

Open

Council

Agenda

6pm
Wednesday, 19 July 2023
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster



Council

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COUNCIL MEETING

11 July 2023

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 19 July 2023**, 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

Disclosure of Interests

Members and co-opted Members of the Council are reminded that, in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and the statutory provisions of the Localism Act, they are required to consider in ADVANCE of each meeting whether they have a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI), an other registrable interest (ORI) or a non-registrable interest (NRI) in relation to any matter on the agenda. If advice is needed, Members should contact the Monitoring Officer or other legal officer in good time before the meeting.

If any Member or co-opted Member of the Council identifies a DPI or ORI which they have not already registered on the Council's register of interests or which requires updating, they should complete the disclosure form which can be obtained from Democratic Services at any time, copies of which will be available at the meeting for return to the Monitoring Officer.

Members and co-opted Members are required to disclose any DPIs and ORIs at the meeting. Where the matter relates to a DPI they may not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not stay in the meeting unless granted a dispensation.

Where the matter relates to an ORI they may not vote on the matter unless granted an advance dispensation.

Where a Member or co-opted Member has an NRI which directly relates to their financial interest or wellbeing, or that of a relative or close associate, they must disclose the interest at the meeting, may not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not stay in the meeting unless granted a dispensation.

Where a matter affects the NRI of a Member or co-opted Member, the Code of Conduct sets out the test which must be applied by the MEMBER to decide whether disclosure is required. Again please ensure you have spoken in ADVANCE to the relevant legal officer and determined whether it is appropriate to declare the NRI and leave.

(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.

WEBCASTING NOTICE

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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, 19 July 2023

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 Nick Collison – Trinity Methodist Church, Foley Park	
2.	Apologies for Absence	
3.	Declarations of Interests by Members In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI), an other registrable interest (ORI) or a non-registrable interest (NRI) in relation to any matter on the agenda. Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's Constitution for full details.	
4.	Minutes To approve as a correct record and sign the Minutes of the last meeting held on 17 May 2023.	9
5.	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 10 July 2023. 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>	

6.	<p>Chairman's Communications</p> <p>To note the engagements of the Chairman of the Council since the Council's last meeting.</p>	14
7.	<p>Leader of the Council Announcements</p> <p>To receive announcements from the Leader of the Council.</p>	
8.	<p>Review of the May 2023 Elections</p> <p>To receive a report from the Returning Officer for the District and Parish Elections on the local elections held on 4 May 2023.</p>	15
9.	<p>Policy and Budget Framework</p> <p>Matters which require a Decision by Council.</p> <p>(a) Recommendations from Cabinet 13 June 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) – Connectivity project <p>(b) Recommendations from Cabinet 17 July 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Localism: Stourport Sports Club and Bewdley Museum <p>(c) Recommendations from Cabinet 17 July 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment of 8A Bridge Street, Stourport <p>(d) Recommendations from Cabinet 17 July 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) <p>Please note that the reports and associated documents, referred to above, have been circulated electronically to Members. Public inspection copies are available on request. Please refer to the front cover for contact details.</p>	<p>35</p> <p>36</p> <p>Withdrawn</p> <p>37</p>
10.	<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 10 July 2023.</p> <p>One question has 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>	38

11.	<p>Motions Submitted under Standing Orders</p> <p>To consider Motions in the order in which notice has been received.</p> <p>No motions were received by the deadline.</p>	
12.	<p>Emergency Motions submitted under Standing Orders</p> <p>To consider Emergency Motions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 4.1 (i).</p>	
13.	<p>To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.</p>	
14.	<p>Exclusion of the Press and Public</p> <p>To consider passing the following resolution:</p> <p>“That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of “exempt information” as defined in the paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act”.</p>	

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

15.	<p>Agenda Item 9 (a) Policy and Budget Framework Recommendations from Cabinet, 13 June 2023 - Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) - Connectivity project</p> <p>EXEMPT Appendix - Detailed recommendations agreed by Cabinet which includes the amount of the increase in the capital programme.</p>	
16.	<p>Agenda Item 9 (d) Policy and Budget Framework Recommendations from Cabinet, 17 July 2023 - Future High Streets Fund (FHSF)</p> <p>EXEMPT Appendix - Detailed recommendations agreed by Cabinet which includes the amount of the increase in the capital programme.</p>	
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>	

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY,
KIDDERMINSTER

17TH MAY 2023 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: P Dyke (Chairman), J Aston, E Bourne, B Brookes, J F Byng, L Carroll, V Caulfield, G Connolly, N J Desmond, R Drew, K Gale, N Gale, J Griffiths, I Hardiman, P Harrison, M J Hart, K Henderson, D Little, N Martin, M McDonnell, D Morehead, F M Oborski MBE, T L Onslow, M Rayner, C Rogers, D Ross, D Russell, A Sutton, L Whitehouse and P W M Young.

C.01 Prayers

Prayers were said by Rev Jason Borlase, Vicar, Kidderminster Baptist Church.

C.02 Election of Chairman

Councillor C Rogers was nominated as Chairman. This was moved by Councillor M Hart and seconded by Councillor T Onslow.

Decision: Councillor C Rogers be elected as Chairman of the Council for the municipal year 2023-2024.

