

Open

Council

Agenda

6pm
Wednesday, 21 September 2022
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster



Council

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COUNCIL MEETING

13 September 2022

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL AND HONORARY ALDERMEN

PRESS AND PUBLIC

Dear Member

YOU ARE INVITED to attend a meeting of the Wyre Forest District Council to be held **at 6.00p.m. on Wednesday 21 September 2022**, in the Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster.

The Agenda for the meeting is enclosed.

Yours sincerely

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

Ian Miller
Chief Executive

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(A) TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COUNCIL

The Council

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

(B) MATTERS RESERVED TO THE COUNCIL

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

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

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

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

* Unless there are no reports in the open session.

Wyre Forest District Council

Council

Wednesday, 21 September 2022

Council Chamber Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster

Part 1

Open to the press and public

Agenda item	Subject	Page Number
1.	Prayers To be read by Rev David Hildred, Team Rector, Kidderminster East	
2.	Apologies for Absence	
3.	Tributes to Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Second Tributes will be given by the Chairman of the Council, the Leader of the Council, and the Leaders of the Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups.	
4.	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.	
5.	Minutes To approve as a correct record and sign the Minutes of the last meeting held on 20 July 2022.	11
6.	Public Participation In accordance with the Council's Scheme for Public Speaking at Meetings of Full Council, to allow members of the public to present petitions, ask questions, or make statements, details of which have been received by 12 noon on Monday 12 September 2022. No requests for public participation were received by the deadline. <i>If you wish to speak on an urgent matter that has arisen since the deadline and you could not reasonably have known about it at the time, you should register your interest in speaking no later than 9am on the day of the meeting of Council. In the case of a request to speak on an urgent matter, the Solicitor to the Council will rule on whether or not the matter is urgent and that ruling will be final.</i>	

7.	<p>Chairman's Communications</p> <p>To note the engagements of the Chairman of the Council since the Council's last meeting.</p>	23
8.	<p>Leader of the Council Announcements</p> <p>To receive announcements from the Leader of the Council.</p>	
9.	<p>Review of Polling Places in the Wyre Forest District</p> <p>To consider a report from the Returning Officer & Chief Executive to advise Council of the need to conduct a review of two designated polling places in the Wyre Forest District.</p>	24
10.	<p>Grading structure and pay policy statement: recruitment and retention of staff</p> <p>To consider a report from the Chief Executive to consider mitigating actions in response to the corporate risk on "Organisational capacity to deliver - unable to maintain skilled, balanced and motivated workforce".</p>	28
11.	<p>Policy and Budget Framework</p> <p>Matters which require a Decision by Council.</p> <p>(a) Recommendations from the Ethics and Standards Committee – 8 September 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amended Member Code of Conduct <p>Please note that the reports and associated documents, referred to above, have been circulated electronically to Members. Public inspection copies are available on request. Please refer to the front cover for contact details.</p>	42
12.	<p>Questions</p> <p>To receive questions submitted by Members of the Council and the replies of the Leader of the Council, or relevant Cabinet Member, in accordance with Standing Order 1.9, details of which have been received by 12 noon on Monday 12 September 2022.</p> <p>Nine questions have been received by the deadline.</p> <p><i>In the case of an urgent matter that has arisen since the deadline above, and could not have been reasonably known at that time, it must be delivered in writing to the Solicitor to the Council no later than 9am on the day of Council.</i></p>	43

13.

Motions Submitted under Standing Orders

To consider Motions in the order in which notice has been received.

1. Notice of Motion from the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups. To be moved by Councillor M Hart and seconded by Councillor F Oborski MBE.

This Council values the Community Leadership Fund that councillors are allocated in order to spend on good causes, community groups and organisations within their ward.

This Council agrees that this funding provides much needed pump priming to these groups and organisations, especially in the current financial situation and that this is an important resource in assisting councillors to be community champions.

Following the decision taken at Full Council on 23rd February, 2022 as part of the budget setting process and medium term financial strategy, to reduce the Community Leadership Fund allocation from £1,000 to £500 per councillor, this Council calls upon the Cabinet to urgently re-consider this matter and report back to the next meeting of Full Council, working with the Solicitor to the Council and Head of Resources, to consider taking all necessary steps to reinstate the fund per member from £500 to £1,000 as soon as is practicable, having satisfied the necessary legislative and regulatory requirements, recognising that this will have in year revenue implications of £16,500.

2. Notice of Motion from the Liberal Democrat Group to be moved by Councillor S Miah and seconded by Councillor F Oborski MBE

This Council recognises we are in the middle of the worst cost of living crisis for 50 years. Inflation is forecast to hit 18% next year and spiralling energy costs are leaving many people in Wyre Forest struggling to pay their household bills.

Council notes the disastrous impact this year's increases in the energy price cap has had on local people:

- On 1 April 2022, Ofgem increased the energy price cap by 54 per cent. This has increased the average energy bill by £693 a year.
- In October the energy price cap is due to rise again – increasing average energy bills by over £1900 a year.

Council notes the decision taken in June 2022 to impose a Windfall Tax on the profits of giant oil and gas companies. This will be used to fund a £400 reduction in energy bills in late 2022 / early 2023 – a policy first raised by Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey.

Council further notes Lib Dem leader Ed Davey became the first

major party leader to call for October's energy price cap rise to be scrapped, and for a further Windfall Tax to be imposed on gas and oil giants. This measure would save the average household in Wyre Forest £1400.

Council recognises the numerous ways in which both National and Local Government can provide support to local people to ease the burden of rising prices. Council therefore calls on the Government to:

- Immediately reduce the standard rate of VAT from 20 per cent to 17.5 per cent for one year, saving the average household in Wyre Forest a further £600 this year
- Immediately re-introduce the pensions triple lock to support Wyre Forest pensioners, rather than wait until next Spring, saving elderly residents an additional £300.
- Immediately restore the Universal Credit supplement of £20, which was cancelled by the Government in September 2021.

Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to express the Council's demands for the October energy price cap rise to be cancelled, VAT to be cut to 17.5%, the pensions triple-lock to be re-introduced and the £20 Universal Credit supplement to be restored.

Council calls for a local Cost-of-Living Emergency Summit, with stakeholders, including Citizens Advice, Food Banks, Local Trades Unions, the Chamber of Commerce and local MP to explore how more local help can be provided for those struggling with the cost of living – including extending the use of discretionary payments.

Finally Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Leader of all other District Councils in Worcestershire asking them to pass similar emergency motions so we can take a united stand as Local Government to force the Government to do more to help local people.

3. Notice of Motion from the Liberal Democrat Group to be moved by Councillor S Miah and seconded by Councillor F Oborski MBE

This Council:-

- notes the obligations it owes to the Armed Forces community within Wyre Forest as enshrined in the Armed Forces Covenant;
- looks forward to early commencement of the legislation that will give force to the Statutory Guidance on the Armed Forces Covenant Duty which has been awaiting approval by Parliament since July;
- welcomes that the Council already disregards, in calculating

	<p>entitlement to council tax reduction scheme and housing benefit, military compensation awarded through the War Pension Scheme (WPS), Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) or through a veteran's occupational occupation Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS), known as Service Invaliding Pensions (SIPs) or Service Attributable Pensions (SAPs);</p> <p>- expresses concern that similar disregards are not applied for all military compensation schemes when assessing eligibility for support in respect of Disabled Facilities Grants, as a result of the means test prescribed in legislation.</p> <p>In support of the recommendations and findings of the Royal British Legion's 2020 report <i>Making the Benefits System Fit for Service</i>, this Council resolves:</p> <p>- to call on the Government quickly to amend legislation and guidance in respect of Disabled Facilities Grants so that military compensation is not treated as income or taken into account in assessing eligibility for support;</p> <p>- to communicate this motion to the Member of Parliament for Wyre Forest and seek a response from the relevant Government Minister, to be reported to a future meeting of Council.</p>	
14.	<p>Emergency Motions submitted under Standing Orders</p> <p>To consider Emergency Motions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 4.1 (i).</p>	
15.	<p>To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.</p>	
16.	<p>Exclusion of the Press and Public</p> <p>To consider passing the following resolution:</p> <p>"That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of "exempt information" as defined in the paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act".</p>	

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

17.	<p>To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.</p>	
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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY,
KIDDERMINSTER

20TH JULY 2022 (6PM)

Present:

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

C.21 Prayers

Prayers were said by Rev Megan Gibbins, Vicar, The Benefice of the Parish of Ribbesford with Bewdley & Dowles and Wribbenhall Parish.

Council observed a few moments' silence for former Chairman James Dudley

C.22 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence

C.23 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

C.24 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C.25 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

C.26 Chairman's Communications

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

C.27 Leader of the Council Announcements

The Leader of the Council referred members to her tabled report.

C.28 Political Balance Report

Council considered a report from the Solicitor to the Council to approve the revised table of political balance.

The Leader of the Council presented the report and formally moved the recommendation for approval. Councillor G Ballinger seconded the proposal.

Decision: Council APPROVED the revised table of political balance in Appendix 1 of the report.

C.29 Policy and Budget Framework – Matters which require a decision by Council

(a) Recommendations from Licensing & Environmental Committee - 6 June 2022

- **Amendment to constitution**

The Chairman of the Licensing and Environmental Committee, Councillor L Whitehouse, presented the recommendations and formally moved an amendment to the wording of the final sentence of bullet point 2 namely: *the Licensing Committee or Sub Committee*, to be replaced with *Members in accordance with the Council's Constitution*.

He explained that the amendment reflected the debate that took place at the Committee meeting and the general consensus from Committee members who were not in favour of Sub-Committees.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor F Oborski MBE.

Upon a vote, the proposal was unanimously agreed.

