



THE CABINET

A G E N D A

Date: Wednesday 25th May 2005

Time: 6.00 p.m.

**Venue: Earl Baldwin Suite, Duke House,
Clensmore Street, Kidderminster**

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DAY AND VENUE

CABINET

The Cabinet Members and their responsibilities:-

Councillor S J M Clee	Leader, Strategic Overview & Direction
Councillor M J Hart	Deputy Leader, Commercial Services
Councillor Mrs M B Aston	Housing, Health and Rural Affairs
Councillor J-P Campion	Finance and Corporate Affairs
Councillor J W Dudley	Environment & Economic Regeneration
Councillor N J Desmond	Community & Leisure Services

SCRUTINY OF DECISIONS OF THE CABINET

The Council has one Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and five Policy and Scrutiny Panels, that have power to investigate policy issues and question members of the Cabinet who have special responsibility for a particular area of the Council's activities. The Cabinet also considers recommendations from the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and five Policy and Scrutiny Panels.

In accordance with Part 4 of the Council's Constitution Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and Standing Order B4 any item on this agenda may be scrutinised by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee if it is "called in" by any three non-Cabinet Members and the Chairman of the relevant Policy and Scrutiny Panel or by three members of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and any member of the relevant Policy and Scrutiny Panel.

The deadline for "calling in" Cabinet decisions is Thursday 9th June 2005

Councillors wishing to "call in" a decision on this agenda should contact Mrs Diana Glendenning, Committee Officer, Telephone 01562-732763 or e-mail: diana.glendenning@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Urgent Key Decisions

If the Cabinet needs to take an urgent key decision, the consent of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee Chairman must be obtained. If the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee Chairman is unable to act the Chairman of the Council or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairman of the Council, must give consent. Such decisions will not be the subject to the call in procedure.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - GUIDANCE NOTE

Code of Conduct - Members are reminded that under the Code of Conduct it is the responsibility of individual Members to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest in any item on this agenda. A Member who declares a personal interest may take part in the meeting and vote, unless the interest is also prejudicial. If the interest is prejudicial, as defined in the Code, the Member must leave the room. However, Members with a prejudicial interest can still participate if a prescribed exception applies or a dispensation has been granted.

Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 - If any Member is two months or more in arrears with a Council Tax payment, they may not vote on any matter which might affect the calculation of the Council Tax, any limitation of it, its administration or related penalties or enforcement.

For further information: -

If you have any queries about this Agenda or require any details of background papers, further documents or information you should contact Diana Glendenning, Committee Officer. Telephone : 01562-732763, e-mail diana.glendenning@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

(MAP OF VENUE)

PART 1

Open to the Press and Public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any personal or personal and prejudicial interests in the following agenda items. Members should indicate the action they will be taking when the item is considered.

Members are also invited to make any declaration in relation to Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(See guidance note on cover.)

3. MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Cabinet held on the 14th April 2005. (Pages 1 - 12)

4. CALL INS - a verbal update will be given on any decisions which have been "called in" since the last meeting of the cabinet.

5. ITEMS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION

Any item which, in the opinion of the Chairman requires consideration at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

6. LEADER'S PORTFOLIO *Stephen Clee*

6.1 LEADERS ANNOUNCEMENTS

7. FINANCE & CORPORATE AFFAIRS *John-Paul Campion*

7.1. ICT (INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY) STRATEGY 2005-2008

To consider a report from the Head of Human Resources that recommends to Council that the Information Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy 2005 - 2008 be approved. (Pages 13 - 15)

A copy of the ICT Strategy has been placed in Party Group Rooms and a public inspection copy is available on request (see front cover for details)

8.1. POST OF CONTAMINATED LAND ASSISTANT

To consider a report from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that seeks approval for the post of Contaminated Land Assistant (temporary) within the Environmental Health Section to be placed upon the permanent establishment. (Pages 16 - 18)

8.2. APPOINTMENT OF PART-TIME FOOD AND SAFETY OFFICER

To consider a report from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that requests that the part-time Food and Safety Officer post in the Planning, Health and Environment Division be made permanent from September 2005, subject to it continuing to be self-funded. (Pages 19 - 22)

8.3. ODPM (OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER) HOMELESSNESS FUNDING 2005/06

To consider a report from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that proposes funding arrangements for the Council to utilise the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Priority Need Order Funding for 2005/06. (Pages 23 - 26)

9.1. STRATEGIC RAIL AUTHORITY (SRA): CONSULTATION ON RAILWAYS FOR ALL STRATEGY

To consider a report from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that:

- (1) Informs Members of the Strategic Rail Authority's consultation on its 'Railways for All Strategy' and the issues it raises
- (2) To seek Cabinet's approval of Appendix 1 - Schedule of Responses for Submission to the Strategic Rail Authority and the District Council's responses to the consultation. (Pages 27 - 33)

9.2. STRATEGIC RAILWAYS AUTHORITY (SRA) CONSULTATION WEST MIDLANDS ROUTE UTILISATION STRATEGY

To consider a report from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that appraises members of the key issues in the Strategic Railway Authority consultation on the West Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy (WMRUS) and to seek authorisation for the submission of comments and representations. (Pages 34 - 40c)

10. COMMUNITY & LEISURE SERVICES

Nathan Desmond

10.1. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

To consider a report from the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services that recommends to Council that the Safeguarding Children Policy be approved and adopted. (Pages 41 - 43)

A copy of the Safeguarding Children Policy has been placed in Party Group Rooms and a public inspection copy is available on request (see front cover of agenda for details).

11. DECISIONS MADE BY AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

11.1. BID FOR FUNDING FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

To note a decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Rural Affairs regarding a bid for funding for Affordable Housing. (Pages 44)

12. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANELS (if any)

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL - 15TH MARCH 2005

Recommendations on Single Site. (Pages 45 - 46)

- 13. TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN COMMUNICATED TO THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES 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.**

14. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC:

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 items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of "exempt information" as defined in paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

PART 2

Not open to the Press and Public

15. MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the Exempt minutes of the Cabinet held on the 14th April 2005. (Pages 47 - 51)

16.1. GRANT OF NEW LEASE TO WYRE FOREST CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU AT 21 - 23 NEW ROAD, KIDDERMINSTER

To consider a report from the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services that advises Members of the request from Wyre Forest Citizens Advice Bureau that the Council grant a new lease of their offices at 21-23 New Road to assist in their application for lottery money to finance their proposed extension of the premises. (Pages 52 - 55)

17.1. STOURPORT COMMUNITY CENTRE

To consider a report from the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services regarding proposals relating to community facilities at Stourport Community Centre. (Pages 56 - 58)

- 18. TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN COMMUNICATED TO THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES 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.**

**Wyre Forest District Council
CABINET
Thursday 14th April 2005
Areley Kings Village Hall
Areley Kings
Stourport on Severn**

PRESENT: Councillors: S J M Clee (Chairman), M J Hart (Vice-Chairman), Mrs M B Aston, J-P Campion, N J Desmond and J W Dudley

OBSERVERS: Councillors: J W Ballinger, Mrs J Fairbrother-Millis, M A W Hazlewood , Mrs F M Oborski and M J Shellie.

CM.914 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

CM.915 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

CM.916 MINUTES

DECISION:

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on the 17th March 2005 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to the venue of the meeting being altered to Stourport High School, and be signed by the Chairman.

CM.917 CALL INS

No decisions had been called in since the last Cabinet meeting.

CM.918 ITEMS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CM.919 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**1. Norman Broome**

The Leader stated that a minute's silence would be held in memory of Norman Broome at the Council meeting on the 20th April 2005.

2. Warehouse Cinema

The Leader informed Cabinet Members that the Warehouse Cinema in Green Street, Kidderminster would be opening on Friday 15th April 2005.

3. Taxi Trade Survey

The Leader and the Chief Executive had met with some members of the Taxi Trade this week to discuss the Taxi Trade Survey. As a result of this meeting there would be a change to the recommendation to Council on the 20th April 2005. The Leader would brief Group Leaders before the Council meeting on the outcome of the meeting with the Taxi Trade.

4. KTC3

The Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services Section had erected a display regarding the plans for KTC3. These plans would also be displayed at the Council meeting on the 20th April 2005.

5. Investors in People

The Leader gave congratulations on behalf of the Cabinet to the Human Resources and I.T. Section being re-awarded their Investors in People Status.

CM.920 DELIVERING EFFICIENCY SAVINGS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT - ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENTS

A report was considered from the Chief Executive and Head of Financial Services that outlined the Council's approach for delivering annual efficiency savings as required by the Officer of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

The Leader commented that this Council was required to find 2.5% efficiency savings for the next three years which would not have an adverse effect on service performance. This equated to £530,000 for the next 3 years.

DECISION:

- 1. The requirements and timetable for submission of the Annual Efficiency Statements be noted.**
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2. The approach for delivering efficiency gains be endorsed and the 2005/06 forward looking Annual Efficiency Statement submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister be approved.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

3. Delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive and the Head of Financial Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Affairs, to submit future Annual Efficiency Statements.

