

Open

Council

Agenda

6pm
Wednesday, 13 December 2023
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster



Council

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

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COUNCIL MEETING

5 December 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 13 December 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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At the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 1998. The footage recorded will be available to view on the Council's website for 6 months and shall be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

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

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

If any attendee is under the age of 18 the written consent of his or her parent or guardian is required before access to the meeting room is permitted. Persons under 18 are welcome to view the meeting from the Stourport and Bewdley Room.

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

* Unless there are no reports in the open session.

Wyre Forest District Council

Council

Wednesday, 13 December 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 Deacon Becky Lovatt of Wesley Methodist Church, Stourport-on-Severn | |
| 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 20 September 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. Councillor L Carroll has registered in order to present a petition. <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. | Chairman's Communications To note the engagements of the Chairman of the Council since the Council's last meeting. | 17 |

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| 7. | <p>Leader of the Council Announcements</p> <p>To receive announcements from the Leader of the Council.</p> | |
| 8. | <p>Review of Polling districts and polling places</p> <p>To receive a report from the Electoral Registration Officer and the Acting Returning Officer for the UK Parliamentary Constituency of Wyre Forest.</p> | 18 |
| 9. | <p>Policy and Budget Framework</p> <p>Matters which require a Decision by Council.</p> <p>(a) Recommendations from the Treasury Management Review Panel – 13 November 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report on Treasury Management Service and Actual Prudential Indicators 2022-23 <p>(b) Recommendations from the Treasury Management Review Panel – 13 November 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Mid-year Review Report 2023-24 <p>(c) Recommendations from the Licensing & Environmental Committee – 4 December 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Fees and Charges for the Council’s Licensing and Regulatory Services Function 2024/25 <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 43 44 |
| 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 4 December 2023.</p> <p>Three 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> | 45 |

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| 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

| | | |
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| 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> | |
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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY,
KIDDERMINSTER

20TH SEPTEMBER 2023 (6PM)

Present:

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

C.92 Prayers

Prayers were read by Rev David Hildred – Team Rector Kidderminster East.

C.93 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: V Caulfield and N Martin.

C.94 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

C.95 Minutes

Decision: The Minutes of the last meeting held on 19 July 2023 and the Minutes from the special meeting held on 19 July 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C.96 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

C.97 Chairman's Communications

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

The Chairman announced that he was holding a charity quiz on 14 October, at Stourport Yacht Club. His chosen charity is Midlands Air Ambulance.

C.98 Leader's Announcements and Report

The Leader of the Council referred members to his tabled report. A copy of the announcements is available for viewing on the Council's website. https://forms.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/docs/doc58902_20230920_council_report.pdf

C.99 Members' scheme of allowances - Independent Remuneration Panel Report for 2023/24 and Subsequent Years

Council received a report from the Chief Executive that invited members to consider and take decisions on the Independent Remuneration Panel's (IRP) report and recommendations for the period from May 2023 to March 2026.

The Leader of the Council presented the report and outlined the key issues. He said that the administration would be accepting the IRP's recommendations in full, with a slight addition.

He said it was not a good use of the IRP's and Council's time for a Panel to be convened in 2025 to provide recommendations for one year only (2026-2027). He proposed an amendment to the effect that in 2025 the Panel should also make recommendations for 2027-2028, 2028-2029 and 2029-2030. He added that historically the Panel had made recommendations for four years and it was logical to continue in this way.

The Leader thanked the members of the IRP; Mr Hipkiss, Mr Reynolds and Mrs Wall, for undertaking the work and producing a comprehensive report.

Councillor I Hardiman said that he had trust in the IRP and was grateful for their input. He seconded the proposals. A discussion ensued and a number of members spoke in support of the recommendations as amended.

Upon a vote, the proposals were unanimously agreed.

Decision: Council;

- 1.1 accepted the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2023-2024, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026;**
- 1.2 agreed that a Panel should be convened in 2025 to provide recommendations for 2026-2027, 2027-2028, 2028-2029 and 2029-2030; and**
- 1.3 authorised the Solicitor to the Council to convene a Panel at that time, 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.**

C.100 Amendments to the Constitution

A report was received from the Chief Executive that asked Council to consider amendments to the Constitution including arrangements for remote participation by members and officers in formal meetings of committees of the Council.

The Leader presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. He said the report was relatively straightforward and in essence was a tidying up exercise to regularise what the Council were already doing.

Councillor I Hardiman seconded the recommendation.

Upon a vote, the proposal was unanimously agreed.

Decision: Council AGREED the amendments to the Constitution set out in Appendix A of the report.

C.101 Policy and Budget Framework – Matters which require a decision by Council

Recommendations from Cabinet, 12 September 2023

(a) Adoption of Corporate Plan, 2023-2027

The Leader presented the recommendation and formally moved it for approval. He thanked the members of the Cabinet Advisory Panel for their work, and expressed his gratitude to all the stakeholders, organisations and members of the public that had taken part and responded to the consultation events that have helped shape the Corporate Plan.

Councillor I Hardiman said it was a clear, well defined Plan and was happy to second the proposal. A robust debate ensued.

Upon a vote, the proposal was unanimously agreed.

Decision: Council ADOPTED the Corporate Plan in appendix 1 of the Cabinet report.

C.102 Questions

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

The Chairman announced that in the absence of Councillor V Caulfield question number four had been withdrawn

Councillor T Onslow left that meeting at 6.54pm.

1. Question from Councillor F Oborski MBE to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

Agenda Item No. 4

Disposable Vapes are said to be a " fire hazard" when disposed of in the normal waste system as they contain lithium batteries which can explode. "Good Practice" indicates that the retail outlets selling these products should provide collection bins to which used vapes should be returned. What steps is WFDC taking to encourage retail outlets to provide such collection bins and how many such bins are currently provided in the district?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

All Wyre Forest residents are advised to dispose of waste appropriately, vapes can be returned to most retailers for recycling or can be disposed of at any household recycling centres as WEEE waste with the battery disposed of in its own container.

Supplementary Question

It is rumoured that His Majesty's Government may follow other countries in banning disposable vapes. Will the Cabinet Member lobby our Member of Parliament to support such a move?

Councillor T Onslow returned to the meeting at this point, (6.56pm).

Supplementary Answer

Yes, Councillor Oborski, I can give you that promise I will.

2. Question from Councillor M Rayner to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

In your manifesto you say you are going to make Wyre Forest Cleaner. Please can you explain how you are ensuring this is happening?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

We are ensuring that this will happen by increasing the number of front-line officers on our streets and by allocating additional resources, both of which you and the administration which you were part of voted against in February this year, when the Conservatives' alternative budget proposals came to this council.

Supplementary Question

Please can you tell us how you are going to specifically tackle dog fouling on the streets and in places, of bags of dog excreta hanging off trees and so on. It is extremely prolific in the Wyre Forest. It is particularly concerning and important because dog excreta contains bacteria, parasites, and viruses, which are extremely dangerous to humans and other animals, in particular toxocariasis which leads to central nervous system damage?

