

Open

# Council

# Agenda

6 pm  
Wednesday, 23rd May 2012  
The Council Chamber  
Civic Centre  
Stourport-on-Severn



## **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

### **Access to the Meeting and Further Information**

- The Council meeting is open to the public except for any exempt / confidential items, which are normally taken at the end of the meeting.
- Agenda Item 14 - Public Participation. Guidance on how to have your say is available on the Council's website:  
[http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/wfdc\\_docs/policy/haveyoursay.pdf](http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/wfdc_docs/policy/haveyoursay.pdf)
- If you have any queries about this Agenda or require any further information, please ask.
- If you have any mobility issues, please let us know before the meeting so that we can arrange for you to have a seat on the ground floor.
- This agenda can be made available in larger print on request.

Please contact:

Penelope Williams

Democratic Services Manager

Civic Centre, Stourport-on-Severn

Telephone 01562 732728

**e-mail: [penelope.williams@wyreforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:penelope.williams@wyreforestdc.gov.uk)**



**COUNCIL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2012**

**CIVIC CENTRE, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN, WORCESTERSHIRE. DY13 8UJ**

**TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL, HONORARY ALDERMEN**

**PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Dear Member

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Wyre Forest District Council to be held **at 6.00p.m. Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2012**, in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Stourport-on-Severn.

The Agenda for the meeting is enclosed.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Miller  
Chief Executive

**2012/2013**

## **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.

## **(A) TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COUNCIL**

The Council

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

## **(B) MATTERS RESERVED TO THE COUNCIL**

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

Wyre Forest District Council

Council

Wednesday, 23rd May 2012

The Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Stourport-On-Severn

Part 1

Open to the press and public

<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
1.	<b>Prayers</b> Prayers to be said by Reverend Simon Gudger from Kidderminster Baptist Church.	-
2.	<b>Election of Chairman</b> To elect a Chairman of the Council for this Municipal Year.	-
3.	<b>Chairman – Investiture and Declaration of Acceptance of Office</b> To invest the Chairman of the Council with the Chain of Office after which the Chairman will make his or her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.	-
4.	<b>Chairman’s Response</b> The Chairman of the Council will express thanks for his or her election.	-
5.	<b>Retiring Chairman</b> The Leader of the Council will thank the retiring Chairman of the Council.	-
6.	<b>Retiring Chairman – Presentation of Badges</b> To present the retiring Chairman of the Council with a Past Chairman’s Badge. The retiring Chairman may wish to respond.	-
7.	<b>Appointment of Vice-Chairman</b> To appoint a Vice-Chairman of the Council for this Municipal Year.	-
8.	<b>Vice-Chairman – Investiture and Declaration of Acceptance of Office</b> To invest the Vice-Chairman of the Council with his or her Badge of Office after which the Vice-Chairman will make a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.	-
9.	<b>Vice-Chairman’s Response</b> The Vice-Chairman of the Council will express his or her thanks for his or her appointment.	-
10.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> To receive apologies for absence.	-

11.	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b>  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.</p> <p>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.)</p>	-
12.	<p><b>Minutes</b>  To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012.</p>	
13.	<p><b>Public Participation</b>  In accordance with the Council's Scheme for Public Speaking at Meetings of Full Council, to allow Members of the public to present petitions, ask questions or make statements, details of which have been received by no later than <b>12 noon Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May</b>.</p> <p><i>If you wish to speak on an urgent matter that has arisen since the deadline and you could not reasonably have known about it at the time, you should register your interest in speaking no later than 9am on the day of the meeting of Council. In the case of a request to speak on an urgent matter, the Director of Legal and Corporate Services will rule on whether or not the matter is urgent and that ruling will be final.</i></p>	-
14.	<p><b>Questions</b>  No questions have been received in accordance with Standing Orders (Section 7, 1.9) by Members of the Council, details of which should have been received by no later than <b>12 noon Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May</b>.</p> <p><i>In the case of an urgent matter that has arisen since the deadline above, and could not have reasonably been known at that time, it must be delivered in writing to the Director of Legal and Corporate Services no later than 9am on the day of Council.</i></p>	-
15.	<p><b>Chairman's Communications</b></p> <p>(a) To note the engagements of the outgoing Chairman of the Council since the Council's last meeting.</p> <p>(b) To receive such communications from the new Chairman of the Council.</p>	
16.	<p><b>Leader of the Council Announcements and Reports</b>  To receive announcements and any matters to report from the Leader of the Council.</p>	-

17.	<p><b>Members' Annual Activity Reports and Attendance 2011/2012</b>  To note the schedule of Members' Annual Reports giving details of their activities in their role as District Councillors for the 2011/2012 municipal year and to receive a record of Members' attendance for the 2011/2012 municipal year.</p> <p><i>These reports have been circulated electronically and a public inspection copy is available on request. (See front cover for details)  Copies will also be available with the pre council refreshments and in the Democratic Services Office.</i></p>	
18.	<p><b>Annual Reports for the Municipal Year 2011/2012</b></p> <p>(a) Cabinet</p> <p>(b) Scrutiny Report</p> <p>(c) Ethics and Standards Committee</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p><b>30</b></p> <p><b>36</b></p>
19.	<p><b>Political and Constitutional Structures 2012/2013</b></p> <p>a) To consider a report from the Director of Community Assets and Localism on the proposed political and constitutional structures for 2012/2013. This report will include the municipal calendar and the proposed amendments to the constitution.</p> <p>b) Appointments to outside bodies</p> <p>(Please note that this item is marked to follow)</p>	-
20.	<p><b>Motions Submitted Under Standing Orders</b>  No motions have been received in accordance with Standing Order (Section 7, 4.1).</p> <p><i>Motions must be received in writing by the Director of Legal and Corporate Services no later than <b>12 noon Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May.</b></i></p>	-
21.	<p><b>Urgent Motions Submitted Under Standing Orders</b>  To consider any motions in the order in which they have been received, which, by reason of special circumstances, should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Standing Order (Section 7 4.1 (viii)).</p>	-
22.	<p><b>Update from the Chief Executive</b>  To receive an update report from the Chief Executive.</p>	<b>40</b>
23.	<p><b>Community Governance Review</b>  To receive a report from the Director of Community Assets and Localism on the progress of the Community Governance Review for Rock and Ribbesford.</p>	<b>44</b>