CM.921 IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2005-2008 AND DIVISIONAL SERVICE BUSINESS PLANS 2005/2006

A report was considered from the Corporate Performance Advisor that asked the Cabinet to approve the Council's Improvement Plan for the period 2005-2008 and the Divisional Service Business Plans for 2005/06.

The Improvement Plan had been broken down into a number of improvement projects to be undertaken over the next three years (2005-2008).

Divisional Service Business Plans were produced annually and provided an overview of each Division's role, structure and targets for service delivery.

DECISION:

1. The Council's Improvement Plan for the period 2005-2008, as set out in a separate appendix to the report, be approved.
2. The Divisional Service Business Plans for 2005/06, as set out in a separate appendix to the report, be approved.

CM.922 SUPPORTING PEOPLE - PROGRESS REPORT AND FIVE YEAR STRATEGY

A report was considered that provided a progress report on the implementation of the Supporting People regime and sought approval to the draft 5 year Strategy prior to it going out to Countywide consultation.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

1. The latest position regarding service reviews and the financial position of the Supporting People Service, as detailed in the report, be noted.
 2. The Draft 5 Year Strategy, as circulated separately to the report, prior to the three month consultation process be approved.
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CM.923 KIDDERMINSTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION STRATEGY

A report was considered from the Chief Executive that asked the Cabinet to approve the Kidderminster Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy.

The Kidderminster Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy would enable the District Council to seek support from key regional agencies in order to bring forward its Vision and Strategic Objectives. In addition it would enable required regeneration projects to have a strategic focus endorsed by Wyre Forest District Council.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

the Kidderminster Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy, as detailed in the report, be approved.

CM.924 WORCESTERSHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2 (LTP2) 2006/2011 CONSULTATION DRAFT FEBRUARY 2005

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that informed Members of the content of the Local Transport Plan 2 Draft Consultation Document and the key issues relating to the Wyre Forest District. The report set out comments and representations received for submission to Worcestershire County Council.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Economic Regeneration commented that the main issues in Wyre Forest related to air quality in Kidderminster and Bewdley and traffic issues in Bewdley. The Council was under some pressure to consider ways of linking in with the strategic industrial corridor by road development. This would link in with the Council's economic regeneration plan.

The Chairman of the Environment and Economic Regeneration Panel referred to the detailed recommendations made by her scrutiny panel.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Economic Regeneration commented that he took on board the recommendations raised by the Environment and economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel and agreed that these should be added to those already listed in the report that were to be forwarded to Council for approval.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- 1. The comments set out in Appendix 1 of the report to the Cabinet on 14th April 2005, together with the comments from the Environment, Economic and Regeneration Policy Scrutiny Panel (as listed below) be approved as the District Council's response to the Draft Local Transport Plan 2, for submission to Worcestershire County Council.**
 - (a) There is concern about the need for Stourport Relief Road including the second river crossing at Stourport on Severn;**
 - (b) Under the Market Towns Strategy reference should be made to the agreed District Council funding towards the provision of the Vale Road pedestrian crossing.**
 - (c) Evening bus services - some areas are now very well served, especially Areley Kings, but other areas including Lickhill and Burlish, Stourport on Severn and certain urban areas of Kidderminster still do not have a satisfactory evening bus service;**
 - (d) Consideration should be given to submitting an Urban Bus Challenge bid to improve services in parts of the District not covered by the existing Rural Bus Challenge project.**
 - (e) Real time information on buses should be implemented as soon as practicable;**
 - (f) There is a need for the Highways Partnership Unit to progress the revised improvement proposals for Blackwell St/ Coventry St. Kidderminster.**
 - (g) Consideration of Kidderminster Parkway railway station is felt to be premature, and consideration should be given to enhancing Blakedown railway station;**
 - (h) The Formula by which highways maintenance funding is distributed by the County Council to District Councils should be reviewed by Worcestershire County Council to give more weight to those authorities with heavily used urban roads as opposed to large areas of rural roads which have very light usage.**
- 2. That the Head of Planning, Health and Environment be authorised to submit Wyre Forest District Council's representations on the Consultation Draft Local Transport Plan 2 to Worcestershire County Council by 29th April 2005.**

PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT 2005/06

A report was considered from the Head of Planning, Health and Environment that advised the Cabinet on the Planning Delivery Grant for 2005/06 and how the grant was spent in its first and second years.

The Planning Delivery Grant commenced in July 2002 when the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced the introduction of investment in Local Authorities planning resources through a new Planning Delivery Grant. The Grant was originally intended to make £350 million available to Local Authorities between the years 2003 and 2006 to improve the delivery and performance of planning services but had now been increased and would be resourced until 2008.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Economic Regeneration commented that the Grant would be used for improvements within the Planning Division. It had therefore been decided to use the grant in the following areas: Forward Planning Resources, electronic service delivery, support services resources, funding new posts for housing and conservation, consultancy work, training, Housing Needs Survey and support for work by external partners.

DECISION:

1. **The 2005/06 Planning Delivery Grant award be noted and it be agreed that it can be used within the Planning, Health and Environment Division within the following areas:**

Forward Planning Resources	>	Consultants Work
Electronic Service Delivery	>	Training
Support Service Delivery	>	Housing Needs Survey
Funding new posts for Housing and conservation	>	Support for work by external partners
2. **The expenditure for years one and two of the Planning Delivery Grant be noted.**
3. **The Head of Planning, Health and Environment, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Economic Regeneration, be given delegated authority to vire monies between the areas of expenditure if necessary.**

**CM.926 WYRE FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK:
STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)**

A report was considered that informed Members of the background to the development of the Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), its content and the proposals to take it forward for a 6 week consultation period commencing on Thursday 28th April 2005.

It was noted that the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, required the Council to produce a Statement of Community Involvement which would set out the Council's policy for involving the community in the planning process through the preparation and revision of local development documents and for consulting on planning applications.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- 1. The Draft Statement of Community Involvement, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved for the purposes of pre-submission public participation in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.**
- 2. That the Head of Planning, Health and Environment be authorised to make the appropriate arrangements to publish the Draft Statement of Community Involvement for a 6 week consultation period commencing on 28th April 2005.**

CM.927 ANNUAL EXTERNAL FUNDING REPORT

A report was considered from the Chief Executive that advised the Cabinet of the funding that had been brought into the district in the financial year 2004/05. It was noted that a total of £5,714,336 had been received in 2004/05.

DECISION: the report be noted.

CM.928 DRAFT WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY (2005 TO 2008)

A report was considered from the Chief Executive that sought the Cabinet's approval of the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership's draft Community Safety Strategy for the period 2005 to 2008.

It was noted that every three years the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a statutory responsibility on Community Safety Partnerships to produce a local Strategy to tackle crime and disorder. This Council would be publishing a new Community Safety Strategy during April 2005. The strategic priorities for the Strategy were: Anti Social Behaviour, Drugs and Alcohol, Public Perception of Crime and Violent Crime. The Council would be responsible for supporting the delivery of the Strategy and would lead on the public perception of crime strategic priority. The third Community Safety Strategy for the district would help to support the continued reduction in crime, disorder and anti social behaviour.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership's draft Community Safety Strategy for the period 2005 to 2008 as circulated as a separate appendix to the report to Cabinet be approved.

CM.929 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL ON PROMOTING THE EVENING ECONOMY

The Chairman of the Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel presented the recommendations of the Panel on Promoting the Evening Economy. She commented that the scrutiny exercise was available as a detailed document. The Panel had undertaken a lot of hard work in compiling their recommendations. She was grateful to her colleagues who took part in the investigatory activities and also to members of the public and trade from whom evidence was taken. She asked that an additional recommendation be included - that the full report on the scrutiny exercise be published on the Council's website.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Economic Regeneration thanked the Chairman of the Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel for her presentation of the Panel's recommendations. He was pleased and impressed with the amount of work undertaken on the scrutiny exercise. He noted that this Council was one of the few Councils in the country that had undertaken a scrutiny exercise on the evening economy. He stated that this Council would like an evening economy that was family friendly, protected and secure.

A lengthy discussed ensued where Members discussed toilet provision during extended opening hours and they also discussed the possibility of holding an evening street market was also discussed.