Supplementary Answer

We will ensure that we have an additional Environmental Protection Officer, which is something that you voted against in February.

3. Question from Councillor L Whitehouse to the Leader of the Council

Can the Leader of the Council please confirm to this chamber that he expects the highest standards from each of his Group's members and that

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they must be professional, example setting, responsive and fair at all times?

Answer from the Leader of the Council

Yes.

Supplementary Question

Will the Leader ensure, when these issues or questions are brought to his attention, he will make sure these are dealt with, and prompt responses provided?

Supplementary Answer

For those of you who don't know me well and indeed those who do, I did so in the previous 5 years I was Leader of this Council and I see no reason why I would not do so in future, and of course my only plea is that other Group Leaders do exactly the same.

4. Question withdrawn

5. Question from Councillor L Carroll to the Cabinet Member for Operational services

Do you believe that every child in the district should have access to inclusive play equipment?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

In a one-word answer, yes.

Supplementary Question

This answer should be very easy then. Can you tell this Council how much has been set aside, monetary wise, for inclusive play equipment and which sites are in scope?

Supplementary Answer

In February, the Conservative opposition allocated £50,000 towards this and something that your Group and your Leader voted against in our proposal.

6. Question from Councillor L Whitehouse to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

Can the Cabinet Member please confirm to this Council and members of the public that he is happy with the appearance of the public realm in our district?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

I am a lot happier with the appearance of our public realm since the 4th May.

Supplementary Question

In the plan that we have just seen the vision says a safe, vibrant, and clean place to live, work and visit. Perhaps the Cabinet Member would like to visit my ward, particularly Blakebrook; St. Johns Avenue, Greatfield Road, Sutton Road and Habberley estate, specifically in relation to weeds and detritus. The question is will he commit to reviewing the state of the street scene throughout the district and report back to members with an action

Agenda Item No. 4

plan, including liaising with Worcestershire County Council to establish what has gone wrong this year with their weed control measures they are responsible for?

Supplementary Answer

Yes, I am happy to commit to do that and we are already doing that. We are reviewing that, and we have had a conversation with Worcestershire County Council, trying to rebuild the relationships that were damaged under the previous administration.

7. Question from Councillor L Carroll to the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Arts and Community Safety

What is the administration doing to support young people in the district?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Arts and Community Safety

Back in 2019 Wyre Forest District Council had a thriving community sports and events directorate and I know that because it was set up by the Conservatives, and that directorate ran full year long programmes across the district, not only for young people, but also for older people and disabled groups. There were events in the parks, in the nature reserves, with the sports facilities and they were district wide. There was a whole host of summer events for our young people, including the pond dipping and the horrible bat thing. But sadly, in February 2020 the Progressive Alliance, which included the Labour Group at that time, who were running the Council, put forward proposals not only to scrap the entire programme but also at reasonable expense to make all the staff redundant. The Conservatives at that time put up alternative proposals to counter these cuts but sadly these were voted down by the Progressive Alliance, and to be clear that included your Labour Group. They voted unanimously to support the cuts and the axing of the programme. But that is all very negative, so on the positive side you will be pleased to hear you can trust the Tories. We are supporting and co-ordinating with our partners, such as Bewdley Museum and Stourport Sports Club, we are pushing for a return of events for young people. In addition to our plans, thanks to the resilience of the brilliant and creative staff who were left through their commitment and motivation, we also, via North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership, fund Kidderminster and District Youth Trust to provide detached youth services. Wyre Forest District Council also participate in Get Safe which is the Worcestershire multi-agency group, who work with children and young people who are at risk of criminal exploitation. Bewdley Museum puts on a range of holiday activities and an education programme for in excess of 8,000 children. Wyre Forest District also commissioned youth activities using public health funding and helped to deliver Ready Steady Worcestershire holiday activities. With Public Health funding we also have community builders who work in specific areas across the district to put on activities to benefit children. They also organise the show case of mental health and wellbeing services for young people. Wyre Forest District Council also funds, as I know do some Councillors, Nightstop to provide an education programme and mediation service for 11+ year olds to help with homelessness, family break down and relationship issues. Finally through the Wyre Forest Collaborative, Wyre Forest District Council

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also employs collaborative project officers to assist with health and mental health issues for young people. So, I think in short, we aren't doing what we used to, but we are doing what we can, and moving forward we hope to do more.

Supplementary Question

Youth unemployment is 12.75% nationally compared to 4.7% unemployment overall, what is the level of youth unemployment in the district?

Supplementary Answer

Chair I am sorry, what has that question got to do with my portfolio at the District Council, it is about youth unemployment? We do not have a department that does youth services now, Councillor Carroll, because in 2019 your Group voted to get rid of it.

The Chairman advised that it was a valid supplementary question as the original question was: what is the administration doing to support young people in the district?

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

When the Chief Executive's Appraisal was carried out I remember it being agreed that the temporary car park on the former Crown House site would have a banner along the perimeter guard rails of the car park on the Baxter Church side, explaining that it was a temporary car park. What progress has been made in getting said banners installed?

Answer from the Leader of the Council

I can tell you what progress exactly, excellent progress, because it is already there. There is now a nice light blue banner on the side of the former Crown House site at the carpark, with our logo and EDR logo on it. There is more coming as well, because to be fair she specifically asked about the Baxter Church side and I am reliably informed that we are going to be having a number of additional banners installed next week, so you will definitely be able to hold me to account at the next meeting of full Council if they have not been erected. So, we are getting there in the end Councillor Oborski.

Supplementary Question

Last week at a presentation at Kidderminster Town Council, the representatives of the BID suggested that they were going to install flower planter baskets along that barrier opposite Baxter Church. Is the District Council consulting with the BID about their proposals or are we just going to put our banners up and let them fit planters in between them if they can?

Supplementary Answer

I am sure that those who know far greater than me and indeed those who think they know, are working behind the scenes to ensure that we have a seamless and joined-up approach between ourselves as a District Council, the Town Council and representatives of the BID. If they want to put lots of lovely planters with winter pansies or whatever through the autumnal

months, we will be delighted for them to do so.

9. Question from Councillor L Whitehouse to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

Can the Cabinet Member please confirm the frequency of channel and footway mechanical sweeping throughout the district, confirming that all roads are swept regularly?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

Yes, all roads are swept regularly, mechanical sweeping is done every day, with the town centres being swept daily and the outside areas of the centres being swept on an 8 week cycle. The channels in the district are again swept daily, and each gutter is cleared at least twice a year.

Supplementary Question

It is clear that many streets are not frequently swept. Will the Cabinet Member commit to reviewing all footway and channel sweeping routes, including route optimisation, and provide the current and future schedules to all members of this Council, and publish routes on the website so that residents can check for themselves rather than having to make contact with members or the Council directly?

Supplementary Answer

Yes, that is something I will consider, and I will speak with the officers.

C.103 Motions Submitted Under Standing Orders

No motions were received by the deadline.

