

**Open**

# **Council**

# **Agenda**

**6pm**  
**Wednesday, 15 May 2024**  
**Council Chamber**  
**Wyre Forest House**  
**Finepoint Way**  
**Kidderminster**



## Council

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4. If you have any special requirements regarding access to the venue and its facilities including audio and visual needs please let us know in advance so that we can make arrangements for you.
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**

**7 May 2024**

**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 15 May 2024**, 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.

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, 15 May 2024

Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster

Part 1

Open to the press and public

<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
1.	<b>Prayers</b> To be read by Deacon Becky Lovatt of Wesley Methodist, Stourport & Alveley and Callow Hill and Areley Kings Methodist Churches	
2.	<b>Election of Chairman</b> To elect a Chairman of the Council for the Municipal Year 2024-2025.	
3.	<b>Chairman – Investiture and Declaration of Acceptance of Office</b> To invest the Chairman of the Council with the Chain of Office after which the Chairman will make his or her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.	
4.	<b>Chairman’s Response</b> The Chairman of the Council will express thanks for his or her election.	
5.	<b>Retiring Chairman</b> The Leaders of the largest political groups will thank the retiring Chairman of the Council.	
6.	<b>Election of Vice-Chairman</b> To elect a Vice-Chairman of the Council for the Municipal Year 2024-2025.	
7.	<b>Vice-Chairman – Investiture and Declaration of Acceptance of Office</b> To invest the Vice-Chairman of the Council with his or her Badge of Office after which the Vice-Chairman will make a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.	
8.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	

9.	<p><b>Declarations of Interests by Members</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's Constitution for full details.</p>	
10.	<p><b>Minutes</b></p> <p>To approve as a correct record and sign the Minutes of the last meeting held on 21 February 2024.</p>	10
11.	<p><b>Public Participation</b></p> <p>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 Friday 3 May 2024.</p> <p><b>No requests for public participation were received by the deadline.</b></p> <p><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></p>	
12.	<p><b>Chairman's Communications</b></p> <p>To note the engagements of the Chairman of the Council since the Council's last meeting.</p>	19
13.	<p><b>Leader of the Council Announcements</b></p> <p>To receive announcements from the Leader of the Council.</p>	
14.	<p><b>Political and Constitutional Structures 2024/2025</b></p> <p>To consider a report from the Solicitor to the Council on the proposed political and constitutional structures for the municipal year 2024/2025.</p>	20
15.	<p><b>Members' Annual Activity Reports and Attendance 2023-2024</b></p> <p>To note the schedule of Members' Annual Reports giving details of their activities in their role as District Councillors for the 2023-2024 municipal year and to receive a record of Members' attendance for the 2023-2024 municipal year.</p> <p><i>These reports are available electronically on the website</i>  <a href="https://forms.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/meetings/com55.htm#mt815">https://forms.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/meetings/com55.htm#mt815</a></p>	53

<p><b>16.</b></p>	<p><b>Annual Reports for the Municipal Year 2023-2024</b></p> <p>(a) Cabinet</p> <p>(b) Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>(c) Ethics &amp; Standards Committee</p>	<p>54</p> <p>58</p> <p>62</p>
<p><b>17.</b></p>	<p><b>Community Governance Review: Wolverley and Cookley</b></p> <p>To consider a report from the Chief Executive to agree various matters relating to the community governance review of Wolverley and Cookley, which is to commence on 1 August 2024.</p>	<p>64</p>
<p><b>18.</b></p>	<p><b>Senior management structure and approval of updated pay policy statement</b></p> <p>To consider a report from the Chief Executive to formally approve changes to the senior management structure and to approve the updated pay policy statement.</p>	<p>86</p>
<p><b>19.</b></p> <p>(a)</p>	<p><b>Policy and Budget Framework</b></p> <p>Matters which require a Decision by Council.</p> <p><b>Recommendations from the Cabinet – 7 May 2024</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future High Streets Fund project</li> </ul> <p>Please note that the reports and associated documents, referred to above, have been circulated electronically to Members.</p>	<p>96</p>
<p><b>20.</b></p>	<p><b>Questions</b></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 Friday 3 May 2024.</p> <p><b>Two questions have been received by the deadline.</b></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>	<p>97</p>
<p><b>21.</b></p>	<p><b>Motions Submitted under Standing Orders</b></p> <p>To consider Motions in the order in which notice has been received.</p> <p>1. Notice of Motion from Councillor M Hart to be seconded by Councillor H Dyke.</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 marked the Golden Anniversary of Wyre Forest District Council assuming its wide range of duties and responsibilities in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972. Council accordingly <b>celebrates</b> this occasion and the many achievements by the Council since its creation; and <b>pays tribute</b> to those who have served the Council</p>	



	over the last 50 years, whether as elected members or as officers. Council <b>looks forward</b> with confidence to continuing to serve and foster the communities of Wyre Forest for many years to come.	
<b>22.</b>	<b>Emergency Motions submitted under Standing Orders</b>  To consider Emergency Motions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 4.1 (i).	
<b>23.</b>	<b>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.</b>	
<b>24.</b>	<b>Exclusion of the Press and Public</b>  To consider passing the following resolution:  “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”.	

## Part 2

### Not open to the Press and Public

<b>25.</b>	<b>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.</b>	
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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY,  
KIDDERMINSTER

21 FEBRUARY 2024 (6PM)

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**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, N Martin, 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.117 Prayers**

Prayers were said by Rev Sallie Butcher – Priest-in-Charge, Wyre Forest West – Baynton, Clows Top, Far Forest, Heightington, Mamble, Rock.

**C.118 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor V Caulfield.

**C.119 Declarations of Interests by Members**

No declarations of interest were made.

**C.120 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**C.121 Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

**C.122 Chairman's Communications**

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

**C.123 Leader of the Council Announcements**

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/doc59253\\_20240221\\_council\\_report.pdf](https://forms.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/docs/doc59253_20240221_council_report.pdf)

**C.124 Political Balance**

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

The Leader of the Council presented the report and formally moved the recommendation for approval. He outlined the changes to the political balance and explained that ultimately the position in respect of the allocation of seats on committees remained the same.

Councillor I Hardiman seconded the recommendation.

Upon a vote, the proposal was agreed.

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

**C.125 Electoral arrangements and local government boundaries in Wyre Forest**

Council received a report from the Chief Executive that sought to agree the Council's response to the draft recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission's review of electoral arrangements for Worcestershire County Council; and to agree to conduct a community governance review (CGR) for the parish of Wolverley and Cookley and the principle of other community governance reviews as set out in the report.

The Leader presented the report. He gave a summary of the background and key issues detailed in the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval.

A discussion ensued. The Leader acknowledged the concerns raised by a few members about the lack of communication with Town Councils by the Boundary Commission.

Councillor D Ross seconded the recommendations.

Upon a show of hands, the proposal was agreed.

**Decision: Council AGREED;**

- 1.1 The response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's review in Appendix 1 of the report;**
- 1.2 The principle of conducting a community governance review of the parish of Wolverley and Cookley, commencing on 1 August 2024 with a local advisory poll to be held on 1 May 2025;**
- 1.3 To receive a report in May 2024 to determine the terms of reference for the review and the details of the local advisory poll including the question to be asked in the poll;**

- 1.4 The principle of conducting community governance reviews of Kidderminster Foreign and Kidderminster to examine among other things the electoral arrangements for the parish and town councils, with timetables and terms of reference for these reviews to be agreed at the meeting in July 2024.**

**C.126 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2027 and Capital Strategy 2024-2034**

A report was received from the Head of Resources that invited Council to approve the Council's budget for 2024-2027 having considered the proposed budget decision recommended to Council by Cabinet.

The report also sought approval of the Capital Strategy for 2024-2034 including prudential indicators which set limits for non-financial investments and to fulfil the key requirements of the DLUHC Investment Guidance. As part of the overall approval sought the report of the Head of Resources in respect of statutory duties placed on Local Authority Chief Financial Officers in relation to budget setting and monitoring was considered.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. He said that the budget proposals had been subject to public consultation; 976 responses had been received and almost all of the proposals received strong support.

He said the budget proposals from the administration together with the responses from the public consultation exercise had been discussed with members of other groups at the meeting of the Strategic Review Panel. He added that in addition to discussing the proposals put forward by the administration, the meeting provided an opportunity for other groups to present an alternative budget. He thanked Councillor F Oborski MBE for presenting an alternative budget proposal on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group. He added that two of the proposals put forward by the Group had been accepted by the Cabinet.

The Cabinet Member gave a summary of the ten proposals as outlined in the report considered by Cabinet on 13 February 2024.

In conclusion, the Cabinet Member said that the budget was in line with the Corporate Plan. It aimed to deliver on what was important to the residents of Wyre Forest and formed a robust medium term financial strategy (MTFS) which will deliver services and make the authority more commercially viable. He added that the budget set out identified achievable targets.

The Leader seconded the recommendations.

On behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group Councillor F Oborski MBE moved a set of amendments as set out in appendix 5 of the report. She thanked the Cabinet Member for taking on two of the proposals. She added that the amendments to the fee parking offer; second home premium and town hall meetings were not opposing the budget, but the amendments were

designed to enhance it.

Councillor S Miah seconded the amendment.

A debate on the amendment ensued.

**Named votes on the Liberal Democrat proposals were recorded as follows and the amendment was defeated:**

For (3)

Councillors: S Miah, F Oborski MBE and L Whitehouse.

Against (24)

Councillors: E Bourne, B Brookes, J Byng, G Connolly, N Desmond, R Drew, H Dyke, P Dyke, K Gale, N Gale, J Griffiths, I Hardiman, P Harrison, M Hart, K Henderson, D Little, N Martin, D Morehead, T Onslow, C Rogers, D Ross, D Russell, A Sutton and N Wilson.

Abstained (5)

Councillors: J Aston, L Carroll, M McDonnell, M Rayner and P Young.

A robust discussion on the substantive budget proposals took place.

Councillors P Dyke and H Dyke left the meeting at 7.30pm and returned at 7.33pm.

Councillor N Gale left the meeting at 7.36pm and returned at 7.37pm.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio addressed a number of the issues raised during the debate. He said that a strong opposition makes a strong administration and looked forward to receiving more alternative budget proposals next year. He urged Council to support the proposals.

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

For (21)

Councillors: E Bourne, B Brookes, J Byng, G Connolly, N Desmond, R Drew, K Gale, N Gale, I Hardiman, P Harrison, M Hart, K Henderson, D Little, N Martin, D Morehead, T Onslow, C Rogers, D Ross, D Russell, A Sutton and N Wilson.

Against (5)

Councillors: J Aston, S Miah, F Oborski MBE, M Rayner and L Whitehouse.

Abstained (6)

Councillors: L Carroll, H Dyke, P Dyke, J Griffiths, M McDonnell and P Young.

**Decision: Council;**

**1.1 THREE YEAR BUDGET, CAPITAL STRATEGY AND POLICY FRAMEWORK 2024-2027**

**1.1.1 APPROVED the updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024-2027.**

**1.1.2 APPROVED the Cabinet Proposals – taking into account the impact on the Council’s Capital and Revenue Budgets for 2024-2027 as shown in the tables in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.3 and as set out below:**

- a) provision of community leadership funding of £1,000 for each councillor across the period of the MTFs, at a cost of £33k in each year.**
- b) delivering actions set out in the new corporate plan by increasing capacity in the Civil Enforcement team at a cost of £39k in the second year. This will provide funding for one additional enforcement post in 2025-26.**
- c) delivering actions set out in the new corporate plan by increasing litter picking activity at a cost of £52k/£56k in 2024-25 and 2025-26.**
- d) capital investment of £50k for accessible play equipment, which will have a revenue cost for the borrowing of £7.5k/year.**
- e) a spend to save proposal to provide permanent capacity within the property team, at a cost of £116k/£120k/£123k to progress commercial rental income growth in line with the priority within the 2023-27 Corporate plan; cost of temporary agency resource is currently met from risk reserves; cost to be fully recouped from income growth from commercial rents.**
- f) changes to the senior management structure to provide capacity for delivery of the priorities in the corporate plan, at a cost of up to £11k/£15k/£15k.**
- g) introduction of free one hour parking at one car park in each of the three towns, Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm. This builds on the arrangements put in place in Bewdley in November as a consequence of the long-term traffic works. This is anticipated to cost £51k/£54k/£57k.**
- h) to introduce web casting of meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a cost of £1k in each year to allow**

maximum access for the public and in order to be fully open and transparent.

- i) to explore and develop a commercial proposal to bring long term empty homes back into use to increase housing supply and help meet housing demand; and support an allocation from the Innovation Fund of up to £10k to fund the feasibility study.
  - j) to hold a public engagement event with businesses, residents and stakeholders at Wyre Forest House for a State of the Area debate.
- 1.1.3 APPROVED the fees and charges in line with this Strategy, and the impact on the Council's Revenue Budget for 2024-2027, as shown in Appendix 3.
- 1.1.4 APPROVED the Council's updated Capital Strategy:
- a) Approval of the Capital Strategy 2024-2034 set out in Appendix 1 of the December Cabinet report and the updated, associated Quantitative Indicators set out in Appendix 2C of the report
  - b) Approval of variations to the Capital Programme and Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewals Schedule as set out in Appendices 2A and 2B, of the report (which updates Appendix 1 of the Capital Strategy report to December 2023 Cabinet)
  - c) Approval of the limits for gross debt for non-treasury investments compared to net service expenditure and for commercial income as a percentage of net service expenditure as set out in Appendix 2C of the report.
- 1.1.5 APPROVED that any Final Accounts savings arising from 2023-2024, together with surplus Earmarked Reserves, be allocated by the Head of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio.
- 1.1.6 The General Fund Revenue Budget be APPROVED including all updates from the position in December 2023 as set out in the report.
- 1.2 COUNCIL TAX AND BUSINESS RATES
- 1.2.1 That Council Tax is increased by the higher limit specified by the Government of 3% and:
- a) SETS the Council Tax for Wyre Forest District Council on a Band D Property at £243.29 for 2024-2025 which represents an increase of 3% on Council Tax from 2023-2024.