DECISION :

the following recommendations from the Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel be agreed:

- 1. Regular meetings be held with the Council's Strategic Community Safety Officer, appropriate operational Council Officers and the relevant Police representatives to develop even closer working relationships.**
- 2. The Primary Care Trust's action on promoting sensible drinking guidelines be endorsed and it be established which schools are included in its promotion.**
- 3. Consideration be given to the appropriateness of designating areas within the District suitable for a drinking ban, and to the promotion of them as alcohol restriction zones, if applicable.**
- 4. The Environmental Health and Licensing Manager work with licensees of premises who hold Public Entertainment Licenses, relevant Police officers, the Licensed Victuallers' Association and the locally based representative from the British Beer and Pub Association to:-**
 - a) Ask Wyre Forest Licensing Forum to monitor standards of behaviour for people using licensed premises particularly with regard to alcohol related problems and to agree common policies on dealing with people who ignore those standards of behaviour.**
 - b) Monitor local compliance with the Private Security Act 2000, under which door staff are registered, and request West Mercia Police to encourage the employment of properly qualified door supervisors at late night opening establishments.**
 - c) Whilst not a requirement of the 2003 Licensing Act, ask night clubs to consider serving hot food/sandwiches.**
- 5. The Environmental Health and Licensing Manager report back to the Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel on a quarterly basis, on matters detailed in 4. above.**
- 6. Non-alcohol and family orientated activities within the District, including the Warehouse Cinema, be commended and encouraged.**
- 7. The development of a major cinema within the Kidderminster Town Centre development (KTC3) be actively encouraged by the Council and the Cabinet be urged to take relevant steps to ensure its completion.**

8. The Bus Quality Partnership be recommended to work with local bus and taxi companies to try and establish late night transport provision to help develop the night culture.
9. The Bus Quality Partnership be recommended to work with relevant local transport companies to undertake a survey into the District's evening transport services and its potential requirements.
10. Consideration be given to the incorporation of 24-hour accessible toilets within any proposed development of car park in New Road, Kidderminster.
11. The Highway Authority at Worcestershire County Council be requested to consider provision of pavement barriers in New Road, Kidderminster (above Tesco's, by the mini-island at the Corporation Street junction).
12. The Highway Authority at Worcestershire County Council be requested to consider provision of an additional Taxi Rank in New Road, Kidderminster (above the junction with Corporation Street).
13. A full report on the scrutiny exercise to be published on the Council's website.
14. The possibility of holding an evening street market to be explored by the Cultural Leisure and Commercial Services Section. (Possibly on the evening when the Christmas lights are switched on).

CM.930 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMERCIAL SERVICES POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL ON STREET CLEANSING

The Chairman of the Commercial Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel was in attendance to present the recommendations from his Panel on street cleansing. He commented that a questionnaire had been sent to all Stourport councillors and 10 replies had been received. The respondents had basically agreed that street cleansing in Stourport had generally improved under the zoning scheme.

The Leader stated that the 'hot spots' that had previously been identified had been improved. Concern was expressed about the culture of eating takeaway food in the street and throwing down the containers onto the street after the food had been consumed. Whilst enforcement action could be taken on people who threw down litter, it was felt that it would be helpful to educate young people in schools not to adopt this type of behaviour.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services wished to record his thanks to the Commercial Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel for their work on street cleansing and he accepted the recommendations made. However with regard to the comments made during the debate about enforcement of littering he wished to clarify that there were approximately 12 officers who dealt with enforcement issues. He concurred with the view that it was necessary to educate school children not to litter. He also stressed the importance of recycling materials. He noted the vast improvement in street cleansing in Stourport and the appointment of 3 extra cleansing staff had aided this.

DECISION: the following recommendations from the Commercial Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel on street cleansing be agreed:-

- 1. The Council adopt a Zoning Plan for the delivery of the Street Cleansing service in accordance with cleansing best practice.**
- 2. The Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services be authorised to revise the details of the Zoning Plan in consultation with the Cabinet member for Commercial Services.**
- 3. The Council continue to treat litter and the general cleansing services as high priority services, that performance standards/public satisfaction are monitored and a log of litter hotspots maintained.**
- 4. The Zoning Plan for the District be included on the Council's Internet site.**
- 5. The outcome of the Zoning approach to service delivery be scrutinised by the Panel at their October, 2005 meeting or at a suitable meeting thereafter.**

CM.931 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

DECISION:

Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of "exempt information" as defined in paragraphs 7 & 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CM.932 SUMMARY OF MINUTES

The following proceedings were considered after the press and public had been excluded from the meeting. A summary of the minutes relating to these items have been made as "exempt information" would be disclosed if the minutes were published in full.

(i) Minutes

The Exempt Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on the 17th March 2005 were approved and were signed by the Chairman.

(ii) Future of Rushock Trading Estate

1. The recommendations of the Finance and Corporate Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel meeting held on the 15th March 2005 were considered.
2. A report was considered from the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services that sought a decision on the future of the Council's interest in Rushock Trading Estate.

(iii) Council Tax Write Off of Amounts Outstanding

A report was considered from the Head of Financial Services that asked the Cabinet to consider writing off sums in respect of Council Tax.

(iv) Redevelopment Site Worcester Street, Kidderminster - KTC3

A report was considered from the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services that asked the Cabinet to consider options for a design brief and marketing of the Worcester Street development site known in the Local Plan as KTC3.

(v) Land and Premises at Bridge Street, Stourport on Severn - Wyre Forest District Council Adopted Local Plan Policy Site STC4

A report was considered from the Chief Executive and Head of Planning, Health and Environment regarding the future plans for this site.

(vi) Sports and Leisure Centres - Request to Spend Contingency

A report was considered from the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services that requested authority to spend money from the contingency for the Sport and Leisure Centres management contract.

The meeting ended at 7.15 pm

AGENDA ITEM NO 7.1.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING
26th May 2005

ICT Strategy 2005 - 2008

COMMUNITY THEME	STRATEGY	OPEN
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:		Delivering Quality Services
KEY PRIORITY:		Utilising new Technologies
CABINET MEMBER:		Cllr John-Paul Campion
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:		Head of Human Resources
CONTACT OFFICER:		Dave Bradbury ext: 2139 Dave.bradbury@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES		Information and Communications Technology Strategy 2005 – 2008 Placed in Party Group Rooms. A public inspection copy is available on request (see front cover for details)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To approve the adoption of the ICT strategy for 2005 - 2008

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE that:

- 2.1 The Information and Communications Technology Strategy 2005 – 2008, set out in a separate appendix to the report, be approved.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The previous ICT strategy has now expired. Any issues outstanding have been taken into account.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The strategy supports the Divisional Business Plans and the Corporate Plan
- 4.2 E-Government priorities and electronic service delivery targets have been addressed.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. There are no direct financial implications from approving the strategy. There are financial implications that will be considered as part of the many projects that are in progress or planned.
- 5.2. See use of Resources – Section 4 of the Strategy.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. This is a revision of a previously agreed strategy

7. IMPLEMENTATION

- 7.1. The strategy will be progressed over a 3 year period and will be regularly reviewed to meet changing demands. Further reports will be brought to the Cabinet as necessary.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1. The implications of not following the Strategy could result in:-
 - 8.1.1 Failure to meet Government targets;
 - 8.1.2 Delay in achieving efficiency targets;
 - 8.1.3 Reduction in quality of the existing ICT service;
 - 8.1.4 Financial loss to the Council due to the failure of equipment or systems.
- 8.2. The strategy relies on resources being available. The software, hardware and manpower implications of projects will not be fully realised until project groups have carried out detailed feasibility studies.
- 8.3. Risks can be mitigated by:-
 - 8.3.1 Members and Heads of Service continuing involvement and support;
 - 8.3.2 Existing finance estimates being followed as closely as possible;
 - 8.3.3. Council accepting that there may be occasions where additional resources may be required to comply with the Strategy.

9. CONSULTEES

- 9.1 The strategy has been considered and recommended for approval by the Information, Communications and E-Government (ICE) Group and the Corporate Management Team.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING

25th May 2005

Post of Contaminated Land Assistant

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	A Better Environment
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Enabling Community Wellbeing
KEY PRIORITY:	Contaminated Land
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Maureen Aston
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Head of Planning, Health and Environment
CONTACT OFFICER:	Mark Kay Ext. 2580 Mark.Kay@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the post of Contaminated Land Assistant (Temporary) within the Environmental Health section to be placed upon the permanent establishment.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE:

That the post of Contaminated Land Assistant (Temporary Post No. 066) within the Environmental Health Section be made permanent with immediate effect.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Part II of the Environmental Protection Act requires every Local Authority to inspect its area for contaminated land and in appropriate cases to remediate or cause to be remediated land that is causing "harm".
- 3.2 To facilitate this process the Council approved its Contaminated Land Strategy (currently under review) in 2001 which identified a 7 year programme of identification and remediation.
- 3.3 For various reasons including staff shortages and lack of appropriate computer software, work on identifying potentially contaminated sites only got underway in Autumn 2003 when the post of Contaminated Land Assistant (Temporary) was created using funding within existing budgets.