Decision: Council AGREED to amend the scheme of delegation in section 4 of the Constitution in respect of licensing and registration functions as set out below:

Amend the opening paragraph of the delegation to read (amendments are shown in bold): "To exercise authority, including approval and refusal, **amendment**, suspension and revocation, **reinstatement**, service of notices and orders or other matters requiring a decision by the Council under the Council's published policy and practice notes and the following legislation, regulations and guidance (and any re-enactment or replacement or consolidation of the statutes or regulations or guidance, or any modifications or extensions thereof):"

Replace the first two numbered paragraphs of the delegation with these three numbered paragraphs:

“Except in the following cases:

1. Where in accordance with the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, the application is to be considered by, or a review is to be undertaken by, the Licensing Committee.
2. Where in respect of any licence, other than one covered by the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, the Officer considers that an application should be considered by, or a review should be undertaken by, Members in accordance with the Council’s Constitution.
3. The application is for a premises licence or a personal licence under the Licensing Act 2003 and the application is recommended for refusal.

and the existing paragraph 3 is amended by the deletion of the words in brackets and renumbered as follows:

4. Applications by drivers and operators of taxis and private hire vehicles, any application where a statutory or non-statutory consultee, responsible authority or interested person has responded to the application objecting to its approval and the objection has not been deemed vexatious.”

(b) Recommendations from Cabinet – 30 June 2022

- **Acquisition of Property in Kidderminster**

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio presented the recommendation and formally moved it for approval. The Leader seconded the proposal.

Councillor M Hart indicated that he would be making reference to the confidential section of the report and formally moved a motion to exclude the press the public. The proposal was seconded by Councillor F Oborski MBE.

C.30 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Decision: Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of “exempt Information” as defined in paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

A robust debate ensued. Several members spoke against the proposal and outlined their reasons for being unable to support the recommendation.

Agenda Item No. 5

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio reminded members that the proposal was a key element of the bid for the Government's £17.9m Levelling Up Fund grant for Kidderminster. She spoke about the benefits to the district of the proposal and urged Council to support the recommendation.

Upon a show of hands, a vote on the motion was taken and lost.

Decision: Council DECLINED approval to amend the Capital Programme to reflect the third-party contribution towards conversion costs of the building, as set out in paragraph 5.2 of the confidential report.

Council agreed to reverse the decision to exclude the press and public and resumed the remainder of the meeting in the open session.

C.31

Questions

Eleven questions had been submitted by members of the council in accordance with standing orders.

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

I am given to understand that WFDC was the only Worcestershire Council not to have been represented at the recent LGA Conference. Would she care to explain why?

Answer from the Leader of the Council

I was not aware that Councillor Oborski was keeping the attendance register for the LGA these days. I hope that Councillor Oborski would agree that it is more important that councillors and staff concentrate on the very important projects we have going on in Wyre Forest at the moment. I cannot see why she would have a problem with us putting that work first at this time. It has also saved the council between £2,000 - £3,000 that it costs for us to attend the conference.

Supplementary question

Given that every other Worcestershire council took part, am I to assume that it is now the policy of this administration that Wyre Forest District Council does not in fact play an active role in the wider realm of local government.

Answer

There is no policy, and the administration does play an active role in the wider realm of local government. It was not compulsory to attend the conference.

2. Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor A Totty

The Government requirement for voter ID is due to come into effect from elections next May. I understand that Councils are to be enabled to provide such ID. So, my question is to the leader of the council. What steps is Wyre

Agenda Item No. 5

Forest District Council taking to ensure that all voters are made aware of this requirement and to publicise the opportunity to obtain voter ID?

Answer from the Leader of the Council

Yes, there was a lot of media attention paid to this idea originally, but all seems to have gone very quiet. We cannot take any action until the government gives us some clarity on the detail of secondary legislation and other things that affect the idea of voter ID but since the original activity, all has gone quiet from government.

Supplementary question

Will the Council also make an effort to increase postal votes?

Answer

The Association of Electoral Administrators wrote to the new Secretary of State on 11 July to voice its concerns and to make the point that in their view it would not be possible to introduce voter ID for the 2023 elections. Given the results of the recent by-election where postal voters outnumbered the number of in-person votes, as far as I am concerned, we should keep using postal votes.

3. Question to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism from Councillor M Hart

Could the Leader tell me and this Council, given the two by-election losses in Franche and Habberley North in November 2021 and most recently in June 2022, clearly demonstrating a rejection of their policies, whether she feels the Progressive Alliance is still fit to lead to this Council?

Answer from the Leader of the Council

Yes

Supplementary question

Would the Leader agree with me that the answer to that question is out of touch with reality, out of touch with our communities and out of touch with the electorate? And would she now agree with me, it is time for the Leadership of this Council to stand aside?

Answer

No, Councillor Hart, when I woke up this morning, I had a full Cabinet in place, and nobody had resigned. It is a better record than Government have had recently. We as a Cabinet and administration remain focused on the major decisions and issues that need addressing here in Wyre Forest and will continue to do so.

4. Question to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Heath, Wellbeing and Democratic Services from Councillor T Onslow

In respect of the temporary accommodation proposal for Castle Road, could the Cabinet Member please advise all the other sites that have been considered for this accommodation and why they were rejected?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Housing, Heath, Wellbeing and

Democratic Services

There were other sites taken into consideration, some of which were dismissed immediately because they were deemed too small. We did not want dispersal over various sites as revenue costs would be much higher for that type of scheme. One that was explored thoroughly was the job centre, and again that was deemed inappropriate due to size and lack of outdoor space. Churchfields was included as part of the HIF grant bid and is dependent on a development that produces acceptable numbers of units. Radford Avenue was too small, and Crown House would not be financially viable. Castle Road car park has the greatest potential. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a detailed report on the proposed development in September 2021 and it was unanimously supported.

Supplementary question

Local representatives for the area are all concerned about traffic as the site is next to very busy roads. As the proposals for the Lionfields site are no longer going ahead, would it be more appropriate to use that site?

Answer

It would not be appropriate at this time because we are so far advanced with Castle Road.

5. Question to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services from Councillor D Ross

Could the Cabinet Member explain to me, this Council and the public, what the current street cleaning schedule is for sweeping the streets and emptying litter bins in our 3 towns?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

The depot team employ a number of mechanisms in order to maintain our street cleanliness across the district. This will be in the form of both programmed and reactive work and will utilise both mechanical sweeping and manual litter picking. Broadly, the three town centres will be mechanically swept daily over a 7-day period, and litter bins will also be serviced daily over that 7-day period.

Supplementary question

Could he comment to this Council and explain to the residents why the district has never looked so uncared for? Why we have overflowing bins? And could he explain to the hard-pressed council tax payers, what they are receiving for the services they pay for?

Answer

No, I do not agree that we have those problems with the litter bins. As I said in my answer to your first question, the litter bins are serviced daily over a 7-day period and, in addition to that, we provide a reactive service for any demand from the public.

6. Question to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism from Councillor B Brookes

Agenda Item No. 5

Could the Leader tell me when she will be bringing forward a commercial proposal for the former Crown House site in Kidderminster and Bridge Street in Stourport?

Answer from the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism

As you can imagine we are focusing on delivery of a number of major projects within the Future High Streets and the Levelling-Up Funding including the old Crown House site. At the moment we are concentrating on the former Magistrates Court and Worcester Street / Bromsgrove Street element of the work, but never lose sight of the Government's completion date for all of these projects. Regular updates come forward to the Overview & Scrutiny meetings, chaired by Councillor Hart, and I am sure that Ostap Paparega, in his role as Head of Economic Development and Regeneration and Clayton Maponga, the Delivery Manager for Future High Streets projects, would only be too happy to meet with you to discuss the old Crown House part of the project.

Supplementary question

So would the Leader agree with me that given that the previous Conservative administration successfully agreed to the terms to demolish Crown House and given that the Progressive Alliance was so critical of the former Conservative administration on the time that it was taking to develop Bridge Street, is it clear that the Progressive Alliance over promised and talked a great deal, but in three years have delivered nothing, and don't the residents deserve better?

Answer

No, I do not agree with you Councillor Brookes.

7. Question to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Wellbeing and Democratic Services from Councillor L Jones

How would the Cabinet Member rate morale at the present time amongst our staff?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Wellbeing and Democratic Services

Unfortunately, there is no one measure for morale. I have regular meetings with my portfolio managers, and the feedback that I get is positive. I am not saying that everybody who works for us is happy, there will be varying reasons why people are not happy. We have our last staff survey, 81% of those who responded are enjoying their jobs, two thirds, which amounts to 66% were proud of the work of the Council, and a high proportion were satisfied with their physical environment, and they had a good relationship with their line managers. I admit the survey was not all positive, but I do thank those who took the time to do the survey and assure them that all answers were explored and taken into consideration.

Supplementary question

Isn't the Cabinet member embarrassed and concerned that a number of our experienced and hard-working employees are leaving or considering leaving the Council? I would hope that measures are being taken to ensure

Agenda Item No. 5

that our employees feel valued and listened to. We do not want to lose any more of our fantastic staff.

Answer

At no point am I embarrassed. I am saddened, but I am not embarrassed. As previously explained, people leave their jobs for varying reasons, some is location, some is financial, some is promotion. We cannot accommodate everybody with all of those things. We as an administration changed the pay arrangements as soon as we came into administration to support those that we could. As a member of the administration, I can categorically tell you that the wellbeing of our staff is uppermost to me. At the majority of our Cabinet meetings and our meetings with managers I always ask how our staff are. I have regular meetings with Rachael Simpson, our HR Manager, and we are always trying to explore different things. We are coming out of a pandemic, during that time people will have reflected, their priorities will have changed and their outlook will be different. You will have a general churn of people who are leaving. The austerity over the last decade from Central Government, that has resulted in the cutting of services, does not help. I do have to say, comments in this room, such as the district is dirty and bins are not emptied do not help morale. If anybody from the depot is watching, what do you think they are feeling right now?