- b) **ENDORSES** the provisional Council Tax on a Band D Property in 2025-2026 of £250.58 and £258.09 in 2026-2027, being increases of 3%.
- 1.2.3 **NOTED** the Head of Resources (as Chief Financial Officer) opinion on the budget proposals, recommended by the Cabinet in the report, as detailed in Appendix 4 of the report.

**C.127 Council Tax Setting 2024-25**

Council considered the formal resolution for setting the Council Tax for 2024-25.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. He said the resolution recommended a council tax (Band D equivalent) of £243.29 be set, an increase of 2.997%; which is below the maximum level permitted and a referendum in respect of this Council's element of council tax was not required.

Councillor S Miah left the meeting at 7.46pm

The Leader seconded the recommendations.

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

For (28)

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

Against (0)

Abstained (3)

Councillors: L Carroll, J Griffiths and M McDonnell

**Decision: Council APPROVED the formal Council Tax Resolution 2024-25 at Appendix 1 of the report, taking into account information contained in Appendices 2 to 5.**

**C.128 Policy And Budget Framework – Matters which require a decision by Council**

- (a) **Recommendation from the Treasury Management Review Panel – 29 January 2024**

**Treasury Management Strategy 2024-25**



The Chairman of the Review Panel, Councillor C Rogers presented the recommendations and formally moved them for approval.

Councillor D Ross seconded the proposals.

Upon a vote, the proposals were unanimously agreed.

**Decision: Council;**

- 1.1 APPROVED the restated Prudential Indicators and Limits for the financial years 2024-25 to 2033-34, along with the Liability Benchmark, included in Appendix 3 of the report.**
- 1.2 APPROVED the updated Treasury Management and Investment Policy and Strategy Statements for the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 (the associated Prudential Indicators are included in Appendix 3 and the detailed criteria is included in Section 10 and Appendix 5).**
- 1.3 APPROVED the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement that sets out the Council's policy on MRP included in Appendix 1.**
- 1.4 APPROVED the Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator included in Appendix 3.**
- 1.5 NOTED that the separate Capital Strategy 2024-34, to be approved separately by Council, sets out the policy statement covering non-treasury investments including the related suite of prudential indicators.**

**C.129**

**Questions**

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

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

Could the Cabinet Member tell me what steps are being taken to increase the Recycling Rate in Wyre Forest?

**Answer from the Cabinet Member for Operational Services**

We are increasing our recycling rates by using a 3-pronged approach. We are improving our social media communication, increasing resident education around contamination and by ensuring we keep recycling simple by continuing to use the commingling method of collection.

**Supplementary Question**

We cannot make it compulsory for residents to purchase green and black bins. I was rather surprised the other week to hear a house had been empty for 3 years, the bins had disappeared, a new resident buys it and is

## **Agenda Item No. 10**

charged for his black bin and his green bin. Are we absolutely certain that charging in this way will actually encourage recycling? The gentleman in question said to me, “you know I don’t have to buy a recycling bin, the council is encouraging me to possibly act antisocially”. Please could you look again at that particular policy when it comes to a house that has been empty for some time and the bins which were there have disappeared?

### **Supplementary Answer**

If you want to send me the information over, I am very happy to look into that with the officers.

## **2. Question from Councillor L Carroll to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio**

In March 2023, the percentage of Wyre Forest District Council employees that were disabled was 1.22%, what is it now?

### **Answer from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio**

The answer is 1.22% the same as last year.

### **Supplementary Question**

Currently in the Wyre Forest there is 7.9% of the population are registered disabled, including myself. What has the Cabinet member done personally to ensure that more disabled people are working for the district, especially as the need for a diverse work force?

### **Supplementary Answer**

Well personally, you realise that the appointment of staff is an officer function not a function of an elected member. But notwithstanding that, we can only employ those people that come forward for employment when we advertise for such and furthermore of course not everybody does declare a disability. So last year we had in our recruitment 667 applications for employment, of which 42 people declared a disability and 11 of those were interviewed. So we do look carefully at all kinds of disabilities and protected characteristics and should somebody with a disability or protected characteristic seek and gain employment with this council, then this council I can assure you will do everything that is reasonably practicable to ensure that person is accommodated with this employment.

## **C.130 Motions Submitted under Standing Orders**

No motions were received by the deadline.

## **C.131 Emergency Motions submitted under Standing Orders**

There were no emergency motions.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.53pm.

The meeting is available for viewing on the Council’s website.

<https://wyreforestdc.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcasts>

**Chairman's List of Functions – 2024**

**February 2024 to May 2024**

Wed 14 <sup>th</sup> February	Mayor of Ledbury's Valentine coffee morning
*Fri 22 <sup>nd</sup> March	Kidderminster Town Mayors Ball, West Midlands Safari Park
*Sat 13 <sup>th</sup> April	Kidderminster Choral Society, St Mary's Church
Sat 13 <sup>th</sup> April	Chairman of Worcester CC Ball, Tree Top Pavillion, West Midlands Safari Park
Sun 14 <sup>th</sup> April	Malvern Hill DC Chairman's Civic Service, St. Mary Magdalene Church
*Sat 20 <sup>th</sup> April	Mayor of Malvern, Clive Hooper's Civic Service, Christ Church, Avenue Road, Malvern
Sun 21 <sup>st</sup> April	St George's Day Parade, Kidderminster Harriers / Town Hall

\* Denotes attendance by Vice Chairman

## WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

## COUNCIL

15 MAY 2024

## Political and Constitutional Structures 2024/2025

<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	The Leader of the Council
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	Solicitor to the Council
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Caroline Newlands, Ext. 2715 caroline.newlands@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	Appendix 1 – Amendments to the Constitution Appendix 2 - Political management structure <a href="https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-committees-and-meetings/council-democratic-structure/">https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-committees-and-meetings/council-democratic-structure/</a> Appendix 3 - Committee appointments Appendix 4 - Municipal calendar Appendix 5 - Appointments to outside bodies

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To consider the Political and Constitutional Structures for the municipal year 2024/2025.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

The Council is asked to:

- 2.1 AGREE the revisions to the Constitution as set out in section 4 and Appendix 1.**
- 2.2 APPROVE the proposed Political Management Structure of committees for 2024/2025 as set out in Appendix 2.**
- 2.3 AGREE the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees as contained in Appendix 3.**
- 2.4 ADOPT the Municipal Calendar as set out in Appendix 4.**
- 2.5 AGREE the appointments to outside bodies as set out in Appendix 5.**
- 2.6 Authorise 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.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Council is responsible for establishing the political structures which are not the responsibility of the Leader and Cabinet. Under the Local Government Act 2000 as**

amended by the Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Leader of the Council is responsible for appointments to the Cabinet and allocating responsibilities to Cabinet members. Since 2011, the Council has appointed the Leader of the Council under the “strong leader” model and Council was invited to appoint the Leader for the period to 2027 earlier on tonight’s agenda.

- 3.2 It remains Council’s role to establish such Committees as it thinks fit to carry out the discharge of functions which are not the responsibility of the Cabinet. It also appoints their Chairmen and Vice Chairmen.
- 3.3 Under section 7, 1.4 of the Council’s constitution, it is a function of full Council to make appointments to external bodies including relevant joint committees. Vacancies that arise during the course of the municipal year are dealt with by the Cabinet.
- 3.4 Under Article 15 of the Constitution, it is for full Council to agree material changes to the constitution. There are several such amendments proposed, which are set out in section 4 below and Appendix 1.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 Following the elections on 4 May 2023, four political groups have been formed and the administration is provided by the Conservative group which holds 20 of the 33 seats. The Conservative group’s proposals for the 2024/2025 political structure are detailed in Appendix 2.

##### **Political Balance**

- 4.2 Council approved the political balance at its meeting on 21 February 2024. There have been no changes since that date so Council is not required to re-calculate political balance.

##### **Amendments to Constitution**

- 4.3 Several amendments to the constitution are set out in Appendix 1 for the Council’s approval.

##### **4.3.1 Section 4 Responsibility for Functions**

Policy 26.15 of the adopted local plan provides:

26.15 The designers of extensions must consider the 45 degree code in order to protect the amenity of neighbouring residents. Proposals that do not adhere to the code will not be permitted.

This means that each time everything else is acceptable, if there is even a slight breach of the 45 degree code, the application has to be reported to Planning Committee as a departure from the Local Plan. As an example, 3 out of the 4 part B reports taken to Planning Committee in April only went due to a breach of the 45 degree code. It is therefore proposed that the scheme of delegations be amended to allow the Development Manager to determine whether the breach is acceptable and should be allowed as a departure from policy 26.15.

The revised wording to the scheme of delegations that relate to the determination of planning matters at paragraph A is proposed as follows:

A. All delegated decisions being in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Development Plan (except for paragraph 26.15 of the Wyre Forest Local Plan 2016-2036) or emerging Development Plan policies.

#### **4.3.2 Section 5 Terms of Reference of the Council and its Committees**

In a minor change in respect of committee TOR, the annual Ombudsman report will be transferred the from Ethics and Standards Committee to the Audit committee.

#### **4.3.3 Member training and performance**

Following recommendations from our auditors on member training and performance, the Council Constitution shall be amended to include the following wording;

- Members of regulatory committees may not vote if s/he has not undertaken mandatory training for that committee and may be called to speak only at chairman's discretion.
- Relevant Terms of reference for committees to be amended so that a review of the performance of regulatory committees shall be completed on an annual basis.

Section 14, paragraph 8.1 will be updated to reflect the recommendation.

#### **4.3.4 Terms of Reference for each Committee of the Council**

Following recommendations from our auditors after a review of the Council's terms of reference (TOR) and the Council's constitution, the information on each committee to be consolidated into one location. The single TOR document for each committee will improve transparency and clarity. Example single TOR is attached at appendix 1.

#### **4.3.5 Addition of prohibition of use of Council addresses for campaigning purposes to code of conduct**

Members may have already seen the publicity generated by The MJ article:

“The Digital Imprint Regime was introduced under Part 6 of the Elections Act 2022 (the ‘Act’) and came into force on 1 November 2023. It’s a commendable regime designed to ensure transparency in the electoral process. Scotland has had a regime in place for devolved elections since 2020 and indeed, used it as far back as the 2014 independence referendum...”

See the DLUHC letter below:

[Letter from Baroness Scott of Bybrook to the LGA \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

To address this matter and for clarity a minor change to the WFDC code of conduct is proposed.

This will make clear that no councillor may use the address of a council as part of an imprint (whether for hard copy or digital election material)

### **Committee Appointments**

- 4.4 After determining its political structures and allocations of seats to committees, Council must appoint Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen to committees. The nominations for these posts are set out in Appendix 3. The Solicitor to the Council will fill other seats in accordance with the nominations from the respective political Groups.

### **Municipal Calendar**

- 4.5 The calendar of meetings for 2024/2025, attached at Appendix 4, has been prepared based on the Council's proposed decision-making structure and in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

### **Outside appointments**

- 4.6 Each year the Council appoints Members as representatives on a number of outside bodies.
- 4.7 The attached schedule at Appendix 5 details the appointments due at this time and the number of nominations required for each body. Members will note that the appointments are made for the municipal year 2024/2025 unless otherwise annotated.
- 4.8 The schedule in Appendix 5 sets out the proposals for who should be appointed in each case. The proposals have been shared with Group Leaders.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no significant financial implications arising from this report.

## **6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The proposals comply with the requirements of Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 which require one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees to be established. The proposals comply with the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003 in respect of licensing committees.
- 6.2 There is no change to the allocation of seats on committees, which reflects political balance in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken and it is considered that there are no discernible impacts on the six equality strands.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 There are no significant risks associated with the proposed political management structure for 2024/2025.

**9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The proposals contained within this report meet the requirements of the relevant legislation including the Local Government Act 2000 and provide clear links to the Council's priorities.

**10. CONSULTEES**

- 10.1 The Chief Executive.
- 10.2 Group Leaders – in respect of the municipal calendar & appointments to outside bodies.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Local Government Act 2000, Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Local Government and Housing Act 1989, The Police and Criminal Justice Act 2006; Schedule 1 to the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000; the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 as amended by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 No. 881; the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 No 234.



## Amendments to the Constitution

### Section 4: Responsibility for Functions

That paragraph A of the Scheme of delegations that relate to the determination of planning matters be amended to: All delegated decisions being in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Development Plan (except for paragraph 26.15 of the Wyre Forest Local Plan 2016-2036) or emerging Development Plan policies.

### Section 5: Terms of Reference of the Council and its Committees

Delete the wording:

*'Oversees the complaints handling and Ombudsman investigations'*

from the Ethics and Standards Committee TOR and add it into the Audit Committee TOR

To meet audit recommendations, the information on each committee to be consolidated into one location. Template for single TOR is attached at Appendix 1 A

### Section 14: Code of conduct

In response to the correspondence received from the Government, it is intended to add to the following wording to the Councillors code of Conduct.

The following wording will be added into the Code of Conduct under the misuse of Council resources paragraph 7.1,

*'Councillors are not permitted to use their Council email address for election campaigning purposes'*

The following wording will be added into the code of conduct after 8.1

*'Members of regulatory committees may not sit as voting members if they have not undertaken mandatory training for that committee and/or if they have not completed their register of interests.'*

## Wyre Forest District Council

### Responsibility for Functions - Terms of Reference: Audit Committee

#### 1. Role and Purpose

- 1.1 The committee's purpose is to provide an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements. Its role in ensuring there is sufficient assurance over governance, risk and control gives greater confidence to all those charged with governance that those arrangements are effective.
- 1.2 The committee has oversight of both internal and external audit, together with the financial and governance reports, helping to ensure there are adequate arrangements in place for both internal challenge and public accountability.

#### 2. Core Functions

##### 2.1 Arrangements for Audit and Assurance

To consider the council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the council.

##### 2.1.1 External Audit

- Appointment of external Auditors
- To support the independence of external audit through consideration of the external auditor's annual assessment of its independence and review of any issues raised by PSAA or the authority's auditor panel as appropriate.
- To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports and the report to those charged with governance.
- To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor
- To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
- To consider additional commissions of work from external audit.
- To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external and internal audit and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies.
- To provide free and unfettered access to the audit committee chair for the auditors, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the committee.