- 3.4 Over the last 18 months approximately 850 potentially contaminated sites have been identified within Wyre Forest District Council using the historical land maps and by examining records such as planning applications and all Council owned sites (56 sites) have been visited and inspected. This still leaves at least 700 sites to visit and inspect and more sites are coming to light as more 'brownfield' sites are developed.
- 3.5 It is estimated that visiting and inspecting the remaining sites will take 5-7 years assuming 100-140 visits and inspections per year and that there will then still remain the ongoing work of producing reports for prospective purchasers and maintaining the public register.
- 3.6 The Government have recently introduced two national headline indicators BVPI 216a and 216b which deal with contaminated land and its remediation which will be used to assess progress from 2005/06. These indicators will require the council to identify sites of potential concern (which it has done) and to provide this figure (216a) and the council will then be asked to state what percentage of these sites has been investigated to the stage that it can be determined if any further action, such as remediation (cleanup) is required (216b) For Wyre forest the current figures are 852 and 7.7% meaning 92.3% of sites remain to be dealt with.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Council is under a legal obligation to carry out the work outlined above and the new national performance indicators will measure performance.
- 4.2 The post of Contaminated Land Assistant (Temporary) currently carries out the majority of work in this field and is currently being offered to postholders on a year on year basis and a temporary contract.
- 4.3 The postholder needs to be a graduate and upon appointment it can take several months to become familiar with the Council's dedicated software.
- 4.4 The temporary nature of the post offers no certainty to either the postholder or the Council and making the post permanent would aid carrying out the Council's commitments under its Contaminated Land Strategy.
- 4.5 In order to progress the work in a satisfactory manner and help retain the calibre of staff required it is recommended that the post be made permanent.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The proposal can be funded entirely from existing budgets currently set aside for dealing with contaminated land.. The post is currently a temporary post on a 1 year contract (renewable) and paid within salary bands D-E £14364-£17469 but this is still subject to confirmation by job evaluation which has still to be applied to this post

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council is legally bound to carry out its duties in respect of Contaminated Land.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The Council could face legal challenge and a potential danger to Public Health if duties under the Act are not carried out.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The making of the post permanent will help ensure steady progress in implementing the Council's Contaminated Land Strategy.

9. CONSULTEES

- 9.1 Head of Financial Services
9.2 Head of Human Resources and IT
9.3 Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Affairs

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Wyre Forest District Council Contaminated Land Strategy.

25.04.05

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
25th May 2005

Appointment Of Part-Time Food And Safety Officer

COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME PLAN	Improved Health and Wellbeing
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Enabling Community Wellbeing
KEY PRIORITY:	Public Health
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Maureen Aston
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Head of Planning, Health and Environment
CONTACT OFFICER	Mark Kay at Ext. 2580 Mark.Kay@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek agreement to the appointment of a part-time Food and Safety Officer in the Planning, Health and Environment Division, self-funded with income received from providing external food hygiene training.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE:

- 2.1 **That the part-time Food and Safety Officer post in the Planning, Health and Environment Division be made permanent from September 2005 subject to it continuing to be self-funding.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council is required by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to undertake annual food sampling at a rate of 1 per '000 capita of population i.e. approximately 97 samples per annum in Wyre Forest.
- 3.2 The Council receives no additional external funding from the FSA or elsewhere to resource this requirement.
- 3.3 Prior to April 2003 and the re-organisation of the Planning, Health and Environment Division little or no food sampling was taking place and Wyre Forest fell into the bottom 10% of Council's when measured against the FSA targets.

- 3.4 Before April 2003 and until September 2004 food sampling was being carried out by a student completing her log book towards formal qualification. In this period 36 samples were carried out. From April 2004 – March 2005 100 samples were carried out.
- 3.5 The FSA has also indicated that it may measure the Council's advisory and educational activity as part of its proposals to improve the monitoring system used by Local Authorities to report food law enforcement activities.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 In August 2004 Cabinet agreed to a 12 month trial period for the student to be employed as a part-time (18.5 hours) Food and Safety Officer to continue to undertake food sampling; the post would be self-funded from income from training courses which would be offered externally on basic and intermediate food hygiene training.
- 4.2 Food business operators must have their food handlers trained in food hygiene matters. This is expected to be further endorsed by EU Food Hygiene regulations in 2006.
- 4.3 As part of the August 2004 Cabinet report it was agreed that the Head of Planning, Health and Environment would update Cabinet with progress reports on the proposal.
- 4.4 Since the appointment to the post in September 2004 the following courses have been conducted and income derived:

Ninety people have been trained to date with a 99% pass rate and income is projected as follows:

a) Actual figures for mid-October 2004 to mid-March 2005:

Course Name	Actual	
	Quantity of Delegates	Gross Revenue
Foundation	72	£3960
HACCP	6	£450
Intermediate	12	£2760
Total	90	£7170

b) Projected figures mid-March 2005 to mid-May 2005:

Course Name	Projected	
	Quantity of Delegates	Gross Revenue
Foundation	48	£2640
HACCP	20	£1500

Intermediate	8	£1840
Total	76	£5980

c) **Actual + Projected figures:**

Course Name	Actual plus Projected	
	Quantity of Delegates	Gross Revenue
Foundation	120	£6600
HACCP	26	£1950
Intermediate	20	£4600
Total	166	£13150

- 4.5 The cost of the appointment on band H (including oncosts) is £14,929. The above figures indicate actual and projected income for 7 months of the 12 month initial appointment. Profiling the expected income at the end of the 12 month period gives a total of £16,075 which covers the cost of the appointment.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Based on the above figures it can be seen that the cost of continuing the 18.5 hour post will continue to be met from income derived from running food hygiene training courses.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Ensuring that this post is made permanent will assist the Council in meeting the requirements set out for food sampling by the FSA.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 If this post is not continued then either the rate of food sampling against FSA targets will be substantially reduced or the duties of other officers will have to be tailored to spend time food sampling at the expense of another public health service.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 It is concluded that this post can successfully be self-funding and subject to it continuing to be so until September it should be made permanent on the basis that the food hygiene training continues to be undertaken in order to fund the post.

9. CONSULTEES

- 9.1 Head of Financial Services

Head of Human Resources and IT
Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Affairs

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Report to Cabinet 26th August 2004.

22nd March 2005

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING
25TH MAY 2005

ODPM Homelessness Funding 2005/6

COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	OPEN and Wellbeing
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Enabling Community Wellbeing
KEY PRIORITY:	To Maintain a Balanced Housing Market
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Maureen Aston
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Mike Parker
CONTACT OFFICER:	Julia Jennison, Principal Housing Officer Ext. 2561 Julia.Jennison@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES	Homelessness Funding Allocation 2005/6 S.93 Local Government Act 2000 (Appendix 1)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To propose funding arrangements for the Council to utilise the ODPM's Priority Need Order Funding for 2005/6.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to **DECIDE** that:

- 2.1 The proposed spend of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Priority Need Order Funding for 2005/6 be approved.
- 2.2 The Head of Planning, Health and Environment be given delegated authority in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Rural Affairs to switch funding between projects where necessary to ensure full take up.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002 extended the categories of homeless applicant who have a priority need for accommodation. Additional monies have been made available to local authorities from 2002/3 for work with homeless applicants including prevention work.
- 3.2 Over the past three years monies have been made available to a number of local agencies for homelessness related work, and some of the successes are noted below –

- 3.2.1 The Nightstop Scheme, to provide short term accommodation for young people in the homes of trained volunteers, was initially funded from these monies and has come into operation this year.
- 3.2.2 Funding has been made available to Women's Aid to enable outreach work to be offered to women and children who may not need to go to the Refuge.
- 3.2.3 The Council's Rent Deposit Scheme has been extended to non-priority homeless people to enable them to access the private rented Sector, should they wish to do so.
- 3.2.4. A number of visiting floating support workers have been funded to support both vulnerable people who need assistance in managing the day to day issues of a new tenancy, and also those at risk of losing their tenancy and becoming homeless.
- 3.2.5. Citizens Advice Bureau have run various homelessness advice sessions. County Court Advice work has been particularly successful in avoiding homelessness where people have not sought previous advice about their situation. Attendance on possession hearing days enables support to be given through the Court process, and a number of evictions have been avoided.

4. KEY ISSUES - PROPOSALS FOR 2005/6

- 4.1 Proposals for the coming year are attached, and many of these will enable the work of local agencies to continue.
- 4.2 Additionally, the sum of £5,000 has been set aside for a proposed pilot Sanctuary Scheme – This has been piloted by the London Borough of Harrow, a Beacon Council and enables victims of domestic violence to remain in their own home provided it is considered safe and they wish to do so. Any scheme would be run in partnership with Womens Aid and the Police, and once an initial risk assessment was completed, arrangements could be made to make the property more secure. This may include replacement mortice locks, window locks, grilles if appropriate and a safe room with additional security, usually the master bedroom. Fire safety equipment is also provided including smoke detectors, and a collapsible fire escape ladder in the sanctuary room.
- 4.3 The government is also keen to see new approaches introduced to reduce homelessness, particularly through prevention work and "spend to save" funding. Significant savings can be made where an applicant accepts assistance to access the private rented sector, provided they wish to do so. As an example, two adults and three children could receive a spend to save loan of £600 as a deposit for a tenancy rather than be placed in bed and breakfast for 28 days at a cost of £4,318. The immediate saving would be £3,718 with the loan being repaid over time.

5. FLEXIBILITY

- 5.1 Funding is drawn down by the various agencies on a quarterly basis, when reports are received on progress and successes.

