten Actions’ of the Green Advisory Panel. It includes the Wyre Forest Climate Change action plan for 2022-23 for endorsement.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is invited to:

- 2.1 Consider the update of the Green Advisory Panel top ten actions, and
- 2.2 Approve the Climate Change Action Plan 2022/23

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Health and Sustainability Team in Housing Services lead the co-ordination and delivery of work to tackle climate change in Wyre Forest, working with internal and external colleagues and stakeholders on this vital issue.
- 3.2 The Wyre Forest Climate Change action plan focus on key areas where Wyre Forest District Council and partners can have the most impact in the district, within current resources. There are four key themes:
 - 1. Warmer, healthier homes.
 - 2. Building a low carbon economy.
 - 3. Transport and infrastructure.
 - 4. Healthy and resilient communities.
- 3.3 The Green Advisory Panel was set up to advise Cabinet on the steps the Council can take to reduce its own carbon emissions. Ten actions were identified as priorities to

focus on, with the Panel to make recommendations on investment and policy matters as appropriate.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) releases an assessment report on the latest climate change science every five years. The latest report considered evidence from many independent scientific analyses and has been endorsed by all UN member States. Scientists are now all but certain that climate change is mostly caused by human action, and that it is already leading to changes in regional weather patterns, with extreme events such as flooding and heat waves on the increase. The IPCC has also concluded that we have until 2030 to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and for global warming to be kept to a maximum of 1.5C, beyond which even half a degree will significantly worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people. The Paris Agreement came into force in 2016 and aims to limit the rise in global temperatures to well below 2°C, to pursue efforts to hold it to 1.5°C and to reach net zero emissions in the second half of the century. In November 2021, Glasgow hosted the COP (Conference of the Parties) 26 for world leaders. The arising Glasgow Climate Pact aims to keep alive the hope of limiting the rise in global temperature to 1.5C. Combined with increased ambition and action from countries, 1.5C remains in sight, but it will only be achieved if every country delivers on what they have pledged.
- 4.2 The UK is already experiencing widespread change in the climate. According to the recent Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk report by the UK Climate Change Committee, average land temperature has risen by around 1.2°C from pre-industrial levels, UK sea levels have risen by 16cm since 1900 and episodes of extreme heat are becoming more frequent. The highest ever recorded temperatures in the UK exceeded 40C for the first time in July. In May 2019, UK Parliament approved a motion to declare an environment and climate emergency. The UK Climate Change Act 2008 was subsequently amended to set a target of achieving net zero emissions by 2050. The previous target was to reduce carbon emissions by 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050. Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) is one of more than 300 Local Authorities which have also declared a Climate Emergency to date.
- 4.3 Each year, central government releases per capita CO2 emissions figures for all local authorities. Between 2005 and 2020 (the latest data available) per capita emissions in Wyre Forest fell by 37%. ****how does this compare to the UK or English average?*** Councils have a pivotal role in tackling climate change and, through local governance, can ensure climate change policies and programmes protect and help the most vulnerable, including those suffering from fuel poverty. Local authorities are uniquely placed to assess the needs of their areas and local residents and to act as catalysts for change. The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) recognises local authorities' ability to use their position to improve the energy efficiency of all residential accommodation in their areas. HECA requires local authorities to produce a series of reports, setting out the energy conservation measures that considered practicable, cost-effective and likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in its area. Fuel poverty is an issue for the

district; latest government statistics show that in 2020, 15.7% of Wyre Forest households (7,258 households) were classed as being fuel poor. Living in cold, damp homes can exacerbate health conditions, particularly cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses. Worcestershire has slightly higher than average excess winter deaths, the majority of which tend to be caused by diseases of the cardiovascular system (such as stroke and heart attack) and respiratory illness (e.g. influenza).