##### 2.1.2 Internal Audit

- To approve the internal audit charter.

- To review proposals made in relation to the appointment of external providers of internal audit services and to make recommendations.
- To approve the risk-based internal audit plan, including internal audit's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.
- To approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan and resource requirements.
- To make appropriate enquiries of both management and the head of internal audit to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.
- To consider any impairments to the independence or objectivity of the head of internal audit arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing and to approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments.
- To consider reports from the head of internal audit on internal audit's performance during the year, including the performance of external providers of internal audit services. These will include:
  - updates on the work of internal audit, including key findings, issues of concern and action in hand as a result of internal audit work
  - regular reports on the results of the QAIP
  - reports on instances where the internal audit function does not conform to the PSIAS and LGAN, considering whether the non-conformance is significant enough that it must be included in the AGS.
- To consider the head of internal audit's annual report, including:
  - the statement of the level of conformance with the PSIAS and LGAN and the results of the Quality Assurance Improvement Programme (QAIP) that support the statement (these will indicate the reliability of the conclusions of internal audit)
  - the opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of governance, risk management and control, together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion (these will assist the committee in reviewing the AGS).
- To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.
- To receive reports outlining the action taken where the head of internal audit has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the authority or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.
- To consider a report on the effectiveness of internal audit to support the AGS where required to do so by the accounts and audit regulations

## **2.2 Financial and Governance reporting**

### **2.2.1 Governance reporting**

- To review the AGS prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, including the head of internal audit's annual opinion.
- To consider whether the annual evaluation for the AGS fairly concludes that governance arrangements are fit for purpose, supporting the achievement of the authority's objectives.

### **2.2.2 Financial Reporting**

- To monitor the arrangements and preparations for financial reporting to ensure that statutory requirements and professional standards can be met.
- To review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the council.
- To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

## **2.3 Overall Audit Function**

2.3.1 To consider the council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.

2.3.2 To consider reports on the effectiveness of financial management arrangements, including compliance with CIPFA's Financial Management Code.

## **2.4 Governance, Risk and Control**

2.4.1 Receive reports on, comment upon and make recommendations, if appropriate, on the Council's overall corporate governance arrangements including the Council's arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption.

2.4.2 Monitor and evaluate the development and operation of risk management by the Council. To receive reports and make recommendations to Cabinet where appropriate on:

- Risk Management Policy, Strategy and its associated action plans
- Reports from officers on developments and enhancements to the Risk Management process corporately

- Internal audit and External audit reports on Risk Management matters as appropriate.

2.4.3 To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.

2.4.4 To review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the council from fraud and corruption.

2.4.5 To monitor the counter fraud strategy, actions and resources.

2.4.6 To review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations.

## **2.5 Procurement**

2.5.1 Monitor and evaluate compliance with the Council's Procurement Policy and Standing Orders Relating to Contracts and Financial Regulations in so far as they relate to procurement.

For the Audit Committee this includes the following:

To receive reports and make recommendations to Cabinet where appropriate on:

- Procurement Policy, Strategy and associated action plans
- Reports from officers on developments and enhancements to the Procurement process corporately, including e-procurement (electronic procurement) with regard to compliance with the Standing Orders relating to Contracts and Financial Regulations
- Internal Audit and External Audit reports on procurement matters as appropriate.

## **2.10 Any Other Business**

2.10.1 Consider any other relevant business deemed appropriate by the Committee.

## **3. Constitution**

### **3.1 Membership**

3.1.1 The Audit Committee shall consist of such number of members of the Council and such number of independent persons as has been determined by Council. Independent persons shall be non-voting and appointed in accordance with the method approved by Council.

- 3.1.2 The Quorum at meetings of Council or any of its Committees is half of its membership. If, during the meeting of the Council, a Quorum of Members is not present then the meeting shall be adjourned immediately.
- 3.1.2.1 If the lack of Quorum only relates to particular item(s) then that particular item(s) shall be deferred.
- 3.1.2.2 The remaining business will be considered at a date and time fixed by the Chairman. If he/she does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next Ordinary Meeting.
- 3.1.2.3 Except where authorised by Statute or ordered by the Council, business shall not be transacted at any meeting unless the quorum as set out below is present. Fractions of numbers are to be rounded up.
- 3.1.3 The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be agreed by Annual Council.
- 3.1.4 At every meeting of a Committee, the Chairman of that Committee shall, if present, take the Chair, or in their absence the Vice-Chairman shall do so. If the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are both absent, the Committee shall elect a Member to chair the meeting until the Chairman or Vice-Chairman arrives.
- 3.1.5 No member shall be allowed to serve on Regulatory Committees unless they have completed the appropriate training as arranged by Council Officers.
- 3.1.6 No member of the Executive will be eligible for membership of the Audit Committee.
- 3.2 Meeting Arrangements**
- 3.2.1 All meetings of the Committee will normally be held at the Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster.
- 3.2.2 Meetings will start at 6.00 pm, unless the Chairman agrees to a different time.
- 3.2.3 The Committee will meet at least six times a year and shall have the ability to convene special hearing meetings as and when required.
- 3.2.4 The minutes and reports of the Committee will public documents available for inspection, examination and public consideration, except those documents that are classed as exempt.
- 3.2.5 The Committee will produce an annual report for submission to Council detailing the work undertaken by the Committee.
- 3.2.6 The Committee will be advised by the Chief Executive, the Chief Financial Officer and other officers and advisors as necessary.

- 3.2.7 Meetings will be held in public, with the full right of attendance for all members, public and press, except during consideration of exempt business. Public participation will apply.
- 3.2.8 Other members and/or officers of the Council may be requested to attend meetings of the Committee when the matters to be discussed make it necessary.
- 3.2.9 An agenda, together with reports, will be made available to all members of the Council at least 5 clear working days before each formal meeting.
- 3.2.10 The Committee will be serviced by Democratic Services.

EXAMPLE DRAFT

**COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**  
**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**COMMITTEES 2024/2025**

<p>Appointments and Appeals Committee</p> <p>Chairman: Vice-Chairman:</p>	<p>Leader of the Council Deputy Leader</p>
<p>Audit Committee</p> <p>Chairman: Vice-Chairman:</p>	<p>Councillor Nathan Desmond Councillor George Connolly</p>
<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Chairman: Vice-Chairman:</p>	<p>Councillor Nicky Martin Councillor Fran Oborski</p>
<p>Licensing and Environmental Committee</p> <p>Chairman: Vice-Chairman:</p>	<p>Councillor Chris Rogers Councillor Ken Henderson</p>
<p>Licensing Sub-Committee</p>	<p>A rota of 3 Members of the Licensing and Environmental Committee, including, and chaired by, the Committee's Chairman or Vice-Chairman.</p>
<p>Planning Committee</p> <p>Chairman: Vice-Chairman:</p>	<p>Councillor Robin Drew Councillor Alan Sutton</p>
<p>Ethics and Standards Committee</p> <p>Chairman: Vice-Chairman:</p>	<p>Councillor Nicky Gale Councillor Emily Bourne</p>
<p>Strategic Review Panel</p> <p>Chairman: Vice-Chairman:</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Finance Leader of the Council</p>



MAY 2024

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1	2 Elections (PCC & KTC)	3 Count 11am Licensing Sub Committee	4	5
6 Bank Holiday	7 CLT 6pm Additional Cabinet	8	9 6pm Overview & Scrutiny	10	11	12
13	14	15 6pm Council	16 CLT	17	18	19
20 6pm Audit	21 CLT 6pm Planning	22 Cabinet/CLT	23	24	25	26
27 Bank Holiday School half term week	28	29	30	31		

JUNE 2024

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

**Agenda Item No. 14 Appendix 4**

**JULY 2024**

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

AUGUST 2024

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

**Agenda Item No. 14 Appendix 4**

**SEPTEMBER 2024**

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

OCTOBER 2024

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

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

**Agenda Item No. 14 Appendix 4**

**NOVEMBER 2024**

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

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

DECEMBER 2024

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



JANUARY 2025

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

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

\*\* Strategic Review Panel to be programmed in (x2) ??

**Agenda Item No. 14 Appendix 4**

**FEBRUARY 2025**

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

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

MARCH 2025

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

**Agenda Item No. 14 Appendix 4**

**APRIL 2025**

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

**Agenda Item No. 14 Appendix 4**

**MAY 2025**

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

JUNE 2025

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

**Agenda Item No. 14 Appendix 4**

**JULY 2025**

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

**Representation on Outside Bodies 2024/2025**

<b>External Body</b>	<b>Representative 2023/2024</b>	<b>Representative 2024/2025</b>	<b>Number of Representatives</b>
Age UK	Councillor Nicky Gale	Councillor Nicky Gale	1 Councillor
Bewdley Development Trust	Councillor Emily Bourne	Councillor Emily Bourne	1 Councillor
Bewdley Museum Management Committee	Relevant Cabinet Member - Councillor Tracey Onslow Councillor Paul Harrison Councillor John Byng	Relevant Cabinet Member - Councillor Tracey Onslow Councillor Paul Harrison Councillor John Byng	Relevant Cabinet Member plus 2 Bewdley & Rock Ward or Wribbenhall & Arley Ward Councillors
Sir Edward Blount's Charity (operates as Witnell Blount Charity)	Councillor George Connolly	Councillor George Connolly	Requirement is to appoint a "competent person" who "may be but need not be a member of the council" (The charity's main role is operating and maintaining six almshouses in Franche & Habberley North Ward.)
District Councils' Network	Leader of the Council: Councillor Marcus Hart Substitute: Deputy Leader, Councillor Ian Hardiman	Leader of the Council: Councillor Marcus Hart Substitute: Deputy Leader, Councillor Ben Brookes	Leader, Deputy Leader as named substitute
Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Partnership Assembly	Relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Ian Hardiman Substitute: Councillor Paul Harrison	Relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Ian Hardiman Substitute: Councillor Paul Harrison	Relevant Cabinet Member 1 named substitute



External Body	Representative 2023/2024	Representative 2024/2025	Number of Representatives
Local Government Association General Assembly	Leader of the Council Councillor Marcus Hart	Leader of the Council Councillor Marcus Hart	Leader of the Council
PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London) Adjudication Joint Committee	Relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Ben Brookes Substitute: Councillor Ian Hardiman	Relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Ben Brookes Substitute: Councillor Ian Hardiman	Relevant Cabinet Member, 1 Councillor as named substitute
Stourport Forward Board	Councillor Chris Rogers	Councillor Chris Rogers	1 Stourport Councillor / 1 Officer
Stourport on Severn Social Day Centre Association (Charity No. 256775) - representative and trustee (T/A Elizabeth Mills Centre)  (formerly The Elizabeth Mills Centre)	Councillor Dave Little	Councillor Dave Little	1 Stourport Councillor
10:32 Wyre Forest Early Help (formerly Tree Tops Sure Start Children's Centre)	Councillor Nicky Gale	Councillor Nicky Gale	1 Foley Park and Hoobrook Ward Member
West Mercia Police and Crime Panel	Relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Tracey Onslow	Councillor Tracey Onslow	Relevant Cabinet Member
West Midlands Employers Shareholder Board	N/A	Relevant Cabinet Member - Councillor David Ross	Relevant Cabinet Member

External Body	Representative 2023/2024	Representative 2024/2025	Number of Representatives
Worcestershire County Council Corporate Parenting Board	Councillor Fran Oborski	Councillor Fran Oborski	1 Councillor (Expectations from WCC: Relevant Cabinet Member or Councillor with relevant experience)
Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Paul Harrison	Councillor Paul Harrison	1 Councillor
Worcestershire County Council Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board – co-opted member for scrutiny of Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership	Councillor Ian Hardiman	Councillor Ian Hardiman	1 Councillor
Worcestershire County Waste Forum	Relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Ben Brookes	Relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Ben Brookes	Relevant Cabinet Member
Worcestershire Health and Well-being Board	Relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Ian Hardiman Substitute: Councillor Paul Harrison	Relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Ian Hardiman Substitute: Councillor Paul Harrison	Relevant Cabinet Member 1 named substitute
Worcestershire Health Improvement Group	Relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Ian Hardiman	Relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Ian Hardiman	Relevant Cabinet Member
Worcestershire Leaders’ Board	Leader of the Council, Councillor Marcus Hart Substitute: Deputy Leader, Councillor Ian Hardiman	Leader of the Council, Councillor Marcus Hart Substitute: Deputy Leader, Councillor Ben Brookes	Leader, Deputy Leader as named substitute

External Body	Representative 2023/2024	Representative 2024/2025	Number of Representatives
Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board	Relevant Cabinet Member - Councillor Tracey Onslow & Chairman of Licensing & Environmental Committee – Councillor Paul Harrison	Relevant Cabinet Member - Councillor Tracey Onslow & Chairman of Licensing & Environmental Committee – Councillor Chris Rogers	2 Councillors (Past practice: Relevant Cabinet Member & Chairman of Licensing & Environmental Committee)
Wyre Forest Citizen's Advice Bureau - Management Committee	Councillor Ken Henderson	Councillor Ken Henderson	1 Councillor
Wyre Forest Community Leisure Association Ltd - Local Partnership Board	Relevant Cabinet Member - Councillor Tracey Onslow Councillor Nicky Gale	Relevant Cabinet Member - Councillor Tracey Onslow Councillor Nicky Gale	2 Councillors / 2 Officers
Wyre Forest Local Children and Young People's Trust	Relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Ian Hardiman Councillor Kevin Gale	Relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Ian Hardiman Councillor Kevin Gale	2 Councillors including relevant Cabinet Member / 1 Officer
Wyre Forest Nightstop and Mediation Service Management Committee	Relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Ian Hardiman	Relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Ian Hardiman	Relevant Cabinet Member

**Outside Bodies – Wyre Forest District Councillors Representing North Worcestershire Districts (for information).**

The Leaders of Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest will agree North Worcestershire representation on the bodies below for 2024/2025.

<b>External Body</b>	<b>Representative 2023/2024</b>	<b>Representative 2024/2025</b>
Worcestershire LEP	Councillor Dan Morehead (WFDC – Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda) Substitute: Councillor Karen May	Councillor TBC Substitute: TBC
Worcestershire Local Access Forum	Councillor Anthony Lovell (Redditch)	Councillor TBC

**Armed Forces Champions (for information)**

These appointments are to be made by the Leader of the Council.