- 5.2 In order to ensure that monies are fully taken up, discretion is required for monies to be switched between agreed projects. It is proposed that the Head of Planning, Health and Environment should have delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Rural Affairs.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications. Priority Need Order monies are made available by the ODPM who have committed to providing a similar sum in 2006/7.

7. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no legal or policy implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Council and its agent, Wyre Forest Community Housing have been working hard to reduce the level of homeless applications and acceptances through a focus on prevention and housing advice work. The results have been good and we have seen a reduction in the number of presentations (415) and homeless acceptances (309) in 2003/04 to a projected number of 325 and 223 respectively up to the end of March 2004. We are maintaining our focus on innovative ways of continuing this reduction.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Head of Financial Services

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Housing Strategy 2004 - 2007

Appendix 1

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOMELESSNESS FUNDING ALLOCATION 2005/6

S.93 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

	£
1. Continuing funding to support Nightstop and Mediation service for vulnerable young people. A preventative and emergency accommodation scheme in partnership with statutory agencies and Centrepont	5,000
2. Continuing funding for CAB Court based Homelessness Advice Desk and work at Edward Parry centre	15,200
3. Continuing CAB Money Advice training to assist people with financial Literacy	1,000
4. Continuing funding for a Domestic Violence Outreach worker for tenancy sustainment, Womens Aid	7,000
5. Pilot a Sanctuary Scheme	5,000
6. Floating support to homeless clients, various agencies	17,300
7. Housing Advice and homeless prevention WFCH	1,500
8. Consultant for Homelessness Strategy review	3,000
9. Homelessness Prevention / Spend to Save	12,000

	67,000

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING
25TH MAY 2005

Strategic Rail Authority (SRA):
Consultation on Railways for All Strategy

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:	A Better Environment
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Enabling Community Wellbeing
KEY PRIORITY:	Transport Infrastructure
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor James Dudley
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Head of Planning, Health and Environment
CONTACT OFFICER:	Rebecca Mayman – Ext. 2554 Rebecca.Mayman@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES	Appendix 1: Schedule of Responses

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the SRA's consultation on its Railways for All Strategy and the issues it raises.
- 1.2 To seek the Cabinet's approval of Appendix 1: Schedule of Responses, for submission to the SRA as the District Council's response to the consultation.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE:

- To approve the Schedule of Responses set out at Appendix 1 as the District Council's formal response to the Strategic Rail Authority's consultation exercise on the Railways for All Strategy.
- To authorise the Head of Planning Health and Environment to make the appropriate arrangements to submit the District Council's formal response to the Strategic Rail Authority by 14th June 2005.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Due to lack of availability of a suitable E&ER Policy & Scrutiny Panel meeting prior to the Cabinet meeting of 25th May, a report was distributed to the Panel Members individually requesting their comments by 16th May. This set out the background to the SRA's consultation exercise. It also presented Members with an initial schedule of responses to questions 8-14, for their consideration. Any ensuing comments will be reported verbally at the Cabinet meeting on 25th May.
- 3.2 The SRA is developing an Accessibility Strategy for the rail industry under Section 206 of the Transport Act 2000. The deadline for the submission of responses to the SRA's consultation document is the 14th June 2005. The consultation exercise will be used to inform the final Accessibility Strategy, to be published in summer 2005.
- 3.3 The schedule of responses to questions 8-14 is attached at Appendix 1 for the Cabinet's consideration. Electronic copies of the SRA's consultation documents are available for Members' information via e-mail upon request, or from the SRA's website at www.sra.gov.uk.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Up to 10 million adults and 700,000 children in Great Britain are likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995. An accessible railway within the framework of an integrated transport system is important to delivering the Government's commitment to comprehensive civil rights for disabled people.
- 4.2 The objectives of the SRA's strategy are:
- To establish a coherent, agreed, funded plan for making the railway more accessible through both physical and customer service improvements.
 - Given the finite resources, to establish a framework within which choices can be made.
 - To set out a clear implementation route so that different players within the restructured railway industry can all work towards common goals.

The SRA proposes that the key elements of an accessibility strategy should be:

- Readily available and accurate information.
- Physically accessible rolling stock and stations wherever reasonable.
- Availability and training of staff.
- Alternative accessible provision.

- 4.3 Following on from this, the SRA proposes that the main changes in this Strategy are to:
- Establish an Access For All Fund for accessibility improvements at stations.
 - Update the Code of Practice, which sets out the standards that Train Operating Companies (TOCs) and Network Rail have to meet in providing for disabled passengers.
- 4.4 Section 6 (Pages 49-83) sets out details of the Government's Access for All Fund, (£370 million to be spent on making stations more accessible for disabled passengers from 2004-2015). It also specifies how the SRA will identify those stations eligible for Access for All Funding and includes a number of prioritisation options.
- 4.5 Kidderminster Rail Station is identified as a "geographical filler station" and is included under Band 1 - capital improvement works for step free access. Page 79 proposes Kidderminster Station to become fully staffed throughout the period of timetabled train services through Access for All Funding.
- 4.6 Paragraphs 6.40-6.44 outline the need for third party funding for improving accessibility. They refer specifically to Section 106 monies from the planning process and state that it is important that local authorities consider such issues when discussing contributions with developers.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The District Council may be asked to contribute towards the development of the Railways for All Strategy within the District, through partnership working and officer and Member representation at meetings and forums. In addition, it is possible that the District Council may need to contribute some match funding towards accessibility improvements at Kidderminster Rail Station. Such funding could be met through Section 106 Contributions.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. The recommended policy responses are in accordance with the Council's established priorities.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from this report.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 An accessible railway within the framework of an integrated transport system is important to delivering the Government's commitment to comprehensive civil rights for disabled people. The SRA's consultation document contains important proposals relating to Kidderminster Rail Station, which should be supported by the District Council.
- 8.2 Following consideration by Cabinet, the schedule of responses attached at *Appendix 1* will be submitted as WFDC's formal response to the SRA's consultation exercise by 14th June 2005.

9. CONSULTEES

Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel
CMT

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy & Scrutiny Panel Report dated 16th May 2005.
Railways for All: A Consultation Document. SRA. March 2005
Train and Station Services for Disabled Passengers: A Code of Practice. (SRA)

Appendix 1: Schedule of Responses to SRA's Railways for All Consultation Document

8. Do you agree that all measures (step-free, CIS, PA Systems and staffing)?	Relevant Section Paragraphs 6.21-6.24 Pages 52-55	Head of Planning Health & Environment's Comments
		These measures start in addressing accessibility at stations. Naturally, they will not cover every eventuality, but can be expanded upon in the future. These proposals form an important basic approach towards improving infrastructure at stations.
9. Do you agree that all measures should be invested in, especially step-free access (Option 3)?	Paragraph 6.25-6.26 Pages 55-56	Support for Option 3. Within Kidderminster the provision of step free access to the station is essential. Currently, accessibility is very poor considering Kidderminster has the 17 th busiest rail station in the West Midlands and is one of only three principal stations in Worcestershire (West Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy, SRA)
10. To determine the criteria for choosing stations, do you agree that the fund should be targeted at highest use stations, but with 25% used to ensure reasonable coverage (Option C)?	Paragraphs 6.31-6.32 Pages 57-59	Support for Option C. Map D (Page 66) shows that this option provides reasonably good national coverage for partly accessible stations. As Kidderminster Rail Station is included as a Regional infill station, the District Council supports this approach for targeting Access for All Funding.
11. To determine the order in which stations are enhanced, do you agree that the proportion of journeys to other accessible stations should be taken into account alongside usage and geographical coverage (Option Z)?	Paragraph 6.37 Page 60	Support for Option Z. This broad branding approach prioritises Kidderminster as one of the busiest stations in the West Midlands Region. Kidderminster Station is a very popular commuter route into the West Midlands conurbation and it is felt that accessibility improvements at the Station will help to achieve a high number of accessible

Consultation Questions (P.83)	Relevant Section	Head of Planning Health & Environment's Comments
<p>12. Do the lists of stations selected for improvement provide good linkages with other accessible transport modes, or would alternative stations better integrate the different modes?</p>	<p>Pages 70-79</p>	<p>journeys into Birmingham.</p> <p>Within the Wyre Forest District, Kidderminster Rail Station is well served by both taxis and buses, which stop in the station forecourt area. This includes a flexilink bus service, which uses low floor buses, and drivers who are trained to help passengers with special needs.</p> <p>The District Council strongly supports the proposal to “fully staff” Kidderminster Rail Station and to make platform staff available throughout the period of timetabled train services. (Page 79)</p>
<p>13. Are you aware of any well-developed and funded plans for any of the stations that are targeted for improvements?</p>	<p>Paragraphs 6.40-6.44 Pages 80-81</p>	<p>The current Worcestershire Local Transport Plan (2001-2006) identifies the need to improve access for all modes of transport to Kidderminster Rail Station. It proposes a package of measures to improve interchange facilities at Kidderminster Rail Station, which aims to promote the integration of all modes of travel and to improve the flexibility of public transport in the Wyre Forest district.</p> <p>Similarly, the Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 2 (2006/11) Consultation Draft (Feb 2005), includes reference to promoting better integration between Kidderminster Railway Station and the town centre through improvements to walk, cycle and public</p>