C.104 Emergency Motions submitted under Standing Orders

There were no emergency motions.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.10pm.

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

September to December

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Friday 29 th September | Mayor of Stourport MacMillan coffee morning |
| Sunday 1 st October | Mayor of Ledbury Civic Service, St Michael & All Angels Church |
| Sunday 8 th October | Mayor of Redditch Civic Service with procession |
| Friday 10 th November | Remembrance Service at County Hall Worcestershire |
| Sunday 12 th November | Remembrance Service and Parade at Stourport-on-Severn |
| *Sunday 12 th November | Remembrance Service, Bewdley |
| *Friday 17 th November | St Richard's Hospice, Annual Lights of Love Service at Worcester Cathedral |
| Friday 17 th November | Chairman of Bromsgrove's Autumn Civic Soiree |
| *Friday 24 th November | Three Kings Parade and Christmas Light switch on at Stourport-on-Severn |
| Thursday 30 th November | Worcester Victorian Christmas Fayre, Worcester Cathedral |
| *Thursday 30 th November | (as above) |
| *Friday 1 st December | Mayor of Ledbury's Christmas Coffee morning, Jacobean Room, Council Offices, Church Lane, Ledbury |

* Denotes attendance by Vice Chairman

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

13 DECEMBER 2023

Review of Polling districts and polling places

| OPEN | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| CABINET MEMBER: | Councillor David Ross, Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio |
| RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: | The Electoral Registration Officer and the Acting Returning Officer for the UK Parliamentary Constituency of Wyre Forest |
| CONTACT OFFICER: | Ian Miller, Chief Executive Ian.Miller@Wyreforestdc.gov.uk EXT 2700 |
| APPENDICES | Appendix A- Executive Summary Appendix B- Returning Officer's Response Appendix C- Other Responses |

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a report for the Council to take decisions following the compulsory review of polling districts and places.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to:

- 2.1 CONSIDER the responses to the review of polling districts and places:**

- 2.2 DECIDE that the following changes should be implemented with effect from 1 March 2024:**

| Issue | Recommended change/options for change |
|--|---|
| Creation of new polling district within existing polling district WFR-CO to serve Lea Castle | A new polling district should be created within WFR-CO, to be designated WFR-CO2. The boundaries should be based on Option A. The polling place for the new polling district should be designated as Cookley Sports and Social Club. |

| | |
|---|--|
| Polling place for OFC-3 and OFC-4 | Offmore Community Centre should be designated as the polling place for OFC-3 and OFC-4. |
| Polling place for MI-SN1 (one option affects AKR-SC) | <u>Either</u> The polling place for part of MI-SN1 (Lower Lickhill Road, The Ridgeway, Woodbury Road, Woodbury Road North and Woodbury Road West) should be designated as Stourport Community Centre, Lower Lickhill Road. <u>Or</u> No change should be made to the polling place for MI-SN1 (Stourport Primary School). <u>Or</u> The polling place for MI-SN1 should be designated as Stourport Community Centre, Lower Lickhill Road, and the polling place for AKR-SC should be designated as Severn's Club, Lickhill Road DY13 8SB. |
| Polling place for BHS-5 | <u>Either</u> No change should be made to the polling place for BHS-5 (Habberley Social Club) <u>Or</u> The polling place for BHS-5 should be designated as Baxter College, Habberley Road. |
| Other polling districts and polling places | No change. |

3. **POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW- BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 amended the Representation of the People Act 1983 and introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and places. The review must be started and completed between 1 October 2023 and 31st January 2025.
- 3.2 The most recent such review was undertaken in October 2019 and the results were agreed by Council on 11 December 2019. Copies of the report and the decisions can be found using the link, <https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/your-council/elections-and-voting/polling-districts-and-polling-places-reviews/polling-districts-and-polling-places-2019-review/>

4. **PURPOSE**

- 4.1 The aim of any such review as outlined in Electoral guidance is:
- Seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in the local authority area have such reasonable facilities as are practicable in the circumstances.

- Seek to ensure that, so far as is reasonable and practicable, every polling place which the local authority is responsible for is accessible to electors who are disabled.

5. THE REVIEW

- 5.1 The consultation period ran from 2 October 2023 to 22 November 2023, with the options of completing an online survey or responding in writing or email. The executive summary of the consultation is set out in Appendix A and the responses to questions are reported in the body of this report.
- 5.2 The Review proposed several changes and invited comments on these changes along with the current set up of Polling Districts and Polling Places
- 5.3 In addition to the response to the online consultation, the Acting Returning Officer (ARO) provided his response on 20 November 2023 which can be found in Appendix B. In short, the ARO supported the proposals but also identified other changes that the Council might make as a consequence of the consultation responses.
- 5.4 Six letters or email responses were received from two district Councillors. (one of which was a petition), one voter, The Wyre Forest District Council Conservative group, The Wyre Forest Conservative Association, and the current Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia. These responses can be found in Appendix C.

6 RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Consultation had 60 responses of which 54 were responses to the online survey. The overall response generally supported the proposals although different views were expressed on most issues.
- 6.2 All questions were optional in the survey and were:
- 6.3 Q1 - We are proposing to create a new polling district within the Wyre Forest Rural Ward. This is to accommodate the new development on the Lea Castle site. We are expecting a significant number of electors to be living there by 2028. Electors would vote at Cookley Sports and Social Club. Do you support the need for a separate polling district for this development?

Table 1

| | |
|---|----|
| I live in Cookley and I support this proposal | 4 |
| I do not live in Cookley and I support this proposal | 31 |
| I live in Cookley and I do not support this proposal | 1 |
| I do not live in Cookley and I do not support this proposal | 3 |

| | |
|------------|----|
| Don't Know | 15 |
| Total | 54 |

6.4 54 people answered the question, and no one skipped. There was strong support for the need to create a new polling district to accommodate the Lea Castle site. This was from both people that lived in the area and those that do not.

6.5 Q2 - If we do create a new polling district for the new Lea Castle development where do you think the boundaries should be? We have three options:

Option A – This option has a boundary that runs from the edge of Kidderminster, along the Wolverhampton Road (A449) and then along Axborough Lane to the existing boundary with Stourbridge Road, before returning to the edge of Kidderminster. It would encompass the entire Lea Castle site, meaning that the new polling district will be made up of the new development together with existing properties in the immediate area, such as those on The Crescent.

Option B – This option includes more of the present Cookley polling district. The boundary runs from the edge of Kidderminster, travels further up the Wolverhampton Road (A449), and then runs up Common Barn Lane until it meets with Beech Tree Lane. It reaches Beech Tree Lane where Caunsall Road ends. The boundary then runs to the end of Beech Tree Lane where it joins the existing boundary that returns to the edge of Kidderminster. It would encompass a larger area than Option A but there are few properties located in the additional area.