C.03 Chairman – Investiture and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

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

C.04 Chairman’s Response

The Chairman thanked members for his appointment. He said it was a great honour to be in the position and would do his best to help everybody. He announced that his chosen charity for the municipal year was Midlands Air Ambulance.

C.05 Retiring Chairman

On behalf of the political groups Conservative Group, Councillor M Hart, Independent and Green Group, Councillor M Rayner, Labour Group, Councillor L Whitehouse and Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor F Oborski MBE, thanked the retiring Chairman for his contribution to the role during his term of office.

C.06 Election of Vice-Chairman

Councillor P Harrison nominated Councillor J Byng as Vice-Chairman. This was seconded by Councillor I Hardiman.

Decision: Councillor J Byng be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the municipal year 2023-2024.

C.07 Vice-Chairman – Investiture and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

After being invested with his Badge of Office, Councillor J Byng made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

C.08 Election of Leader of the Council

Council considered a report from the Chief Executive which asked members to elect a Leader of the Council for the period to the annual general meeting following the ordinary elections in 2027, in accordance with section 91 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Council's constitution.

Councillor I Hardiman proposed Councillor M Hart for the position of Leader of the Council. The proposal was seconded by Councillor D Ross.

There were no other nominations and following a unanimous vote Councillor M Hart was elected as Leader of the Council.

Decision: Council elected Councillor M Hart as the Leader of the Council for the period to the annual general meeting of the Council following the next ordinary elections in May 2027.

C.09 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: H E Dyke, S Miah and N Wilson.

C.10 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

C.11 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C.12 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

C.13 Chairman's Communications

Agenda Item No. 4

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

C.14 Leader of the Council Announcements

The Leader of the Council thanked members for supporting his election as Leader for the next four years. He referred members to his tabled report. He confirmed the appointment of Councillor Kevin Gale and Councillor Alan Sutton as Armed Forces Champions and also announced the members whom he had appointed to serve with him in the Cabinet.

C.15 Political and Constitutional Structures 2023-2024

Council considered a report from the Solicitor to the Council on the proposed political and constitutional structures for the municipal year 2023-2024.

The Leader presented the report and formally moved the full suite of recommendations as set out in the report for approval. Councillor I Hardiman seconded the proposals.

Upon a vote, the recommendations were agreed.

Decision: Council:

- 1.1 Agreed the revisions to the Constitution as set out in Appendix 1.**
- 1.2 Approved the proposed Political Management Structure of committees for 2023/2024 as set out in Appendix 2.**
- 1.3 Agreed the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees as contained in Appendix 3.**
- 1.4 Adopted the Municipal Calendar as set out in Appendix 4.**
- 1.5 Agreed the revised table of political balance in Appendix 5.**
- 1.6 Agreed the appointments to outside bodies as set out in Appendix 6.**
- 1.7 Agreed that the Planning Code of Good Practice as set out in Appendix 7 be adopted and added to the Constitution as Part 22.**
- 1.8 Authorised the Solicitor to the Council to settle any outstanding details relating to the political structures and to make changes as necessary to the Council's Constitution to give effect to the Council's decisions and any other revisions necessary to reflect needs or circumstances.**

C.16 Members' Annual Activity Reports and Attendance 2022-2023

Council received the schedule of Members' Annual Reports giving details of their activities in their role as District Councillors for the 2022-2023 municipal year and a record of Members' attendance for the 2022-2023 municipal year.

Decision: The reports and attendance be noted.

C.17 Annual Reports for the Municipal Year 2022-2023

- (a) Cabinet**
- (b) Overview & Scrutiny Committee**
- (c) Ethics & Standards Committee**

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

Decision: The annual reports for Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Ethics & Standards Committee be noted.

C.18 Independent Remuneration Panel

Council received a report from the Chief Executive which sought agreement to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to recommend any amendments to the scheme of allowances to be paid to Members for the municipal year 2023/24 and for subsequent years.

Councillor P Dyke formally moved the recommendations for approval.

The Leader seconded the proposals and spoke about the importance of having an independent panel with the necessary wealth of experience required to sit on the panel and gave a brief summary of the timeline.

Upon a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

Decision: Council;

- 1.1 AUTHORISED the Solicitor to Council to convene an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) at the earliest opportunity, after seeking expressions of interest in serving from suitably qualified persons who are independent of the Council and having consulted Group Leaders prior to making appointments to the Panel;**
- 1.2 REQUESTED the IRP to report back no later than the Council's meeting in September 2023 with recommendations for the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2023/24 (which would take effect from 9 May 2023) and should include an uprating mechanism that would apply for the years commencing 1 April 2024, 1 April 2025, 1 April 2026 and 1 April 2027.**

C.19 Questions

No questions were received by the deadline.

C.20 Motions Submitted Under Standing Orders

No motions were received by the deadline.

C.21 Emergency Motions submitted under Standing Orders

There were no emergency motions.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6.51pm.