24.	<b>To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Director of Community Assets &amp; Localism before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.</b>	-
25.	<b>Exclusion of the Press and Public</b> To consider passing the following resolution: "That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of "exempt information" as defined in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act".	-

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

26.	<b>To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Director of Community Assets &amp; Localism before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.</b>	-
-----	---	---



WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN

29TH FEBRUARY 2012 (6 PM)

---

**Present:**

Councillors: M Ahmed, J Aston, J Baker, G W Ballinger, R Bishop, A J Buckley, J-P Campion, S J M Clee, N J Desmond, H E Dyke, P Dyke, N Gale, B T Glass, D R Godwin, J Greener, I Hardiman, P B Harrison, J A Hart, M J Hart, P V Hayward, V Higgs, A T Hingley, J Holden, T Ingham, M B Kelly, H J Martin, D J McCann, C D Nicholls, F M Oborski, T L Onslow, J W Parish, J Phillips, M Price, K H Prosser, C Rogers, M A Salter, A M Sewell, J A Shaw, D R Sheppard, N J Thomas, S J Williams, and G C Yarranton.

**C.69 Prayers**

Prayers were read by Reverend Mark Turner, St Bartholomew's Church, Areley Kings.

**C.70 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence, although it was noted that Councillor Ingham had been delayed.

**C.71 Declaration of Interests**

Councillor Clee declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 11 Community Governance Review, as an employee of Rock Parish Council.

In the absence of Councillor Ingham, Councillor Oborski declared a prejudicial interest on his behalf on agenda item 13 Green Street Area Designation, Character Appraisal and Management Plan.

**C.72 Minutes**

That subject to the following amendment on page 10 of the minutes of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011; the reference should read Northwood rather than Northcote Lane.

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**C.73 Public Participation**

In accordance with the Council's scheme for public participation at meetings of Full Council, the following members of the public addressed the meeting at this point.

Mr Tony Clay addressed the meeting to speak on Agenda item 11. During his address he raised the following points.

- Rock had not been asked to provide their Lengthsman in Ribbesford.
- The services that Rock provided for its parishioners were of no value to Ribbesford residents, for example they do not make use of the bus shelters in Rock or Far Forest.
- If a meeting place was needed Ribbesford residents used those provided by Bewdley Town Council.
- Ribbesford had more in common with Bewdley than Rock which was a short walk for most Ribbesford residents.
- Ribbesford was closely identified with Bewdley and Ribbesford interests lay there.
- An extended parish of Rock would be too large to be effective.
- The merger would not reflect the identities of interests of the two communities equally, and would not create community cohesion.
- It would create a parish that would be too large both geographically and electorally.

Mr James Arbuthnott, Chairman of Stone Parish Council addressed the meeting to speak on agenda item 12. During his address he raised the following points;

- It seemed inherently wrong for Parish Council elections to be held outside the parish area, as there were adequate facilities in the parish.
- The Council was happy to provide ramps for the electorate to access the Parish Rooms. Moreover the steps up to the bus were higher than the steps into the Parish Rooms.
- The bus ran hourly to Chaddesley Corbett and the timing of the bus service meant there was only a very limited time to use the bus, vote and make the return journey.
- The Trustees had agreed for the charge for the polling station to be reduced from £150 to £100.
- The Parish council had won quality status and part of that bid was emphasising a commitment to facilitate parishioners their democratic right to vote and the closure of the polling station had discouraged people, particularly the elderly in the community from voting.

**C.74 Questions**

The Council received a report setting out a range of questions from Councillor J Shaw directed at the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members.

**Question from Councillor Jamie Shaw to the Leader of the Council, Councillor John Campion**

Local Contractors - Noting the proportions of the figure spent so far on the Council's new headquarters which have been won by local companies, under Thomas Vale procurement processes, namely 35% by companies with a 15 mile radius of the project base, and 36% within a 30 mile radius: what measures is the Council able to take to provide similar opportunities within public sector procurement processes?

**Answer from Councillor John Campion:**

Procurement is one of those areas tied by EU colleagues. The new Head

Quarters is an area where we have been able to demonstrate spend locally. We have to ensure the contract contains clauses to encourage apprenticeships as this is how money will benefit local economy. However the short answer is that there is very little we can force through but there is lots we can do as an encouragement.

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Jamie Shaw**

I wonder if the Leader could consider from his perspective and possibly on the grounds of localism, and from my perspective the environment, demanding supplies being as local as possible thereby reducing carbon emissions; and through EU legislation would it not be a good idea if this council initiated this through the LGA processes to make it easier for local firms gain business from local Councils?

**Answer from Councillor John Campion:**

You have raised two relevant points and I'm happy to discuss these with the Director of Community Assets and Localism and as a local resident and local Councillor I want to support the local economy, and to hear any ideas you have. However, the Council's procurement policies are governed by EU rules and regulations and as such the Council cannot give any weighting to the location of suppliers. Moreover, the Council helps local suppliers to bid for Council contracts by partaking in 'meet the buyer' events and supplier seminars. The Council has also standardised the procurement documents across the Worcestershire Districts. The standardising of documents makes it easier for suppliers to bid for multiple contracts across the districts as the documents and processes are the same. The threshold which Council contracts have to be advertised at has recently been lowered from £50k to £10k in a bid to make Council contracts more competitive and available to suppliers. All Council contracts that are between £10k - £170k (provided a framework is not used) are advertised in one of two places, the Council's own website and Worcestershire County Council's portal. All contracts that are advertised on the County's website are automatically advertised on the 'Find it in Worcestershire' website.