8. Question to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Wellbeing and Democratic Services from Councillor N Desmond

Last September the Government announced that vulnerable households across the country would be able to access a £500m Household support fund via local authorities. In March this year the Household Support Fund was extended by a further £500m and would run until 30th September. Could the Cabinet Member tell me please how much WFDC has received from the Household Support Fund, how much has already been spent, how is the money used to support vulnerable families and how many families across Wyre Forest has this fund supported?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Wellbeing and Democratic Services

You have asked four questions, but I am prepared to accommodate you. For the period November 2021 to March 2022 Worcestershire was awarded £3.95 million of funding from the Household Support Fund to provide support for residents in need of help with food, fuel and other essential household costs. In Spring 2022, the Chancellor confirmed that the Household Fund would be extended. This equates to another £3.95 million for Worcestershire. The funding awarded to the county council is then disseminated across the districts. Just for the record, we would love it to come direct to us, not to Worcestershire County Council. For the period to March 2022, a minimum of 50% of the fund was for families with children, 50% was for residents experiencing, or at risk of poverty. Wyre Forest District Council were awarded £369k in the first tranche. That was disseminated by our excellent Revenue & Benefits department. We then allocated grants via the voluntary sector and the community sector organisations, such as the Citizens Advice, food banks, church-based groups and other charitable organisations. Of that first tranche, 1831 households were supported through the district council's allocation during

Agenda Item No. 5

this period, 1329 of these were households with children. For the period April to September 2022, again the funding was provided to support vulnerable households, however, the criteria had changed. It comes in thirds. One third again allocated to support families and children, one third to be allocated to pensioners and the last third to be allocated for vulnerable households. Of that tranche we have £207k. Due to the fact, the scheme does not end until 30th September I cannot answer your last question of how much is left.

Supplementary question

Would the Cabinet member agree with me, because it is such a big issue, that affects families in all of our wards, that once this money ceases at the end of September and we have all the facts, can a detailed paper be brought to Scrutiny please so that all members can have the chance to go through the facts and figures, because I think it is fascinating.

Answer

Yes, she will do her best, however, as she does not do the work she will ask the person who does do the work if that is possible.

9. Question to the relevant Cabinet Member from Councillor F Oborski MBE

Can the Cabinet Member tell me, for each week since the new Car Park Charges were brought in: the income from Car Parks received between the hours of 6.30pm and 9.30pm, the costs of employing Civil Enforcement Officers for those additional hours and the Fines Levied during those hours?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

We are talking about over 100 weeks of data here, so really I cannot give you a week by week breakdown of the revenues. I will give you a breakdown of total revenues. The best available data that we have to hand is as follows; During the period April 2021 to March 2022 revenue generated across all council carparks, during the 6pm to 9pm period, was £49,272. There were no additional staffing costs for enforcing between these hours because enforcement staff carry out random patrols as part of their normal contracted hours. In the period from 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2022 the penalty charge notices issued across the carparks between these hours generated a sum of £5073.

Supplementary question

Given the very vocal level of complaints, particularly from the people of Bewdley, about the problems that are being caused by the extended car parking hours, is the Cabinet member prepared to have another look at the evening charging?

Answer

Can I remind Councillor Oborski that we have committed to establish a cross-party advisory panel to produce a report for Cabinet, where we will look at all car parking charges throughout the district before the next medium-term financial plan is issued later this year.

10. Question to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services from Councillor M Hart

Is the Cabinet Member happy with the manner in which Wyre Forest House is currently operated?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

Quite a simple answer, yes.

Supplementary question

Would the Cabinet member agree with me that was a most regrettable answer, and given the answer could he tell me why the doors to this building are still locked in the working day? And when one wanders around this building it is like the Mary Celeste?

Answer

This building is a local government institution, and we have seen what happens in some institutions where we allow the general public in without checking what is going on. So, I do not agree with him that we should have the doors open all the time. We have a responsibility to all our staff, and please bear in mind that we have tenants within this building that we also have responsibility for. So, no, I think that we are quite happy with the way things are running at the moment. We are undertaking a review of space within this building to be used by Wyre Forest staff and we should be bringing a report, probably later in the year, to see how this works out.

11. Question to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism from Councillor M Hart

Could the Leader tell me and this Council whether or not she and the Progressive Alliance she leads are pleased that this Council adopted its Local Plan on 26th April?

Answer from the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism

It is not a question of being pleased, or not pleased, there is a legal obligation for the Council to have an up-to-date local plan. Whoever voted for, against or abstained at the meeting on April 26th we now have the Wyre Forest District Council Local Plan in place.

Supplementary question

We certainly do have the local plan in place thanks to the Progressive Alliance. Would the Leader of the Council explain to me and this Council therefore, if we do have the properly adopted local plan, why members of her Progressive Alliance for the second planning meeting in a row, seem single handily not to want to back it and support it?

Answer

I cannot speak for what goes on with every individual, we do not run a whip system. Our group looks at planning as it is supposed to be looked at, as a non-political committee.

C.32 Motions Submitted under Standing Orders

One motion had been received in accordance with standing orders.

Councillor M Hart tabled an amendment to the motion submitted by the Conservative Group. He apologised to Council for his oversight as he had submitted the incorrect version to Officers for inclusion in the agenda papers. A printed copy of the amended motion was circulated to members at this point. The amended motion was seconded by Councillor I Hardiman

Councillor Hart outlined the reasons for the motion. A lengthy and robust debate ensued. A number of members spoke in support of the motion.

Several members spoke against the motion. The Cabinet Member for Operational Services outlined the reasons why he was unable to support the motion and urged members to vote against it.

Councillor N Martin left the meeting at 8.15pm and returned at 8.17pm.
Councillor A Coleman left the meeting at 8.17pm and returned at 8.19pm.
Councillor P Young left the meeting at 8.17pm and returned at 8.24pm.
Councillors D Ross and S Rook left the meeting at 8.18pm and returned at 8.20pm.
Councillor V Caulfield left the meeting at 8.22pm and returned at 8.24pm.

Upon a show of hands, a vote on the motion as amended, was taken and agreed.

Decision: The following motion from the Conservative Group, as amended by Councillor M Hart, be agreed:

Whilst accepting the importance of ‘No Mow May and Too soon June’ to the insect life of the District and that the use of weed killers should be carefully controlled, This Council is appalled at the current state of the District. A core priority of this Council is to ‘Keep the District Safe, Clean and Looking Good’.

This Council calls upon the Leadership of this Council and the Cabinet Member with responsibility to get a grip on this fundamental issue and that core statutory functions of this Council and other non-statutory functions but of which come under this corporate theme and are a key quality of life issue for our residents.

Will the Cabinet Member assure this Council that roads will be swept, grass will be cut, parks and open spaces will be kept tidy and litter bins emptied and this Council calls upon him to formally apologise for the woefully inadequate level of service that the Progressive Alliance is giving to the council tax payers of this District?

Council further requests that in order to keep elected members and members of the public up to date, regular updates are sent to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on how it is meeting its KPIs in cutting the grass and sweeping the streets and emptying the litter

bins.

C.33 Emergency Motions submitted under Standing Orders

There were no urgent motions.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.35pm.

The open session of the meeting is available for viewing on the Council's website <https://wyreforestdc.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcasts>

Chairman's List of Functions – 2022/23

July – September 2022

17 th July	Civic Service, All Saints Church, Evesham
23 rd July	Severn Valley Railway – Queen's Baton Relay for the Commonwealth Games – (Both the Chairman and Vice Chairman attended)
29 th July	Food Bank – Trussel Trust
10 th Aug	Funeral of Former Chairman James Dudley
2 nd Sept	Chairman raised Red Ensign for Merchant Navy Day
*7 th Sept	Vice Chairman attended the funeral of Hon. Alderman – Pauline Hayward
11 th Sept	Proclamation at Worcester and Kidderminster Town Hall
*11 th Sept	Proclamation at Bewdley

* Denotes attendance by Vice Chairman

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
21st SEPTEMBER 2022

Review of Polling Places in the Wyre Forest District

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Nicky Martin, Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Ian Miller EXT 2700 Returning Officer & Chief Executive
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ian Dobson EXT 2762 Interim Electoral Services Manager
APPENDICES:	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Council of the need to conduct a review of two designated polling places in the Wyre Forest District.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to NOTE that:

- 2.1 **A review will be undertaken of polling places for polling districts BHS-4 and BHS-5 and AKR-SC to take effect from 1 January 2023;**
- 2.2 **A report on the review and decision on changes will be required at the Council's meeting in December.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council completed its last compulsory review of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places in February 2020. Two polling places that have been used for many years are no longer available and it will be necessary to conduct a review to identify replacement locations.
- 3.2 The Gainsborough Hotel will no longer be available as a polling place, not only because of its present use to house asylum seekers (the date at which this might come to an end is not known) but also because the owners plainly do not intend to continue operating it as a hotel, having submitted a planning application for conversion to flats. Likewise, the Workmen's Club in Stourport – which was successfully used for a by-election as recently as 14 July - has confirmed that it is currently closed and will not be able to take a booking for May 2023.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Proposals will be issued for consultation during October and November to set out proposals for alternative locations and invite representations. A report on the review will be presented to Council at its meeting on 7 December when it will be invited to agree changes to the two polling places. Alternative locations will have to be accessible for disabled people, not just in terms of access to and within a building but also by provision of car parking for blue badge holders and other disabled people that is adjacent to or in close proximity to the building.
- 4.2 In respect of BHS-4 and BHS-5, few electors live in the town centre (BHS-5) and therefore a location in BHS-4 would be desirable as that is where the vast majority of electors live. St John the Baptist's Church has been identified by a councillor as a possible alternative venue but it will not be suitable because it has no car parking adjacent. Indeed the main pedestrian entrance is located alongside zig-zag markings where no parking is possible and involves a considerable incline to reach the church building. It is possible to designate schools as polling places and there are several in BHS-4. However the Council has generally tried to minimise designating them as polling places in order to avoid disruption in the event that governing bodies decide to close the entire school on a day when elections are held. The consultation will therefore consider the only alternative building in BHS-4 which is considered to be the Habberley Social Club, located off Truro Drive.
- 4.3 If the Social Club was to be designated as the polling place, it would be further away for residents of BHS-5 than the current polling place. The legislation envisages the possibility that a polling place might be located outside the polling district concerned e.g. "the polling place for a polling district must be an area in the district, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the district" (section 18B(4)(d), Representation of the People Act 1983). While the number of electors in BHS-5 is too low to make a separate polling place within that polling district economic, it is possible – just as now – to designate a polling place outside the BHS-5 polling district that would be more conveniently located for this group of electors. The consultation paper will therefore also seek views on whether the polling place for BHS-5 should be Trinity Methodist Church, which already acts as a double polling station for two polling districts in Broadwaters ward. It would be possible to accommodate a third, small polling station for BHS-5 at this location. The consultation will therefore seek views from electors and others about whether they would prefer to continue voting at the same location as electors in BHS-4 or to have a polling place closer to the town centre.
- 4.4 In the case of AKR-SC, a councillor has suggested the possibility of using the Stourport Bowling Green Club, also on Lickhill Road, which has the advantage of being next door to the current polling place. An alternative – given that a polling place does not have to be located in the polling district – is to consider whether the Stourport Community Centre on Lower Lickhill Road (which lies across the road from AKR-SC, in the immediately adjacent ward) might be suitable as it is closer to where the majority of electors in AKR-SC live. Again there are schools within the polling district that might be used, although the comments above about avoiding schools so far as possible hold true. The consultation will thus consider the Stourport Bowling Green Club and the Stourport Community Centre as potential alternative locations.

5. NEXT STEPS

5.1 A consultation document will be issued in October and will be open for responses until a date in the latter part of November. Council will then take decisions at its meeting in December.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The cost of conducting the review primarily relate to staff time and will be undertaken within existing resources.

7. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Section 18(2)(c) of the Representation of People Act 1983 states that “the polling place for any polling district shall be an area in that district, except where special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the polling district, and shall be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the polling district how they will be able to reach the polling station”.

7.2 A polling district is a geographical area created by the sub division of a constituency, ward or division into smaller parts.

7.3 The Electoral Commission uses the following definitions:

- A polling place is defined as the building or area in which a polling station will be selected by the (Acting) Returning Officer.
- A polling station is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place. Unlike polling districts and polling places which are fixed by the local authority, polling stations are chosen by the (Acting) Returning Officer for the election.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

8.1 The recommendation will enable the Council to continue to meet its requirements under the Equality Act and subsequent legislation by ensuring that access to polling stations meets the needs of electors.

9. RISK MANAGMENT

9.1 There are no risk management issues identified with this report.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 The Council is invited to note that a review of polling places will be undertaken as set out in this report and that, following consultation, the Council will be invited to decide on appropriate arrangements at its December meeting.

11. CONSULTEES

- Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services
- Returning Officer for Wyre Forest

- Corporate Leadership Team

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Representation of the People Act 1983

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**COUNCIL**
21st SEPTEMBER 2022**Grading structure and pay policy statement: recruitment and retention of staff**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Nicky Martin Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services
DIRECTOR:	Chief Executive
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ian Miller x 2700 ian.miller@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1: updated pay policy statement Appendix 2: data on recruitment and retention Appendix 3: option of mapping to national pay spine

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider mitigating actions in response to the corporate risk on “Organisational capacity to deliver - unable to maintain skilled, balanced and motivated workforce”. The report identifies that the rapid and significant increase in loss of staff, particularly in professional and specialist posts, will have been influenced by seven years of local pay arrangements, which saw WFDC staff receiving increases worth less than they would have received under national pay agreements in the period from 2014 to 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to:

- 2.1 **CONFIRM** that pay points for all staff should be increased by 5% with effect from 1 October 2022;
- 2.2 **ADOPT** the revised pay policy statement in Appendix 1.

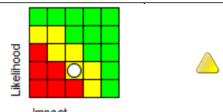
3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Council in September 2019 resolved to return to the national pay agreements for determining annual increases in pay with effect from April 2021. This followed seven years of local pay arrangements. Cumulatively across the seven years, pay for WFDC staff increased by 4.24% less than it would have done if the Council had applied the national pay increases. Even though the Council has returned to national pay increases from April 2021, the cumulative gap will continue to widen as any percentage increases are applied to a lower base in WFDC than in councils that have operated the national pay increases throughout. It is now approximately 4.31% following the April 2021 pay increase of 1.75%.

Comparison of local pay arrangements with national pay agreement

	Wyre Forest District Council	National Pay Agreement
2014	1.25% wef 1/4/14	2.2% wef 1/1/15 (plus one off cash sum of about £150 for most staff)
2015	0.75%	0
2016	0.50%	1%
2017	0.50%	1%
2018	1.50%	2.0%
2019	1.25%	2.0%
2020	1.25% plus a non consolidated element of 0.25%	2.75%
Cumulative total impact on base pay, 2014-2020	+7.21% plus a non consolidated element of 0.25%	+11.45% Plus one off cash sum of about £150 for most staff

3.2 The revised corporate risk register, shared with the Audit Committee on 6 July, identified the risk around our ability to maintain a skilled, balanced and motivated workforce. Some of the mitigating actions are set out below:

Risk:	Organisational capacity to deliver - unable to maintain skilled, balanced and motivated workforce	Corporate Plan Priority:	Internal corporate issues	Risk Scores:	
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MITIGATING ACTIONS			
Action	Description	Managed By	Due Date
Implement a refreshed Organisational Development strategy Sept 2022	The OD strategy will set out what is required of staff and councillors in terms of leadership, behaviour and engagement in order to deliver the Council's vision and ensure the long term viability of the District. It will also explain expectations of staff and the support the council will provide to further develop skills and commitment. The strategy will be the first step in identifying the actions that need to be taken to develop and maintain a skilled, balanced and motivated workforce. It will underpin the council's commitment to its workforce, ensuring that working practices make WFDC an employer of choice enabling the council to attract and retain high quality employees.	Corporate Leadership Team: Chief Executive HR&OD Manager	31-Mar-2023
Pay policy and pay strategy delivering a pay system that is effective, fair and transparent	The use of pay ranges to form grades enables the council to recognise elements of loyalty, competence, experience or scarcity. The council recognises the importance of managing pay fairly and in a way that motivates staff to make a positive contribution. The pay and grading review implemented in July 2021, underpinned by job evaluation ensures fairness and equality of opportunity. The review was based on a clear and rational process for setting and reviewing pay, levels of remuneration which are sufficiently flexible and reasonably competitive.	Corporate Leadership Team Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)	31-Mar-2023
Flexible employment policies including use of market supplements for recruitment and retention	In order to successfully deliver day to day services and projects the Council offers flexible employment policies. In order to retain a flexible and committed workforce service managers can offer market supplements at the discretion of the Head of Paid Service.	Corporate Leadership Team Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)	31-Mar-2023

3.3 Appendix 2 sets out recent data on recruitment and retention and shows the rapid increase in the number of staff leaving the council in 2022-23 compared to the previous year. These include many specialist and unique roles within the Council, such as:

Planning Manager (21 years' experience with WFDC) – recruitment closed 18 August. Only one applicant: internal appointment made. Postholder has taken narrower head of service post at Worcester

Electoral Services Manager (over 5 years' experience with WFDC) – readvertisement at higher salary (£38-£41k plus market supplement, better to match salary offered by Stratford DC, £42-45k). Only two applications received: neither suitable. Part-time consultant engaged from Association of Electoral Administrators, pending further attempt at recruitment or joint appointment with another council.

Elections Systems Officer – which means both postholders in this small team have resigned. Interviews on 14 September.

North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies Manager – two external recruitment processes have produced no suitable candidates. Now examining wider shared service with local resilience forum or other partners

Delivery Managers, NWEDR – two posts filled only with difficulty and with assistance from recruitment consultants, with substantial market supplements. Advertisement for third post produced three candidates, only one of whom was suitable for interview and has been offered the post but not yet confirmed.

Estates Officer – no suitable candidates following advertisement.

HR and Organisational Development Manager (30+ years' experience with WFDC) – One applicant, interview on 13th September.

Health & Safety Advisor – recruitment about to commence

- 3.4 There is a present and growing danger of loss of excessive amounts of corporate knowledge and expertise. This is considered to present a particularly acute risk if further senior managers, including members of the Corporate Leadership Team, were to leave for a role elsewhere. The new CLT structure has been in place only since January 2022 and, despite changes in salary that have been implemented as part of that structure, comparable roles in other organisations generally pay more than WFDC offers. This is also true for some posts at other levels in the organisation.
- 3.5 Data from West Midlands Employers provide the following information on salary for Chief Officers (Tier 2) of district councils. WFDC figures are substantially below the average and most are around or just above the lower quartile.

Average	£81,220
Lower Quartile	£62,250
Upper quartile	£98,194

Comparing similar sized authorities (headcount 300-400), WFDC salaries are in the lower quartile.