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

Chairman's List of Functions – 2023

May to July 2023

*Tuesday 13 June	Sustainable Coffee Morning – Mayor of Ledbury, St Katherine's Hall, Ledbury
Friday 23 rd June	Hampton Ferry, Boat Lane, Evesham, - Cllr R Raphael, Chairman, Wychavon District Council – Barbecue
Sunday 25 th June	City of Worcestershire Civic Service, Mayor's Sunday, at Worcestershire Cathedral
Tuesday 27 th June	The Chairman of Worcestershire County Council Afternoon tea at County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester

* Denotes attendance by Vice Chairman

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council

19 July 2023

REVIEW OF THE MAY 2023 ELECTIONS

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Ian Hardiman, Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	The Returning Officer for the District and Parish Elections
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ian Miller, Chief Executive ian.miller@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1: data on turnout, postal votes, rejected ballot papers etc Appendix 2: Poll Card example and prescribed wording

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide a report on the local elections held on 4th May 2023

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is asked to

2.1 NOTE the report on the May 2023 elections.

3. ELECTION BACKGROUND

3.1 All out elections were held in Wyre Forest District on Thursday 4th May 2023 for **Wyre Forest District Council** (12 wards with a total of 33 seats to elect). In addition there were contested elections for both **Stourport-on-Severn Town Council** (4 of the 6 Town wards with a total of 10 seats) and **Bewdley Town Council** (3 Town wards with a total of 13 seats). Stourport-on-Severn North and Stour and Wilden wards of Stourport-on-Severn Town Council did not have contested elections, the first time that elections to a town council have not been contested in well over a decade. The Parish councils of **Broome** (7 seats), **Chaddesley Corbett** (11), **Churchill & Blakedown** (9), **Kidderminster Foreign** (7), **Rock** (13), **Rushock** (7), **Stone** (9), **Upper Arley** (9) and **Wolverley & Cookley** (14), also held all out elections.

- 3.2 Following the implementation of the Elections Act 2022 the local elections were the first in England to require voters to show a form of photo identification before being issued with a ballot paper. Voters could use a wide range of ID such as passports, full and provisional driving licences, Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) cards, blue badges, and some concessionary travel cards. The ID used in a polling station must be original, but it did not matter if it was expired so long as the photo was a good likeness. Voters without an existing acceptable form of photo ID could apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate (VAC). The VAC displayed a voter's name and a passport style photo. Provision was also made at every polling station to allow voters to request that their ID was inspected in private.
- 3.3 In Wyre Forest 210 applications were received by the deadline for voter authority certificates, and 195 were issued for applicants who had provided all necessary information including a satisfactory photograph. One temporary VAC was issued. In total, 36% of VACs were used which means that those holding a VAC were more likely to vote in person than the generality of electors.
- 3.4 There was a very high compliance rate among electors in Wyre Forest. 99.8% of 12,200 electors voting in polling stations brought photo ID that met the requirements of the Elections Act 2022. By the end of the polling day, 22 electors who tried to vote in a polling station were not given a ballot paper because they did not meet the new voter ID requirements. This represents only 0.2% of electors who asked to be issued with a ballot paper in a polling station. The figures also show that, while 32 electors were initially turned away, ten returned with acceptable ID and were able to vote.

4. NOMINATIONS

- 4.1 There was a total of 99 nominations received for the district council election which was slightly down on the 102 received for the all-out district elections held in 2019.
- 4.2 There were 128 nominations received for the Town and Parish Councils which resulted in all the wards for Bewdley Town Council and four of the six Stourport-on-Severn Town Council wards being contested. Polls were held in Stourport-on-Severn Areley Kings East, Stourport-on-Severn Areley Kings West, Stourport-on-Severn Central and Stourport-on-Severn Lickhill. For all other parish councils, the candidates were duly elected as the number of candidates was the same as or lower than the number of vacancies and therefore no poll was held.

5. TURNOUT

- 5.1 The overall turnout for each of the elections held on 4 May 2023 was as follows
- Wyre Forest District Council – 28%. The count was held on 5 May 2023 and the last seat was declared at 16:40

- Bewdley Town Council – 34.4% with the last seat declared at 17:30
- Stourport Town Council- 28.4% with the last seat declared at 16:55

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

5.3 The trend of postal voters being far more likely to cast their vote than people voting in person has become well established. Therefore, while other measures to encourage participation will continue, the most effective is likely to be encouraging more people to register for a postal vote. The correct information about turnout by postal voters may be seen in tables 4 to 6. Participation was in line with previous elections, reaching more than 70% in each type of election. (Earlier announcements, including those at the count, unfortunately did not use the correct divisor and therefore understated the percentage of postal voters who had voted. I apologise for that error, which did not affect the result of the elections.)

6. FEEDBACK FROM THE DEBRIEFING MEETING

6.1 A ‘wash-up’ de-brief was held with agents and candidates on 25 May to discuss the preparation and delivery of the local elections in May 2023. This meeting was attended by several sitting members and agents representing several political parties. The main discussion included:

- Concern about the design and change of the poll card that now is an A4 Poll Card letter rather than the traditional A5 postcard-size. Parties were reminded that the change to the Poll Card letter was introduced as a direct consequence of the Elections Act 2022, which requires far more information to be on the Poll Card – a sample of the letter issued is shown in appendix 2 together with the prescribed wording that must be included. The design of the Poll Card letter is now being reviewed for use in future polls to ensure that the “traditional” poll card element is prominently located at the top of the letter and, if possible, that a map of where the polling station is located is included;
- Representatives of the parties reported a number of cases of electors claiming not to have received Poll Cards, and similar feedback was received at some polling stations. There is no evidence to suggest that the letters were not issued. The likeliest explanation is that the letters were either not opened or that electors did not realise that the letter was the Poll Card despite the clear wording of the letter and the wording on the outside of the envelope, a sample of which is in Appendix 2. The move from A5 style cards to A4 letters may have meant that some people did not retain the document as they would have done in the past. There is no requirement for an elector to produce the Poll Card letter in order to vote;
- Difficulties were experienced by some voters in finding the BHS-5 polling station which is now at Habberley Social Club, following the polling places review approved by Council on 7th December 2022. It is apparent that some electors did not seek to check the location on a paper map, on line or using satellite navigation

prior to setting out on their journey to the polling station. Additional A-board and other signage was deployed several times during the day to assist in showing the route from Canterbury Avenue: regrettably this was removed or turned around on a number of occasions by unhelpful members of the public. As noted above, consideration is being given to including a map on all Poll Card letters in future;

- Arrangements at Trinity Methodist church to accommodate a third polling station in a large room worked well but, for the much higher turnout expected at a General Election, a second room will be needed to accommodate one of the polling stations;
- The usual room was not allocated at St Anne’s Primary School and, while the alternative school hall was larger, it involved a flight of steps or significant ramped path for electors, which was not suitable. Future use of this school will require access to the room that has previously been allocated for elections. Disruption was experienced by the use of the other part of Habberley Social Club and its bar in the evening. Future bookings at this venue will be negotiated on the basis of requiring use of the whole building;
- There were no issues reported in respect of queuing at polling stations and the introduction of an extra poll clerk regarding Voter ID operated successfully;
- A suggestion, that more durable laminated signage should be used, will be considered;
- At double and triple polling stations, few poll card letters were printed with colour coding which made voting at such stations more confusing. This was acknowledged and the process of checking colour coding with the printers would be reviewed.

7. ABSENT VOTING

7.1 Table A below shows the number of postal votes issued and returned including the number of rejected postal votes for the election in May 2023 compared to previous elections.

Table A postal votes

	2023 Local	2021 County council/PCC	2019 UKPE	2019 Local
No. of Postal Vote Packs issued	13,269	14,346	12,756	11,552
No. of Postal votes returned	9526	10,998	11,134	8,349
Postal votes accepted as valid and counted	9342	10,506	10,827	8,034
Postal Votes rejected for missing statement or Ballot Paper(s)	80	346	68	132

No. of Postal Votes Rejected at scanning	104	146	239	183
Rejected at scanning %	1.09%	1.33%	2.15%	2.19%

- 7.2 20 postal packs were received in the post in the 24 hours after the close of poll and a total of 41 have been received in the post since 5th May 2023.
- 7.3 The decrease in postal voters from the previous election in 2021 was to be expected as voters changed back to in person voting following the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- 7.4 However the significant increase in postal voters from the previous local government election as well as the general election held in 2019 may have been caused by the need to show photographic ID at a polling station for the first time.
- 7.5 By law the Electoral Registration Officer must write to postal voters whose ballot papers were not included in the count because their personal identifiers on the postal vote could not be verified and to explain the reason why e.g. incorrect date of birth provided or signature didn't match that on their original application form. A total of 104 letters have been issued to those electors who had a postal vote rejected in May 2023. Those whose signature did not match the original supplied will also be sent an identifier refresher form to complete.
- 7.6 The number of proxies appointed at these elections was 45. A breakdown of proxy voters compared to previous elections is set out in Table B.

Table B proxy voters

	2023 Local	2021 WCC/PCC	2019 UKPE	2019 Local	2018 Local
Proxies	45	38	297	24	60

- 7.7 The number of proxy voters has increased slightly from the previous major election in 2021 as well as the comparable previous local elections in 2019.

8. COUNT AND RESULTS

- 8.1 The verification of all ballot boxes and the count for the Wyre Forest District and the contested wards of Bewdley and Stourport Town Council elections took place on 5th May 2023, at Wyre Forest Leisure Centre. Information on rejected ballot

papers, including unused votes in multi-member wards, is set out in Tables 8 to Table 13.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial accounts for the different elections held in May 2023 are currently being complied so the appropriate recharges can be made to Bewdley Town Council, Stourport-on-Severn Town Council and all other parish councils who had elections. The balance of costs will be met by WFDC and is expected to fall within the allocated budget for the elections service. The Government provided new burdens funding related to changes introduced by the Elections Act 2022, which will be deployed as relevant in meeting the cost of the elections.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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

11. RISK MANAGEMENT

11.1 All elections and electoral registration work is supported by robust risk management plans to ensure contingency arrangements are always in place for meeting electoral legislation.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 The Council is invited to note the report of the May 2023 elections.

13. CONSULTEES

13.1 Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being
13.2 Corporate Leadership team

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 A breakdown of the full results for the May 2023 elections held on 4th May 2023 can be found at

<https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/your-council/elections-and-voting/election-results/2023-election-results/>

14.2 A breakdown of polling station data that was recorded by the Presiding Officers relating to Voter ID can be found at

[Polling station data 2023 | Wyre Forest District Council \(wyreforestdc.gov.uk\)](https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/polling-station-data-2023)

Appendix 1- detailed tables on turnout

Overall turnout for the Wyre Forest District Council Elections at ward level compared to the previous equivalent elections is set out in table 1, as well as comparisons for Bewdley Town Council in table 2 and Stourport-on-Severn Town Council in table 3.