**Question 2 from Councillor Jamie Shaw to the Cabinet Member for Place-Shaping, Councillor Julian Phillips**

Following initial compliance by householders with High Hedge judgements, has the Council experienced difficulty in many cases obtaining ongoing observance of the height judged permissible?

**Answer from Councillor Julian Phillips**

There are two ongoing cases according to the Arboricultural Officer.

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Jamie Shaw**

Under s 69 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 the Council is able to serve a Remedial Notice on the owner of a property where there has been a legitimate complaint about the height of a hedge from a neighbour. This Notice sets out what is required to resolve the problem and often specifies a height at which the hedge must be maintained. It is fair to say that once complied with there is an ongoing enforcement requirement to ensure that the hedge doesn't exceed the height in the Notice and this isn't always straightforward. If the owner of the

hedge refuses to reduce its height to that specified in the Notice the Council can pursue action through the Magistrates Court, but as with any such prosecution, the Council has to weigh up the wider benefits of taking such action from a public interest perspective. There are a number of cases currently ongoing in the district where the Council is actively pursuing compliance with Remedial Notices using the Arboricultural Officer and the Planning Enforcement Officers.

**Answer from Councillor Julian Phillips**

The supplementary that Councillor Shaw is undoubtedly referring to is about a property in Redstone Lane, Stourport on Severn. In April 2008 a Remedial Notice was served on the owner of a conifer hedge. In the notice it required the owner to keep the height of his hedge at 3 metres in height. The notice gave the owner 8 months to comply, due to the bird nesting season. As soon as the bird nesting season finished the complainant started to demand the hedge was cut to the required level. After a number of attempts he spoke to Councillor Shaw who contacted the Arboricultural Officer. Eventually the hedge was cut to the 3 metre requirement. The owner of the hedge then moved out of the property and used Severn Estates to rent his property out. Again the hedge was not cut and reached almost 4 metres. This was in 2010. The Arboricultural Officer contacted the tenants and Severn Estates numerous times, but there was some sort of disagreement as to who was responsible. Despite promises on every occasion from Severn Estates, no work was carried out on the hedge. The council then sent a letter to the tenants and Severn Estates. They undertook the required works in March 2011. The tenants then moved out and the owner's sister moved in with her partner. Again complaints have been made that the hedge is not 3 metres. The Arboricultural Officer called in to look at it from the owner's side after Christmas. There were obvious signs that they had undertaken works to the height of the trees. Although it is not 3 metres along its entirety, it's not far off. The tenant said that she would be doing the hedge again at the end of February so that it is at the correct height before the bird nest season. The Arboricultural Officer is planning to write to the tenant within the next few weeks to remind her of her obligations. The hedge blocks light to the complainant's living room and garden. A height of anything below 3.5 is acceptable and shouldn't cause a major issue to light levels. Beyond that height, is too high, but it currently isn't beyond 3.5 metres tall.

**Question 3 from Councillor Jamie Shaw to the Cabinet Member for Place-Shaping, Councillor Julian Phillips**

Community Housing Group – Without reference to the record of individuals, what is the current attendance record of Councillors appointed to serve on the company's board since May 2011?

**Answer from Councillor Julian Phillips**

The overall percentage since May 2011 is 80.67%

There was no supplementary question.

**C.75 Chairman's Communications**

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

following announcements:

The Chairman thanked the Members that had joined him for the dinner for Alderman Mrs Mills. He conveyed to Council how much she had enjoyed the dinner and how well she was. He further thanked Members for supporting his charity dinner at La Brasserie in Kidderminster.

Group Leaders then acknowledged the contribution that the Director of Resources had made to the strategic direction of the Council and all wished him well with his new job with Stratford District Council. A presentation was then made and the departing Director thanked Members for their support.

The Chairman reminded Members the some of their colleagues were standing for re-election. Moreover, Councillor Baker was retiring and would not be standing again for election.

**C.76 Leader's Announcements and Report**

The Leader of the Council made the following announcements:

The Leader was pleased to report since last meeting of Council the priority credit status with Landsbanki had been reinforced and the first dividend coming back to the Council was £930K with confirmation that the Council was expecting 98% of that deposit to be returned. The Leader advised that this was a fantastic result for the Council and complimented the work of the LGA to ensure payments were returned. Members were advised that the total received was just over £4.7m which was just over half of the amount invested. The Leader of the Council reassured Members that he would continue to update Council in this area as it developed.

Members were further advised that the budget included a £1m pot for economic regeneration. Moreover, there was to be a State of the Area Debate on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2012 and a question time event on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2012 at the Town Hall. The Question Time event would involve a panel of experts and members of the public would be able to ask questions. Further, there would be a live Twitter and Facebook feed and it was hoped that this would be an interactive process.

The Leader welcomed Mrs Southall to the Chamber and advised that she would be acting Treasurer and S151 Officer until recruitment to the vacant post was completed. An amusing anecdote about the outgoing Director was shared and the Leader of the Council wished Mr Buckland every success and happiness in his new job.

**C.77 Motions Submitted Under Standing Orders**

No notices of motion were received in accordance with Standing Orders.

**C.78 Urgent Motions Submitted Under Standing Order No. D1 (7)**

No notices of motion were received in accordance with Standing Orders.

Councillor Clee left the meeting at this point and the meeting was chaired by the Vice Chairman, Councillor Prosser.