- 4.4 A progress report on delivery of the Climate Change action plan for 2021/22 is included at Appendix 1. The case studies below outline some of the activities undertaken to tackle change in Wyre Forest in 2021/22:

Case study 1: Greener Homes: domestic energy conservation

We continue to work on various schemes to advise and support residents on their domestic energy use. The charity Act on Energy provide a helpline service on our behalf, offering free and impartial advice and information on fuel bills and energy efficiency improvements. In 2021/22, Act on Energy received 1,238 enquires from Wyre Forest residents with the majority (493) requesting information, advice and guidance on energy efficiency and support with their energy bills. A further 399 Wyre Forest residents were supported in obtaining financial support for their energy debt and utility bills through the Worcestershire Household Support Fund. Over this time, the pandemic caused a number of restrictions that decreased the number of residents assisted through home visits and physical interventions compared to before the pandemic. However at least 38 Wyre Forest households did benefit from measures such as boiler replacements, heating upgrades, solar panels and insulation works through various schemes in place. Work to channel external funding for energy improvements is ongoing and the private sector housing team continues to work with private sector landlords on implementation of the minimum energy efficiency standards regulations to improve Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings and thermal comfort.

Case study 2: Greener Communities: Wyre Forest Green Alliance

The Wyre Forest Green Alliance (WFGA), formed in 2020, brings together a range of local organisations to help individuals and communities to learn more about environmental issues and learn how better to respond. This builds on previous partnership work to run events such as the Greener Living Fairs held pre-pandemic. Activities over the last year have included:

- Webinars on topics such as renewable heating, electric vehicles and woodland/tree planting in urban areas.
- An Art4Planet Earth exhibition, held both online and at various physical locations, with 94 creative contributions from people across the district aiming to raise awareness ahead of the international climate talks held in Glasgow in 2021.
- The inaugural SustFest event held this spring on the theme of 'Greener, Happier, Healthier'. Volunteers organised around fifty walks, talks, events and activities throughout the SustFest fortnight.

Case study 3: Greener Businesses- Cleantech Bootcamp

Over the first six months of 2022, Wyre Forest District Council hosted the BetaDen North Cleantech Bootcamp at Wyre Forest House. The programme, funded by the UK government's Community Renewal Fund and supported by Worcestershire County Council, saw local entrepreneurs and businesses take part in a series of workshops with leading

experts from the Cleantech world to help them develop their innovative, low carbon technologies and solutions. Workshop topics included:

- Decarbonising in response to new industry supply chain drivers.
- Extending digital transformation for major sustainability gains.
- Bringing net zero to the heart of business strategy.
- Business innovation to support decarbonisation.

The programme culminated in a showcase event, with six of the participants pitching their low carbon innovations to the invited audience.

4.5 The Green Advisory Panel’s work programme has included examining the case for implementation of the ‘Top Ten Actions’ identified that the Council can undertake directly that will have an impact on climate change:

1. Tree Planting on Council land.
2. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- 3: Renewable energy generation on council land
4. Reducing emissions from council vehicle fleet and equipment
5. Reducing emissions from travel by staff and councillors
6. Changing licensing policy to move taxis and private hire vehicles away from fossil fuels
7. Changing car park season ticket prices
8. Renewable energy tariffs
9. Reducing emissions from our buildings
10. Reducing emissions through procurement

4.6 A progress update on the Green Advisory Panel Top Ten Actions is provided in the table below, and whether the Panel’s involvement in the action is completed or ongoing.

Top Ten Action	Update	Completed/ Ongoing
1.Tree Planting on Council land.	20,500 trees planted across the district and programme ongoing. Updates from the Countryside Manager and Arboricultural Officer on the district’s tree canopy coverage and biodiversity.	Completed
2. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure	Feasibility work completed and capital funding agreed. Procurement process underway. Energy Savings Trust engaged for support and re future funding opportunities.	In progress Installation expected autumn/ winter 2022
3. Renewable energy generation on council land	Feasibility work funding agreed and consultants being procured to complete this work. Business case to be taken through the formal decision making process during the winter.	In progress Formal report expected winter 2022
4.Reducing emissions from council vehicle fleet and equipment	First electric vehicle to be acquired before March 2023. Three further small vans planned for replacement	Ongoing