Table 1

Turnout %	2018*	2019	2023	% Difference in Turnout from 2019
Aggborough & Spennells	36.09%	36.14%	31.31%	-4.83%
Areley Kings & Riverside	30.98%	30.22%	27.16%	-3.06%
Blakebrook & Habberley South	30.98%	30.22%	26.23%	-3.99%
Broadwaters	26.12%	27.21%	22.39%	-4.82%
Bewdley & Rock	37.34%	35.37%	31.74%	-3.63%
Foley Park & Hoobrook	26.27%	26.30%	23.16%	-3.14%
Franche & Habberley North	31.68%	29.81%	26.46%	-3.35%
Lickhill	N/A**	33.21%	31.03%	-2.18%
Mitton	25.97%	26.65%	25.05%	-1.6%
Offmore & Comberton	28.68%	28.67%	27.12%	-1.55%
Wribbenhall & Arley	34.97%	36.14%	33.82%	-2.32%
Wyre Forest Rural	35.51%	37.76%	33.95%	-3.81%
Wyre Forest District Council	30.64%	31.01%	28.0%	-3.01%

Note *The election in 2018 was the final election in ‘thirds’ for Wyre Forest District Council. ** No seat up for election in Lickhill ward in 2018

Table 2

Turnout %	2019	2023	% Difference in Turnout
Bewdley East	35.60%	32.05%	-3.55%
Bewdley West	39.57%	36.81%	-2.76%
Bewdley Wribbenhall	36.50%	34.32%	-2.18%
Bewdley Town Council	37.13%	34.4%	-2.73%

Table 3

Turnout %	2019	2023*	% Difference in Turnout
Areley Kings East	24.50%	21.59%	-2.91%
Areley Kings West	32.89%	32.00%	-0.89%
Lickhill	33.12%	30.98%	-2.14%
Stourport Central	33.73%	29.03%	-4.7%
Stourport-on-Severn Town	28.63%	28.4%	-0.23%

Note: Stourport North and Stour & Wilden were not contested in the 2023 elections.

Postal votes Returned

A breakdown of the postal voting returns for each district ward for the local elections on 4th May is set out in Table 4. Tables 5 and 6 provide the breakdown for the Town Councils.

Table 4

District Ward	Postal Vote Electorate	Postal Votes Returned	Turnout
Aggborough & Spennells	1220	950`	77.86%
Areley Kings & Riverside	1062	766	72.13%
Bewdley & Rock	1326	938	70.73%
Blakebrook & Habberley South	1210	844	69.75%
Broadwaters	942	630	66.88%
Foley Park & Hoobrook	1123	777	69.19%
Franche & Habberley North	1341	936	69.80%
Lickhill	413	322	77.97%
Mitton	1252	885	70.68%
Offmore & Comberton	1168	843	72.17%
Wribbenhall & Arley	857	637	74.32%
Wyre Forest Rural	1355	998	73.65%
Total	13,269	9526	71.80%

Table 5

Bewdley Town Council wards	Postal Vote Electorate	Postal Votes returned	Turnout
Bewdley East	370	268	72.43%
Bewdley West	424	331	78.06%
Bewdley Wribbenhall	601	458	76.20%
Bewdley Town Council	1395	1057	75.77%

Table 6

Stourport-on-Severn Town Council wards	Postal Vote Electorate	Postal Votes returned	Turnout
Areley Kings East	327	235	71.86%
Areley Kings West	380	282	74.21%
Lickhill	411	316	76.88%
Stourport Central	355	251	70.70%
Stourport-on-Severn Town Council	1473	1084	73.59%

Number of electors voting by post

The number of electors voting by post per ward for the local elections on 4 May 2023 is set out in table 7.

Table 7

Ward	Number of Postal voters for elections on 2 May 2019	Number of Postal voters for election on 4 May 2023	Increase in Postal voters for 4 May 2023	% increase in Postal voters for 4 May election
Aggborough & Spennells	1066	1220	154	14.4%
Areley Kings & Riverside	926	1062	136	14.6%
Bewdley & Rock	1125	1326	201	17.8%
Blakebrook & Habberley South	1147	1210	63	5.4%
Broadwaters	856	942	86	10%
Foley Park & Hoobrook	1054	1123	69	6.5%
Franche & Habberley North	1227	1341	114	9.2%
Lickhill	344	413	69	20%
Mitton	1066	1252	186	17.4%
Offmore & Comberton	1022	1168	146	14.2%
Wribbenhall & Arley	769	857	88	11.44%
Wyre Forest Rural	1157	1355	198	17.1%
Total	11,759	13,269	1,510	12.84%

Rejected ballot papers

At the count on 5 May 2023 the following number of ballot papers was rejected for each election:

- Wyre Forest District Council- 105 ballot papers were rejected across all wards with 4 for 'want of an official mark', 33 for 'voting for more Candidates than voter was entitled to', 6 'writing or mark by which the voter could be identified' and 62 'unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty'.
- Bewdley Town Council- a total of 27 ballot papers were rejected with 5 being 'voting for more Candidates than voter was entitled to' and 22 for being 'unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty'
- Stourport-on-Severn Town Council- A total of 27 ballot papers were rejected with 1 being 'voting for more Candidates than voter was entitled to', 1 'writing or mark by which the voter could be identified' and 12 'unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty'

Table 8

These rejected papers are split into wards below.