**C.79 Community Governance Review**

The Council received a report from the Director of Legal and Corporate Services regarding the progress of the Community Governance for Rock and Ribbesford and to agree the draft proposals in readiness for the next consultation stage as detailed in the report to Council.

The Cabinet Member for Place-Shaping outlined the content of the report and explained the next steps that the Council needed to take as part of the Community Governance Review.

Members were reminded of the consultation process that had been undertaken so far and of the responses to the initial consultation. It was recognised that not only was this an emotive subject that challenged local boundaries and identities but that it was inordinately complex and bureaucratic. Mr Clay was thanked by the Council for speaking on this item and his views were welcomed. Members were reminded that Rock Parish did contain a number of villages each with their own sense of identity and community, moreover that Rock Parish Council provided services for Ribbesford, for example a Lengthsman that incurred a cost for residents of Rock Parish.

Members debated in detail the benefits and disadvantages of Ribbesford being included in the Parish of Rock and they recognised the importance of community identity and cohesion, in particular the balance of the historical link of Ribbesford to Bewdley verses the need for the administration of community governance, i.e. a Lengthsman.

Members raised strong concerns regarding the additional slip that had been inserted in the consultation pack, together with the change of stance of the Chairman, in declaring a prejudicial interest as the Clerk for Rock Parish which he not previously stated at the meeting in September 2011 when this item was discussed. Members were advised that the insertion of the slip did not invalidate the validity of the consultation; moreover that it was right the Chairman declared his interest at this stage due to the substance of the proposal compared to the previous discussion which had been to initiate a generic consultation.

Councillor Godwin declared a personal interest at this point in the meeting as a Rock Parish Councillor. He explained to Council that he been contacted by Ribbesford residents regarding issues on Little Lakes Caravan Park.

Members continued to debate the issue in detail and it was concluded that the second stage consultation should commence.

**Decision:**

- 1. The second stage of consultation be undertaken with the proposal to incorporate Ribbesford into the Parish of Rock, and for the parish to be called Rock Parish.**
- 2. The Director of Legal and Corporate Services be given delegated**

**authority to make any minor modifications to the draft proposals as necessary during the course of the consultation.**

19.03 Councillor Clee and Councillor Ingham joined the meeting.

**C.80 Review of Polling Stations**

The Council considered a report from the Chief Executive that asked the Council to consider the responses to the consultation, and decide that the changes to the polling places as set out in the report be made.

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Transformation outlined the content of the report and explained that seven formal responses had been received. Members were further advised that the Scout Hut in Lickhill Road Stourport on Severn had been reinstated as a polling station following representations from Independent Community and Health Concern. Moreover the Territorial Army Centre Kidderminster would not be used, and instead St John's Ambulance Centre Kidderminster would be a polling station.

Members discussed the points raised by Councillor James Arbuthnott of Stone Parish Council and an amendment to reinstate Stone Parish Rooms as a polling station was moved and seconded. Members then debated the amendment and upon a vote the amendment was lost.

Members continued to debate the substantive item and requested that a report was presented to a future meeting of Council on the turnout in the Mitton and Lickhill wards. Concerns were reiterated on the problems with crossing Vale Road, Stourport on Severn and the need to utilise the new Stourport Primary School: however that this should be done without closing the school if possible.

**Decision:**

- 1. The changes to the polling places as set out in paragraph 4.2 be made.**
- 2. A report be presented to a future meeting of Council on the turnout in the Mitton and Lickhill Wards in 2012 as a result of the changes agreed.**

**C.81 Recommendations from Cabinet - Budget and Policy Framework**  
Matters which require a decision by Council.

**Recommendations from the Cabinet meeting 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012**

**Pay Policy Statement.**

Council received a report from the Director of Resources advising Council of the requirement in the Localism Act 2011 for the Council to adopt a pay policy statement.

The Cabinet Member for Resources outlined the content of the report and drew Members' attention to the reward policy for Chief Officers, and the Local

Government (Discretionary Payments)(Injury Allowances) Regulations 2011. (The Council would maintain past practice and in normal circumstances no payments would be made under the 2011 regulations.) Council were advised that no staff were paid as self employed.

**Decision:**

- 1. The pay policy statement in the appendix of the report to the Cabinet be adopted for the financial year 2012-13 and each subsequent financial year (until it is amended by Council).**
- 2. The delegations to the Appointments and Appeals Committee be amended in line with the pay policy statement.**
- 3. The policy statement on the exercise of the Council's powers under the Local Government (Discretionary Payments) (Injury Allowances) Regulations 2011 be approved.**

**Recommendations from the Cabinet Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> February 2012**

19:40 Councillor Ingham left the meeting.

**Green Street Area Designation, Character Appraisal and Management Plan.**

Council received a report from the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services on the response to the public consultation undertaken on proposals to designate Green Street as a Conservation Area and to propose the designation of that Conservation Area.

**Decision:**

- 1. The designation under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, of a new Conservation Area at Green Street in Kidderminster as shown on Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet be agreed.**
- 2. Delegated powers be granted to the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services to determine the final format and presentation of the Character Appraisal and Management Plan.**
- 3. The owners/occupiers of the buildings and structures proposed to be included on the Kidderminster Local List be notified of the Council's intention.**
- 4. The Character Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted.**
- 5. The background and history of the buildings and points of interest within the area collated as part of the report be made available for display in the Carpet Museum and local library.**

**Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision**



**Policy Statement and Investment Policy and Strategy Statement for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.**

Council received a report on the recommendations from the Treasury Management Review Panel of 24<sup>th</sup> January 2012 that were considered by Cabinet on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2012.