	<b>2023/2024</b>	<b>2024/2025</b>
Armed Forces Champion	Councillor Kevin Gale Councillor Alan Sutton	Councillor Kevin Gale Councillor Alan Sutton

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

Electronic Copies of all reports are available on the Internet

<b>Name</b>	<b>Attendance Percentage for 2023/2024</b>	<b>Number of Meetings Attended</b>
Cllr John Aston	95%	18
Cllr Emily Bourne	100%	7
Cllr Ben Brookes	100%	22
Cllr John Byng	100%	15
Cllr Liam Carroll	94%	16
Cllr Vicky Caulfield	80%	12
Cllr George Connolly	89%	17
Cllr Nathan Desmond	95%	21
Cllr Robin Drew	94%	16
Cllr Helen Dyke	38%	9
Cllr Peter Dyke	96%	25
Cllr Kevin Gale	90%	18
Cllr Nicky Gale	93%	14
Cllr Jackie Griffiths	100%	12
Cllr Ian Hardiman	95%	19
Cllr Paul Harrison	94%	30
Cllr Marcus Hart	100%	23
Cllr Ken Henderson	92%	11
Cllr David Little	96%	22
Cllr Nicky Martin	74%	17
Cllr Mary McDonnell	91%	10
Cllr Shazu Miah	100%	14
Cllr Dan Morehead	100%	12
Cllr Fran Oborski	89%	25
Cllr Tracey Onslow	100%	12
Cllr Mary Rayner	94%	16
Cllr Chris Rogers	94%	32
Cllr David Ross	100%	22
Cllr Danny Russell	100%	15
Cllr Alan Sutton	84%	16
Cllr Leigh Whitehouse	86%	12
Cllr Nick Wilson	80%	4
Cllr Peter Young	93%	13

The calendar of meetings is agreed at the beginning of each municipal year. Occasionally the need arises for additional meetings to be arranged at short notice which not all Members are able to attend due to previous commitments. The table shows only the meetings in the agreed municipal calendar: additional meetings are ignored.

# Cabinet Annual Report 2023-2024

## Report from the Leader of the Council

It gives me great pleasure to present my first annual report as Leader of the Council in the first municipal year of this four-year term, having previously presented such reports from 2014-2019.

The political make-up of the Council in 2023-2024 is wholly different from that in 2022-2023.

The make-up of the Council following the elections is:-

Conservatives	20
Independents	6
Labour	4
Liberal Democrats	2
Green	1

Those 33 councillors have formed into 4 groups.

Prior to the election the make-up was as follows:-

Conservatives	14
Independents	13
Liberal Democrats	3
Labour	2
Green	1

Labour, Green and Independent (Some former Independent Health Concern) councillors formed the Progressive Alliance that ran the Council.

There has been a change since the election and Labour are now 3 and the Independents 7.

The election result clearly ensured that there would be political stability in the political administration of the Council.

One of the first steps as Leader was to form a Cabinet.

Ensuring the right size and skills make-up of the Cabinet to make sure that the key strategic decisions affecting the Council and most importantly the residents of the Wyre Forest whom it serves is essential.

The minimum size of the Cabinet is 3 and the maximum is 10. Ever since the Cabinet system was introduced at Wyre Forest District Council the Cabinet has ranged between 5-7 members, with the vast majority of that time having at least 6 members.

I appointed a Cabinet of 6 members and in order to focus on overall strategy felt it important not to have a wider portfolio.

I appointed a:-

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being,

Cabinet Member for Operational Services,

Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda,

Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Arts and Community Safety and

Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio.

One of the first things the Cabinet had to do was to focus on a new Corporate Plan and to deliver on the political agenda that its Party and Group had stood upon on at the May 2023 elections.

A Corporate Plan was approved by Cabinet and unanimously supported at Council in the autumn of 2023.

At the core of the Cabinet's thinking is delivering on Economic Regeneration, keeping our District, safe, clean and looking good and ensuring that we are a transformational and commercial Council that is financially sustainable.

I was also very keen to demonstrate action on the Green Agenda and hence giving this more prominence at a senior level by giving this responsibility within a Cabinet role and Cabinet also approving a contract with a private sector company to commence delivery of almost 200 electric chargers across all of our pay and display car parks within its first year.

The cabinet has also been pleased to agree an element of free car parking in Bewdley to support businesses over the next 18 months whilst the traffic is one way across the bridge and also expanding this scheme to be fair and consistent, to car parks in Stourport and Kidderminster too as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

I was also delighted to produce a balanced budget for 24-25 and a medium term financial strategy that see the Council not exhaust its reserves over that period. Clearly in year 3 as it presently stands the Council is drawing heavily from its reserves but throughout 23-24 the Cabinet has worked hard with the corporate leadership team to continue ways to identify savings and efficiencies and grow our income without affecting front line services important to the public, including investing in areas of importance to the public in line with our corporate priorities, such as accessible play equipment, additional

resource for civil enforcement officers and additional resource for litter pickers.

The Cabinet has met 9 times during this municipal year, 7 of which have been ordinary meetings and 2 additional meetings. With the exception of the first meeting in June, the attendance of Cabinet has been 100% at all meetings.

The Creative Hub refurbishment and re-purposing works are under way and envisaged to be completed in December 2024. This has proved to be a complex and challenging project given the building's listed status and condition. Progress has been made also in attracting tenants for the building with discussions with a few local companies from the creative industries sector moving to a detailed stage. A targeted marketing campaign will be launched in the May this year.

The Council has purchased the Piano Building and Bus Station in February this year and appointed a multi-disciplinary professional team to manage the delivery of the project, including the preparation and submission of a planning application in May this year. In parallel, the Council has advanced discussions with potential tenants for the food and beverage (F&B) ground floor use and the flexible office space on the upper floors.

Connectivity Project – the demolition works have been completed and the tender exercise for the main works contract has been concluded with the preferred bidder expected to be appointed in May this year.

I have, together with the Chief Executive, following proper consultation, proposed a restructure to create a Deputy Chief Executive: Regeneration and Commercial to coincide with NWEDR being brought back in house to ensure we have sufficient capacity to deliver the priorities within the corporate plan. This is subject to Council's approval.

A total of 14,272 square feet of Wyre Forest House has already been dedicated for letting to tenants. There are 7 different tenants at present, taking up 12,938 square feet or 90% of the lettable office space. This brings in gross rental income of £321k a year and £144k of IT support charges, and therefore makes a valuable contribution to our commercial income.

We know that, whilst having set a balanced budget in February, the scale of the challenge is going to become greater and that within the financial year 2023/24 we have had to substantially increase our Wyre Forest Forward savings to ensure we live within our means. Whilst there will be difficult choices ahead, I am confident that this Council is in a sound financial position to rise to those challenges.

I would like to place on record my grateful thanks to the Chief Executive, Corporate Leadership Team and all officers within the Council for their help and support this year. I know that the challenges within local government grow ever larger year on year, but the drive and commitment shown by the officers within our Council never ceases to amaze me.



I would also like to place on record my thanks to my Cabinet colleagues for their support and counsel during the last year. Also, importantly to all elected members of the Council across the political divide as I know ultimately all elected members get elected for one common aim, to deliver good public services and for the betterment of all residents across the district. They do a difficult job in a changing environment and in a society where sadly many in public office are targeted in all forms of communication. Together we play a vital role in local democracy.

Finally, the last year has been challenging and I have little, if any, doubt that this year will be even more challenging, but I am confident we will all continue as members and officers to work together for our common aim; the residents, businesses and tax payers of Wyre Forest.

**Councillor Marcus J. Hart**  
**Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategy**

# Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2023-2024

## Report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

It gives me great pleasure to write and present to you my first annual report as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. I would like to thank Councillor Marcus Hart and his administration for giving me the opportunity to fulfil the role.

The committee has met 10 times during this municipal year, and we have a further meeting scheduled for 9 May 2024.

The committee is made up as follows:-

- 7 Conservative Group – Councillors: G Connolly, N Desmond, N Gale, P Harrison, D Little, C Rogers and D Russell.
- 3 Independent & Green Group – Councillors: V Caulfield, H Dyke and N Martin.
- 1 Labour Group – Councillor M McDonnell
- 1 Liberal Democrat Group - Councillor F Oborski MBE

In this municipal year, we have considered 22 reports in all, so a busy year with lots of reading and information to process and understand.

We have explored a wide variety of issues and reports such as Budget and Performance, Housing Strategy 2023-2040, Health and wellbeing, Localism Strategy and Cost of Living Action Plan to name but a few. We also received a visit from our external advisors Jones Valerio in respect of our Capital Portfolio Fund.

The committee is as required by law, to be politically balanced. It has worked hard to ensure that the decisions taken by the council have been thoroughly scrutinised on a cross party basis. Each member has been given an opportunity to contribute to discussion and debate and I thank all members for their time and contributions.

I have enjoyed chairing the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and would also like to thank Vice Chair and Officers who have presented reports and taken questions. Also not forgetting the clerks, Karen Morton and Louisa Bright, who have been a great support to me.

**Councillor Nicky Martin**

## Scrutiny at Wyre Forest

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

The Committee consisted of 12 cross party Members. The workload included scrutinising proposals for new or amended policies before their consideration by the Cabinet and Council, undertaking detailed reviews into existing procedures and policy, and monitoring the schedule of proposed decisions as set out in the Council's Forward Plan.

## Review Panels

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

Changes were made to the reporting of the Treasury Management Review Panel in 2022. The Scrutiny Committee appoints the Chairperson and the recommendations from the Panel now flow directly to Council.

The following Panels have taken place during the 2023/2024 year:

Name	No. of meetings	Purpose
Treasury Management	2	Allowed detailed scrutiny and training in respect of treasury management. Recommendations from the Panel were made to Council.

## Recommendation Tracking

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

After recommendations have been made, all members receive the Cabinet decision list which records what decision Cabinet took in respect of any scrutiny committee recommendations. This is a clear means of tracking the outcome of recommendations.

## Public and Stakeholder Involvement in Scrutiny

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

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

## Terms of Reference - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1. Reviews the policies of the Council and the Cabinet and recommends to the Council or the Cabinet:
  - (i) Whether any new policies are required.
  - (ii) Whether any existing policies are no longer required.
  - (iii) Whether any changes are required to any existing policies.
  - (iv) Whether any action is required to make the policies more effective.
2. Reviews the discharge of Cabinet functions, and recommends to the Council or the Cabinet:
  - (i) Whether any action should be taken to improve the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of those functions.
  - (ii) Whether any action should be taken to improve the co-ordination of the various functions within the Authority, or with any other person or body.
  - (iii) Whether the function should continue to be discharged or be discharged in another way.
3. Reviews any decisions or proposed decisions of the Council and of the Cabinet. In undertaking such reviews, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall in particular consider:
  - (i) Whether the relevant criteria were used.
  - (ii) Whether the decision is in accordance with the budget and policy framework of the Council.
  - (iii) Whether the decision or action was within the powers of the Authority.
  - (iv) Whether the decision was lawful.
  - (v) Whether the decision contributes to the efficient, effective, and economic discharge of the function.
4. Recommendations should all take account of the following:
  - (i) Whether the decision should be reconsidered, and if so, what alternative decision should be taken.
  - (ii) Whether the proposed decision should be taken or taken in a different form.

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- (iii) Whether any further action should be taken in the experience of that decision to ensure proper or better implementation of decisions.
  - (iv) Whether any further actions should be taken in the experience of that decision to improve the manner or quality of decision-making for the future.
5. Considers any matters which affect the Council or its administrative area or the inhabitants of that area and makes recommendations to the Council or the Cabinet arising from that consideration.
  6. External Partners  
Reviews the performance and effectiveness of the Council's external partner organisations, including the duty to scrutinise the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.
  7. Review Panels  
Establishes time limited Review Panels which focus upon specific issues of concern raised by Members through a Scrutiny Proposal Form, consider evidence, and subsequently make recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A protocol for the establishment of Review Panels is attached as Appendix C at section 10 of the Constitution.
  8. Review the Forward Plan  
Regularly reviews the Forward Plan with a view to deciding which, if any, forthcoming items require consideration.
  9. Sets and agrees an Annual Work Programme and prioritises the work of the Committee.
  10. Ensures consideration is given to encouraging public participation and engagement in functions of the Committee.
  11. Ensures that the views of any invitees and co-opted Members (where appropriate) are taken into account when conducting investigations.
  12. Monitors the implementation of scrutiny recommendations.
  13. Reviews and scrutinises relevant public bodies and partners in the district, including the Council's contribution and relationship with them. Where necessary, requesting them to address overview and scrutiny about their activities, performance, particular decisions, initiatives, or projects.

# **Ethics and Standards Committee Annual Report 2023-2024**

## **Report from the Chairman of the Committee**

It has been another year which has been very quiet.

We have not had to have any meetings this year as there have been no cause to hold any meetings to consider any issues.

**Councillor Nicky Gale**

## **Role of the Standards Committee / Terms of Reference**

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

## **Member Activity Reports**

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

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

## **Membership of the Ethics and Standards Committee**

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

Chairman: Councillor Nicky Gale

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Emily Bourne

Councillors: Robin Drew, Mary McDonnell, Mary Rayner, Nick Wilson and Peter Young

Independent Members: R Reynolds and Rev J A Cox

Parish Council representatives: Councillors S Billett, S Fowler and D Killingworth.

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL**  
**15 MAY 2024**

**Community Governance Review: Wolverley and Cookley**

<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Ian Miller, Ext. 2700 ian.miller@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Councillor Marcus Hart, Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	Appendix 1 – Proposed terms of reference for the review. Appendix 2 – proposed questions to be asked in local advisory poll, franchise, and other procedural rules. Appendix 3 – map of area covered by the community governance review.