Ward	Want of official mark	Voting for more candidates than entitled	Writing or mark by which voter could be identified	Being unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty	Rejected in part	Total
Aggborough & Spennells	4	4	0	0	0	8
Areley Kings & Riverside	0	1	0	5	0	6
Bewdley & Rock	0	12	0	11	0	23
Blakebrook & Habberley South	0	1	0	3	0	4
Broadwaters	0	3	0	10	0	13
Foley Park and Hoobrook	0	0	3	0	0	3
Franche and Habberley North	0	1	0	7	0	8
Lickhill	0	2	3	1	0	6
Mitton	0	1	0	1	0	2
Offmore and Comberton	0	3	0	6	0	9

Wribbenhall & Arley	0	1	0	6	0	7
Wyre Forest Rural	0	4	0	12	0	16

Unused votes on valid ballot papers

Table 9 below shows the number of unused votes for each ward where there were multiple seats contested.

Table 9

Wyre Forest District Council

District Ward	Votes Cast	Unused Votes	% unused
Aggborough & Spennells	5565	598	9.7%
Areley Kings & Riverside	4547	634	12.2%
Bewdley & Rock	5964	664	10%
Blakebrook & Habberley South	4598	789	14.6%
Broadwaters	3548	921	20.6%
Foley Park & Hoobrook	4420	707	13.8%
Franche & Habberley North	5015	935	15.7%
Mitton	4576	1059	18.8%
Offmore & Comberton	4854	1083	18.2%
Wribbenhall & Arley	2668	223	7.7%
Wyre Forest Rural	6880	841	10.9%

The number of unused votes ran well into three or even four figures in each area, reflecting those hundreds of electors who withheld their second and/or third vote. The proportion of electors who withheld their votes varied greatly between wards. The lower proportions were seen in wards where more than one party had fielded full slates of candidates – in such areas supporters of that party were able to use both or all three of their votes to support the same party but, in other areas, party supporters were perhaps naturally less willing to use their second and/or third vote to support other candidates.

Table 10

Bewdley Town Council

Town Council Ward	Votes Cast	Unused Votes	% Unused
Bewdley East	1903	860	31.1%
Bewdley West	2599	577	18.2%
Bewdley Wribbenhall	3606	1773	33%

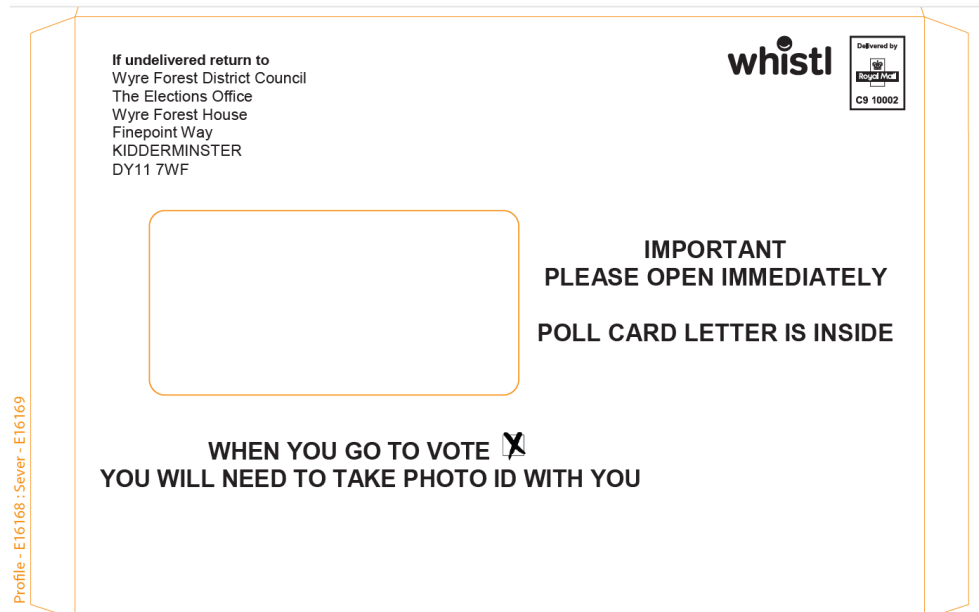
Table 11

Stourport Town Council

Town Council Ward	Votes Cast	Unused Votes	% Unused
Areley Kings East	1165	470	28.7%
Areley Kings West	1094	189	14.7%
Lickhill	1549	424	21.5%
Stourport Central	953	98	9.3%

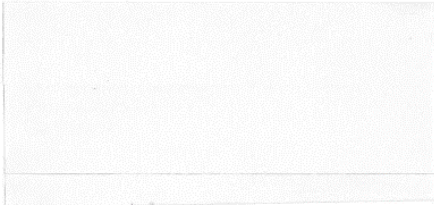
Appendix 2 Example of Poll Card letter and prescribed wording of Poll Cards

The images below are of an issued Poll Card Letter and its outer envelope. It was sent by the Returning Officer for an elector in the Mitton ward and returned after the election.