**Decision:**

- 1. The restated Prudential Indicators and Limits for the financial years 2012/13 to 2014/15 be approved.**
- 2. The updated Treasury Management and Investment Policy and Strategy Statements for the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013 (the associated Prudential Indicators are included in Appendix 3 and the detailed criteria is included in Section 11 and Appendix 5 of the report to Cabinet) be approved.**
- 3. The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement that sets out the Council's policy on MRP included in Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet be approved.**
- 4. The Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator included in Appendix 3 of the report to Cabinet be approved.**

Council then moved into recess for 10 minutes returning to the Chamber at 19.50.

**C.82 Budget Proposals 2012/2015**

The Leader of the Council presented the administration's proposals for the budget. He thanked the Director of Resources and the Corporate Management Team for their support during the budget process.

A robust debate ensued on the budget proposals, during which Members of each of the political groups made their comments.

The Labour Group presented their amendment to the budget which was discussed at length; however upon a vote the amendment was lost.

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2011/12 ONWARDS**

**Decision:**

- 1.1 APPROVES the updated Base Capital Programme and Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewal Schedule as presented to the Cabinet on 20th December 2011 and further amended to incorporate the Cabinet Proposals identified in Appendix 2 along with the updated Prudential Indicators presented in the separate report on the agenda.**
- 1.2 DELEGATED authority continues to be given to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources, to fund appropriate elements of the Capital Programme by means of Prudential Borrowing.**

- 1.3 **DELEGATES** authority to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Cabinet, to determine the most financially prudent funding method for Capital Projects (Capital Receipts or Direct Revenue Funding) at the end of each Financial Year.
2. **FEES AND CHARGES**
  - 2.1 **RECOMMENDS** fees and charges as detailed in the Financial Strategy as presented to Cabinet on 20th December 2011, along with the amendments attached in Appendix 1.
3. **THREE YEAR BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK 2012/15**
  - 3.1 The contents of the Reports of the Director of Resources on the Three Year Budget and Policy Framework 2012-2015 (pages 1-73 incorporating the Base Budget Variations (pages 21-22) be **ENDORSED** and in doing so **APPROVE** the Revised Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2011/12.
  - 3.2 **APPROVES** that any Final Account savings arising from 2011/2015 over and above the target allowed for in the Council's Finance Strategy, together with surplus Earmarked Reserves, be allocated for the one-off costs of the new Head Quarters project.
  - 3.3 The following General Fund Revenue Budget be **RECOMMENDED** including **CABINET PROPOSALS** (Appendix 2) and **FEES AND CHARGES** (see Financial Strategy pages 32-70) and related amendments (Appendix 1):

**Agenda Item No. 12**

	<b>Revised 2011/12 £</b>	<b>2012/2013 £</b>	<b>2013/2014 £</b>	<b>2014/2015 £</b>
Net Expenditure on Services (per Appendix 1 on Page 12 of the Financial Strategy Book) (*)	14,241,610	12,780,950	12,805,090	13,096,700
<u>Add/(Less)</u> Cabinet Proposals - (Appendix 2)	-	274,250	2,400	(87,080)
Net Expenditure	14,241,610	13,055,200	12,807,490	13,009,620
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	(716,560)	(322,400)	(329,870)	(656,840)
Net Budget Requirement	13,525,050	12,732,800	12,477,620	12,352,780
<u>Less</u> Business Rate Grant, Government Grant and Collection Fund Surplus (*)	6,294,330	5,615,730	5,294,640	4,990,370
Area Based Grant	293,270	109,270	0	0
Council Tax Income	<u>£6,937,450</u>	<u>£7,007,800</u>	<u>£7,182,980</u>	<u>£7,362,410</u>
Wyre Forest District Council Tax Level assuming no change in 2012/13 then a 2.5% increase 2013/14 onwards.	<u>£197.62</u>	<u>£197.62</u>	<u>£202.56</u>	<u>£207.62</u>

(\*) Now confirmed that the Council Tax Freeze Grant is included within Formula Grant for 2012/13 and beyond

<b>Government Grant Analysis*</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>Increase (decrease)</b>	
	£	£	£	%
Revenue Support Grant	1,474,240	105,820	(1,368,42)	(92.8)
Business Rates	4,769,440	5,458,910	689,470	14.4
Collection Fund Surplus	50,650	51,000	350	0.0
Overall Totals	6,294,330	5,615,730	(678,600)	(10.8)

**3.4 Reserves available as part of the Three Year Financial Strategy:**

<b>Reserves Statement</b>	<b>2011/12 £'000</b>	<b>2012/13 £'000</b>	<b>2013/14 £'000</b>	<b>2014/15 £'000</b>
Reserves as at 1 April	2,698	1,981	1,659	1,329
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	(717)	(322)	(330)	(657)
Reserves as at 31 March	1,981	1,659	1,329	672

**C.83 Council Tax 2012/2013**

The Council received a report from the Director of Resources which asked the Council to set the Council Tax for 2012/13.

**Decision: The formal Council Tax Resolution 2012/13 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report to Council, taking into account the information contained within Appendices 2 to 5 of the report to Council be agreed and as detailed below**

1. It be noted that the Council has calculated the Council Tax Base 2012/13:
  - (a) for the whole Council area as **35,461** [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (“the Act”)]; and
  - (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates as in column 5 of the attached Appendix 3.
2. To calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council’s own purposes for 2012/13 (excluding Parish precepts) is **£197.62**.
3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2012/13 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
  - (a) **£61,623,508** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
  - (b) **£54,151,664** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
  - (c) **£7,471,844** being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. [Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act]
  - (d) **£210.71** being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
  - (e) **£464,038** being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached Appendix 3).
  - (f) **£197.62 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (1(a) above),**

calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

4. To note that for the year 2012/13 the County Council, Police Authority and Fire and Rescue Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as shown below.

WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL							
Valuation Bands							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£692.71	£808.16	£923.61	£1039.06	£1269.97	£1500.87	£1731.77	£2078.13

WEST MERCIA POLICE AUTHORITY							
Valuation Bands							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£119.15	£139.00	£158.86	£178.72	£218.44	£258.15	£297.87	£357.44

HEREFORD AND WORCESTER FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY							
Valuation Bands							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£49.10	£57.28	£65.46	£73.64	£90.01	£106.38	£122.74	£147.28

5. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in Appendix 5 as the amounts of Council Tax for 2012/13 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.
6. To determine that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2012/13 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992.

#### C.84 Corporate Governance

Council received a report from the Director of Legal and Corporate Services which asked the Council to agree to the re-formatting of the extant provisions of the constitution as detailed in the report to Council.

##### Decision:

1. That the amendments to the Constitution as detailed in Appendix A of the report to Council be agreed.
2. The Director of Legal and Corporate Services be Authorised to settle any outstanding details relating to the amendments and to make any other minor changes as necessary to the Constitution to reflect needs or circumstances.

#### C.85 Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2012-13

Council received a report from the Chief Executive together with a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to decide the scheme of allowances to be paid to Members for the financial year 2012/2013.

Members were reminded that they had considered in item in May 2011 and that this was a subsequent report of the IRP Panel. The Leader of the Council expressed his concerns with the work of the Panel and the basis on which they recommended the allowances. Moreover a saving of £184k had been made on Members' allowances following the last IRP report.

A vigorous debate ensued on the appropriateness of the level of allowances paid and the necessity to take heed of the recommendations of the Panel. However, some Members also felt that the Panel has not produced a cogent and reasonable report and that the recommendations did not reflect the work carried out by Wyre Forest Members.

**Decision:**

- 1. To have regard the conclusions and recommendations of the IRP in making any amendments to the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2012/13;**
- 2. The scheme of allowances set out in Appendix A of the report to Council for the financial year 2012-13 be maintained.**
- 3. With effect from the implementation of new arrangements under the Localism Act 2011 for handling complaints about the conduct of members, that the penalties that may be imposed for a breach of the code of conduct include full or partial suspension of allowances for a period of up to six months;**
- 4. The Director of Legal and Corporate Services be authorised to amend the Constitution as appropriate to give effect to the Council's decisions.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 21:35

**CHAIRMAN'S FUNCTIONS**

**2011/2012**

**March 2012**

Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup> @ 11.10am	Unveiling of new Touring Coach, Phillips International Travel
Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> @ 6.30pm	State of the Area Debate – Question Time
Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> @ 7.30pm	Classical Music Society, Kidderminster Library
Saturday 10 <sup>th</sup> @ 7.30pm	Wyre Forest Symphony Orchestra
Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> @ 3.00pm	Shropshire Civic Service
Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> @ 6.00pm	State of the Area Debate
Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> @ 7.00pm	Mayor of Kidderminster's Ball, Kidderminster Town Hall
Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Tenbury Mayor's Charity Ball
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> @ 2.30pm	Topping Out Ceremony, New Council Headquarters
Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> @ 4.00pm	Sports Project, Stourport Sports Club
Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> @ 7.00pm	Wyre Forest Young Voices and Primary Chords, Kidderminster Town Hall
Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> @ 7.00pm	House of Commons Civic Heads Dinner Wyre Forest & MP
Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup> @ 10.30am	Citizenship Ceremony, WCC*
Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup> @ 3.30pm	Meeting Kidderminster Investment Properties Ltd
Friday 30 <sup>th</sup>	Lunch Deputy Mayor of Kidderminster & Mrs Craddock
Saturday 31 <sup>st</sup> @ 7.30pm	Kidderminster Choral Society, Kidderminster Town Hall

**April 2012**

Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup> @ 11.30am	Art and Craft Exhibition, Friends of Rock Church
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> @ 10.00	Visit to Rushock Stores – Bewdley Museum
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> @ Noon	Memorial Service to Mrs Betty Yates St Annes Church Bewdley
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> @ 7.00pm	Parish Forum
Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> @ 7.30pm	Kidderminster Male Choir
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> @ 10.20am	Kidderminster Scout and Guide St Georges Day Parade
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> @ 3.00pm	Chairman of Worcestershire County Council Civic Service, St John The Baptist Church, Hagley
Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> @ 6.00pm	A St George's Day Best of British Celebration, Evesham Town Council
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Lunch with Anthony Coombs and Elizabeth Mills
Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup> @ 11am	Kidderminster Harriers Football Club

**MAY 2012**

Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> @ 6.30pm	Wyre Forest Sport Awards, The Mercure Hotel, Bewdley
Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> @ 7.00pm	Annual Meeting of Bewdley Town Council
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> @ 6.00pm	'End of Term' River Cruise, Evesham Town Council
Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> @ 11.45am	Severn Valley Railway visit with HRH The Duke of Gloucester
Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> @ 7.00pm	Annual Mayor Making, Evesham Town Council
Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> @ 10.30am	Official opening of new Specsavers factory
Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> @ 6.00pm	Annual Meeting of Bromsgrove District Council