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To agree various matters relating to the community governance review of Wolverley and Cookley, which is to commence on 1 August 2024.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Council is asked to **APPROVE**:

- 2.1 the terms of reference for the review in Appendix 1 and to delegate to the Chief Executive (in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Solicitor to the Council) power to make any amendments that may be necessary in light of the Boundary Commission's final recommendations for electoral arrangements of Worcestershire County Council so far as they affect Wolverley and Cookley;
- 2.2 the questions to be asked in the local advisory poll on 1 May 2025 under section 116 of the Local Government Act 2003, together with the franchise and other procedural rules for the local poll, set out in Appendix 2;
- 2.3 the Returning Officer (as counting officer) be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to supplement the rules for the advisory poll as set out in rule 12 in Appendix 2.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Council agreed on 21 February 2024:



“the principle of conducting a community governance review of Wolverley and Cookley, commencing on 1 August 2024 with a local advisory poll to be held on 1 May 2025;

To receive a report in May 2024 to determine the terms of reference for the review and the details of the local advisory poll including the question to be asked in the poll”.

This report deals with the detailed matters that need to be agreed in order to proceed with the review

3.2 The review arises from the Local Government Boundary Commission’s review of electoral arrangements for Worcestershire County Council. The following resolution was passed by Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council: “In respect of the proposals for Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council, the Parish Council unanimously resolved to oppose the current proposal and request that the LGBC make no changes at the current time **as Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council formally request that Wyre Forest District Council undertake a Community Governance Review in respect of the current Parish Council, given the housing growth at Lea Castle**” (emphasis added). This constitutes an application for a community governance review in accordance with section 80A of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and section 83(2) places the Council under a duty to undertake a review. Under section 93(8) of the 2007 Act, the review must be concluded within 12 months. However the terms of reference for the review will need to incorporate reference to the Boundary Commission’s final recommendations on 2 July. Therefore the review would commence on 1 August and be completed no later than July 2025.

3.3 Council will recall that the Boundary Commission’s draft recommendations for the area of Wolverley and Cookley involve creating a separate parish ward for Lea Castle, which aligns with the polling district that Wyre Forest District Council has already put in place. However the draft recommendations for representation of parish wards in Wolverley and Cookley do not appear to command local support – in particular because they merge the villages of Wolverley and Cookley into a single ward. Following the meeting on 21 February, the District Council’s representations to the Boundary Commission were submitted as follows:

“In respect of Wolverley and Cookley, WFDC **objects** to the proposal that the area of Wolverley and Cookley (other than Lea Castle) would be covered by one parish ward. No rationale is presented for such a change. There have been separate wards for Wolverley village and Cookley village for many years - each ward also includes more sparsely populated areas surrounding the main villages. There is no need to merge the two “village” wards (other than to create a separate ward for Lea Castle) as this would disrupt the long-standing arrangements under which each has had separate representation on Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council.

“WFDC recognises that the Boundary Commission does “not normally” change the number of councillors for a parish council when making its recommendations. However we believe that there is a strong case for doing so in respect of Wolverley and Cookley. The 2029 estimates of electors which the Boundary Commission has used show that the Cookley ward would grow by almost 1700 electors, which will relate mainly or wholly to the development at Lea Castle. In total, 1,400 dwellings are expected at Lea Castle in accordance with the adopted local plan, of which 600 already have permission with an application for the remaining 800 expected to be

considered this year. Once all 1,400 dwellings are built, there is every expectation that the number of electors in Lea Castle will comfortably exceed the 2,000 or so in each of the present Wolverley and Cookley wards. On that basis, WFDC **objects** to the representation of 4 councillors for the new Lea Castle ward and submits an alternative proposal that the appropriate representation should involve parity of representation for the three wards, comprising at least 5 councillors for each of Wolverley ward, Cookley ward and Lea Castle ward.”

**4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 A CGR provides the opportunity for principal councils to review and make changes to community governance in an area. This report presents for Council’s approval proposed terms of reference for the review. The area to be considered in the review comprises the polling districts WFR-WO, WFR-CO1 and WFR-CO2. A map detailing the area concerned is attached at Appendix 3.
- 4.2 Chapter 3 of Part 4 of the 2007 Act confers on the relevant principal council – which is the District Council in this case - the power to take decisions about such matters as creation of parishes or the alteration of boundaries and their electoral arrangements arising from a CGR. Final recommendations following the review would be submitted to full Council for approval and for it to approve the making of any necessary reorganisation order.
- 4.3 A timetable for the review is detailed below.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Report to Council to approve the Terms of Reference for the review	15 May 2024
<b>Commencement of review and publication of Terms of Reference</b>	<b>1 August 2024</b>
Undertake formal consultation with other interested bodies in accordance with section 93 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007	August – November 2024
Undertake formal consultation with local electors by means of local advisory poll	1 May 2025
Full Council considers result of poll and other responses to consultation	16 July 2025
<b>If there is positive support for the creation of a separate parish council for Lea Castle or separate parish councils for each of Wolverley, Cookley and Lea Castle</b>	
Recommendation to full Council to consider and approve publication of draft proposals for reorganisation order including electoral arrangements etc.	16 July 2025
Consultation on draft proposals for reorganisation order	August – October 2025
Approval of reorganisation order by full Council	December 2025
Effective date of order	1 September 2026

Action	Dates
New parish council(s) created in temporary form from existing parish councillors for the polling district concerned (this is necessary, among other things, so that a precept can be set for 2027-28)	September 2026
Elections to parish councils	6 May 2027
<b>If there is <u>not</u> positive support for any change to the parish council arrangements for Wolverley and Cookley</b>	
Recommendation to full Council to end the community governance review so far as it relates to creating new parish councils but to decide the electoral arrangements that would apply for the parish council	16 July 2025
Consultation on draft proposals for reorganisation order	August – October 2025
Approval of reorganisation order by full Council	December 2025
Effective date of order (affects elections to be held in May 2027)	1 January 2027
Elections to Wolverley and Cookley parish council	6 May 2027

- 4.4 The timetable ensures that, if the review supports the creation of new parish council(s) for either part of or all parts of Wolverley and Cookley, elections to them would be held in May 2027 and that any new councils would be created in time for them to take their own decisions on precepts for 2027-28, rather than the District Council having to set them in the reorganisation order or the current parish council taking the decisions. Based on the model used when Kidderminster Town Council was created, the existing parish councillors for the relevant polling districts would serve on the new councils in the period from September 2026 to the elections in May 2027 e.g. if there is a new parish council created for Lea Castle, the parish councillors who represent polling districts WFR-CO1 and CO2 would serve on that council in the “shadow” period.
- 4.5 As part of a community governance review, it is necessary for the Council to undertake consultation with local government electors for the area and with interested bodies. In respect of registered local government electors in Wolverley and Cookley, this will be achieved by conducting a local advisory poll under section 116 of the Local Government Act 2003. The poll would be held on 1 May 2025 at the same time as, but not formally combined with, the county council elections which are being held on that day. Under electoral law, it is not possible formally to combine a local advisory poll with an election. A poll and election can be held at the same time although, in effect, there would have to be separate polling arrangements in each location. The polling places used for Wolverley and Cookley are sufficiently large to accommodate the additional desks, staffing etc. that would be required.
- 4.6 Under section 116 of the 2003 Act, it falls to the Council to decide the rules that apply for the poll, including the wording of the question and the franchise for the poll. These are set out in Appendix 2 for approval. The question to be asked in the poll needs to be simple and understandable and provide only two possible outcomes so that the “winner” will be clear. Consideration has been given to how best to understand the

views of residents in each polling district (Wolverley, Cookley and Lea Castle) and the proposal is that they should each be asked whether they support the creation of a parish council for their polling district. This will allow the Council to test whether there is support for radical change, involving replacement of the existing parish council by two or three parish councils, or if residents support retention of the existing parish council. Since the poll is about local government issues, the franchise for the poll is those entitled to vote in local government elections.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Conducting a CGR will involve a financial cost to the Council including officer resources to undertake the review. It is estimated that the total cost of the review will be approximately £5k which will be met from the general risk reserve. It is appropriate that steps should be taken to minimise the cost to the District Council without unduly impeding local electors' ability to take part in the local advisory poll. It is for this reason that it is proposed that no separate poll card should be issued – electors will receive one in respect of the county council elections and the information on where and how to vote will be the same for the local poll.
- 5.2 If the result of the CGR is for separate parish councils to be created – whether for one of the three areas or for each of the three areas - a precept would be levied on the residents by the new parish council(s). This would replace the current precept levied by Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council. As set out in the timetable, it is envisaged that the new parish council(s) would be created in the autumn of 2026, in order that decisions on the precept would be taken by those bodies rather than by the District Council. The level of the parish element of the council tax in 2027-28 onwards would be a matter for the parish councils and might be higher or lower than the current figure – which is no different from the position that would apply if no change was made to the structure of local governance.

**6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 sets out the powers associated with Community Governance Reviews and provides the power for the Council to take decisions regarding matters arising from the review, as proposed in the terms of reference. The Council is required by Section 100(4) to have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State relating to Community Governance Reviews.
- 6.2 In addition to the 2007 Act, legislation relating to parishes will have to be considered during the review as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Government Act 1992.
- 6.3 Section 94(2) of the 2007 Act states 'If the Parish has 1000 or more local government electors, the review must recommend that the Parish should have a Council'.
- 6.4 Section 116 of the Local Government Act 2003 confers a power on the District Council to hold local polls on various matters. It is for the Council to decide who is polled and what rules apply to a poll.

**7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 An initial assessment has been undertaken and no adverse implications for the protected characteristics has been identified.

**8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 Risks will be mitigated by ensuring that the CGR accords with the legislation and guidance given by the Electoral Commission. This will include ensuring that the review is carried out within the statutory timescales and that the Terms of Reference are appropriate for the petition.

- 8.2 When the Boundary Commission's recommendations are implemented, they will represent "protected electoral arrangements" at the time when the review is completed and decisions fall to be taken by the Council. The effect is that any decisions to alter the electoral arrangements will require the consent of the Boundary Commission – this is relevant if Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council is retained on its current footprint and the Council decides to alter the warding arrangements.

**9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The Council is invited to confirm the terms of reference for the community governance review of Wolverley and Cookley and the procedural rules for the local advisory poll (including the questions to be asked and the franchise).

**10. CONSULTEES**

- 10.1 The Leader of the Council and the Corporate Leadership Team.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Report to Council, 21 February 2024: Local Government Boundary Commission - review of electoral arrangements for Worcestershire County Council and community governance review of Wolverley and Cookley

- 11.2 DCLG Guidance on Community Governance Reviews.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance>

- 11.3 Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Part 4, Chapter 3  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/part/4/chapter/3>

Appendix 1

**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW  
WOLVERLEY AND COOKLEY**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007**

**DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE, May 2024**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Why undertake a community governance review?**

1. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIH) devolved the power to take decisions relating to the creation or abolition of parishes, the boundaries of parishes and the electoral arrangements of parish councils from the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission to principal councils. From 2008, district councils have had responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews and have been able to decide whether to give effect to the recommendations made in those reviews. In making that decision, Councillors need to take into account the views of local people and to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
2. Wyre Forest District Council has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR), pursuant to Part 4, Chapter 3 of LGPIH, with a view to asking the public in Wolverley and Cookley whether they support the creation of separate parish councils for Wolverley, for Cookley and for Lea Castle.
3. A CGR provides an opportunity for principal authorities to review and make changes to community governance within their area.
4. A CGR is a review of the whole or part of the district to consider one or more of the following:
  - Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes
  - The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes
  - The electoral arrangements for parishes ( the ordinary year of election: council size, the number of councillors to be elected to council, and parish warding) and
  - Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.
5. The Government has emphasised that, ultimately, recommendations made in a CGR ought to improve community engagement, result in more cohesive communities, yield better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.
6. Parish councils are a democratically elected tier of local government with their own Councillors, which provide a range of local services for a locally defined area. Councillors would be elected by local residents.

**Scope of the review**

7. The District Council has resolved to undertake a CGR to consider whether governance arrangements within Wolverley and Cookley are:
  - a) Reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area:
  - b) Effective and convenient to the community in that area

In doing so, the review is required to take into account:

- a) The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion, and
  - b) The size, population and boundaries of any new parish.
8. The area that is the subject of the review consists of the local government parish of Wolverley and Cookley: see attached map. The parish is part of the Wyre Forest Rural ward of Wyre Forest District Council and, for the purposes of elections, the parish is divided into three polling districts.

**Who will undertake the community governance review?**

9. As the principal authority, the District Council is responsible for undertaking any CGR within its electoral area.
10. Draft recommendations will be made to Full Council for consideration and, depending on the outcome of the consultation, this would include making of a reorganisation order.

**CONSULTATION**

11. Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals, in line with legislative requirements, the District Council will take full account of the views of local people. The District Council will comply with legislative requirements by:
  - Consulting all local government electors for the area under review. Each elector will be asked formally whether or not they support the creation of a parish council for the area in which they live. This will be achieved through a local advisory poll under section 16 of the Local Government Act 2003 and will be held on 1 May 2025. In addition, electors are welcome to submit written responses to the proposals if they wish;
  - Consulting any other person or body (including Worcestershire County Council and other local authorities) which appears to the principal council to have an interest in the review;
  - Taking into account any representations received in connection with the review.
12. When taking account of representations, the District Council is bound to have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area under review:

- Reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area, and
  - Is effective and convenient
13. In order to ensure that this review is conducted transparently, as soon as practicable, the District Council will publish its recommendations and take such steps as it considers sufficient to ensure that persons who may be interested in the review are informed of the recommendations and the reasons behind them.
14. The District Council will also notify the outcome of the review to any persons or bodies who submit written representations.