Average	£85,504
Lower Quartile	£67,238
Middle Quartile	£84,320
Upper quartile	£99,259

- 3.6 Generally, WFDC seems able to fill most posts so there is not a loss in absolute capacity as measured by the number of employees. However what is being lost and is at further risk is capacity in terms of experience, knowledge and skills – which cannot quickly be replaced. With slimmed down and flat management structures, that risk is exacerbated. There is also the disruption and cost caused by a high level of turnover, including gaps in capacity (between departure of an individual and arrival of his/her replacement), cost of recruitment processes, and opportunity cost of turnover (such as managerial time spent on recruitment

or supporting other staff, rather than delivery of services and supporting member decision-making). In some cases, there is no choice but to bring in consultancy or interim support, at daily rates that far outstrip the salaries that the council would normally pay.

- 3.7 Steps are being taken to re-articulate the employment offer from the Council, for example around well-being, the generous leave arrangements and well-regarded local government pension scheme. But none of these is likely to shift perceptions of the Council as an employer in the same way as pay. If the Council does nothing, the likelihood is that the corporate risk will continue to grow and that there will be a noticeable impact on the quality and effectiveness of council services and the support that is provided to members in formal decision-making. Addressing significant and growing concerns about recruitment and retention should form part of an initiative to recognise the broader capacity issue that exists in the Council: to ensure that it is “right” size in terms of staffing structure, that staff have the “right” amount of work (workloads are considered excessive in many areas by now) and that staff are paid the “right” amount.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Various options have been considered in response to the significant corporate risk identified in this report. “Do nothing” is not recommended because, patently, it will do nothing to address the difficulties that are being experienced. The Local Government Employers’ initial offer of £1,925 for all staff from 1 April 2022 would see no change to the gap that has grown between WFDC and other councils, although the gap would grow if the Employers revert to percentage pay increases in future.
- 4.2 One option could involve mapping to the national pay spine: see Appendix 3. This would produce differential results which would be more difficult to justify to staff or the unions. Staff on pay bands 1 and 2 enjoyed significant increases as a result of the pay and grading review that was implemented in July 2021, whereas in contrast many professional, specialist and managerial posts saw little or no change (and a few even experienced reductions in the assessed salary for their posts – the 18 months of pay protection that was negotiated with the unions has a few months left to run). Mapping to the national pay spine would see larger increases in the top three bands within the main scale, about 6% compared to approximately 3.5% for lower pay bands, and therefore provide potentially a better focussed response to the retention and recruitment issues being experienced. Any criticism from staff and unions about the differential impact might be countered with information about the large increases that many front-line staff enjoyed as a result for the July 2021 grading review. While all posts would see an upwards change, the increase for lower paid posts would be less than the impact of local pay arrangements set out in paragraph 3.1. Also it would be necessary to identify what increases would be applied for spot salaries where the risks around retention are just as significant, if not more so. The proposal is that these would be inflated by 4.4%, the average increase that would be experienced by staff on WFDC’s main pay scale if the mapping approach in Appendix 3 was adopted.
- 4.3 This report identifies the preferred option of a common across-the-board increase in all pay points which would apply to all staff and treat everyone equally. This is the simplest approach and would reverse the impact of local pay arrangements that applied from 2014 to 2020. Local pay arrangements have saved significant sums from 2014 onwards, estimated at £1.3 m to date. These savings will not have been lost as they were achieved in previous years, and there is no suggestion of backdating the change that is contemplated in this report. The proposed 5% increase is slightly ahead of the adverse impact of local pay settlements identified above but is considered to be reasonable, having regard to current

levels of churn affecting the Council and the need to take steps to mitigate the corporate risk.

- 4.4 It is important to stress that any action must not be presented as, or be capable of misinterpretation as, a substitute or “down payment” for the April 2022 pay increase. Following their meeting on 25 July, the Local Government Employers have offered a flat rate increase worth £1,925 for all negotiating groups. The impact in percentage terms ranges from over 10% at the bottom of the national pay spine to just over 4% at the top of the pay spine. However for chief officers and chief executives, the offer is worth progressively less in percentage terms, the higher an individual’s salary. For example, the offer represents an increase of 2.75% for someone on a salary of £70,000 but under 1.5% to someone earning £130k. It cannot be predicted what the outcome of national pay negotiations will be or when the April 2022 increase will be finalised: it could be some months away. The national pay award is different from the Council’s grading structure. As was demonstrated in July 2021, the Council is able to make changes to its grading structure that affect the pay of staff without disturbing the outcome of national pay negotiations. The Council does not operate the national pay scales and it is not intended to adopt them en bloc (although existing WFDC grades could be mapped to relevant points on the national pay scales, as set out in paragraph 4.2). If WFDC decides to rebase its grading structure in light of the recruitment and retention issues set out in this report, any change should not take effect from 1 April 2022, further to demonstrate that it is separate from and nothing to do with the national pay increase that is in the process of negotiation. The Local Government Association has issued clear advice against making “up front” payments in lieu of the pay award being finalised. For clarity, the proposal in this report is not in any way in lieu of the pay award being finalised: it is in response to the significant and growing corporate risk around the Council’s ability to maintain a skilled, balanced and motivated workforce. The 2022 pay increase will be decided solely by the national negotiations and will be implemented in full by WFDC.
- 4.5 The changes set out in this report, if agreed, require amendments to the Council’s pay policy statement under section 38 of the Localism Act 2011, a document that only full council may approve. The main changes relate to the impact of the across-the-board increase on pay scales including those for the Council’s most senior officers, who are appointed on spot salaries within a specified range. In order to avoid having to return to Council to ask for approval of a further edition of the pay policy statement after the April 2022 or future pay increases have been confirmed, the width of the bands has been adjusted to accommodate future growth from national pay settlements. The opportunity has also been taken to make one presentational change which does not affect substance. Deputy chief officer posts are being re-badged as “Chief Officer posts”. The previous terminology was relevant when the Council had corporate directors, to whom “deputy chief officers” reported. With the removal of the corporate director posts – and there is no intention to recreate them - the word “deputy” is being removed.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The financial implications of the recommended across-the-board increase are estimated at £578k in a full year. Given past trends of underspends and the high turnover rate in the current year, it is possible that the part year cost in 2022-23 could be absorbed within existing budget levels. The impact would have to be accommodated in full in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, although there may be some offsetting movements in the opposite direction, for example as a consequence of the pension fund revaluation for March 2023 which is expected to see the level of employer contributions reduce.

- 5.2 The alternative option of mapping to the national pay scale is estimated to cost £448k in a full year. Despite the lower cost relative to the preferred option, this option is considered to have significant negative aspects, not least that it would treat staff in different ways with higher increases for posts in higher bands.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council will need to act in accordance with relevant employment legislation and notification requirements of the national agreements, including discussions with the unions. It is not considered that their formal agreement will be required.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 No equality impact assessment is required for the recommended option, as the grading structure that emerged for July 2021 was the subject of such an assessment. Revaluing pay points for all staff by the same percentage treats all staff equally. The alternative option of mapping to the national pay scale, which is not recommended, has not been fully assessed. If it were to be selected by Council instead, there could be an adverse impact for group(s) with protected characteristics, in particular as there are more men than women holding posts in pay bands 1 and 2. Therefore it would be necessary to demonstrate that, even though all staff would see upwards movement in their pay, a lower rate of increase for lower graded posts can be objectively justified.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The principal risks are considered to be financial and reputational. The recommended approach will add to the pay bill and therefore – in the absence of offsetting additional income or cost reductions – could lead to a widening of the Council's financial gap. It is too early to offer accurate predictions, not least because the new Government has not yet shown its hand on the local government settlement for 2023-24 or funding reform. Likewise the pension fund valuation for March 2023 is not yet to hand although many funds are reporting being at or above 100% funding level: if this is confirmed for Worcestershire's pension fund, it should result in a reduction in employers' contributions.
- 8.2 The reputational risk relates to public perception of increases in the pay of Council staff. Any public concerns can only be addressed by pointing out that the Council has to remain viable in being able to recruit and retain staff – if it does not do so, then it will be unable to sustain and to provide the range of services for which WFDC is responsible, and that could have a direct adverse impact on the public. The capacity and quality of support for councillors in their formal and strategic decision-making roles may also suffer.
- 8.3 A further risk is that there is no guarantee that the mitigating measure will be successful in returning the corporate risk to a lower, manageable level. The Council may find that, in the competition for talent, its financial offer needs to improve yet further. If that turns out to be the case and the recommended approach in this report has been adopted, in the short term any areas of specific pressure can be addressed using existing tools for retention and recruitment, such as market supplements. While there is no guarantee that the mitigating measure will be successful, conversely it is virtually certain that doing nothing will see WFDC continue to leach experienced staff and that it will face a growing adverse impact on its capacity in skills, knowledge and experience.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Council is invited to support the recommendation in the report that pay points for all staff should be increased by 5% with effect from 1 October 2022, to mitigate the corporate risk in respect of recruitment and retention, and to adopt the revised pay policy statement in Appendix 1.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Leader of the Council & the Cabinet
10.2 Corporate Leadership Team

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Local pay arrangements 2018-21, report to Council, 13 December 2017
11.2 Pay arrangements 2021 onwards, report to Council, 25 September 2019
11.3 Pay and Grading Review, 24 February 2021

Appendix 1 Revised pay policy statement for 2022 onwards

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT September 2022

Introduction

1. This pay policy statement under section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 shall apply for the financial year 2022-23 and each subsequent financial year, until amended.
2. The purpose of the statement is to provide transparency with regard to the Council's approach to setting the pay of its employees by identifying:
 - the methods by which remuneration of all employees are determined, including the remuneration of its most senior staff;
 - the arrangements for ensuring the provisions set out in this statement are applied consistently throughout the Council.