	with electric vehicles in next financial year. Capital Replacement Programme to be reviewed. Report to be taken to the Panel covering current changes that could be made, the longer term changes for the medium term financial strategy and what else may be available on the horizon going forward.	
5. Reducing emissions from travel by staff and councillors	The move to hybrid working and online meetings has reduced emissions from business travel but further opportunities (e.g. Cycle to Work scheme) to be explored with HR.	Ongoing.
6. Changing licensing policy to move taxis and private hire vehicles away from fossil fuels	Presentation given to the Panel by Worcestershire Regulatory Services outlining the issues with this approach. Discussions to continue with other district councils about adopting common approach to ceasing to register additions to fleet that depend on fossil fuels.	Ongoing.
7. Changing car park season ticket prices	To be considered as part of a wider Car Park Order with the installation of the electric vehicle car park spaces.	Ongoing.
8. Renewable energy tariffs	Electricity and gas supplies have been switched to green tariffs following agreement by Cabinet.	Completed
9. Reducing emissions from our buildings	Energy Efficiency Surveys of Wyre Forest House and Green Street sites carried out. Report to be brought to future GAP on the recommendation made, once received. Procurement underway for installation of LED car park lighting (subject to ecological surveys).	Ongoing.
10. Reducing emissions through procurement	Presentation on sustainable procurement toolkit received by the Panel. Toolkit use to be considered in procurement activities.	Ongoing.

4.7 An updated Climate Change Action Plan for 2022/23 is provided at Appendix 2 and incorporates ongoing actions for the Green Advisory Panel 'Top Ten Actions'.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The costs of adopting the climate change plan are minimal and mostly relate to staff time. These will be met by existing budgets.

- 5.2 The costs of undertaking the top ten actions will be covered in each individual business case developed by the relevant service area and taken through the appropriate decision-making process, including the medium term financial strategy and capital programme as appropriate.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The UK Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 sets a target for the UK to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.
- 6.2 'A Safe, Clean and Green Living Environment' is a priority in WFDC's Corporate Plan 2021-2023. A key strategic action is to 'Work with partners to protect our environment, to address air quality issues and to help tackle climate change.'
- 6.3 The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) recognises local authorities' ability to use their position to improve the energy efficiency of all residential accommodation in their areas. HECA requires local authorities to produce a series of reports, setting out the energy conservation measures that considered practicable, cost-effective and likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in its area.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment Screening has been undertaken in relation to the Climate Change Strategy and no impact identified.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 Failure to implement measures to tackle climate change could have many negative implications for the council and Wyre Forest residents, as well as failure to meet the requirements of the relevant policies and reputational risk of failing to tackle the issue.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 This report outlines the progress against the council's top ten actions overseen by the Green Advisory Panel in addition to the climate action plan.
- 9.2 The Climate Change Action Plan 2021/22 (Appendix 1) sets out progress against the current action plan and Appendix two includes the proposed actions to tackle climate change in 2022/23.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Corporate Leadership Team
10.2 Green Advisory Panel

11. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 [Worcestershire Energy Strategy](#)

Appendix 1 WFDC A Climate for Change- 2021-22 Action Plan Progress update.

Warmer, Healthier Homes	Expected Outcomes/ Timescale	Resources	Progress update and Information
Ongoing promotion and delivery of schemes to install domestic energy efficiency and renewable energy measures.	Ongoing promotion and delivery throughout the year. 150 measures to be installed through the various schemes.	Act on Energy SLA in place. Internal funding used for fuel poverty assistance where external funding not available.	Over this time, the pandemic caused a number of restrictions that decreased the number of residents assisted through home visits and physical interventions compared to before the pandemic. However at least 38 Wyre Forest households did benefit from measures such as boiler replacements, heating upgrades, solar panels and insulation works through various schemes in place. WFDC Energy Efficiency Page
Develop and co-ordinate energy efficiency schemes, utilising external funding e.g. Energy Company Obligation (ECO), Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme, Sustainable Warmth.	Ongoing throughout the year.	County wide activity through the Warmer Worcestershire Network to bid for external funding and channel in ECO funding. LADS 1a and 2/ Sustainable Warmth funding streams	See above. External funding streams utilised have included ECO3 and LADS. Work has been ongoing to secure funding and a delivery plan for the next round of Sustainable Warmth funding. WFDC Energy Efficiency Page In addition, support for energy bills, fuel debt and heating repairs was made available through covid response funding and the Household Support Fund. Demand for the latter was higher in Wyre Forest compared to the other Worcestershire districts, with 662 district households collectively receiving £200k of support for utilities in this period.
Run the Wyre Forest Big Energy Switch collective switching scheme.	100 + residents to switch through the Feb 2022 Auction (promotion begins Dec 2021)	Promoted using existing resources.	Collective switching schemes are currently on hold due to the current issues with the energy market.
Participate in collective scheme for domestic solar panel installation	Spring 2022	Existing resource in place through Warmer Worcestershire Network	The spring 2022 scheme was oversubscribed and Worcestershire were unable to join but are planning to participate in the next round of the scheme.