**Timetable for the review**

15. A CGR must, by statute, be concluded within a twelve month period from the day on with the review commences. A CGR commences when the Council publishes its Terms of Reference and it concludes when the District Council publishes the recommendations made in the review.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Report to Council to approve the Terms of Reference for the review	15 May 2024
<b>Commencement of review and publication of Terms of Reference</b>	<b>1 August 2024</b>
Undertake formal consultation with other interested bodies in accordance with section 93 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007	August – November 2024
Undertake formal consultation with local electors by means of local advisory poll	1 May 2025
Full Council considers result of poll and other responses to consultation	16 July 2025
<b>If there is positive support for the creation of a separate parish council for Lea Castle or separate parish councils for each of Wolverley, Cookley and Lea Castle</b>	
Recommendation to full Council to consider and approve publication of draft proposals for reorganisation order including electoral arrangements etc.	16 July 2025
Consultation on draft proposals for reorganisation order	August – October 2025
Approval of reorganisation order by full Council	December 2025
Effective date of order	1 September 2026
New parish council(s) created in temporary form from existing parish councillors for the polling district	September 2026



Action	Dates
concerned (this is necessary, among other things, so that a precept can be set for 2027-28)	
Elections to parish councils	6 May 2027
<b>If there is <u>not</u> positive support for any change to the parish council arrangements for Wolverley and Cookley</b>	
Recommendation to full Council to end the community governance review so far as it relates to creating new parish councils but to decide the electoral arrangements that would apply for the parish council	16 July 2025
Consultation on draft proposals for reorganisation order	August – October 2025
Approval of reorganisation order by full Council	December 2025
Effective date of order (affects elections to be held in May 2027)	1 January 2027
Elections to Wolverley and Cookley parish council	6 May 2027

## PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE REVIEW

### Relevant legislation

16. In undertaking a CGR, the District Council will apply the guiding principles as appropriate from the following legislation and guidance:
- The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
  - The Local Government Act 1972
  - Guidance on Community Governance Reviews (DCLG/EC)
  - Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils)(England) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008/625)

### Electorate

17. In considering the electoral arrangements of the parish stated within these Terms of Reference, the District Council is required to consider any change in the number or distribution of the electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts.
18. The parish of Wolverley and Cookley has 4,235 electors (April 2024). The 2029 estimates of electors, used by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, show that the Cookley ward would grow by almost 1,700 electors, which will relate mainly or wholly to the development at Lea Castle. In total, 1,400 dwellings are expected at Lea Castle in accordance with the adopted local plan, of which 600 already have permission with an application for the remaining 800 expected to be considered later in 2024. Once all 1,400 dwellings are built, there is every expectation that the number of electors in Lea Castle will comfortably exceed the 2,000 or so in each of the present Wolverley and Cookley wards.

<b>Polling district</b>	<b>Electorate (electoral register as at April 2024)</b>	<b>Estimated electorate, 2029 (LGBCE)</b>
WFR-WO (Wolverley and surrounding area e.g. Kingsford)	2044	1988
WFR-CO1 (Cookley and surrounding area e.g. Caunsall)	1912	3722
WFR-CO2 (Lea Castle)	279	
<b>Total = parish of Wolverley and Cookley</b>	<b>4235</b>	<b>5710</b>

Present Structures of parish governance in the area to be reviewed:

Parish Council & ward	Councillors	No. of Electors/Councillor
Wolverley & Cookley, Wolverley	7	292
Wolverley & Cookley, Cookley	7	313

(The Cookley ward comprises the polling districts CO1 and CO2.)

### **Justification and General Considerations for the Review**

19. As the principal Council, Wyre Forest District Council has a legal duty to carry out a Community Governance Review of Wolverley and Cookley Parish following the receipt of an application by the Parish Council. The application “formally request[ed] that Wyre Forest District Council undertake a Community Governance Review in respect of the current Parish Council, given the housing growth at Lea Castle”. The request did not seek any particular outcome or propose what the electoral arrangements would be, either for the existing parish council or for new parish councils if they were to be created by the review.
  
20. The Council wishes to ensure that electors should be able to identify clearly with the parish in which they are resident. It considers that this sense of identity and community lends strength and legitimacy to the parish structure, creates a common interest in parish affairs, encourages participation in elections to the parish council, leads to representative and accountable government, engenders visionary leadership and generates a strong, inclusive community with a sense of civic values, responsibility and pride. The Council considers that parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity; the feeling of local community and the wishes of local inhabitants are therefore primary considerations in this Review.
  
21. The Council is anxious to balance carefully the considerations of changes that have happened over time, through population shifts or additional development for example, and that have led to a different community identity with historic traditions in its area. The Council notes the Government's Guidance that community cohesion should be taken into account in this Review.

22. If the review leads to the replacement of the current parish council by two or three new parish councils, it is appropriate that a suitable transitional period is allowed for the new councils to prepare for assumption of their responsibilities. This will include practical matters such as adopting standing orders and financial regulations, deciding any committee structures, making arrangements for clerking or other staffing matters and – very importantly – deciding the budget and council tax precept for their first year of operation. Under the timetable set out above, it is therefore proposed that, if created, new councils would exist from September 2026 with the first ordinary elections to the new councils being held in May 2027. During the period from September 2026 to the first elections, the members of a new council would be the relevant ward members of Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council: for example, the members of a new Cookley parish council would be the serving councillors for the Cookley ward.
23. If new parish councils were created, there would be no change to the membership or responsibilities of Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council until it ceased to exist on 31 March 2027. It would not have to set a budget or issue a precept for 2027-28 as the new councils would take those decisions for themselves.
24. If new parish councils were created, it would be necessary for the District Council to make a reorganisation order to give effect to the new arrangements. This would also include making provision for the transfer of land and assets from Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council to the appropriate new council. Provision would have to be made for the transfer of the following land and buildings:

Memorial Hall, Wolverley

Cookley Village Hall and Social Club

Elizabeth Bache Garden, Cookley

Cookley allotments, Lionfields Road, Cookley

Among other assets will be the unused financial reserves of Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council at 31 March 2027 and they would need to be shared on an appropriate and fair basis, having regard to the fact that all areas of the present parish have contributed to them over a period of time. The proposed approach on transfer of land and assets in a reorganisation order would be the subject of separate consultation during the latter part of 2025, if the review results in the creation of new parish councils. The reorganisation order would also need to address the electoral arrangements for new parish councils: views on this aspect are sought below.

25. If the review results in the retention of Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council on its current boundaries, a reorganisation order would still be required if changes are to be made to the electoral arrangements that will be implemented following the review of Worcestershire County Council by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. The Boundary Commission's final recommendations are <insert table after final recommendations published>. The District Council believes that <drafting TBC after confirmation of LGBCE final recommendations> and views are therefore sought below on potential changes to the electoral arrangements.

**Potential approaches that would be adopted depending on outcome of the Review**

26. In Wyre Forest, there are separate parish councils for many smaller communities than each of the three principal communities in Wolverley and Cookley. The table shows the most recent electorate and the number of councillors in each case:

27.

Parish Council	Electorate, April 2024	Number of Councillors
Rushock	123	7
Broome	297	7
Stone	477	9
Upper Arley	591	9
Kidderminster Foreign	755	7
Chaddesley Corbett	1152	11
Churchill & Blakedown	1398	9

28. If the review results in the creation of a separate parish council for each of the three communities in Wolverley and Cookley, the District Council would propose that the number of councillors for that parish council should be as set out in the table, and there would be no wards within each parish. Thus the level of representation would be the same across a parish. The number of councillors proposed for Lea Castle Parish Council, if created, is higher than the two other areas in recognition of the expectation that it will ultimately have more electors than each of those other areas. This is also reflected in the alternative proposals set out below in the event of other outcomes to the review.

	Number of councillors
Wolverley Parish Council	7
Cookley Parish Council	7
Lea Castle Parish Council	8

29. Other outcomes of the review are possible, including retention of Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council on its present footprint. This table considers the electoral arrangements that the District Council would propose in those other circumstances, reflecting that the 1,400 dwellings proposed for the Lea Castle site, once occupied, would be likely to have well over 2,000 electors and therefore deserve a higher level of representation than the other principal communities:

	Number of councillors
Wolverley & Cookley Parish Council Lea Castle Parish Council	Wolverley 7, Cookley 7 8
Wolverley & Lea Castle Parish Council Cookley Parish Council	Wolverley 7, Lea Castle 8 7
Cookley & Lea Castle Parish Council Wolverley Parish Council	Cookley 7, Lea Castle 8 7
Wolverley & Cookley Parish Council (present footprint)	Wolverley 7 Cookley 7 Lea Castle 8

30. The District Council recognises that the total number of councillors in the last scenario would result in a large parish council: 22 councillors compared to the 18 that form Kidderminster Town Council or the 18 that form Stourport-on-Severn Town Council. Alternative arrangements are possible for each of these scenarios, although any proposals put forward for the District Council's consideration should reflect the expectation that Lea Castle will have more electors in time than Cookley or Wolverley and seek to achieve a broad level of equality of representation between the different areas.
31. Views are therefore invited on the proposed electoral arrangements and the names to be allocated to parishes and their councils. In the event that Wolverley & Cookley Parish Council is retained on its present footprint, views are invited on whether the parish and its council should be renamed as Wolverley, Cookley & Lea Castle to reflect the existence of what will be the largest community in the parish.
32. If, following consultation and the local advisory poll, the District Council decides to implement changes to create any new parish councils, it is proposed that the changes would take effect on 1 September 2026. As explained above, the parish councillors for the relevant polling district would serve on the new council(s) for the period until the first ordinary elections in May 2027. The new councils would decide their budgets and level of council tax for 2027-28 and subsequent years. It is not possible to predict what their decisions will be.

### **Reorganisation of Community Governance Orders and Commencement**

33. If changes are agreed, a reorganisation order would then be required and would be the subject of separate consultation. This would be implemented in accordance with Government guidance. More detail on what would be contained in a reorganisation order is set out for information earlier in this consultation paper.
34. The review will be completed when the Council adopts a 'Reorganisation of Community Governance Order'. Copies of this Order, the map(s) that show the effects of the order in detail, and the document(s) which set out the reasons for the decisions that the Council has taken (including where it has decided to make no change following a review) will be deposited at the Council's Offices and on the Council's website.
35. In accordance with the guidance issued by the Government, the Council will deposit and make available for public inspection maps to illustrate each recommendation as soon as possible after making the order. The Council will inform the Secretary of State, the Electoral Commission, the Office of National Statistics and the Director General of the Ordnance Survey.

### **Consultation – How to take part and how to contact us**

36. Every local government elector in Wolverley and Cookley will be able to take part in the local advisory poll which will be held on 1 May 2025. They will be able to vote in the same way as they have registered to do for the local government

elections on that day i.e. they will be able to vote in person at a polling station unless they have registered for a postal or proxy vote for the local government elections.

37. If you have additional written comments that you would like to submit about how you view potential future arrangements under these Terms of Reference, please send them to arrive no later than 30 November 2024 by email to:

[wandcgovernancereview@wyreforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:wandcgovernancereview@wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

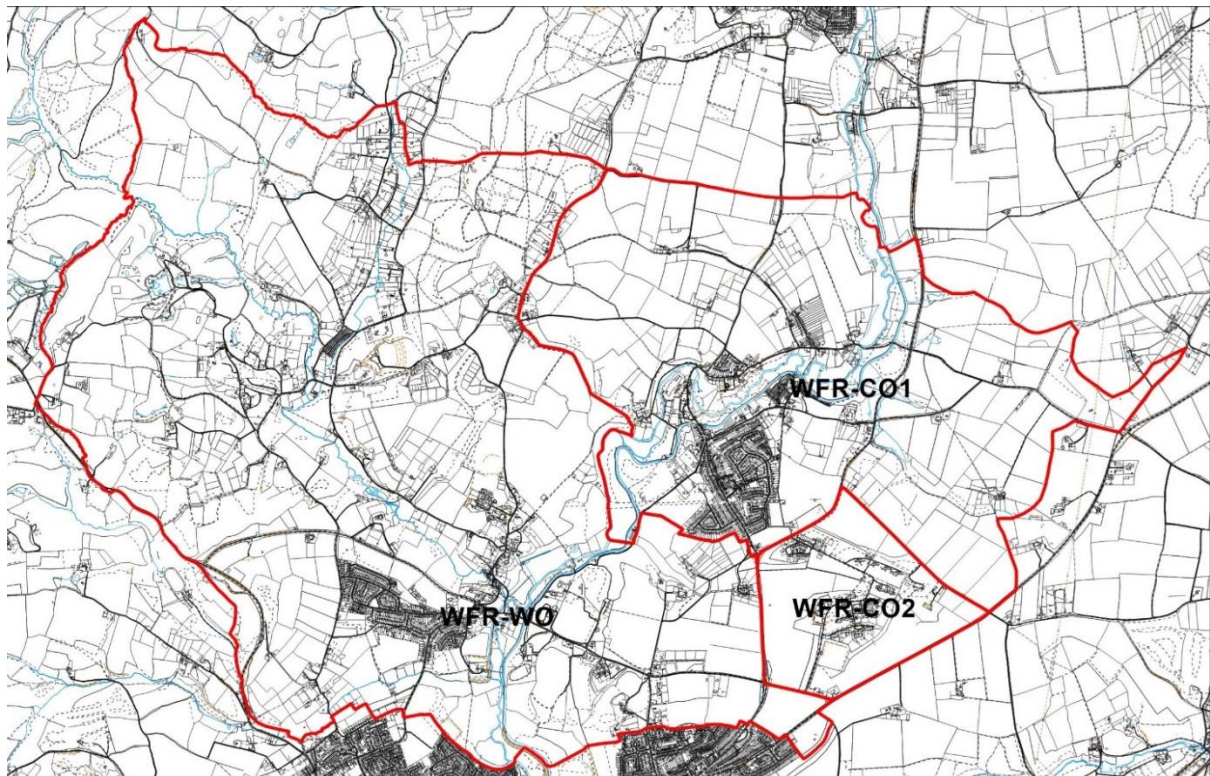
or by post to:

C S Newlands  
Solicitor to the Council  
Wyre Forest District Council, Wyre Forest House  
Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF

**Publication of Terms of Reference**

38. These Terms of Reference will be published on the District Council's web site: [www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk) and will be available for public inspection at The Hub, Green Street, Kidderminster DY10 1HA.

Map showing current polling districts, April 2024



The polling districts WFR-CO1 and WFR-CO2 make up the Cookley ward of Wolverley & Cookley Parish Council, for which elections were held in May 2023.

## Appendix 2

### COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF WOLVERLEY AND COOKLEY

#### PROCEDURAL RULES FOR LOCAL ADVISORY POLL, 1 MAY 2025

##### Introduction

Under section 116 of the 2003 Act, the rules to be used for the poll are set by the Council. It is a legal requirement that the poll is not combined with elections, even though they are taking place on the same day.