Option C - This option includes an even larger part of the present Cookley polling district. The boundary runs from the edge of Kidderminster, along the entire length of the Wolverhampton Road(A449) to the northern boundary of the district with South Staffordshire. It splits the existing Cookley polling district on a roughly southwest to northeast line. The Wolverhampton Road would provide a consistent and clear boundary between the two polling districts. It would encompass a larger area than Option B but again there are few properties located in the additional area.

Table 2

| | |
|------------|----|
| Option A | 10 |
| Option B | 5 |
| Option C | 5 |
| Don't Know | 16 |
| Total | 36 |

6.6 Thirty six people answered the question with 18 people skipping it. Where an option was selected, it was clear that Option A was the most desired. This was also the view of some of the other respondents. **This report recommends that the Council should create a polling district for the Lea Castle development based on the boundaries set out in Option A.** The

designated polling place at Cookley Sports and Social Club is suitable to hold a double station. If an appropriate building within the new Lea Castle development were to be available in due course, its designation as the polling place for the new polling district could be explored in a future review. The new polling district would be designated as WFR-CO2, while the remainder of the existing Cookley polling district being designated as WFR-CO1. At some point in the future, a community governance review will be needed to consider options for representation at parish council level, whether by adjusting election arrangements for Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council or other options such as creating a separate parish and parish council for Lea Castle.

- 6.7 Q3 - On Offmore and Comberton, Kidderminster we are proposing to move the polling place for people who live in the OFC-4 polling district. Electors in this district currently use Offmore Evangelical Church, Gray Close, Kidderminster. We are suggesting they should now vote at Offmore Community Centre, which is located next door to the church. We are proposing change because the electorate in polling district OFC-3 is expected to increase due to a major development known as Woven Oaks. OFC-3 uses Offmore Evangelical Church. See map Do you support the move of the polling place for OFC-4 to Offmore Community Centre?

Table 3

| | |
|--|----|
| I live in Offmore and Comberton and I support the move | 3 |
| I do not live in Offmore and Comberton and I support the move | 19 |
| I live in Offmore and Comberton and I do not support the move | 2 |
| I do not live in Offmore and Comberton and I do not support the move | 0 |
| Don't know | 7 |
| Total | 31 |

- 6.8 Thirty one people answered this question with 23 skipping it. As seen in Table 3 there was support from both residents living in Offmore and Comberton and those that do not for using the Community Centre next door. This move was also supported by some other respondents.

- 6.9 Q4 - What alternative arrangements do you suggest?

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|---|--|---------------------|
| 1 | That the OFC-2 polling district should have a separate polling station. Presently, a significant portion of residents, including individuals with mobility issues, face an unreasonable walk of up to 30 minutes to reach the nearest polling station at St. Chad's church. This distance poses a considerable obstacle to exercising the fundamental right to vote, particularly for those with mobility challenges. It's crucial to ensure that our democratic process is inclusive and accessible to all members of our community. By establishing an additional polling station closer to these residents, we can enhance accessibility and actively promote democratic participation. | 11/21/2023 11:18 PM |
| 2 | Don't build Woven Oaks!! Last time I checked it had not been approved, and neither should it be, there is massive opposition to such a huge development on what should have remained greenbelt. | 10/22/2023 6:38 PM |
| 3 | People living in the Offmore area have to cross the busy Chester Road to get to their polling station. It would be useful if the polling centre could be somewhere like St Ambrose Parish hall, or somewhere nearby. | 10/12/2023 5:59 PM |

The comments about an additional polling place for part of OFC-2 are addressed below in paragraph 6.17.

6.10 Q.5 - We are also seeking views on whether the polling place for polling district OFC-3 should remain at Offmore Evangelical Church or whether it should move to Offmore Community Centre as proposed for OFC-4. The number of electors in OFC-3 is expected to increase in future due to a major development known as Woven Oaks. Do you support the move of the polling place for OFC-3 to Offmore Community Centre?

Table 4

| | |
|--|----|
| I live in Offmore and Comberton and I support the move | 3 |
| I do not live in Offmore and Comberton and I support the move | 18 |
| I live in Offmore and Comberton and I do not support the move | 2 |
| I do not live in Offmore and Comberton and I do not support the move | 0 |
| Don't Know | 9 |
| Total | 32 |

6.11 32 people answered the question, with 22 skipping. There is clear support for voters in OFC-3 to also vote at the Community Centre next door. This move was also supported by some other respondents.

6.12 The Offmore Community Centre is spacious and could accommodate a triple polling station serving OFC-3 and OFC-4. It is next door to the existing polling place and was previously used for elections until it closed. It has suitable accessibility for all electors. **The recommendation is that the polling place for OFC-3 and OFC-4 should be the Offmore Community Centre.**

6.13 Q6 - In Stourport we are proposing changing the polling place for a small number of electors who live in MI-SN1 polling district. We are suggesting people who live in Lower Lickhill Road, The Ridgeway, Woodbury Road, Woodbury Road North, Woodbury Road West should vote at Stourport Community Centre, Lower Lickhill Road. This is to reduce the number of electors assigned to Stourport Primary School to meet new guidance from the Electoral Commission. Adding a second polling station at the school

would mean using part of the main school building and that may prompt a decision by the headteacher and governors to close the whole school for an election, a situation that we try to avoid. Do you support the move of polling place for part of MI-SN1 to Stourport Community Centre?

Table 5

| | |
|--|----|
| I live in the Mitton ward and I support the move | 5 |
| I do not live in the Mitton ward and I support the move | 15 |
| I live in the Mitton ward and I do not support the move | 0 |
| I do not live in the Mitton ward and I do not support the move | 0 |
| Don't know | 12 |
| Total | 32 |

6.14 32 people answered question 6 with 22 skipping. The move proposed in the review is strongly supported by both those that live in Mitton and do not live in Mitton.

6.15 Q7 What alternative arrangements do you suggest?

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|---|-------------------------|------|
| | There are no responses. | |

There were no responses to this question in the online questionnaire. However other respondents proposed that all of MI-SN1 should vote at Stourport Community Centre. The response from the ARO identifies that the Community Centre is not large enough to host three polling stations (i.e. the two that would be required for MI-SN1 and the existing polling station for part of Areley Kings and Riverside Ward). If Council decides that there should be a single polling place for MI-SN1, it would therefore need to remain at Stourport Primary School and a larger room in the main building would need to be used, which might prompt the school to decide to shut on election days. Another option would be to re-locate AKR-SC from the Stourport Community Centre to Severn's Club, Lickhill Road and to move MI-SN1 to the Stourport Community Centre, where a double polling station can be accommodated. This last option would see electors of AKR-SC return to the location that was used for several years, the former Workmen's Club (now Severn's Club) – Council had agreed to change the polling place in a previous review as a result of closure of the club. It has now re-opened and has been refurbished and is available. If this option is chosen, additional efforts will be made with notifications and signage for electors to minimise confusion about where they should vote. **The recommendation in this report is either to move part of MI-SN1 to the Community Centre, as set out in the proposal, or to make no change to the polling place for MI-SN1 or to move MI-SN1 to the Community Centre and AKR-SC to Severn's Club (formerly the Workmen's Club).**

6.16 Q8 Any other comments on the polling districts or places? If you wish to propose changes to polling districts and/or polling places in cases where the review proposes no change, you should set them out clearly here. You

should explain what alternative arrangements should be made and why.