Deliver a Winter Warmth awareness campaign in Wyre Forest	Autumn/ Winter 2021/22	Promoted using existing resources.	The Winter Warmth campaign for 21/22 focussed on promotion of support available for support with energy debt and fuel bills as well as energy efficiency measures. Various channels used to promote the schemes- newsletters, social media, networks, partnership and community work.
Energy advice/information/training sessions- online or face-to-face.	12 sessions to be held throughout Autumn/ Winter 2021/22	Act on Energy SLA in place	Due to the pandemic, less face to face advice was given and the focus was on advice by phone, email and online (including training webinars). In total 1238 energy related enquiries from Wyre Forest residents were dealt with by Act on Energy during this period.
Building a low carbon economy	Timescale	Resources	
Publicise available resource efficiency / low carbon support to local businesses and encourage uptake.	Ongoing promotion throughout the year.	Externally funded (EU/ central government).	Ongoing promotion of the low carbon support in place by the NWEDR and H&S teams. These include the Worcestershire Business Energy Efficiency Programme, Public Sector Energy Efficiency Programme, Low Carbon Opportunities Programme and Zero Carbon Carbon Ready Worcestershire- details of scheme are at Support for Businesses Worcestershire County Council
Participate in county wide work on the low carbon economy sector	Ongoing	Staff time	Community Renewal Funding projects in Worcestershire/ Wyre Forest developed including the Cleantech Bootcamp (see case study) and Zero Carbon Ready Worcestershire
Investigate opportunities for renewable energy generation/ storage on council owned land.	Ongoing- funding bid outcome due by August 2021.	External funding sought for feasibility and development work	Feasibility work for this project is ongoing.
Transport and Infrastructure	Timescale	Resources	
Ongoing support to the Wyre Forest Cycle Forum to strive for cycling infrastructure improvements and promote	Ongoing throughout the year	Staff time	Ongoing support for the Cycle Forum with meetings held at least quarterly. Includes liaison with County Highways on schemes such as the Stourport-Kidderminster active travel corridor canal towpath cycling improvements.

cycling opportunities.			
Work with Cycle Forum to develop local, easy family friendly cycle routes	Routes to be in place by Summer 2021	Funding already in place.	3 routes have been developed to date with leaflets widely distributed and routes available online. www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/cycling
Develop and implement planning policy as part of the Local Plan work- low carbon and renewable energy; sustainable transport , electric vehicle infrastructure.	As per local plan review and implementation timetable	Staff time	<p>The NPPF sets the foundation for considerations around climate change and sustainability. The newly adopted Local Plan builds on these principles providing policies that require or encourage developments to think responsibly about their impact and avoid or mitigate to achieve sustainable development across the District.</p> <p>The strategy and suite of Local Plan policies were found sound by the Planning Inspector. Sustainability or climate change are found in a number of policies and visible outcomes can be achieved through their implementation in planning decisions.</p> <p>The Government has increased the range of Permitted Development provisions to allow both domestic, commercial and public organisations to provide sustainable energy or alternative fuel sources without requiring planning permission.</p>
Increase provision of electric vehicle charge- points in WFDC car parks and encourage the owners of privately owned car parks to do likewise.		TBC	Further feasibility work carried out / sites identified and funding agreed ready for procurement to go ahead.
Investigate opportunities for EV Taxi charging	Autumn 2021	External funding would be sought.	Ongoing.
Fleet review to look at carbon and fuel savings and opportunities for Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles.	Fleet Review to be carried out in 2021	Review can be carried out for free by the Energy Savings Trust.	Opportunities identified to improve existing fleet mileage e.g. route planning and green driver training, as well as electric vehicle suitability.