The proposed rules, including the question to be asked and franchise, are set out below. The key elements of the arrangements are

- The method of voting for any individual will reflect and be the same as the local elections e.g. if someone has a postal vote for the county council elections they will have a postal vote for this poll;
- no polling cards will be issued for the poll. Voters will receive one for the council elections and the details of polling station etc will be the same, so the expense of a separate poll card for the local poll cannot be justified;
- in polling stations, there will be a separate electoral register and ballot box for the local poll. These are essential as the poll is not combined with the elections. For the same reason, postal voting packs for the poll will be separate. Photographic identification requirements will not apply to the poll, so that voters are not required to produce their photo ID or voter authority certificate twice;
- votes will be counted on Friday 2 May commencing not later than 12 noon. While the ballot boxes will have to be opened on Friday morning in order to check that there are no ballot papers for the county council elections in them, and verification will be done at that time, the intention is to prioritise counting of the votes in the county council elections.

##### Background on the wording of the questions

The Electoral Commission has produced guidance for central Government for assessing referendum questions, and it is useful to reflect that in Council's consideration of the questions to be used for this formal consultation.

A question should present the options clearly, simply, and neutrally, so it should be easy to understand and to the point.

It should be unambiguous; it should avoid encouraging voters to consider one response more favourably than another and it should avoid misleading voters.

In that context, the question should be written in plain language, that is language that uses short sentences (around 15-20 words), is simple, direct, and concise and uses familiar words and avoids jargon or technical terms that would not be easily understood by most people.

The question should be written in neutral language, avoiding words that suggest a judgement or opinion either explicitly or implicitly.



The information contained in the question should be factual, describe the question, the options clearly and accurately and the question should avoid assuming anything about voters' views.

**Proposed questions**

Taking all these factors into account, it is proposed that the questions should be as follows and that voters are asked to respond with either a “yes” or “no” response.

**For electors in Wolverley polling district**

<b><i>Should Wolverley have its own Parish Council?</i></b>	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>No</b>

**For electors in Cookley polling district**

<b><i>Should Cookley have its own Parish Council?</i></b>	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>No</b>

**For electors in Lea Castle polling district**

<b><i>Should Lea Castle have its own Parish Council?</i></b>	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>No</b>

**Proposed franchise**

It is proposed that electors registered to vote for local government elections will have the franchise in the local advisory poll to be held on 1 May 2025.

**Proposed procedural rules**

**Procedural rules for local advisory poll to be held in Wolverley and Cookley on 1 May 2025**

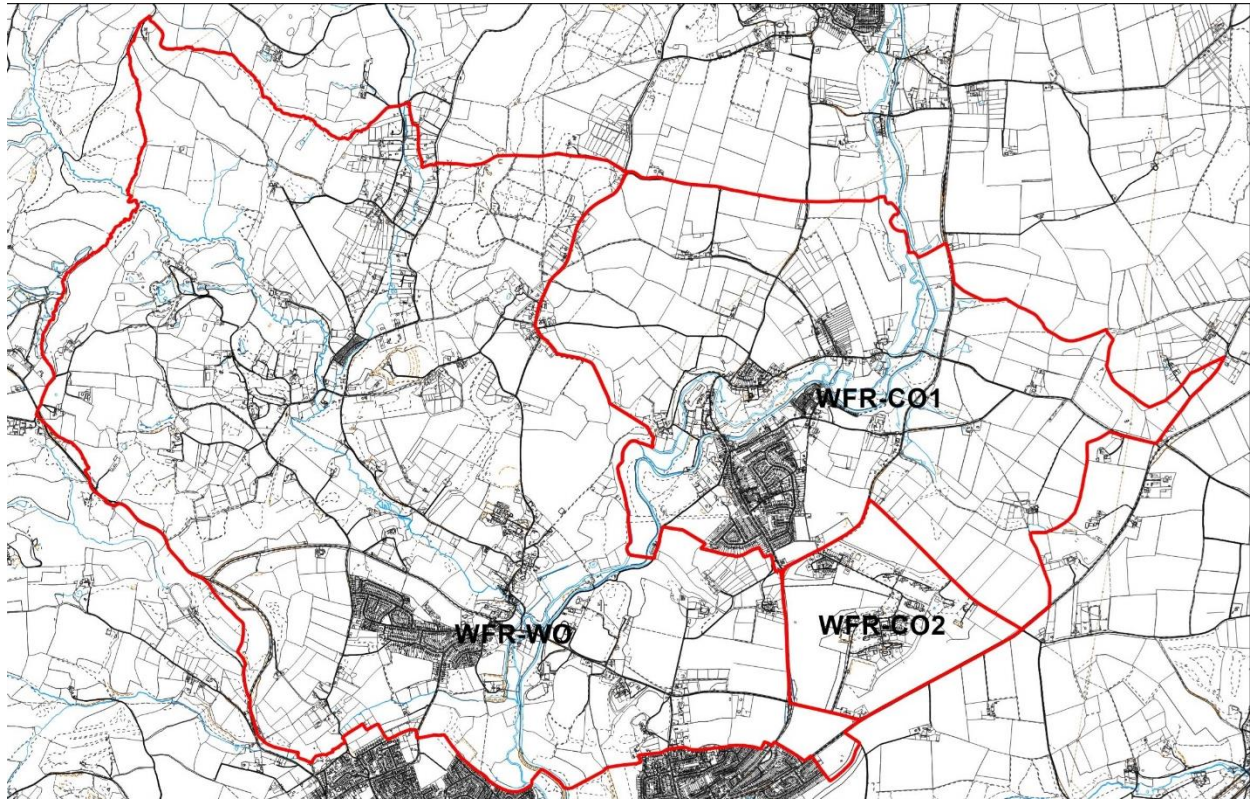
<b>Number of rule</b>	<b>Content of rule</b>
1. Introduction	These are the rules for the local advisory poll to be held by Wyre Forest District Council on Thursday 1 May 2025.
2. Definitions	“The council” means Wyre Forest District Council.

	<p>“The counting officer” means the person who for the time being is the returning officer at elections of councillors for the district of Wyre Forest under section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983.</p> <p>“Electors” means the local government electors who, in accordance with section 2 of the Representation of the People Act 1983, are entitled to vote in ordinary elections of councillors in Wolverley and Cookley.</p> <p>“Wolverley and Cookley” means the parish of that name which comprises the polling districts designated as follows: WFR-WO WFR-CO1 WFR-CO2.</p> <p>“The poll” means the local advisory poll to be held on 1 May 2025, under section 116 of the Local Government Act 2003, pursuant to a resolution of Wyre Forest District Council dated 15 May 2024.</p> <p>“The question” means the questions specified in rule 3.</p>
<p>3. Question to be asked</p>	<p>The question to be asked in the poll shall be:</p> <p>For polling district WFR-WO “Should Wolverley have its own Parish Council?”</p> <p>For polling district WFR-CO1 “Should Cookley have its own Parish Council?”</p> <p>For polling district WFR-CO2 “Should Lea Castle have its own Parish Council?”</p>
<p>4. Publicity</p>	<p>The council shall publish only the following information in respect of the poll: the terms of reference for the community governance review; and information for electors about the poll, the question to be asked, and how and when electors may cast their ballot in the poll.</p>
<p>5. Restriction on publication of promotional material</p>	<p>The council shall not publish material putting arguments for or against a particular answer to the question.</p> <p>This rule shall not prevent the publication of press notices containing factual information where the sole purpose of the publication is to refute or correct any inaccuracy in material published by a person other than the council.</p>
<p>6. Duties of the counting officer</p>	<p>It is the general duty of the counting officer to do all such acts and things as may be necessary for effectually conducting the poll in the manner provided by these rules.</p>

	<p>The counting officer must appoint and pay such persons as may be necessary for conducting the poll, including the counting of votes.</p> <p>The costs incurred by the counting officer in conducting the poll shall be met by the council.</p>
7. Date and conduct of the poll	<p>The poll shall be held on Thursday 1 May 2025 between the hours of 7am and 10pm.</p> <p>No poll cards shall be issued.</p> <p>Electors voting in person and proxies shall not be required to produce a “specified document” (as mentioned in paragraph 26(1A) of Schedule 3 to the Local Authorities (Conduct of Referendums) (England) Regulations 2012 No. 323).</p>
8. Postal votes and proxy votes	<p>Where a person has applied under Schedule 4 to the Representation of the People Act 2000 to vote by post, or to vote by proxy, in elections of councillors, and the application did not relate only to a specified election or to a period ending prior to 1 May 2025, that person is to be treated as having applied also to vote by post, or to vote by proxy, in the poll.</p>
9. Arrangements for sealing and opening of ballot boxes for the poll (polling stations)	<p>The ballot box for the poll shall be sealed at the start of the poll by the presiding officer at a polling station.</p>
10. Verification and count	<p>The counting officer shall verify and count the votes cast in the poll at Wyre Forest Leisure Centre, Silverwoods Way, Kidderminster DY11 7DT on Friday 2 May 2025.</p> <p>At the end of the count, the counting officer shall declare the results of the poll, giving for each of the polling districts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The number of ballot papers counted;</li> <li>(b) The total number of votes cast in favour of the question (“yes”);</li> <li>(c) the total number of votes cast against the question (“no”);</li> <li>(d) the number of rejected ballot papers under each heading shown in a statement of rejected ballot papers.</li> </ul>
11. Advertisements	<p>The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 shall have effect in relation to the display on any site in a voting area of an advertisement relating specifically to the poll as they have effect in relation to the display of an advertisement relating specifically to a local government election.</p>

<p>12. Other rules governing the poll</p>	<p>The counting officer shall draw up and publish not later than 1 March 2025 other rules for the poll, and the Council hereby delegates to the counting officer its powers under section 116 of the Local Government Act 2003 to set those other rules.</p> <p>The other rules shall be based on the rules set out in Schedule 3 to the Local Authorities (Conduct of Referendums) (England) Regulations 2012 No. 323, with such amendments, omissions and modifications for the poll as are consistent with the foregoing provisions of these rules and are considered by the counting officer to be appropriate for the poll.</p>
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Appendix 3 – map of area covered by the community governance review.



**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL**  
**15 MAY 2024**

**Senior management structure and approval of updated pay policy statement**

<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Councillor Marcus Hart, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategy
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Ian Miller x 2700 ian.miller@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	Appendix 1: updated pay policy statement

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 Formally to approve changes to the senior management structure and to approve the updated pay policy statement.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**The Council is asked to:**

- 2.1 **DECIDE** that the senior management structure should change with effect from 1 July 2024 as set out in this report, including the amendments to section 18: Management Structure of the Council’s Constitution and to section 12: Contracts Procedure Rules;
- 2.2 **ADOPT** the revised pay policy statement in Appendix 1.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The corporate plan adopted by Council in September 2023 identified the priorities for the period to the next election in 2027. The medium term financial strategy that was agreed in February set out a number of investments aligned with the priorities, including reviewing the management structure so that it is aligned with the corporate priorities. Specifically there was a proposal for “changes to the senior management structure to provide capacity for delivery of the priorities in the corporate plan, at a cost of up to £11k/£15k/£15k”. This had been explained in the draft MTFS that was considered by Cabinet on 20 December: “following approval of the draft MTFS by Cabinet, the Head of Paid Service will issue proposals for the new structure which include a proposal to create a post of Strategic Director: Regeneration and Commercial. The post is expected to be filled by an existing member of the Corporate Leadership Team and there would be no redundancies. Subject to the outcome of consultation, Council will be invited at its February meeting to confirm the change to the senior management structure alongside the necessary amendment to the pay policy statement.”

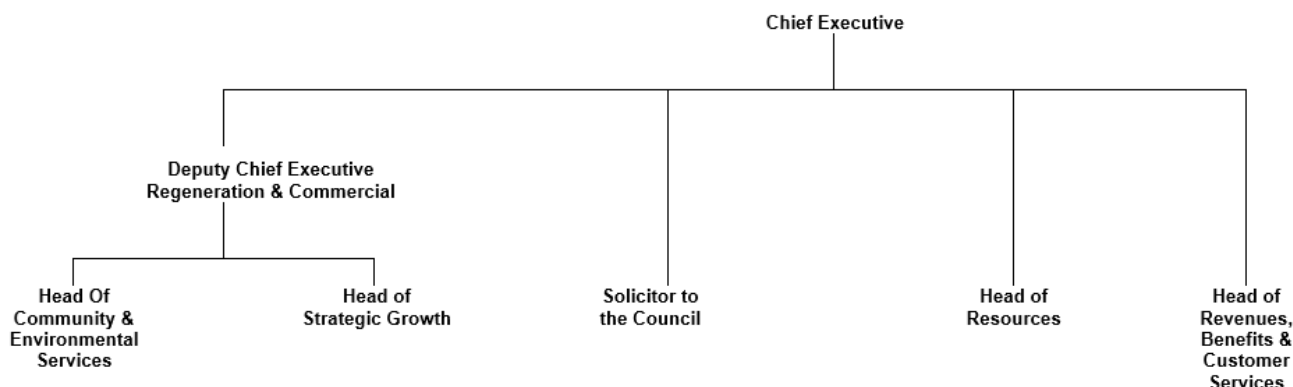
3.2 Consultation proposals were issued on 9 January with consultation closing at the end of that month. Following consideration of the responses to the consultation, a further document was issued on 4 March setting out the conclusion to the management review as follows:

“on 1 July 2024 to implement a new post of Deputy Chief Executive: Regeneration and Commercial which will be filled by assimilation by the Head of NWEDR. The post will take on line management responsibility for the Head of Strategic Growth and Head of Community and Environment Services from that date”.

The documents in January and March 2024 were shared with all members at the time. This report seeks formal decisions from the Council to proceed with implementation.

#### 4. KEY ISSUES

4.1 The new management structure involves amendments to section 18 of the constitution (management structure). Instead of the current “flat” structure of six chief officers reporting to the Chief Executive, from 1 July 2024, the post of Deputy Chief Executive: Regeneration and Commercial will replace the post designated as Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration; and the Head of Strategic Growth and Head of Community and Environment Services will be line managed by the Deputy Chief Executive. This is shown in the revised structure chart:



For the two posts that will report to the Deputy Chief Executive, the changes do not affect their salaries or their membership of Corporate Leadership Team.