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|---|---|---------------------|
| 1 | I advocate for the establishment of an additional polling station within the OFC-2 polling district. Presently, a significant portion of our residents, including individuals with mobility issues, face an unreasonable walk of up to 30 minutes to reach the nearest polling station at St. Chad's church. This distance poses a considerable obstacle to exercising the fundamental right to vote, particularly for those with mobility challenges. It's crucial to ensure that our democratic process is inclusive and accessible to all members of our community. By establishing an additional polling station closer to these residents, we can enhance accessibility and actively promote democratic participation. | 11/21/2023 11:22 PM |
| 2 | None | 10/22/2023 7:55 PM |
| 3 | Why on earth is this a priority over roads, traffic, infrastructure, drainage, sewers? How dare WFDC send this out as if the Woven Oaks proposal is a foregone conclusion- though maybe it is given how it is being made very difficult to make comments on the planning portal. It stinks! | 10/22/2023 6:41 PM |
| 4 | Voters having to travel from Clarence Street to Offmore/Comberton is too far especially for elderly and those without a car. | 10/11/2023 12:58 AM |
| 5 | No need to change other poling stations | 10/9/2023 8:55 PM |
| 6 | Regarding the polling place for BHS-5 - Habberley Social Club, Rear of Truro Drive, DY11 6DN. Some people had difficulty locating it. Can WFDC work with the club in getting permanent signs to the club erected on Canterbury Rd and elsewhere? And can the address be made clearer by a rename of the access road by WFDC or Royal Mail? | 10/5/2023 11:44 AM |
| 7 | No change to other polling station can be justified | 10/2/2023 8:04 PM |

6.17 The two responses about OFC-2 (1 and 4) are also supported by a petition containing 33 names and submitted by one of the ward councillors, who will present the petition earlier in tonight’s meeting, and by two comments shown in paragraph 6.12 above. The petition calls for an additional polling station to serve polling district OFC-2, shown in the map below. If the council were to decide on an alternative polling place, an option could be St Ambrose’s RC Primary School or Holy Trinity School, both shown on the map. The suitability of alternative polling places has not been tested with regard to access by disabled people and the area where they are located suffers from heavy traffic congestion at peak times. It is recognised that the walking distance from OFC-2 to the designated polling place at St Chads is significant, although there are wards in the district where the distances are even greater (and many of those, particularly in rural areas, may offer no safe walking route). The current polling place at St Chads has been used as a polling place for many years with no significant complaints or problems. Moreover, for those who may not have access to a car or other means of transport to facilitate the journey to the polling place, postal votes are available on demand, providing a convenient and secure alternative to voting in person. **The recommendation of this report is not to make any change in respect of OFC-2.**



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6.18 In addition to the on line response about Habberley Social Club (6), a district Councillor, responses from the Conservative Party organisations and the current Police and Crime Commissioner all expressed concerns regarding the use of Habberley Social Club. This polling place was used for the first time in the May 2023 elections, following a previous review that was agreed by Council. Polling Station Inspectors were able to review the polling stations in a live environment. It was reported at Habberley Social Club that many electors said they could not easily find the polling station. Additional temporary signage was deployed during the day. The building is large enough to accommodate a double station that reflects the Electoral Commission’s guidance. It could remain as the polling place – improvements would be made to signage for future elections and, as with any other polling place that voters find difficult to reach for whatever reason, postal votes are available on demand. Turnout from this polling district is lower than average and compared to 2019 (when the Gainsborough Hotel was used) fell slightly:

| Local Elections | May 2019 | May 2023 | Variation % |
|-----------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| BHS-5 | 22.17% | 20.01% | -2.16% |

If Council wishes to act on the responses seeking a change of location, the recommendation is that the most suitable alternative location for a polling place for BHS-5 would be one of the schools. The response from the ARO identifies Baxter College as the most suitable alternative location. It will have a suitable large room for a double polling station and benefits from

better access than other local schools.

- 6.19 The comment about the Woven Oaks development (3) is noted. The quasi-judicial process for taking decisions on planning applications is separate from the decisions that Council is being invited to take about polling places. The decision about a polling place for this area would not be a relevant planning consideration that would affect or pre-judge the decision to be taken by the Planning Committee. The site is allocated for development in the local plan and, as with other sites so allocated, it is appropriate for the Council to make appropriate provision for the polling place to serve it if the development goes ahead.
- 6.20 The responses that seek no other changes (5 and 7) are noted. Generally, that is the recommendation of this report. The responses can also be read as not supporting the changes requested in paragraphs 6.17 and 6.18. Indeed they also contradict the emailed response from the voter regarding the use of St Anne's Primary School, who asked that it should not be used for future elections, as the school closes. The school has been used for well over a decade as the polling place for the BR-BW polling district in Bewdley and there is no suitable alternative polling place. The decision on whether or not a school shuts is taken by the governing body and headteacher: this particular school has sometimes shut on election days and on other occasions has remained open. **No change is recommended in respect of polling district BR-BW.**
- 6.21 Due to the Electoral Commission guidance on the number of electors assigned to each polling station, the Returning Officer will make arrangements that a number of polling stations are split from May 2024 onwards, as set out in the ARO's response. This is achievable within the designated polling places and does not require any decision by Council.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The cost of the consultation and review has been met within existing budgets. The recommendations in this report do not involve additional financial implications as the need to split some exiting polling stations in two arises from compliance with the Electoral Commission's guidance. That will lead to higher costs in the delivery and administration of future elections, although those costs are borne by the District Council only for its own elections.

8. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Review has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Representation of the People Act 1983

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report. However, all elections and electoral registration activity have due regard to the public sector equality duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In particular, the review of polling places has to consider their sustainability access by disabled people. The current and proposed polling places are considered to provide suitable access, having regard to which buildings may be available in any given polling district.
- 9.2 There are no direct implications on health and well-being or climate change. Any pattern of polling places is bound to mean that some voters give rise to carbon emissions in travelling to vote. It is impossible to model choices that individuals will make and therefore to know whether or not any changes have a positive or adverse impact.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 All elections and electoral registration work are supported by robust risk management plans to ensure contingency arrangements are in place for meeting electoral legislation at all times.
- 10.2 The council is required to carry out the compulsory review and there are reputational risks if this is not completed.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The Council is invited to consider the recommendations set out in this report.