Return to sender
next at Address

00116 90



Electoral Services

04 JUL 2023

POLL CARD LETTER

YOU MUST BRING PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION IN ORDER TO VOTE

You will not be able to vote unless you show photographic identification to staff at the polling station

A full list of accepted photographic identification is set out below

Accepted forms of photographic identification

You must present one of the following forms of photographic identification in order to vote in person at a polling station:

- A passport issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, a British Overseas Territory, an EEA state or a Commonwealth country
- A driving licence issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or an EEA state
- A biometric immigration document
- An identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card)
- Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identity Card)
- A Blue Badge
- A national identity card issued by an EEA state
- An Older Person's Bus Pass
- A Disabled Person's Bus Pass
- An Oyster 60+ Card
- A Freedom Pass
- A Scottish National Entitlement Card issued in Scotland
- A 60 and Over Welsh Concessionary Travel Card issued in Wales
- A Disabled Person's Welsh Concessionary Travel Card issued in Wales
- A Senior SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- A Registered Blind SmartPass or Blind Person's SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- A War Disablement SmartPass or War Disabled SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- A 60+ SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- A Half Fare SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- An Electoral Identity Card issued in Northern Ireland
- A Voter Authority Certificate or a temporary Voter Authority Certificate

If you do not possess any of the above forms of photographic identification, you can apply to your local electoral registration officer for a free VOTER AUTHORITY CERTIFICATE - You can apply for Voter ID here - www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-to-vote

If your photographic identification document has expired, it will still be accepted so long as the photograph is still a good likeness of you *HOWEVER if you have a temporary Voter Authority Certificate it is only valid for THIS election and cannot be used at any other election*

You may be required to provide further proof of identity if there is any discrepancy between your name as shown on your form of photographic identification and the name of the elector that you claim to be.

98146 / 06825 / 60674 / 06825 / 00252830 / 12688

Helpline number: 01562 732928

Email: electoral@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk

It is an offence to:

- vote more than once at this election, unless you are voting on your own behalf and as a proxy for another person
- vote as a proxy at this election for more than two people, unless you are their spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild
- vote as a proxy for someone if you know that by law they are not allowed to vote

If you need any help or to find out if your polling station is accessible, please contact us.

Your details:



You do not need to take this letter with you in order to vote.

Helpline number: 01562 732928

Email: electoral@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Web: www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/your-council/elections-and-voting

If there is a TOWN or PARISH Election in your ward, it will take place at the same venue on the same day and time

If you are away or cannot go to the polling station on Thursday 4 May 2023 you can do one of the following:

- Apply to vote by post. Completed applications must reach us **before 5pm on Tuesday 18 April 2023**. If you are given a postal vote, you will not be able to vote in person at this election; OR
- Apply to vote by proxy (this means someone else can vote on your behalf). Completed applications must reach us **before 5pm on Tuesday 25 April 2023**. If you appoint a proxy, you can vote if you wish, but only if your proxy has not already voted on your behalf and has not got a postal vote for you.

Please contact us to find out how to apply.

If after 5pm on Tuesday 25 April you are unable to vote in person because you:

- Have a medical emergency, or
- Learn you cannot go to the polling station because of work reasons

You can apply to vote by proxy. Completed applications must reach us **before 5pm on Thursday 4 May 2023**. To find out how to apply, call the helpline immediately.

The Returning Officer issued this card.

Poll card	
Election of councillors to Wyre Forest District Council for the Mitton ward	
Election of councillors to Stourport-on-Severn Town Council for the Stour & Wilden ward	
Date of election:	Thursday 4 May 2023
Voting information	
Polling Day:	Thursday 4 May 2023
Voting hours:	7am to 10pm
Your polling station will be:	16th Wyre Forest (Stourport St Michaels) Mitton Gardens Stourport-on-Severn Worcestershire DY13 9AD

This is the prescribed wording for Poll Cards in the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 Forms, as amended by Schedule 1 to SI 2022/1397.

YOU MUST BRING PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION TO VOTE
 You will not be able to vote unless you show photographic identification to the polling station staff.
 A full list of accepted photographic identification is set out overleaf.

Your details:

- * *[Elector's name and qualifying address details here]*
- * *Returning Officer to omit where poll card sent to an anonymous elector. Poll card to an anonymous elector must be delivered in a sealed envelope*

Electoral register number:

- ** *[You do not need to take this card with you in order to vote.]*
 - ** *[You must have this card with you. You cannot vote without it.]*
 - ** *If anonymous elector omit the words in the first set of brackets, if not omit the words in the second set of brackets.*
- [Insert helpline and other details including website].*

Poll card	
Election of councillors to <i>[insert name of local authority]</i>	
<i>[Insert name of electoral division/ward]</i>	
Date of election: <i>[Day] [Date] [Month] [Year]</i>	
Voting information	
Polling day	
Voting hours	
Your polling station will be	

This space for map or other information such as helpline and website details

If you are away or cannot go to the polling station on *[day] [date of poll]* you can do one of the following:

- Apply to vote by post. Completed applications must reach us **before 5pm on *[day] [date of deadline]***. If you are given a postal vote, you will not be able to vote in person at this election.