4.2 There is also a minor consequential amendment to section 12 of the constitution (contracts procedure rules). Paragraph 58.1 will be amended to read: “Delegated authority is given to the Solicitor to the Council in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio, **Deputy Chief Executive** and the S151 Officer to update these Rules as appropriate to meet future legislative and operational requirements to ensure that the aims and principles of these Rules are given full effect.” (amendment shown in bold).

4.3 The changes set out in this report also require amendments to the Council’s pay policy statement under section 38 of the Localism Act 2011, a document that only full council may approve. In line with past practice, the pay policy statement is drafted in a way that avoids the need for the Council to approve it annually even though (for example) the pay of staff increases over time as a result of the national pay negotiations. In that respect, the

employers are yet to make an offer for the April 2024 negotiations. The width of the bands within which spot salaries are paid has therefore been adjusted to accommodate at least a couple of years of future growth from national pay settlements. The Deputy Chief Executive post will be paid at a spot salary that equates to the former Corporate Director salary (£78,263 in 2021-22), uprated to take account of national pay awards in 2022 and 2023 and the pay adjustment agreed by Council in September 2022. This produces a figure of £87,144, excluding the national pay award for April 2024 which is not yet known.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The financial implications of the changes remain in line with the approved medium term financial strategy and therefore budget has been allocated for the additional cost.

**6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The change has proceeded in accordance with relevant employment legislation, including consultation and careful consideration of the comments received. The proposals have also been the subject of HR advice in terms of the arrangements for filling the Deputy Chief Executive post.

**7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because, in line with the HR advice, the new post is being filled by assimilation.

**8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 As noted above, the process has complied with employment law and HR advice throughout in order to mitigate any risk of challenge. Some of the consultation responses drew attention to a number of concerns, in particular the risk that the change in line management arrangements for two members of the Corporate Leadership Team would reduce the capacity that will be freed up when the NWEDR shared service comes to an end; and that this might have an adverse impact on the Council's priorities of generating more commercial income and undertaking further economic regeneration and development projects in the district. No specific mitigation is proposed for this risk.

**9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The Council is invited to support the recommendation and to adopt the revised pay policy statement in Appendix 1.

**10. CONSULTEES**

On this report:

- 10.1 Leader of the Council  
10.2 Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio  
10.3 Corporate Leadership Team

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Draft medium term financial strategy, Cabinet, 20 December 2023  
11.2 Medium term financial strategy, Council, 21 February 2024



- 11.3 Proposed changes to senior management structure (consultation paper), 9 January 2024
- 11.4 Changes to senior management structure – next steps (conclusion following consultation), 4 March 2024

**Appendix 1 Updated pay policy statement for 2024 onwards**

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
PAY POLICY STATEMENT  
May 2024**

**Introduction**

1. This pay policy statement under section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 shall apply for the financial year 2024-25 and each subsequent financial year, until amended.
2. The purpose of the statement is to provide transparency with regard to the Council’s approach to setting the pay of its employees by identifying:
  - the methods by which remuneration of all employees are determined, including the remuneration of its most senior staff;
  - the arrangements for ensuring the provisions set out in this statement are applied consistently throughout the Council.

**The Council’s policies for setting remuneration**

3. In determining its grading structure and setting remuneration levels for all posts, the Council takes account of the need to ensure value for money in respect of the use of public expenditure, balanced against the need to recruit and retain employees who are able to meet the requirements of providing high quality services to the community, delivered effectively and at times which those services are required. The grade of a post is determined by application of an agreed Job Evaluation process.
4. The Council returned to applying nationally negotiated pay awards with effect from 1 April 2021. **The figures shown in paragraphs 5 and 11 below do not take account of the pay awards for April 2024 as they are not known at the time of adoption of the pay policy statement.**
5. The salary bands applying to staff covered by the NJC for local government services are set out in the table. The values of the pay ranges will change over time as national pay awards for 2024 and subsequent years are applied. It is not possible to predict national pay awards and this pay policy statement will not be updated solely to take account of such national pay awards.

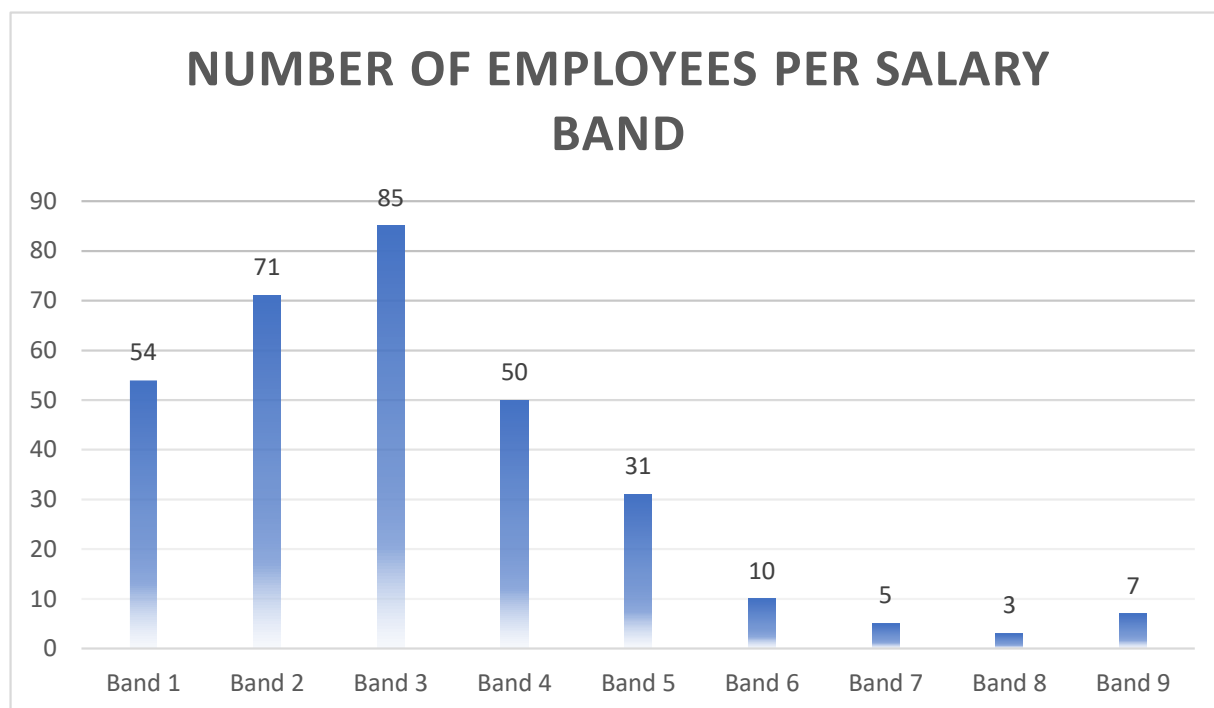
Salary Band	Spinal column points	Annual pay range at 1 April 2024 (£)
1	19-21	24,648 – 26,180
2	22-24	26,751 – 28,182

3	25-28	28,948 – 31,479
4	29-32	32,564 – 35,348
5	33-36	36,269 – 38,770
6	37-40	39,744 – 42,993
7	41-44	44,020 – 47,095
8	45-48	48,062 – 51,184
9	49-52	52,219 – 55,574

6. All other pay-related allowances are the subject of either nationally or locally negotiated rates, having been determined from time to time in accordance with collective bargaining machinery and/or as determined by Council policy.
7. New appointments will normally be made at the minimum of the relevant grade, although this can be varied where necessary to secure the best candidate. From time to time it may be necessary to take account of the external pay market in order to attract and retain employees with particular experience, skills and capability. Where possible, the Council will ensure the requirement for such approaches is objectively justified by reference to clear and transparent evidence of relevant market comparators, using appropriate data sources available from within and outside the local government sector.
- 9 There are a number of pay points within each band. For staff not on the highest point within the band, there is a system of annual progression to the next point on the band. Faster progression is possible under the Council's policy on merit increments.
- 10 With regard to equal pay requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the Council ensures that there is no pay discrimination within its pay structures and that all pay differentials can be objectively justified through the use of equality proofed job evaluation mechanisms which directly relate pay grades to the requirements, demands and responsibilities of the role.
11. The posts of Chief Officers and the Chief Executive, who make up the Corporate Leadership Team, are covered by the relevant JNC for such posts. The Council uses spot pay rates. In order to provide some flexibility in future decisions about recruitment or adjustments to pay of serving staff without the need to amend this policy statement, the statement sets a range within which salary for these posts will fall. The values of the spot pay shown in the table will change over time as national pay awards for 2024 and subsequent years are applied. It is not possible to predict national pay awards and this pay policy statement will not be updated solely to take account of such national pay awards:

Grade	Range	Spot pay rate (value at time of adoption of this statement)
CHIEF OFFICER	£62,000-£81,000	Varies depending on responsibilities etc. of post (6 posts on this grade as at May 2024, one of which is to move to the Deputy Chief Executive grade on 1 July 2024).
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (Post being created from 1 July 2024)	£87,000-£99,000	Based on corporate director pay scale used till end of 2021, uprated to reflect subsequent changes. £87,144
CHIEF EXECUTIVE	£110,000 - £139,000	£128,035

**Number of employees by salary band**



**Chief Officers**

12 The definition of ‘chief officer’ in section 43 of the Localism Act means that it includes many posts falling within the main pay scales. At the time of preparation of this statement, they include some posts that range from Band 6 to Band 9 (although not all employees in those bands fall within the definition of ‘chief officer’).

- 13 The Council’s policy and procedures with regard to recruitment of Chief Officers are set out in the Officer Employment Procedure Rules in Section 13 of the Council’s constitution. The determination of the remuneration to be offered to any newly appointed Chief Officer will be in accordance with this pay policy statement and other relevant policies in place at the time of recruitment. In the case of recruitment of Chief Officers who are members of the Corporate Leadership Team and the Chief Executive, the decision on remuneration will be taken by the Appointments and Appeals Committee. Where the Council is unable to recruit to a post at the designated grade, it will consider the use of temporary market forces supplements in accordance with its relevant policies.
- 14 Where the Council remains unable to recruit chief officers, or where there is a need for interim support to provide cover for a vacant substantive chief officer post, the Council will, where necessary, consider engaging individuals under contracts for service. These will be sourced through a relevant procurement process ensuring the Council is able to demonstrate value for money from competition in securing the relevant service. In accordance with IR35, the Council would normally expect to deduct tax and national insurance from payments to any individual providing interim support.
- 15 The Council does not normally pay any bonuses or performance related pay to its chief officers.

**Additional payments to Chief Officers**

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

**Lowest Paid Employees**

- 17 The Council’s definition of lowest paid employees is people employed in Band 1 of the Council’s grading structure. This is because it is the lowest pay band operated by the Council for permanent staff who are not employed as Apprentices. Apprentices appointed by the Council will be paid at the following rates, at the time of preparation of this policy statement:

First year of apprenticeship

Age	National rate	Wyre Forest District Council rate 2024/25
Regardless of age	National Apprenticeship rate	£6.40

Second year + of apprenticeship

Age	Rate	Wyre Forest District Council rate 2024/25
Under 18	National Apprenticeship rate	£6.40
Aged 18 - 20 years	National Apprenticeship rate	£8.60
Aged 21+ years	National Living Wage rate	£11.44

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

- 18 The pay levels within the Council define the multiple between the median salary of its chief officers and the median salary of all employees. At the time of preparation of this policy statement, the ratio was 1:2.5. This calculation is based on employees in post and actual salaries as at March 2024 (excluding Apprentices). The Council's policy is that this ratio should remain below 1:3.

**Payments on termination etc.**

- 19 The Council's approach to statutory and discretionary payments on termination of employment is set out within its Redundancy Policy which includes the written statement in accordance with regulations 5 and 6 of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006. At the time of preparation of this policy statement, the policy is:
- to pay statutory redundancy payments in accordance with the Employment Relations Act 1998, which provides for a maximum calculation equivalent to up to 30 weeks' pay. The payment will be based on an employee's actual weekly salary rather than the figure set by the Government.
  - not to make discretionary lump sum payments or to make payment in lieu of notice in cases of termination of employment.
- 20 The Council's policy is normally not to make any awards under the Local Government (Discretionary Payments) (Injury Allowances) Regulations 2011 : this constitutes its written policy under the regulations.
- 21 The Council's decisions on use of powers to enter any Settlement Agreement under section 23 of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 will be taken by the Appointments and Appeals Committee where the decisions relate to either the Chief Executive or a Chief Officer. Decisions on entering Settlement Agreements with other employees will be taken by the Chief Executive.

## Publication of information

22 This statement will be published on the Council's website [www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

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

- salary, fees or allowances paid to or receivable by the person in the current and previous year;
- any bonuses so paid or receivable by the person in the current and previous year;
- any sums payable by way of expenses allowances that are chargeable to UK income tax;
- any compensation for loss of employment and any other payments connected with termination;
- any benefits received that do not fall within the above

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

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

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

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

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL  
15 MAY 2024**

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

**RECOMMENDATIONS  
CABINET  
7 MAY 2024**

**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 EXEMPT Cabinet agenda pack.

<b>RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL</b>	<b>CABINET MEMBER</b>
<p><b>Future High Streets Fund project</b></p> <p><b>The Cabinet recommend to Council that:</b></p> <p><b>The capital programme allocation for the Future High Streets Fund is amended by the amount as set out in the confidential report in respect of additional project works and costs, on the basis of the funding arrangements set out in section 5 and with authority delegated to the Head of Resources to decide on any temporary financing arrangements that may be necessary. The total additional allocation of the amount as set out in the confidential report is to be funded from grants arising from the former Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.</b></p>	<p><b>Councillor D Morehead</b></p>



**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL  
15 MAY 2024**

**QUESTIONS**

**1. Question from Councillor J Griffiths to the Leader of the Council**

Can an update be given on progress of the Corporate plan objectives?

**2. Question from Councillor J Griffiths to the Cabinet Member for Cabinet  
Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio**

Has there been any communication to Wyre Forest residents on WFDC's direct response to feedback received from the online budget consultation which took place earlier this year?