The Council's policies for setting remuneration

3. In determining its grading structure and setting remuneration levels for all posts, the Council takes account of the need to ensure value for money in respect of the use of public expenditure, balanced against the need to recruit and retain employees who are able to meet the requirements of providing high quality services to the community, delivered effectively and at times which those services are required. The grade of a post is determined by application of an agreed Job Evaluation process.
4. The Council returned to applying nationally negotiated pay awards with effect from 1 April 2021. **The figures shown in paragraphs 5 and 11 below do not take account of the pay award for April 2022 as it is not known at the time of adoption of the pay policy statement.** With the exception of Chief Officers and the Chief Executive, historically, the Council used the nationally negotiated pay spine as the basis for its local grading structure. As a result of the local pay arrangements implemented in the period from 2014 to 2021, the salary values for spinal column points have diverged from the national pay spine. The values of spinal column points are therefore those developed by Wyre Forest District Council.
5. With effect from 1 October 2022, the salary bands applying to staff covered by the NJC for local government services are set out in the table. The values of the pay ranges will change over time as national pay awards for 2022 and subsequent years are applied. It is not possible to predict national pay awards and this pay policy statement will not be updated solely to take account of such national pay awards.

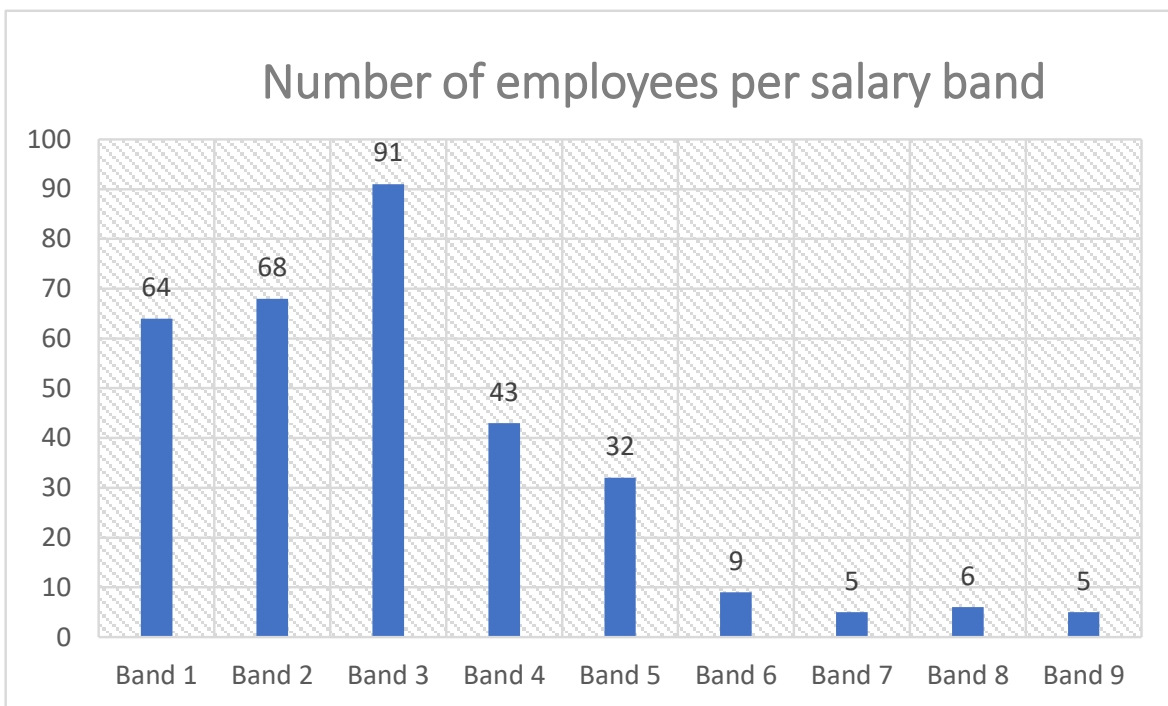
Salary Band	Spinal column points	Annual pay range at 1 October 2022 (£)
1	19-21	20702 - 22234
2	22-24	22805 - 24236
3	25-28	25002 - 27533
4	29-32	28618 - 31401
5	33-36	32323 - 34823
6	37-40	35798 - 39046
7	41-44	40073 – 43149
8	45-48	44116 - 47237
9	49-52	48248 - 51476

6. All other pay-related allowances are the subject of either nationally or locally negotiated rates, having been determined from time to time in accordance with collective bargaining machinery and/or as determined by Council Policy.
7. New appointments will normally be made at the minimum of the relevant grade, although this can be varied where necessary to secure the best candidate. From time to time it may be necessary to take account of the external pay market in order to attract and retain employees with particular experience, skills and capability. Where possible, the Council will ensure the requirement for such approaches is objectively justified by reference to clear and transparent evidence of relevant market comparators, using appropriate data sources available from within and outside the local government sector.
8. There are a number of pay points within each band. For staff not on the highest point within the band, there is a system of annual progression to the next point on the band. Faster progression is possible under the Council's policy on merit increments.
9. With regard to equal pay requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the Council ensures that there is no pay discrimination within its pay structures and that all pay differentials can be objectively justified through the use of equality proofed job evaluation mechanisms which directly relate pay grades to the requirements, demands and responsibilities of the role.
10. The posts of Chief Officers and the Chief Executive, who make up the Corporate Leadership Team, are covered by the relevant JNC for such posts. The Council uses spot pay rates. In order to provide some flexibility in future decisions about recruitment

or adjustments to pay of serving staff without the need to amend this policy statement, the statement sets a range within which salary for these posts will fall. The values of the spot pay shown in the table will change over time as national pay awards for 2022 and subsequent years are applied. It is not possible to predict national pay awards and this pay policy statement will not be updated solely to take account of such national pay awards:

Grade	Range	Spot pay rate (value at time of preparation of this statement)
CHIEF OFFICER	£53,000-£75,000	Varies depending on responsibilities etc. of post (6 posts on this grade as at September 2022).
CHIEF EXECUTIVE	£100,000 - £128,000	£121,685

Number of employees by salary band



Chief Officers

11. The definition of ‘Chief Officer’ in section 43 of the Localism Act means that it includes many posts falling within the main pay scales. At the time of preparation of this statement, they include posts that range from Band 6 to Band 9 (although not all employees in those bands fall within the definition of ‘chief officers’).
12. The Council’s policy and procedures with regard to recruitment of chief officers are set out in the Officer Employment Procedure Rules in Section 13 of the Council’s Constitution. The determination of the remuneration to be offered to any newly appointed chief officer will be in accordance with this pay policy statement and other relevant policies in place at the time of recruitment. In the case of recruitment of Chief Officers and the Chief Executive, the decision on remuneration will be taken by the Appointments and Appeals Committee. Where the Council is unable to recruit to a post at the designated grade, it will consider the use of temporary market forces supplements in accordance with its relevant policies.
13. Where the Council remains unable to recruit chief officers, or where there is a need for interim support to provide cover for a vacant substantive chief officer post, the Council will, where necessary, consider engaging individuals under contracts for service. These will be sourced through a relevant procurement process ensuring the Council is able to demonstrate value for money from competition in securing the relevant service. In accordance with IR35, the Council would normally expect to deduct tax and national insurance from payments to any individual providing interim support.
14. The Council does not normally pay any bonuses or performance related pay to its chief officers.

Additional payments to Chief Officers

15. In addition to basic salary, the Council may pay other elements of ‘additional pay’ which are chargeable to UK Income Tax and do not solely constitute reimbursement of expenses incurred in the fulfilment of duties, which could include returning officer fees or honoraria. Returning officer fees in respect of parish level electoral events are agreed from time to time in a meeting of full Council

Lowest Paid Employees

16. The Council’s definition of lowest paid employees is people employed in Band 1 of the Council’s grading structure. This is because it is the lowest pay band operated by the Council for permanent staff who are not employed as Apprentices.

Apprentices appointed by the Council will be paid at the following rates:

First Year of Apprenticeship		Rate	22-23
Regardless of Age	60% of specified rate - currently £8.45		5.07
2nd year + of Apprenticeship		Rate	
Aged 16 -17 years	65% of specified rate - currently £8.45		5.49
Aged 18 - 20 years	National Apprenticeship Rate (01.04.2022)		6.83

Aged 21 - 22 years	National Apprenticeship Rate (01.04.2022)	9.18
Aged 23+	National Living Wage Rate	9.50

Relationship between remuneration of chief officers and remuneration of employees who are not chief officers

17. The pay levels within the Council define the multiple between the median salary of its chief officers and the median salary of all employees. At the time of preparation of this policy statement, the ratio was 1:2.5. This calculation is based on employees in post and actual salaries as at January 2022 (excluding Apprentices). The Council's policy is that this ratio should remain below 1:3.

Payments on termination etc.

18. The Council's approach to statutory and discretionary payments on termination of employment is set out within its Redundancy Policy which includes the written statement in accordance with regulations 5 and 6 of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006. At the time of preparation of this policy statement, the policy is:

- to pay statutory redundancy payments in accordance with the Employment Relations Act 1998, which provides for a maximum calculation equivalent to up to 30 weeks' pay. The payment will be based on an employee's actual weekly salary rather than the figure set by the Government.
- not to make discretionary lump sum payments or to make payment in lieu of notice in cases of termination of employment.

19. The Council's policy is normally not to make any awards under the Local Government (Discretionary Payments) (Injury Allowances) Regulations 2011 : this constitutes its written policy under the regulations.

20. The Council's decisions on use of powers to enter any Settlement Agreement under section 23 of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 will be taken by the Appointments and Appeals Committee where the decisions relate to either the Chief Executive or a Chief Officer. Decisions on entering Settlement Agreements with other employees will be taken by the Chief Executive.