\*Denotes attendance by the Vice Chairman



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

Electronic Copies of all reports are available on the Internet

	<b>Attendance Percentage for 2011/12</b>
Councillor M Ahmed	73%
Councillor J Aston	83%
Councillor J Baker	100%
Councillor G W Ballinger	76%
Councillor R Bishop	95%
Councillor A J Buckley	65%
Councillor J-P Campion	90%
Councillor S J M Clee	83%
Councillor N J Desmond	91%
Councillor H E Dyke	97%
Councillor P Dyke	88%
Councillor N Gale	76%
Councillor B T Glass	42%
Councillor D Godwin	85%
Councillor J Greener	94%
Councillor I Hardiman	92%
Councillor P B Harrison	96%
Councillor J Hart	96%
Councillor M J Hart	86%
Councillor P V Hayward	72%
Councillor V Higgs	87%
Councillor A T Hingley	83%
Councillor J Holden	80%
Councillor T Ingham	90%
Councillor M B Kelly	77%
Councillor H J Martin	87%
Councillor D McCann	92%
Councillor C D Nicholls	85%
Councillor F M Oborski	94%
Councillor T L Onslow	90%
Councillor J W Parish	87%
Councillor J Phillips	91%
Councillor M Price	100%
Councillor K H Prosser	80%
Councillor C Rogers	81%
Councillor M A Salter	100%
Councillor J A Shaw	93%
Councillor A Sewell	79%

**Agenda Item No. 17**

Councillor D Sheppard	71%
Councillor N J Thomas	81%
Councillor S J Williams	98%
Councillor G C Yarranton	92%

**Cabinet**

**Annual Report 2011/2012**

## **Report from the Leader**

During this municipal year I am confident that the Council and the Administration has made significant progress towards the Council's three main priorities of:

- Securing the economic prosperity of the District
- Delivering together with less
- Improving Community well being

The latter part of the municipal year was spent addressing the Council's number one priority of "Securing the economic prosperity of the District". I, along with four elected member champions, conducted a State of the Area Debate in the earlier part of this year focussing on the local economy. This was the first time that the District Council had supported a State of the Area Debate and I am exceptionally grateful for the support I received, not only from the elected member champions but also from the Council in ensuring that this event was well organised and more importantly provided substance into the Debate on our local economy.

Following the State of the Area Debate, Cabinet has resolved to establish a Cabinet Review Group that will oversee how the £1 million economic regeneration fund will be spent ensuring that it is effective in supporting our local economy.

During the year the Council has also sought to align other resources with supporting our number one priority.

I am also confident that the Administration and Council has made progress with delivering together with less. The Council's project of a new Headquarters is currently underway and will be complete by the end of the Summer this year. This project is not only exciting in organisational terms which will allow people to work together in a way that they were never able to do when over a multitude of sites but will also see £½ million of savings delivered year on year which will help the Council protect frontline services.

The financial constraints imposed on us by Central Government as a consequence of the economic downturn still weigh heavy on the shoulders on the Council.

I was proud during the budget debate earlier this year that all Groups of the Council rallied behind the main courses of action that we need to take and the differences this year, I believe were far smaller. I was very grateful for the Scrutiny process for their consideration of the budget this year which enabled members to have a wide understanding of the sometimes complex financial decisions that we have to make.

The Council still continues on its journey of transformation and the project of Wyre Forest Forward continues to move forward with some pace. The project

is now being overseen by the Council's Group Leaders who now act as the Project Board.

Transformation within Wyre Forest will continue to require us to think of new and ever more innovative ways of driving out value for money from our back office functions to look at how we support our frontline community. This journey can sometimes be difficult but I am confident that we have the process in place that allows all members and our community to fully understand that journey.

This year has also seen the Council take the next step in relation to its Local Development Framework. The Administration oversaw the contentious public consultation on how we support our Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities. The Cabinet authorised public consultation meetings in relation to this issue which saw many hundreds of members of the public attend and contribute. Whilst this process is of course contentious, due to the very nature of the issue, I was pleased with the way the public were able to engage and have input in to how the Council makes policy decisions on this area and I am confident that those decisions reflected the input from our community.

I am confident as we take our Local Development Framework into the final phase of decision making over the summer that we have a good solid policy document that we are able to base our future development on which would support the economic growth that this District so desperately needs.

The Administration has also conducted the next stage of its Leisure Review resolving that it intends to move towards a single leisure facility in the District. This decision has been based on the need to save money across all departments of the Council and as such, leisure cannot be exempt. We are exceptionally grateful for the hard work of Scrutiny in supporting us and getting us to this stage and the Administration will bring back over the summer the next important stage of which site is to be developed.

I would like to place on record my grateful thanks to the Chief Executive, CMT and all of the Officers within the Council for their help and support this year. Every year in Wyre Forest seems to bring new and bigger challenges and I am very proud of the Council working as a team to meet those challenges head on for the communities we serve.

In summary, I believe this municipal year has been a year that the Council has taken its main priorities forward. It has been a year that the Council has grown in maturity and I believe is working together to meet those challenges set by the communities we serve.

**Wyre Forest District Council**  
**Annual Scrutiny Report**  
**2011/2012**

## **Foreword of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The 2011/12 municipal year has been very busy for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Work Programme was varied and extensive for every month without exception.



The Committee has scrutinised a wide range of issues this year including some more controversial than others! The review of the Council's Sports and Leisure Centre Facilities was completed following several in-depth Review Panel Meetings and lengthy consultation with local stakeholders and members of the public.

The public response to the scrutinising of the potential sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople was overwhelming. The Committee held a special meeting to debate the issue and in excess of 400 members of the public attended the meeting to listen to the proceedings.

The Council's Financial Strategy 2011-14 outlined a proposal to review the effectiveness of current grants with a view to reducing the total spend in line with the reduction in Government Grant, the Committee had to deliberate the sensitive issue of reviewing the grants given to Voluntary Bodies.

I have enjoyed chairing the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and have found the work to be most rewarding. I would like to thank the Vice Chairman of the Committee, the Members of the Committee and the officers for the support they have given me during the municipal year.

**Councillor Helen Dyke**

## **Introduction**

### **Scrutiny at Wyre Forest**

For the municipal year 2011/12, the Council changed its approach to the Scrutiny process. The previous two committees were reduced to one and bi-monthly Members Forum's were introduced to present items for noting and to provide updates on the Council's finances and progress on the new head quarters, thus enabling the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to concentrate on scrutinising the varied and extensive work programme items.