12. CONSULTEES (on the report)

- 12.1 Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio
- 12.2 Corporate Leadership team

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1 The full review can be found at <https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/pollingreview2023/>
- 13.2 The Electoral Commission's guidance on conducting the Polling district and polling places review can be found at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator/polling-place-reviews>

APPENDIX A- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES IN THE DISTRICT OF WYRE FOREST

Executive summary

1. This review proposes creating a new polling district within the Wyre Forest Rural Ward, to accommodate the Lea Castle development. For the time being, these electors would need to vote at the existing polling place in Cookley. A community governance review will be required in future to consider the impact of Lea Castle on governance of the Wolverley and Cookley parish area.
2. The review also sets out proposals for changes to the pattern of polling places in the district of Wyre Forest. It seeks views on moving the polling place for OFC-3 and OFC-4 polling districts to a neighbouring building. In the MI-SN1 polling district in Stourport, it is proposed to transfer a small number of voters from one polling place to another nearby, because of capacity constraints at the existing polling place. Due to changes in the Electoral Commission’s guidance on the size of electorate allocated to a polling station, and several large areas of development outlined in our local plan, consideration will need to be given at several polling places to providing two smaller polling stations rather than the existing larger one.
3. The proposed changes are summarised below. The full proposals are set out later in the report, including Appendix A. The proposed changes would be implemented from 1 March 2024 and would apply to any elections or by-elections held on or after that date.

APPENDIX B – RETURNING OFFICER’S RESPONSE

FROM THE RETURNING OFFICER FOR WYRE FOREST

Ian Miller
Returning Officer
 tel: 01562 732700
 email: ian.miller@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
 my ref: IRM/MS/RLF
 date: 20 November 2023

Jordan Billingham Esq,
 Electoral Services Manager, Wyre Forest District Council

Dear Jordan,

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES IN THE DISTRICT OF WYRE FOREST

Thank you for consulting me about this review. I am replying in my role as (Acting) Returning Officer for the Parliamentary constituency of Wyre Forest.

I am content with the proposals for the polling places as detailed in the consultation document. Subject to the points that follow, I have no concerns about splitting polling stations to accommodate the Electoral Commission guidance, which will see fewer electors allocated to each station. Some of these changes will need to be made for elections from May 2024 onwards as set out in the table, whereas others will be split once new housing developments are built and the growth in electorate exceeds the Electoral Commission guidance.

| Polling stations that require to be split for May 2024 | |
|---|--|
| AKR-AKE | FHN-3 (current polling station 21) |
| BR-BE, BR-BR, BR-UAP | MI-SN1 (if polling district allocated to single polling place) |
| BHS-5 | OFC-1 |
| FPH-1 | OFC-3 |

Regarding the creation of a new polling district for part of Cookley within Wyre Forest Rural, I would support any of the three options that are included in the review. Whichever option the Council decides to adopt, the polling place at Cookley sports and social club is suitable. If an appropriate building within the Lea Castle development were to become

Returning Officer
 Wyre Forest House
 Finepoint Way
 Kidderminster
 Worcestershire DY11 7WF

available in due course, its designation as the polling place for the new polling district could be addressed in a future review.

Concerning Offmore and Comberton I am of the opinion that whichever polling place the Council decides to allocate for the polling districts of OFC-3 and OFC-4 would be suitable and large enough to accommodate the electorate. The Offmore Church Hall, formerly known as Offmore Community Centre, is spacious and could accommodate a triple polling station.

I support the proposal for moving a small proportion of Mitton MI-SN1 to the Stourport Community Centre – that polling place would be workable for a double station. However if there was a proposal that would see all of MI-SN1 moved to the Community Centre from Stourport Primary School, I could not support that as, in my view, a triple polling station at the Community Centre would be difficult to administer within the size of the room. If it is desired to keep all the MI-SN1 electors in one polling place, then no change to the polling place is required as the Stourport Primary School is already designated: I would use a larger room in the main building rather than the small room presently used for a polling station. I recognise that this might lead the school to decide to close on election days.

I am content that a double station could be accommodated at Habberley Social Club to reflect the Electoral Commission's guidance. If the Council decides to accept representations to move the location of the polling place for BHS-5, then I would ask the Council to designate Baxter College as the polling place as it will have a suitable large room for a double polling station and benefits from better access than St John's Primary School. Moreover it would be preferable that any disruption to education facilities should be at a mainstream school than Wyre Forest School.

As required by the legislation, I set out information in the appendix about the location and numbers of polling stations that I would propose if the polling places set out in the consultation paper were confirmed as well as alternative approaches that I would adopt if the Council had regard to representations that have been received. I look forward to being notified of the Council's decisions about polling districts and polling places in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Ian Miller
(Acting) Returning Officer, Wyre Forest Parliamentary Constituency

Appendix

| District | Existing or Proposed Polling Place | (Acting) Returning Officer's Comments |
|--|--|--|
| AKR-AKE AKR-AKW | Areley Kings Village Hall, Areley Common, DY13 0NB | Suitable room(s) in polling place for four polling stations |
| BR-BE BR-BR BR-UAP | St Georges Hall, Load Street | Suitable room in polling place for two polling stations |
| BHS-5 | Habberley Social Club, Rear of Truro Drive | Suitable room in polling place for two polling stations |
| Alternative if Council so decides: BHS-5 | Baxter College, Habberley Road DY11 5PQ | Suitable room in polling place for two polling stations |
| FHN-3 | Kidderminster Carolians Football and Rugby Club | Suitable room in polling place for three polling stations |
| MI-SN1 | Stourport Primary School, Park Avenue, DY13 8SH Stourport Community Centre, Lower Lickhill Road | Suitable room for one polling station Suitable room for one polling station (the polling place already accommodates the polling station for AKR-SC) |
| Alternative if Council so decides: MI-SN1 | Stourport Primary School, Park Avenue, DY13 8SH | Suitable room for two polling stations |
| OFC-1 OFC-2 | St Chads Church Hall, Burcher Green, Dy10 3AY | Suitable room in polling place for three polling stations, two of which will serve OFC-1 |
| OFC-3 OFC-4 | Offmore Evangelical Church, Gray Close, Offmore Farm, DY10 3YE OR Offmore Church Hall, Gray Close, Offmore Farm DY10 3YE | Suitable room(s) in polling place for three polling stations, two of which will serve OFC-3 |
| WFR-CO1 | Cookley Sports and Social Club, Lea Lane, DY10 3RH | Suitable room in polling place |
| WFR-CO2 | Cookley Sports and Social Club, Lea Lane, DY10 3RH | Suitable room in polling place |

APPENDIX C - OTHER RESPONSES

From: Onslow, Tracey (Councillor) <TOnslow@worcestershire.gov.uk>
Sent: 03 October 2023 15:46
To: Wyre Forest Electoral <electoral@wyreforestdc.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: Polling districts etc review

This email originated from outside of the organisation

STOP : Were you expecting this email? Does it look genuine?

THINK : Before you **CLICK** on any links or **OPEN** any attachments.

Hi

I would like to feed in my concerns about the use of the Habberley Social Club on Habberley Estate, as a polling station.

As you now know, this polling station did not serve the electorate well in this May's elections, with dissatisfaction being expressed on the day and many complaints directed to WFDC. Universally, this polling station is not felt to be in a suitable location, with both elections staff and electors being at a loss as to why anyone would think this location was suitable.