Publication of information

21. This statement will be published on the Council's website www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk

22. In accordance with regulation 7(3) of, and Schedule 1 to, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, for posts where the remuneration in a year is £50,000 or more, the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts will include a note setting out the total amount of

- salary, fees or allowances paid to or receivable by the person in the current and previous year;
- any bonuses so paid or receivable by the person in the current and previous year;

- any sums payable by way of expenses allowances that are chargeable to UK income tax;
- any compensation for loss of employment and any other payments connected with termination;
- any benefits received that do not fall within the above

The statement of accounts is available on the Council's website.

23. In accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code, the Council also publishes information about remuneration of the Chief Executive, Chief Officers and staff in the transparency section of its website:

[Pay and grading structure | Wyre Forest District Council \(wyreforestdc.gov.uk\)](http://wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

This information is updated from time to time and includes a list of "chief officers" as defined in the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix 2 Recruitment and Retention

1. Issue

To provide information on current recruitment and retention concerns.

2. Background

Over the last 12 months or so it is becoming evident that we are experiencing difficulty in recruiting staff and retaining experienced staff.

National context

Nationally the job vacancy market is saturated, being referenced as the 'great resignation'. During the pandemic job moves were suppressed however as we have come out of the pandemic people are re-evaluating their current job roles and work-life balance.

Research indicates the number of leavers and movement in the labour market is due to seeking more favourable conditions, more aligned to their own personal values, increased work life balance, stability and to feel valued.

Compensation and benefits are not always the top motivators for employees. Providing meaningful and challenging work, recognition and culture are also among the top motivators.

The cost-of-living crisis is also a contributory factor as 'real' wages are falling due to the high inflation rates, fuel and energy increases.

Data

According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) the number of job vacancies rose to record levels in the three months to April 2022, almost 1.3 million, going on to say it's the tightest labour market in decades where the number of vacancies is greater than the number of people unemployed.

Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) *Labour Market Outlook 2022* highlighted that 45% of UK employers currently have vacancies they are finding hard to fill.

CIPD's *Good Work* Index highlighted that, in a poll of 6000+ workers, 20% believed they are likely to quit their current role in the next 12 months – an increase from 16% in 2021.

(Source: CIPD, People Management – July/August 2022)

Local Context

It is becoming evident that the quantity of applications for vacancies has significantly reduced and applications that are received often don't have the relevant experience or skills required for the role.

Several years ago, the Council moved away from the national pay spine/rates and had a local arrangement. As a result of this, there is a disparity in pay rates between this Council and other local Councils who operate the national NJC pay spine and rates.

It is worth noting that a neighbouring authority Worcester City Council froze their pay a few years ago so whilst still being on the national pay spine their rates are lower although more favourable than ours.

In April 2021 we returned to the national pay negotiations and now apply the pay award that is agreed nationally.

In the last six months we have 26 employees leave the authority: 20 of these leavers are resignations. During 2021/22 there were 32 resignations.

Recruitment

During the period January – August 2022 the following recruitment has taken place:

Number of jobs advertised	53 (this includes internal and external adverts)
Number of jobs re-advertised	9
Number of applicants	275
Appointments made	31 (this figure is what is known from the data at the point of running the report: there may be a few that have not been set to “hire” status and therefore not included)
Conditional Offers in progress	9

Leavers

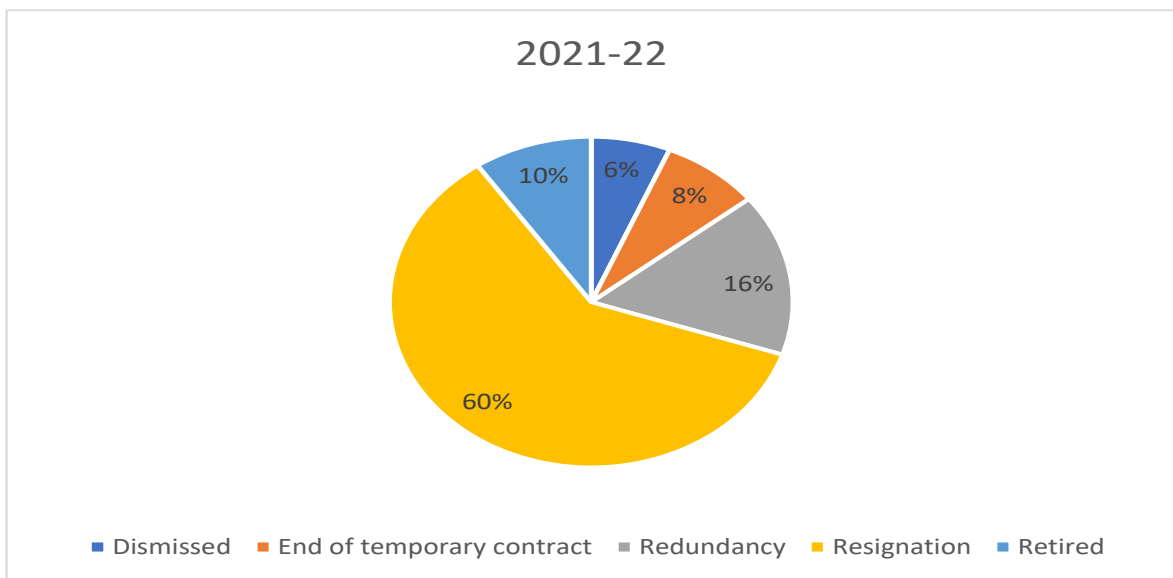
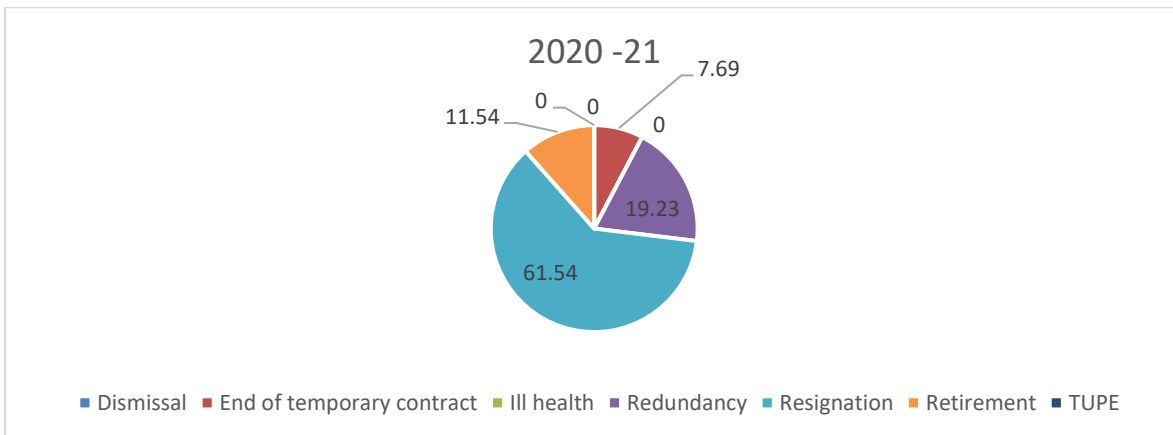
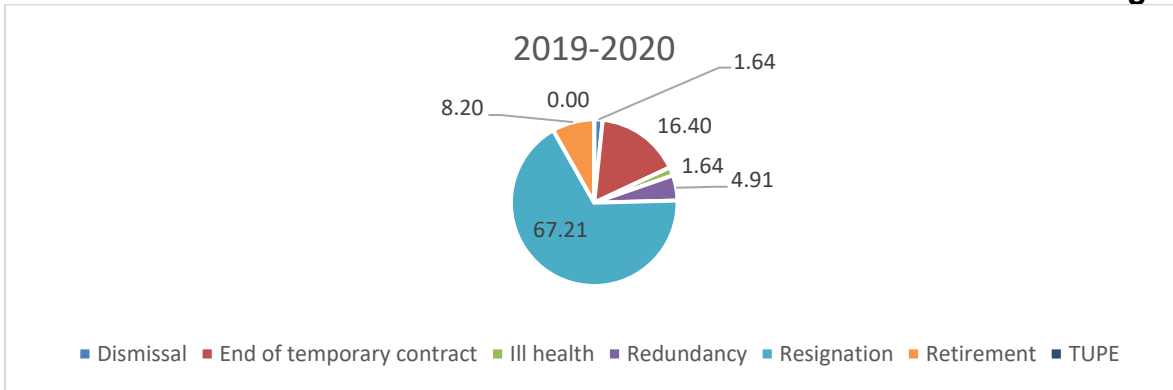
Financial Year	Number of leavers
2019-20	61
2020-21	26
2021-22	63
2022-23 (April – September)	26