Consultation Questions (P.83)	Relevant Section	Head of Planning Health & Environment's Comments
		<p>transport routes.</p> <p>Wyre Forest District Local Plan Policy TR.2 Interchange Improvements at Kidderminster Railway Station, sets out the land use context for the proposed improvements to the Station, which includes improved accessibility for disabled people.</p>
<p>14. Are you aware of any stations where Section 106 monies may be available to part fund accessibility improvements?</p>	<p>Paragraphs 6.40-6.44 Pages 80-81</p>	<p>Wyre Forest District Council has negotiated a number of Section 106 contributions from developers towards sustainable transport projects and improvements.</p> <p>It is possible that the District Council might be able to contribute Section 106 monies to part fund improvements at Kidderminster Rail Station. This would be subject to Members' approval and to detailed discussions and input from the franchise holders, Network Rail and Worcestershire County Council as the local Highway Authority.</p> <p>In particular, the District Council is keen to improve accessibility for vulnerable road users and the mobility impaired from the town centre to the rail station at Comberton Hill.</p>

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING
25TH MAY 2005

Strategic Rail Authority Consultation
West Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy

COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:	OPEN Environment
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Enabling Community Wellbeing
KEY PRIORITY:	Transport Infrastructure
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor James Dudley
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Head of Planning, Health and Environment
CONTACT OFFICER:	Noel Holdstock – Extension 2550 Noel.Holdstock@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 – WMRUS Issues arising in relation to Wyre Forest District Appendix 2 – WMRUS Executive Summary (A public inspection copy of the SRA Consultation Document is available on request)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To apprise Members of the key issues in the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) consultation on the West Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy (WMRUS) and to seek authorisation for the submission of comments and representations.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to **DECIDE:**

- 2.1 To approve the comments set out in Appendix 1 of the report as the District Council's response to the Strategic Rail Authority consultation on the West Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy
- 2.2 That the Head of Planning, Health and Environment be authorised to submit the District Council representations to the Strategic Rail Authority by 27th May 2005.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The SRA has published for public comment a Route Utilisation Strategy for the West Midlands rail network. It is the fourth RUS to be developed but unlike previous RUS that related to specific routes, this Strategy looks at the network across a whole region.
- 3.2 Due to lack of availability of a suitable E&ER Policy & Scrutiny Panel meeting prior to the Cabinet meeting of 25th May, a report was distributed to the Panel Members individually requesting their comments by 16th May. This set out the background to the SRA's consultation exercise. It also presented Members with details of those key issues affecting the Wyre Forest District together with officer comments. Any ensuing comments will be reported verbally at the Cabinet meeting on 25th May.
- 3.3 The RUS looks at travel patterns and track and train capacity in the Region in the period up to December 2011. It seeks to ensure that the rail network will be utilised to achieve maximum benefits to passenger and freight users. The longer term options to develop the network 2011-2031 will be considered as part of the Regional Planning Assessment that the SRA is currently preparing, which will inform in the future, a revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Regional Transport Strategy.
- 3.4 A copy of the RUS Executive Summary is attached at *Appendix 2* and provides an overview of the full 90 page document. The full document, together with some supplementary background material, can be viewed and downloaded from the SRA website at www.sra.gov.uk, or can be emailed to Members on request.

4. KEY ISSUES FOR WYRE FOREST DISTRICT

- 4.1 The RUS acknowledges the significant growth in passenger demand for services from Kidderminster to Birmingham and forecasts that growth is expected to continue. In order to accommodate this growth in demand the RUS proposes to include options for improved peak and off-peak services.
- 4.2 Unfortunately, the RUS does not appear to have considered the issue of through journeys from Kidderminster to most towns beyond the West Midlands and the problems caused for such passengers following the cessation of direct services from Kidderminster to Birmingham New Street in May 2004.
- 4.3 It is also disappointing that the RUS does not include any reference to consideration of improving the existing peak hour direct Kidderminster to London Marylebone service, to provide an all day service as had been initially proposed.
- 4.4 Details of these key issues and other matters affecting Wyre Forest District are set out in the *Appendix 1* together with officer comments.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications to the Council arising out of this report.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. The recommended policy responses are in accordance with the Council's established priorities.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The RUS sets out the SRA's analysis of the existing and forecast growth in the use of the rail network in the West Midlands up to 2011.
- 8.2 A number of options proposed for inclusion in the final strategy will deliver enhancements to passenger services on the Birmingham-Kidderminster route and should be supported.

9. CONSULTEES

- 9.1 Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel 16th May 2005)
- 9.2 CMT

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Strategic Rail Authority Consultation on West Midlands Route Utilisation strategy
- 10.2 Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel (16th May 2005)

APPENDIX 1 West Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy Issues arising in relation to Wyre Forest District

Route Utilisation Strategy Chapter/Topic	Summary	Head of Planning, Health and Environment's Comments
3.3 Profile of the passenger market	<p>Overall passenger numbers in the West Midlands 1995-2004 are up 44% compared with the Great Britain average of 34%.</p> <p>For Kidderminster Station numbers are up 51% with 926,000 passengers 2003-04. (17th busiest in West Midlands). However, only served by average of 76 trains per week day giving an average of 41 passengers per train (6th highest in West Midlands)</p>	The high level of passenger demand at Kidderminster Station strengthens the case for provision of additional services.
3.3.3 Journey to Work-Birmingham	<p>Since 1991 the rail share of journeys to work in central Birmingham, has risen from 12% to over 20% (Central London by comparison is 38%).</p> <p>Since 1999 central Birmingham rail journeys have been growing at an average of 3.9% per year.</p> <p>Analysis of morning peak (0700-0959) capacity on the Stourbridge line into Snow Hill at December 2004 shows a capacity of between 4,300-5,600 passengers depending on whether Centro or SRA capacity definitions are used. This compares with expected passenger numbers of approximately 3,000, i.e. between 53-69% of capacity. There are 17 trains in the morning peak of which 2 are assessed as 'overcrowded'; using the Centro definition.</p>	Growth in rail travel for journeys to work in Birmingham is to be expected, with increasing problems of traffic congestion coupled with the continued policy of encouraging modal shift away from private car for such journeys. On the Kidderminster-Birmingham corridor, with the deletion of the Kidderminster, Blakedown and Hagley Bypass further modal shift to rail is likely to occur.
4.5 Forecasts of Change 4.5.1 Overview	Overall, having regard to forecast employment and retail changes for Birmingham, together with current Transport policies in the West Midlands conurbation, demand for rail travel is projected to rise by up to 43% by 2011.	See comments above
4.5.4 Car Parking and 7.5	There are approximately 7,000 car parking spaces at stations within the Centro areas. Reference is made to the development of Park and Ride facilities and the West Midlands P. & R. Study May 2003. This study includes the possible expansion of existing facilities at the Kidderminster station although in terms of Regional planning priority, it is classified as low.	The expansion of the existing car parking facilities at Kidderminster Station should be supported in principle subject to consideration of the detailed proposals. In table 7.2 reference to Kidderminster should be clarified by a note confirming that the proposal relates to expansion of existing facilities.

Route Utilisation Strategy Chapter/Topic	Summary	Head of Planning, Health and Environment's Comments
4.6.2 Stakeholder Aspirations for New Stations	Appendix A to the RUS contains a list of almost 60 new station sites put forward in 'local plans' and includes a reference to Kidderminster Parkway	The SRA should be advised that a Kidderminster Parkway is not included as a proposal in the Adopted Wyre Forest District Local Plan covering the period to 2011.
5.2 Future Passenger Demand	Three different growth rates are used to forecast overcrowding on peak am services into Birmingham at 2011. For the low growth scenario a rate of 0.7% is mainly used, compared to 3.9% for the medium and 5.5% for the high growth scenario. On the Stourbridge route into Snow Hill using the Centro definition under the high growth scenario most trains would be overcrowded. Under the low growth scenario only 2 trains would be.	In view of the impact of differing growth rates on the issue of overcrowding of a.m. peak services on the Stourbridge route into Snow Hill, the future use should be subject to ongoing monitoring with consideration given to train lengthening to mitigate overcrowding.
6.2 Forecasts of Change – Committed Schemes	The RUS confirms that where signal renewals are planned, opportunities arise for upgrading at much reduced cost. For 2006-07 Network Rail intends to renew signals between Stourbridge and Hartlebury.	Support an upgrading of the signalling between Stourbridge and Kidderminster in order to increase route capacity and improve the reliability of services on the route.
7. Strategic Options 7.4 Managing Peak Demand	The RUS sets out a number of potential options to address peak demand including train lengthening, changing the internal layout of trains and running more trains. With regard to the latter option, there is little possibility in the medium term of running extra peak trains in central Birmingham due to performance risk and lack of capacity. Longer trains will be considered by SRA in conjunction with Centro subject to a value-for-money appraisal. An option to raise peak fares and reduce shoulder peak fares and implement selective timed car park charges to encourage commuters to shift from peak hour travel is seen by the SRA as having considerable merit and will be subject to further evaluation.	Train lengthening on the Kidderminster-Birmingham route would be an effective way of increasing capacity. However, Kidderminster station will need to be improved in order to handle increased peaks in the flow of passengers arriving.
7.8E Route Specific Options Worcester and Kidderminster- Birmingham Peak Services	Key issue is providing capacity to meet growing passenger demand, notably in the peaks.	