Healthy and resilient communities	Timescale	Resources	
Assist voluntary groups in promoting environmental initiatives e.g. Wyre Forest Repair Café, Art 4 Planet Earth exhibition.	Ongoing	Existing resources.	Ongoing assistance with promotion of initiatives such as Repair Cafes and the Art4Planet Earth exhibition, held both online and at various physical locations, with 94 creative contributions from people across the district aiming to raise awareness ahead of the international climate talks held in Glasgow in 2021.
Support and work with the Wyre Forest Green Alliance (WFGA) including identification of new/ shared projects on climate change.	Ongoing	Staff time	Ongoing work with the WFGA. Webinars supported by WFDC on topics such as renewable heating, electric vehicles and woodland/tree planting in urban areas. The inaugural volunteer-led SusFest event held this spring on the theme of 'Greener, Happier, Healthier'. WFDC supported events on electric vehicle promotion, pollinator patches and a community green fair.
Develop activity on/ links between work on climate change and biodiversity/ tree planting.	Ongoing	Staff time	Ongoing through the Wyre Forest Wild project.
Cross-cutting actions	Timescale	Resources	
Deliver Carbon Literacy training (in house)	Summer 2021	Existing resources/staff time	Train the trainer model approved. 2 officers now trained as trainers and materials being developed for in-house delivery.
Ongoing communications/ awareness on energy/ fuel efficiency etc (websites, newsletters, events, press releases, social media etc).	Ongoing	Staff time.	www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/greenerwyreforest branding/ web pages developed and linked communications via Wyred-in, social media etc.

WFDC A Climate for Change- 2022-23 Action Plan

Warmer, Healthier Homes	Who?	Expected Outcomes/ Timescale	Resources	Notes/ Further Info
Ongoing promotion and delivery of schemes to install domestic energy efficiency and renewable energy measures.	Health & Sustainability Private Sector Housing Act on Energy	Ongoing promotion and delivery throughout the year. 150 measures to be installed through the various schemes.	Act on Energy SLA in place. Internal funding used for fuel poverty assistance where external funding not available.	WFDC Energy Efficiency page
Develop, co-ordinate and deliver energy efficiency schemes, utilising external funding where possible e.g. Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and Sustainable Warmth funding for measures including low carbon heating, insulation, domestic renewable energy.	Health & Sustainability Private Sector Housing team Act on Energy	Ongoing throughout the year.	Sustainable Warmth funding in place for 2022/23. Sustainable warmth Officer to be recruited. Act on Energy to take referrals. Warmer Worcestershire Network for joint activity on energy efficiency/fuel poverty schemes.	WFDC Energy Efficiency page The Worcs. Statement of Intent enables us to channel in ECO funds according to locally set criteria.
Participate in collective scheme for domestic solar panel installation	Health and Sustainability Warmer Worcestershire Network	Spring 2023	Existing resource in place through Warmer Worcestershire Network	
Deliver a Winter Warmth awareness campaign in Wyre Forest	Health & Sustainability	Autumn/ Winter 2022/23	Promoted using existing resources.	Promotion of the various energy schemes through newsletters, social media, partnership work.
Deliver a programme of energy advice/information/training sessions- online, by phone or face-to-face.	Act on Energy Health & Sustainability	1000 enquiries to be processed.	Act on Energy SLA in place	Act on Energy helpline 0800 988 2881
Deliver project to improve energy efficiency and thermal comfort within the private rented sector.	Health & Sustainability Private Sector Housing Act on Energy	Ongoing throughout the year.	Within existing resources.	Includes landlord enforcement, promotion of available support, communications & training.