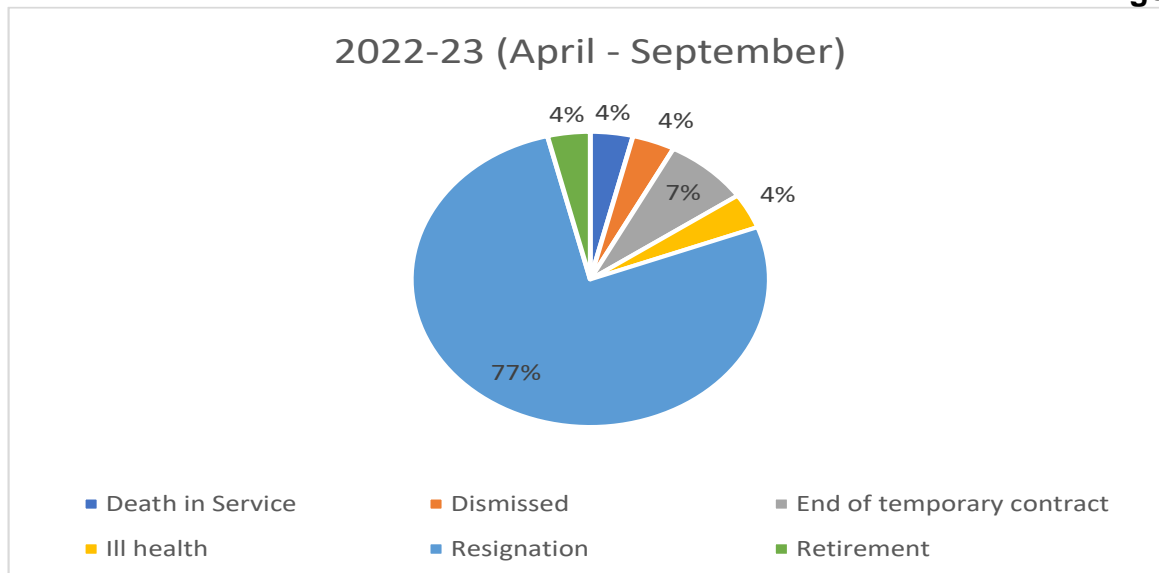
Financial Year	CEU	CWE / C&E	EPP	Resources		
2019-20	7	34	15	5		
2020-21	0	10	13	3		
2021-22	6	28	19	10		
Service Areas	CEU/Solicitor to the Council	C&E	Strategic Growth	Resources	NWedR	Revs, Bens & Customer Service
2022-23 (April – September)	5	10	9	1	1	0

In addition to the figures for the first 6 months of 2022-23 we are aware of at least another two resignations that will take effect over the next couple of months.

Leavers by reason

The graphs below illustrate percentage of leavers by reason:





The charts and the data highlight that resignation is the top reason for leaving. This is not necessarily a negative as staff may leave for career development, relocation etc.

However, it is worth noting for the year to date 76% of leavers are as a result of staff resigning compared to an average of 63% of resignations over the previous 3 years. It is becoming more apparent that high volumes of staff are leaving: additionally the number of professional, specialist staff and those in sole occupancy posts is increasing.

The nature of change in 2022-23 is different

The table below shows a comparison of resignations by job family.

Financial Year	Job Family				
	Operational	Business Support	Technical	Professional	Managerial
2019/20	12	3	11	4	2
2022/23 (April – September)	7	1	11	3	4

Additionally, in 2019/20 4 apprentices resigned.

Resignations identified in the ‘managerial’ job family could also have been categorised in ‘professional’.

In the first 6 months of 2022-23 there has clearly been a significant increase in the rate of resignation by the “professional” and “managerial” groups: 7 in 6 months, compared to 6 in the whole of 2019-20. In the operational and technical groups, resignation levels are running at a higher rate than in 2019-20.

Market Supplements

Provisions within the Pay Policy Statement provide delegated authority to the Head of Paid Service to authorise a market supplement to employees as appropriate, for reasons such as:

Agenda Item No. 10

taking on additional responsibilities, retaining skills, knowledge and experience (S/K/E) and also to secure preferred candidate(s) at point of recruitment and selection for exceptional experience.

Several staff are currently in receipt of a market supplement as highlighted in the table below:

Service Area	Number of Market Supplements	Current Value	Reason for market supplement
CLT	3	£10,600	2 Statutory Officers 1 Retain - S/K/E
Legal	3	£7,826	Retain – S/K/E
HR	1	£1,000	Additional responsibility
ICT	6	£15,451	5 – linked to pay and grading review 1 - Retain – S/K/E
Accountancy	1	£1,456	Retain – S/K/E
Planning	1	£3,000	Additional Responsibility
NWedR	2	£12,000	Secure recruitment
Benefits	1	£3,000	Retain – S/K/E
TOTAL	18	£54,333	

Eleven of the 18 market supplements highlighted above are applied to officers/managers on band 7 and above.

3. Summary

The number of resignations following the pandemic may be a case of staff reflecting and making life changes and, as a result of COVID, people's views on work-life balance have changed.

It is also worth noting that the Council is going through a transformational journey and individuals may consider this an appropriate time to move on, whether that be for progression or a change in career/role. With transformation comes uncertainty which may be a factor: most people seek predictability and to feel valued.

We also know that the pay disparity compared to other Councils is a contributory factor.

Exit questionnaires are sent out but, unfortunately, rarely completed and returned. Information that is available highlights the main reasons for leaving as higher salaries and better opportunities.

Appendix 3 – an alternative approach – mapping across to NJC points

Salary Band	Spinal Column Point	Salary Band Code	Annual	Map to NJC point	Average uplift for pay band		
1	19	WFB1	19716.00	7	20,444	3.69%	3.41%
	20		20434.00	9	21,269	4.09%	
	21		21175.00	10	21,695	2.46%	
2	22	WFB2	21719.00	12	22,571	3.92%	3.56%
	23		22355.00	13	23,023	2.99%	
	24		23082.00	15	23,953	3.77%	
3	25	WFB3	23811.00	17	24,920	4.66%	3.64%
	26		24583.00	18	25,419	3.40%	
	27		25396.00	20	26,446	4.13%	
	28		26222.00	21	26,975	2.87%	
4	29	WFB4	27255.00	23	28,226	3.56%	3.58%
	30		28166.00	24	29,174	3.58%	
	31		29052.00	25	30,095	3.59%	
	32		29906.00	26	30,984	3.60%	
5	33	WFB5	30784.00	27	31,895	3.61%	3.63%
	34		31652.00	28	32,798	3.62%	
	35		32312.00	29	33,486	3.63%	
	36		33165.00	30	34,373	3.64%	
6	37	WFB6	34093.00	31	35,336	3.65%	3.66%
	38		35088.00	32	36,371	3.66%	
	39		36239.00	33	37,568	3.67%	
	40		37187.00	34	38,553	3.67%	
7	41	WFB7	38165.00	36	40,578	6.32%	6.22%
	42		39137.00	37	41,591	6.27%	
	43		40109.00	38	42,614	6.25%	

	44		41094.00	39	43,570	6.03%	
8	45	WFB8	42015.00	40	44,624	6.21%	6.07%
	46		43028.00	41	45,648	6.09%	
	47		44012.00	42	46,662	6.02%	
	48		44988.00	43	47,665	5.95%	
9	49	WFB9	45950.00	44	48,683	5.95%	5.79%
	50		46973.00	45	49,702	5.81%	
	51		47969.00	46	50,737	5.77%	
	52		49025.00	47	51,779	5.62%	

Average increase by mapping to NJC points

Band averages

WFB1	3.41%
WFB2	3.56%
WFB3	3.64%
WFB4	3.58%
WFB5	3.63%
WFB6	3.66%
WFB7	6.22%
WFB8	6.07%
WFB9	5.79%

Average = **4.40%**
increase for spot salaries

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
21 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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

**RECOMMENDATIONS
ETHICS & STANDARDS COMMITTEE
8 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Purpose of Report

To consider recommendations from the Ethics & Standards Committee on matters outside the policy framework or approved budget of the Council.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Would Councillors please note that the related reports and documents have not been included in the Council book, as they have already been sent to Members via the committee agenda pack. A public inspection copy is available on request. The policy documents, referred to below, have been posted on the Council's website. See the report on page 15 of the pdf at this link:

https://forms.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/docs/doc57828_20220908_e_and_s_agenda.pdf

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE
<p>The Committee recommend that:</p> <p>Council adopts the national Local Government Association (LGA) Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020. Adoption of the national code to be implemented with training following the May 2023 elections.</p> <p>https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/local-government-association-model-councillor-code-conduct-2020</p>	<p>Councillor C Edginton-White</p>

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
21 SEPTEMBER 2022**

QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL

1. Question to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services from Councillor A Totty

Can the cabinet member tell me what actions, if any, is this Council taking to introduce food waste collection from households?

2. Question to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism from Councillor M Hart

Could the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic, Regeneration and Localism advise this Council, when we are going to see the Bridge Street car park redeveloped?

3. Question to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio from Councillor L Jones

Could the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio confirm whether or not he thinks that the WFDC main switchboard automated message is acceptable in its new format, given that it is difficult to understand and follow as a result of the numerous breaks in the speech pattern?

4. Question to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services from Councillor B Brookes

Given the ongoing issues with the quality of street cleansing and litter bin emptying previously raised would the Cabinet Member for Operational Services care to join myself and one of my fellow ward colleagues Cllr. David Ross for a meeting on site in the ward to discuss these issues so he can see for himself some of the problems?

5. Question to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism from Councillor J Byng

Since the Progression Alliance took control of WFDC in 2019, could the Leader of the Council, who has responsibility for Localism, tell this Council what level of savings have been made by asset transfers and savings, broken down specifically and for the years 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022?

6. Question to the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Safety from Councillor N Desmond

Following Full Council's approval last December for electric vehicle charging points across Wyre Forest, could the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Safety update me on what has happened on this issue over the last 9 months and when can we expect the first electrical charging point to be fully operational by?

7. Question to the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Safety from Councillor I Hardiman

Can the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Safety please provide an update on whether this Council is still considering establishing a Solar Farm on land owned by the Council?

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

Given that some placements under the Government's Homes for Ukraine Scheme have already come to an end and more may do so as the initial 6 month commitment by hosts is reached, what steps is WFDC taking to ensure that Ukrainian refugees whose placement cannot continue are able to find either new hosts or residential tenancies locally?

9. Question to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services from Councillor M Hart

Could the Cabinet Member for Operational Services advise this Council whether he is satisfied with the level of street cleansing that is taking place on our estates throughout the District?