Route Utilisation Strategy Chapter/Topic	Summary	Head of Planning, Health and Environment's Comments
	<p>Two options for peak services are examined Option E1.1: Would provide improved frequency for Kidderminster by extending services that currently reverse at Stourbridge Junction. Analysis concludes that the extra revenue would not justify additional rolling stock. However extra services could be provided in the evening peak using existing stock and this option is recommended for inclusion in the Strategy subject to further detailed assessment.</p> <p>Option E1.2 : Considers improvements to the Worcester-Birmingham service. Due to existing capacity restrictions on the Droitwich-Worcester section, additional trains are not recommended instead train lengthening is considered the best option. A potential scheme to improve signalling capacity between Worcester and Droitwich is identified in the draft Strategy although this would be for Network Rail to pursue. Such a scheme would improve service punctuality on both routes via Kidderminster and Bromsgrove.</p>	<p>Support the inclusion in the final Strategy of Option E1.1 for the provision of improved peak hour services Birmingham-Kidderminster</p> <p>Support further investigation of proposals to improve the signal capacity between Droitwich and Worcester in order to improve the reliability of services on the route via Kidderminster</p>
All Day Services	<p>For all day services to Kidderminster demand is growing and is expected to continue.</p> <p>Option E2.1 : Increasing frequency from 3 to 4 trains per hour utilising existing rolling stock is recommended for inclusion in the Strategy subject to further detailed assessment.</p>	Support the inclusion in the final Strategy of Option E2.1 for the provision of improved frequency of off peak services on the Birmingham-Kidderminster route.
Route Specific Options Kidderminster-Birmingham Omissions	<p>As part of the consultation process, consultees are invited to identify options that are not considered in the draft Strategy document.</p> <p>There is no consideration of services from Kidderminster to Birmingham New Street, in order to provide convenient interchange with the wider rail network for longer distance journeys. With the cessation of hourly direct services to New Street in May 2004, passengers wishing to connect to other services at New Street need to either change at Galton Bridge or walk from Snow Hill/Moor Street. Some journeys e.g. to Birmingham Airport now required 3 trains, or 2 trains and an 8-10 minute walk.</p> <p>No consideration is given to the extension of the existing peak hour Kidderminster-London Marylebone service to provide an hourly all day service as originally proposed.</p>	<p>Whilst the increased to services Kidderminster to Birmingham introduced during 2004 are welcomed, these have been at the cost of the loss of convenient interchange with the wider rail network for longer distance journeys. The Strategy should include an assessment of demand for such journeys, the impact of the 2004 changes and options to improve connectivity for longer distance journeys from Kidderminster. As part of this analysis, consideration should be given to the provision of an all day hourly direct service from Kidderminster to London Marylebone.</p>

Route Utilisation Strategy Chapter/Topic	Summary	Head of Planning, Health and Environment's Comments
Route Specific Options Kidderminster- Birmingham Omissions contd...	No consideration is given to a direct Kidderminster to Birmingham International route.	The Strategy should include an assessment of demand for such journeys. It is felt that the lack of a direct rail route is hampering business opportunities within the District, which require direct train access from Birmingham International airport.

Executive summary

Improved rail capacity is a central element of the Government's plans for effective delivery of its objectives. The aim is to provide properly performing train services that accommodate aspirations for growth in a way that maximises overall value for money and is affordable.

The passenger demand for rail travel in the West Midlands, and especially into Birmingham, has grown by 44% since 1995, through the region becoming more prosperous; population and employment changes; improved rail services and because of congestion on the roads. There is also growing demand for freight on rail into and through the West Midlands. There has been considerable investment in rail in recent years for the West Midlands. New trains and new infrastructure have been provided to provide better services and to relieve congestion but growth continues to put pressure on the available network capacity.

A Route Utilisation Strategy has been developed for the West Midlands region to ensure that best use is made of available capacity and to address the following issues:

- Performance on the rail corridors into Birmingham is poor. The Strategy examines the structure of the timetable to identify where this could be changed to deliver better performance;
- There are significant commuter flows into Birmingham and there is crowding during the peak periods, although over a shorter time and to a much lesser extent than in the South East. The strategy considers how crowding can most effectively be managed;
- Further passenger and freight growth is forecast and plans need to be put in place to take this potential growth into account; and
- There are a number of train operators in the region, and it is believed that centrally coordinated changes to the specification of train services developed in this Route Utilisation Strategy can lead to more efficient operations and a better service to customers.

In developing this Route Utilisation Strategy, the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) has worked with the Department for Transport (DfT), regional and local authorities, the West Midlands business community, passenger operators, freight operators, passenger representatives and freight users. Network Rail and Centro have been closely involved throughout, especially in the development of options for evaluation. There has been extensive regional participation through a series of informal workshops and dialogue on key issues. Additionally we have drawn information from wider planning processes such as multi-modal studies, performance initiatives led by Network Rail and local authority/developer initiatives. We have ensured that linkages with other strategies have been taken into account, within the SRA, the rail industry and the regional planning context.

During the evolution of this Route Utilisation Strategy the Government White Paper on the Future of Rail was published, setting out structural changes to improve the rail industry. The SRA is to be abolished but the functions it undertakes will be transferred to other organisations. It is envisaged that the Route Utilisation Strategy process will continue, as it is recognised as being important for the efficiency of the rail network. The Secretary of State made clear his wish that the work that had been carried into this Route Utilisation Strategy should be completed, under SRA leadership. Future Route Utilisation Strategies will be carried out by Network Rail.

The Route Utilisation Strategy (the Strategy), sets out the options for change and describes the approach that the SRA intends to adopt, subject to consultation responses to this draft, to balance the needs of improving performance with service patterns more closely matched to predicted levels of demand. In proposing changes, it seeks solutions that are affordable and which give best value to both the taxpayer and railway users. The Strategy is focused on the medium term through to 2011 and identifies solutions that make best use of the existing rail network, so that scarce funds for investment can be focused where they are most needed. It looks to manage change within existing budgets.

The Strategy takes account of firm plans for changes to the railway infrastructure, including those under way as part of the West Coast Strategy. It builds on changes in the local service pattern introduced in December 2004 on the Solihull – Birmingham – Kidderminster corridor and planned for December 2005 on the Coventry – Birmingham corridor. It looks at Network Rail's renewal plans and identifies the opportunities these give for useful incremental change in conjunction with the service growth and change proposed. The Strategy is linked to the published SRA West Coast Strategy, and outcomes from this West Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy will be included in future developments of the West Coast Strategy (June 2003).

Within the West Midlands Strategy, the effects of uncoordinated change in recent years on the rail network are drawn together. Changes in demand, service patterns and frequencies, rolling stock, train driving techniques, train regulation and signalling operation have all had an effect on the available route capacity and the spread of any service disruption.

The Strategy proposes making better use of existing train services. This is done by reducing some and increasing others. Services are amalgamated or split where demand or performance justifies this, but no extra services are sought on the congested parts of the network. Rising passenger demand is generally met by longer trains where justified and freight demand by more and better use of standard hourly timetable paths across the region.

The anticipated benefits of the proposed strategy are being refined in conjunction with industry partners. We believe the proposals recommended in this Strategy could deliver significant benefits including:

- Improved services into Birmingham in the peak by some reallocation of rolling stock;
- Better management of growing peak demand through encouraging passengers travelling to work in Birmingham to use trains with spare capacity earlier or later in the peak, rather than concentrating their journeys on the busiest hour when trains arriving in central Birmingham can be crowded. The document discusses how this might be achieved through use of pricing mechanisms for train services and for car parks;
- Longer peak trains where these are value for money and affordable and, where appropriate, longer station platforms;
- A better mix of services on the Birmingham to Coventry corridor;
- Changes to services between Leamington Spa and Birmingham, routing all long distance CrossCountry services via Coventry and Birmingham International Airport, and freeing some capacity via Solihull to help improve operating performance, particularly as freight volumes grow;
- Extending some existing services from Birmingham to provide a higher frequency to Kidderminster and Stratford-upon-Avon in the off-peak;
- Requiring more services to call at Bromsgrove in the off-peak;
- Changes to services on the Shrewsbury – Wolverhampton – Birmingham corridor to improve performance and to meet stakeholder aspirations, including, possibly in the future, the operation of a peak Shrewsbury – London service;
- Changes to the services between Wolverhampton and Walsall, Birmingham – Rugeley – Stafford and Stafford – Nuneaton to integrate with West Coast changes and ensure efficient use of rolling stock;
- A review of the hours of train operation and engineering access and train services to get a better balance;
- Identification of a freight bottleneck between Water Orton and Landor Street that is a major cause of poor performance and which could limit freight growth rates by 2008. This is linked to an opportunity to revise the specification of Network Rail planned track and signalling renewals;
- Recognition that better use could be made of the route between Walsall and Rugeley Trent Valley, to provide for freight growth and for engineering diversions as well as meeting growing local passenger demand. This requires removal (at a low cost) of a capacity bottleneck; and

- Confirmation that otherwise sufficient route capacity exists to meet expected freight growth in the West Midlands up to 2011.