It is undemocratic to have a polling station that the majority of electors cannot find. There are 3 Schools in Blakebrook and Habberley South, two with extensive premises, which are centrally located, well known and easy to find – one of these should be used for the next elections. Schools are used in other areas of Wyre Forest, without an issue.

Unfortunately, the club is not situated directly off a main road, being off a service road and hidden around the corner. The post code for the club, only offers directions to Truro Drive and not direct to the Social Club. Signage was put up on the day, but this was altered or removed, on several occasions and it was after lunchtime before suitable signage was in place. There is no street signage to indicate the location of the club, so unless you know where it is, you cannot stumble across it.

I was advised on the day that voters were driving around Habberley Estate but then on not being able to find the club, left without voting – this resulted in a further 4% reduction in turnout. I am also advised that the congestion on the car park was an issue later on but I did not witness this.

One of the Schools needs to be used for future elections, as we desperately need to encourage voters in this ward.

Thanks

Tracey Onslow

Cabinet Member for Education on Worcestershire County Council

County Councillor for St Johns Division

Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Arts & Community Safety on Wyre Forest District Council

District Councillor for Blakebrook & Habberley South Ward

Tel: 07818 462993

Email: tonslow@worcestershire.gov.uk

From:
Subject: St Anne's Primary

Please pass the following message to the returning officer: I would like to complain about the use of St Anne's primary school as a polling station. It is outrageous that our young people are required to miss face to face learning (and hot meals) especially given the challenges they have faced through the pandemic. It is also unacceptable to put parents in a position whereby they have to take a day off work (potentially losing a days wage) to care for their children on polling days. With the cost of living crisis as it is, many families cannot afford to lose this income. Whilst I appreciate the venue of the school is convenient for the community, this convenience should not be placed above the welfare of so many children and their families. Please could alternative venues be sought. Possible alternative venues that spring to mind are the Hop Pole pub on the Cleobury road or Wharton Park golf club (they have a huge events room and ample parking).

Kind regards



To Whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of West Mercia's Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion, regarding the review of polling district and polling places in the district of Wyre Forest. After reviewing your proposals, it is the PCC's view that the polling place Habberley Social Club, Truro Drive Kidderminster for polling district BHS-5 for the Ward Blakebrook and Habberley South is not a suitable location. This is due to it being inaccessible as it is hard to reach and difficult to find. It is also difficult to signpost people in the right direction to find the polling station. There has also been significant community feedback on the issue of Habberley Social Clubs inaccessibility. Thank you for receiving the PCC's response to the consultation.

Kind regards

PCC's Policy Team



DISTRICT COUNCIL GROUP

Ian Miller
 The Returning Officer
 Wyre Forest District Council
 Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way
 Kidderminster
 DY11 7WF

Dear Mr Miller,

On behalf of the Wyre Forest District Council Conservative group I thank you for the opportunity to feedback on the proposals contained in the 2023 Polling District Review. Please see below the full response submitted by the group.

Wyre Forest Rural

We agree to the creation of a second polling district for the Lea Castle development. We also agree to the proposed boundaries for WFR-CO2 and to using the middle of the A449 as the boundary. It would appear that The Crescent would also fall into this new polling district, something which has been omitted but nonetheless we agree to it. WFR-CO would need to be renamed to WFR-CO1 to avoid and potential confusion with and be consistent with WFR-CO2.

Areley Kings and Riverside

We agree with the proposal to split the polling districts of AKR-AKE and AKR-AKW over two polling stations within the existing polling place. This is subject to polling cards being issued in different colours to avoid confusion when residents arrive to vote, and to make the administration of the election easier for the polling station staff.

Bewdley and Rock

We agree with the proposal to move BR-BE to a separate polling station. This is subject to polling cards being issued in different colours to avoid confusion when residents arrive to vote, and to make the administration of the election easier for the polling station staff.

Blakebrook and Habberley South

We agree to the splitting of BHS-5 over the polling district over two polling stations at the existing polling place. We also propose to move the polling place for BHS-5 from Habberley Social Club to Baxter College, potentially the sports hall subject to discussion with the school. The current polling place of Habberley Social Club is poorly lit at night, is located down a single narrow track and is tucked away on the Habberley Estate. Moving the polling place for BHS-5 to Baxter College will ensure the polling place is more accessible to residents and more centrally located within the polling district. We would hope that the school could remain open during polling day, given the size of the school.

Franche and Habberley North

We agree to the creating of a triple polling station at the existing polling place for FHN-3. This is subject to polling cards being issued in different colours to avoid confusion when residents arrive to vote, and to make the administration of the election easier for the polling station staff.



DISTRICT COUNCIL GROUP

Mitton

We disagree with the proposal to create a second polling place within MI-SN1. We propose to move the polling place in its entirety to from the primary school to the community centre on Lower Lickhill Road and to create two separate stations within that polling place. The community centre is clearly large enough to accommodate two polling stations.

Offmore and Comberton

We agree to the proposed changes for OFC-1 and OFC-2. This is subject to polling cards issued in different colours to avoid confusion when residents arrive to vote.

We agree to the splitting of OFC-3 into two polling stations. We disagree with the relocation of solely OFC-4 to the community centre and propose that OFC-3 and OFC-4 are both relocated to the community centre, utilising the a room each for each polling district.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr. Marcus J Hart
Leader of Wyre Forest District Council Conservative Group



Ian Miller Esq
 The Returning Officer
 Wyre Forest District Council
 Wyre Forest House
 Finepoint Way
 Kidderminster DY11 7WF

24th October 2023

Dear Ian / 5.10.23/10

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the 2023 Polling District Review, which is currently being undertaken by the Wyre Forest District Council. Please accept this as the submission of the Wyre Forest Conservative Association.

The submission is as follows:

1. Wyre Forest Rural – WFR-CO

We agree to the creation of 2 polling districts; WFR-CO1 and WFR-CO2, recognising the newly built Lea Castle Development and our preferred option is:

WFR-CO2 - Option A (WFDC online survey) agreed option. This uses Axborough Lane between Wolverhampton Road and Stourbridge Road as the boundary. We wish to highlight, as it appears to be omitted in the description on the online option, the inclusion of The Crescent within this newly created polling district.

WFR-CO – This needs to be renamed WFR-CO1 and remains unchanged apart from the area designated into Option A for WFR-CO2

2. Areley Kings & Riverside

AKR-AKE / AKR-AKW - AGREE - We have no concerns in splitting the polling station and for all four stations to be on the Village Hall site which serves the community well. We would like to see polling cards issued in different colours which are then represented clearly in the Polling Station to assist people arriving to vote.

3. Bewdley & Rock

BR-BE / BR-BR / BR-UAP –AGREE to split into 2 polling stations BR-BE and BR-BR with BR-UAP

4. Blakebrook & Habberley South

BHS-5 - DISAGREE that there should be no change to the location of the Polling Station.

This is a difficult location to find for a percentage of the Polling District, including with the use of GPS navigation. Previous election WFDC Electoral Office signage had been removed and was inadequate, with no permanent roadside signage to indicate its location.