Appendix 2

Household support fund support for energy bills/ fuel debt/heating repairs.	Act on Energy Health and Sustainability	Ongoing throughout the year.	Household Support Funding allocation.	WORCESTERSHIRE HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND - Act On Energy
Affordable Warmth and Health- increase collaborative working on improving affordable warmth for those most vulnerable due to health conditions.	Health and Sustainability. Wyre Forest Collaborative	Ongoing throughout the year.	Within existing resources.	
Completion and publication of mandatory Home Energy Conservation Act report	Health and Sustainability Act on Energy	31 March 2023		
Building a low carbon economy	Who?	Timescale	Resources	Notes/ Further Info
Publicise available resource efficiency / low carbon support to local businesses and encourage uptake.	Lead by Worcestershire County Council	Ongoing promotion throughout the year.	Externally funded	Support for Businesses Worcestershire County Council
Participate in county wide work on the low carbon economy sector	Health & Sustainability NWEDR	Ongoing	Staff time	
Investigate opportunities for renewable energy generation/ storage on council owned land.	WFDC	Winter 2022	Funding in place for feasibility work	
Transport and Infrastructure	Who?	Timescale	Resources	Notes/ Further Info
Ongoing support to the Wyre Forest Cycle Forum to strive for cycling infrastructure improvements and promote cycling opportunities.	Health & Sustainability Wyre Forest Cycle Forum	Ongoing throughout the year	Staff time	
Work with Cycle Forum to promote and develop short local cycle routes.	Health & Sustainability Wyre Forest Cycle Forum	Ongoing	Funding already in place.	www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/cycling
Implement planning policy as part of the Local Plan work- low carbon and	Health & Sustainability Planning Policy	Ongoing	Staff time	

renewable energy; sustainable transport , electric vehicle infrastructure.				
Installation of electric vehicle charge points in WFDC owned car parks.	Health and Sustainability. Community & Environment Services. Procurement.	Autumn 2022	Funding agreed.	
Investigate opportunities for EV Taxi charging/ changing licensing policy to move away from fossil fuel vehicles.	WRS Health & Sustainability	Ongoing	External funding would be sought.	
Reduce carbon emissions from vehicle fleet and staff travel.	Health and Sustainability. Fleet Management. Energy Savings Trust.	2022	TBC	
Healthy and resilient communities	Who?	Timescale	Resources	Notes/ Further Info
Assist voluntary groups in promoting environmental initiatives e.g. Wyre Forest Repair Café, SustFest.	Health & Sustainability	Ongoing	Existing resources.	
Support and work with the Wyre Forest Green Alliance, including identification of new/ shared projects on climate change.	Health & Sustainability WFGA	Ongoing	Staff time	
Wyre Forest Wild project- develop activity on/ links between work on climate change and biodiversity/ tree planting	Health & Sustainability Community & Environment	Ongoing	Staff time	
Cross-cutting actions	Who?	Timescale	Resources	Notes/ Further Info
Deliver Carbon Literacy training (in house)	Health & Sustainability	Autumn 2022	Existing resources/staff time	

Appendix 2

Ongoing communications and engagement through the Greener Wyre Forest campaign	Health & Sustainability Communications.	Ongoing	Staff time.	www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/greenerwyreforest
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------	---------	-------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme 2022-2023**

May 2022

“How are we doing?” Q4 update

June 2022 - Overview & Scrutiny Committee Sub Committee

Acquisition of Property in Kidderminster

July 2022

Nominations for Treasury Management Review Panel (Chair to be appointed)

UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Investment Plan 2022-25

September 2022

Stourport Sports Club: Consideration of call in request

Performance and Budget Monitoring Q1 update

Worcestershire’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2022-2025

Report on the progress around the Top Ten Actions in the Climate Change Strategy
Action Plan

November 2022

Performance and Budget Monitoring Q2 update

Worcestershire Housing Strategy

February 2023

Performance and Budget Monitoring Q3 update

March 2023

Annual review of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership 2022-
2023

May 2023

Performance and Budget Monitoring Q4 update