OR

- Apply to vote by proxy (this means someone else can vote on your behalf). Completed applications must reach us **before 5pm on *[day] [date of deadline]***. If you appoint a proxy, you can vote if you wish, but only if your proxy has not already voted on your behalf and has not got a postal vote for you.

It is an offence to:

- vote more than once at this election, unless you are voting on your own behalf and as a proxy for another person
- vote as a proxy at this election for more than two people, unless you are their spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild
- vote as a proxy for someone if you know that by law they are not allowed to vote

If you need any help or to find out if your polling station is accessible, please contact us.

If undelivered, return to:
[Insert return address]

Please turn over

If after 5pm on *[the sixth day before the date of the poll]* you are unable to vote in person because:

- You have a medical emergency after 5pm on *[day] [date of deadline]*
- You learn you cannot go to the polling station because of work reasons
- The form of accepted photographic identification that you were intending to use to vote has been lost, stolen, damaged or destroyed, or has not yet been received if applied for recently

You can apply to vote by proxy. Completed applications must reach us **before 5pm on *[day] [date of deadline]***. To find out how to apply, call the helpline immediately.

The Returning Officer issued this card.

[Where the elector is not an anonymous elector, insert the text below]

Accepted forms of photographic identification

You must present one of the following forms of photographic identification in order to vote in person at a polling station:

- A passport issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, a British Overseas Territory, an EEA state or a Commonwealth country
- A driving licence issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or an EEA state
- A biometric immigration document
- An identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card)
- Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identity Card)
- A Blue Badge
- A national identity card issued by an EEA state
- An Older Person's Bus Pass
- A Disabled Person's Bus Pass
- An Oyster 60+ Card
- A Freedom Pass
- A Scottish National Entitlement Card issued in Scotland
- A 60 and Over Welsh Concessionary Travel Card issued in Wales
- A Disabled Person's Welsh Concessionary Travel Card issued in Wales
- A Senior SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- A Registered Blind SmartPass or Blind Person's SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- A War Disablement SmartPass or War Disabled SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- A 60+ SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- A Half Fare SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
- An Electoral Identity Card issued in Northern Ireland
- A Voter Authority Certificate or a temporary Voter Authority Certificate

If you do not possess any of the above forms of photographic identification, you can apply to your local Electoral Registration Officer for a free Voter Authority Certificate. Completed applications must reach us before 5pm on *[day]* *[date of deadline]*.

If your photographic identification document has expired it will still be accepted so long as the photograph is still a good likeness of you, unless it is a temporary Voter Authority Certificate which is not valid for use on the date of poll.

You may be required to provide further proof of identity if there is any discrepancy between your name as shown on your form of photographic identification and the name of the elector that you claim to be.

[Where the elector is an anonymous elector, insert the text below]

Accepted form of photographic identification

You must present your Anonymous Elector's Document in addition to this poll card in order to vote in person at a polling station. The electoral register number on the Anonymous Elector's Document must match the electoral register number shown on this poll card to be accepted.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
19 JULY 2023**

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

**RECOMMENDATIONS
CABINET
13 JUNE 2023**

Purpose of Report

To consider recommendations from the Cabinet on matters outside the policy framework or approved budget of the Council. The detailed recommendations agreed by Cabinet are in the EXEMPT appendix. In the interests of transparency for the public, appropriately redacted recommendations are presented here.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	CABINET MEMBER
<p>Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) - Connectivity project</p> <p>The Cabinet RECOMMEND to Council:</p> <p>1.1 a) That the 2023-24 capital programme allocation for Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) should be increased to the amount set out in the confidential report.</p> <p>b) That the funding for the increase in the capital programme for the FHSF should be as set out in paragraphs 5.3 and 5.5 of the confidential report.</p>	<p>Councillor D Morehead</p>

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
19 JULY 2023**

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

**RECOMMENDATIONS
CABINET
17 JULY 2023**

Purpose of Report

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

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Would Councillors please note that the related reports and documents have not been included in the Council book, as they have already been sent to Members via the 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 91 of the pdf at this link:

https://forms.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/docs/doc58680_20230717_cabinet_agenda.pdf

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	CABINET MEMBER
<p>Localism: Stourport Sports Club and Bewdley Museum</p> <p>The Cabinet RECOMMEND to Council that:</p> <p>It should rescind its decision in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2022-25 which involved exiting the Council's involvement in the Stourport Sports Club Limited.</p>	<p>Councillor I Hardiman</p>

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
19 JULY 2023**

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

**RECOMMENDATIONS
CABINET
17 JULY 2023**

Purpose of Report

To consider recommendations from the Cabinet on matters outside the policy framework or approved budget of the Council. The detailed recommendations agreed by Cabinet are in the EXEMPT appendix. In the interests of transparency for the public, appropriately redacted recommendations are presented here.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	CABINET MEMBER
<p>Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) project</p> <p>The Cabinet RECOMMEND to Council that:</p> <p>The capital programme allocation for the Future High Streets Fund is amended to include an additional amount as set out in the confidential report, on the basis of the funding arrangements set out in section 5 of the confidential report.</p>	<p>Councillor D Morehead</p>

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
19 JULY 2023**

QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL

1. Question from Councillor L Carroll to the Leader of the Council

Could the leader of the Council please inform members why his administration no longer deems it necessary to continue with the Green Advisory Panel?