This Polling District is an urban area with an electorate of 2910 people.

The site is located by an unlit, single track lane - in a General Election year, with a turnout circa 74% of the electorate, the single track would become impassable and congested due to the need of two way flow of traffic. Vulnerable electorate, after day light hours, may be deterred from voting due to concerns of an unlit environment (a General Election may be called at any month, not just May as with Local Government elections).

Additionally, this is a licensed premises which has remained opened to patrons during elections, and feel whenever possible public houses and clubs should be avoided.

Within this Polling District there are several public buildings including 3 schools (we do not believe Wyre Forest School would be appropriate) and one of these locations, preference being Baxter College due to its size and location, would be more suitable. We believe that given the size of the school it would be able to remain open. See extract below from Electoral Commission May 2023 guidelines:

Schools that are publicly-funded, including academies and free schools, may be used as polling stations free of charge, and the legislation allows you to require a room in such schools for use as a polling station.¹ You are also entitled to use, free of charge, any publicly-funded room as a polling station.²

You will, however, need to pay for any lighting, heating, etc., costs incurred when using such rooms as polling stations.

5. Franche & Habberley North

FHN-3 - AGREE – with the issue of coloured polling cards to assist electorate on arrival.

6. Mitton

SN1 – DISAGREE – Move SN1 Polling place in its entirety to the Community Centre on Lower Lickhill Road and create 2 separate stations within one site identified by different polling cards. This is a 7min walk change in location and will reduce confusion amongst the community and unnecessary expenses by releasing the Primary School. We believe the Community Centre is large enough to accommodate for 2 polling stations.

7. Offmore & Comberton

OFC-1 – AGREE

OFC-2 – AGREE

OFC-3 and OFC-4 – Relocate both Polling Districts to Offmore Community Centre and utilise all the premises in separate rooms and split OFC-3 in the larger room.

On behalf of Wyre Forest Conservatives, I hope that our proposals are of an assistance and viewed positively during this Review.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Garnier

On behalf of Wyre Forest Conservative Association

..2/2..

Petition to Wyre Forest District Council

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Petition summary and background | There is currently a polling station review being undertaken by Wyre Forest District Council and under the proposals OFC-2 (one of the polling districts) remains unchanged. This means that some residents are having to walk 25 minutes to their nearest polling station (St. Chad's Church). |
| Action petitioned for | We, the undersigned, are concerned residents who urge Wyre Forest District Council to act now to Create an additional polling station in OFC-2 to ensure that voting is accessible to all |

| Printed Name | Signature | Address | Date |
|--------------|------------|-----------------------|----------|
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | Albert Road | 19/11/23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | ALBERT RD | — " — |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | Albert Rd | 19/11/23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | LEES WOOD RD | 20/11/23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | VC | 21/11/23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | A 'bert Rd | 21/11/23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | Leestreet Kild | 21/11/23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | Sheep ^{past} | 21/11/23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | BALMORAL COURT | 21/11/23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | 1NW | 21/11/23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | Franche rd | 21/11/23 |

By completing this petition, you are happy that your details will be held by Cllr Liam Carroll until the petition is submitted to Wyre Forest District Council where your details will be shared with the council for the purpose of submitting the petition.

| Print name | Signature | Address | Date |
|------------|------------|--------------------------------------|----------|
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | Albert Rd | 21/11/23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | ALBERT RD | " " " |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | Albert Rd | " " |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | ALBERT RD | " " |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | NESCOT ROAD | " " |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | OFFMORE ROAD WOODFIELD | " " |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | OFFMORE | " " |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | VICTORIA COURT | " " |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | Albert Rd | " " |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | Offmore Rd | " " |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | LOVING STREET | 21/11/23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | Lea Street | 21/11/23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | Victoria Court | 21/11/23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | Broad St. | 21/11/23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | Lea Street | 21/11/23 |

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| Printed Name | Signature | Address | Date |
|--------------|------------|---------------|----------|
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | FINDON STREET | 5.11.23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | FINDON ST | 05.11.23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | FINDON ST | 05-11-23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | OFFMORE RD | 5/11/23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | Leswell Lane | 18/11/23 |
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| Printed Name | Signature | Address | Date |
|--------------|------------|-----------------|---------|
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | FINDAW STREET | 5/10/23 |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | [Redacted] Road | 5/11/23 |
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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
13 DECEMBER 2023**

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

**RECOMMENDATIONS
TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW PANEL
13 NOVEMBER 2023**

Purpose of Report

To consider recommendations from the Treasury Management Review Panel 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 review panel agenda pack. The Treasury Management Review Panel is not open to the press or public.

| RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL | CHAIRMAN OF REVIEW PANEL |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <p>Annual Report on Treasury Management Service and Actual Prudential Indicators 2022-23</p> <p>The Treasury Management Review Panel recommends to Council to:</p> <p>1.1 Approve the actual 2022-23 prudential and treasury indicators in the report;</p> <p>1.2 Approve the actual 2022-23 non-treasury prudential indicators for Capital Portfolio Fund properties;</p> <p>1.3 Note the annual treasury management report for 2022-23, including information on the non-treasury prudential indicators for Capital Portfolio Fund properties.</p> | <p>Councillor C Rogers</p> |

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
13 DECEMBER 2023**

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

**RECOMMENDATIONS
TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW PANEL
13 NOVEMBER 2023**

Purpose of Report

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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| RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL | CHAIRMAN OF REVIEW PANEL |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <p>Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Mid-year Review Report 2023-24</p> <p>The Treasury Management Review Panel recommends the Mid-year Review and all updated Prudential Indicators, Ratios and the Liability Benchmark for approval by Council.</p> | <p>Councillor C Rogers</p> |

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
13 DECEMBER 2023**

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

**RECOMMENDATIONS
LICENSING & ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
4 DECEMBER 2023**

Purpose of Report

To consider recommendations from the Licensing & Environmental 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 30 of the pdf at this link:

https://forms.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/docs/doc59038_20231204_lic_agenda.pdf

| RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL | CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE |
|--|---|
| <p>Review of Fees and Charges for the Council's Licensing and Regulatory Services Function 2024/25</p> <p>The Licensing & Environmental Committee recommends to Council that the proposals for fees and charges within the Council's Licensing, Food, Health, Safety and Pollution Control functions for 2024/25, as detailed in the report, be included in the Council's 2024/25 budget strategy.</p> | <p>Councillor P Harrison</p> |

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
13 DECEMBER 2023**

QUESTIONS

1. Question from Councillor F Oborski MBE to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being

Earlier this year we were told that the Council had received funding to purchase 7 properties. 6 were to be used for Ukrainian refugees and 1 for Afghans.

Can the Cabinet Member tell me what progress has been made on this matter?

2. Question from Councillor M Rayner to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

Can I ask the cabinet member for responsibility for enforcement if he has managed to achieve the recruitment target that their party set in their budget?

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

Could the cabinet member please set out the main reasons for homelessness in Wyre Forest and what the council is doing about it?