In addition to these we consider a new station at Coleshill would be compatible with the proposed strategy and would benefit the West Midlands by improving access on the eastern side of Birmingham. Although the SRA is not in a position to fund this station, it supports in principle proposals for such a scheme with private sector funding and is discussing commercial arrangements for train services with the promoters.

These anticipated benefits have been identified within the constraints of the existing infrastructure and the size of the current rolling stock fleets. They are designed to deliver an affordable match of capacity to demand and improve the performance of the railway. It has not been possible, however, to meet the aspirations of all stakeholders, particularly those that could require additional infrastructure or are inconsistent with the value-for-money and affordability objectives that the SRA has set for its capacity utilisation work.

Work on further developing and refining options will progress during the consultation period of the Route Utilisation Strategy. As stakeholder responses are received, the Strategy will be amended where appropriate and a final version will be published when conclusions have been reached.

There will be a small number of disbenefits of the strategy compared with current service patterns:

- Changes to peak fares could, in limited circumstances, cause minor shifts of demand away from rail and could restrict 'high peak' growth;
- The Strategy envisages some reallocation of rolling stock from less well used services. A small number of passengers will be adversely affected by this change;
- The Strategy (subject to some further evaluation) considers changes to local services on the Coventry – Birmingham and Wolverhampton – Birmingham corridors which could reduce local journey opportunities between some pairs of lightly-used stations; and
- The direct rail service between Walsall and Wolverhampton would be withdrawn because of low usage, as would the local rail service between Stoke and Stafford.

This Strategy will inform the SRA, its partner stakeholders and its successors on:

- The passenger service specification for new, extended or revised franchises;
- How to alter passenger Service Level Commitments during franchise terms and for controlling the exercise by franchisees of their timetable development and access rights;

- Representations to the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) assessing proposed access agreements between Network Rail and train operators, including those from open access operators;
- Decisions on discretionary grants so as to promote the development of services and facilities in a manner consistent with strategies;
- Rolling stock and other strategies;
- Decisions identifying those parts of the network where infrastructure changes (often as part of a renewal scheme) might deliver improved services that are both value for money and affordable; and
- Strategic park and ride proposals for existing and new stations.

It will also provide the 2011 baseline position for the SRA's Regional Planning Assessment (RPA) for the West Midlands, a study that commenced in Autumn 2004 and that covers long-term demand between 2011 and 2031.

When finalised, the Strategy recommendations can be delivered through:

- New franchise specifications;
- Modifications to existing franchise contracts with operators;
- Modifications to Network Rail's renewal programme for infrastructure; and
- The rail industry working closely with regional groups such as Centro and local authorities to co-ordinate transport plans and regional investment.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
26th May 2005

Safeguarding Children Policy

COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	Greater Learning & Participation
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Enabling Community Wellbeing
KEY PRIORITY:	Community Safety
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Nathan Desmond
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kay Higman 2902 kay.higman@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES	Safeguarding Children Policy Placed in party Group Rooms Available on the Intranet/Internet Public inspection – a copy is available on request (see front cover for details)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider, approve and adopt the draft Safeguarding Children policy for the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to recommend to Council that:

- 2.1 the Safeguarding Children Policy as set out in the separate Appendix to the report, be adopted.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) in 2004, it was recommended that the Council develop a corporate Child Protection Policy.
- 3.2 Child Protection procedures were in place in the Cultural, Leisure & Commercial Services Division, as well as some other Divisions but there was no comprehensive corporate document.

- 3.3 As a result of the CPA inspection and the desire to conform with best practice, it became an objective of the Council to develop a corporate policy.

4. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

- 4.1 The Council is committed to ensure that all Council activities provide a safe, enjoyable and positive experience for children and young people as participants and for the employees whose involvement is integral to the development of quality opportunities and services.
- 4.2 The policy provides a general statement on what parents, customers, young people and employees can expect from us, as minimum standards, in the area of Child Protection.
- 4.3 The Council will be expecting voluntary organisations to conform to these standards and we will be working with them to establish best practice.
- 4.4 The policy includes, for example:
- How to recognise poor practice, abuse and bullying
 - Prevention of abuse, including training, code of behaviour, etc.
 - Referral procedures and response to disclosures, suspicions and allegations
 - Designated Child Protection Officers within the Council and their roles and responsibilities.
- 4.5 The Council is awaiting approval from the NSPCC. The ACPC (Area Child Protection Committee) now the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board, has also been consulted. The NSPCC, in particular, was extremely helpful in developing the strategy.
- 4.6 The draft Safeguarding Children Policy is in the Group Rooms and on the Council's Intranet and internet. Employees who will be implementing the procedures have been consulted internally.
- 4.7 Training for front-line employees who could come into contact with children has already commenced.
- 4.8 The document is to be reviewed every three years or when there is a significant change in Child Protection legislation or following a major investigation.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council has informally adopted child protection mechanisms but the Council has no existing formal adopted policy in this area.

Employees (temporary or permanent) will be asked to complete declaration forms regarding any child protection issues that directly affect them. This is considered vital and existing employees who come into contact with young persons as a result of their employment have been consulted on the content of the policy and are currently subject to Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. Human Resources have been involved in finalising the documentation.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There are risks associated with not implementing a corporate policy. Failure to implement could result in the safety and security of young people participating in Council activities being compromised.

8. CONSULTEES

CMT

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Children's Act 2004

KH/JHL
25 April 2005

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11.1.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
DECISION NOTICE

DECISION MADE BY AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

COUNCILLOR MRS M A ASTON

**CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSING, HEALTH
AND RURAL AFFAIRS**

SCRUTINY OF DECISIONS OF INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBERS

In accordance with Part 4 of the Council's Constitution Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and Standing Order B4, any item on this decision notice may be scrutinised by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee if it is 'called in' by any three non-Cabinet Members and the Chairman of the relevant Policy and Scrutiny Panel, or by three members of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and any member of the relevant Policy and Scrutiny Panel.

The deadline for 'calling in' this decision is Tuesday 26th April 2005.

Councillors wishing to 'call in' a decision on this notice should contact Heather Jones, Acting Scrutiny Officer, on 01562-732730

BID FOR FUNDING FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Date of Decision: 19TH April 2005

DECISION: A grant of £150,000 be awarded to Wyre Forest Community Housing towards affordable housing at 49, Hanstone Way, 12 Princess Way and 11a Windmill Close, Stourport, as detailed on the form circulated with the agenda for the Housing, Health and Rural Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel's meeting on 19th April 2005.

Reason for Decision: To assist in meeting local housing needs in
Stourport-on-Severn

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS
POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL
15TH MARCH 2005**

Background

The Single Site Task and Finish Group was established to consider options for a single site for Wyre Forest District Council.

The options available for consideration were Churchfields Business Park in Kidderminster, the Civic Centre in Stourport (combined with the redevelopment of the Green Street Depot site) and the Council owned site at the rear of Crossley Retail Park. (The Group agreed however, that there were no overwhelming operational requirements for the depot to be co-located with any proposed new offices). The Group considered plans and financial options on the three options.

At the Council's meeting on the 23rd February 2005 it was agreed that the business case for a single site should be started before the site options were taken any further and provision was made within the budget to employ consultants to take this forward.

At the meeting of the Single Site Task and Finish Group held on the 3rd March 2005 attended by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, the points that should form the basis of the Consultants' brief were proposed. The Finance and Corporate Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on the 15th March 2005 agreed to recommend these proposals to the Cabinet as set out below.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

The following points form the basis of the consultants' brief with regard to Single Site:

- **How suitable are the Council's existing offices and depot for the servicing of future operational needs?**
- **What is the condition of the Council's existing offices and depot and what investment is required over the next 20 years?**
- **What are the life cycle costs associated with the Council's existing offices and depot and how do these compare with each of the Single Site options?**
- **What are the Council's options on lease renewals and alternative premises if lease renewal is not possible on existing offices?**

- **How will a move to new premises improve service delivery?**
- **What are the organisational benefits (efficiencies and savings) of moving to a Single Site?**
- **What is the space requirement for any new offices and depot and what should be built in for future flexibility?**
- **Investigate the cost options for the retention of Civic Hall or providing a replacement in Stourport.**
- **Develop the case for alternative planning permission on any sites, which would potentially become surplus.**