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

### **Achievements of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

#### **Housing and Planning Policy**

The Committee reviewed a number of significant policy proposals relating to housing and planning policy including the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the Worcestershire Extra Care Housing Strategy. Following a recommendation from the Committee to Cabinet, the Green Street area of Kidderminster was designated as a Conservation Area by Council in February 2012.

#### **Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework (LDF): Potential Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

A thorough public consultation process was undertaken in relation to the potential sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople. The number of attendees at the public meetings and responses received during the consultation process reflected the mixed feelings of residents, businesses and stakeholders within the District to this emotive issue. Following the scrutiny of the consultation results several of the potential sites were removed from the list, an example of local democracy in action.

#### **Crime and Disorder**

The Committee has responsibility for discharging the Council's Crime and Disorder Scrutiny function.

At the December meeting of the Committee, Members scrutinised the performance of the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership (WFCSP) and received presentations on the Partnership Priorities for 2011/2012 and the Community Safety Delivery as part of the Areas of Highest Need Project, which covers the Horsefair, Walshes and Rifle Range areas of the District.

The Committee found the presentations to be useful particularly the update on the restructure of the WFCSP to enable the effective delivery of the Partnership



Plan; namely the establishment of two theme groups - Safer Communities and Safer Town Centres. A Management Group had also been set up to oversee the progress of the theme groups and manage performance.

## **Review Panels**

Review Panels are in depth investigations into issues conducted by Members outside of the formal Scrutiny Committee setting. Their flexibility allows for a wide range of evidence sources, guests and methods of evidence gathering to be considered.

Examples of review panels which have been undertaken in the past municipal year are:

### **Sports and Leisure Centres Review**

A Review Panel was established to undertake a full appraisal of the options available to the Council for the provision of sports and leisure facilities. The review was set up as the Leisure Centre buildings and the facilities within them are potentially coming towards the end of their useful life. The current leisure management contract ends in March 2013 and the Review Panel had been tasked with considering the options open to the Council for the future provision of leisure facilities. Recommendations were presented to Cabinet in January 2012 and at its meeting in February 2012 the Council decided to proceed with and procure a new Sports and Leisure Centre for the District to be completed by April 2015.

### **Grants to Voluntary Bodies**

In December 2011 a Review Panel was established to produce a grant giving strategy that focussed on the allocation of resources on delivering Council priorities as outlined in its Corporate Plan and to produce a methodology for reducing the grant by 17% by 2015.

As part of the review Members gathered evidence from the existing grant information and application process, and feedback was sought from the organisations currently in receipt of the funding. The Cabinet agreed the recommendations and following formal notification to the organisations concerned, reductions in the grants will come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012.

### **Recommendation Tracking**

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

After recommendations have been made, the Committee have considered feedback from Cabinet regarding their recommendations so that there was a clear means of tracking the outcome of recommendations.

In addition, the Committee looked back at the recommendations made in the previous year, so that they were able to examine the progress made in

implementing the recommendations. This was carried out and there were no concerns raised over outstanding recommendations. The tracking recommendations from this years Committee will be reviewed at the first meeting of the Committee of the new municipal year.

## **Public and Stakeholder Involvement in Scrutiny**

Scrutiny is an important means of involving the community in the Democratic Process. If you have any suggestions or comments for issues affecting your area which you feel Scrutiny could consider, please contact the Democratic Services Team via email: [committee.section@wyreforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:committee.section@wyreforestdc.gov.uk) telephone: 01562 732763, or in writing to Democratic Services, Civic Centre, New Street, Stourport on Severn, DY13 8UJ.

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

## **Terms of Reference - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

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

- (i) Whether the decision should be reconsidered, and if so, what alternative decision should be taken.
  - (ii) Whether the proposed decision should be taken or taken in a different form.
  - (iii) Whether any further action should be taken in the experience of that decision to ensure proper or better implementation of decisions.
  - (iv) Whether any further actions should be taken in the experience of that decision to improve the manner or quality of decision-making for the future.
5. Considers any matters which affect the Council or its administrative area or the inhabitants of that area and makes recommendations to the Council or the Cabinet arising from that consideration.
6. External Partners  

Reviews the performance and effectiveness of the Council's external partner organisations, including the duty to scrutinise the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.
7. Review Panels  

Establishes time limited Review Panels which focus upon specific issues of concern raised by Members through a Scrutiny Proposal Form, consider evidence, and subsequently make recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A protocol for the establishment of Review Panels is attached as Appendix C at section 10 of the Constitution.
8. Review the Forward Plan  

Regularly reviews the Forward Plan with a view to deciding which, if any, forthcoming items require consideration.
9. Sets and agrees an Annual Work Programme and prioritises the work of the Committee.
10. Ensures consideration is given to encouraging public participation and engagement in functions of the Committee.
11. Ensures that the views of any invitees and co-opted Members (where appropriate) are taken into account when conducting investigations.
12. Monitors the implementation of scrutiny recommendations.
13. Reviews and scrutinises relevant public bodies and partners in the District, including the Council's contribution and relationship with them. Where necessary, requesting them to address overview and scrutiny about their activities, performance, particular decisions, initiatives or projects.

**Wyre Forest District Council**  
**Ethics and Standards Committee**  
**Annual Report 2011/2012**

## **Foreword by the Chairman of the Ethics and Standards Committee**

The introduction of the Localism Act and the impact that it has on the current ethics and standards regime is significant. Much of what is to come with the ethics and standards will be local choice however this will still be clearly shaped by the desire of central government to promote transparency within local government decision making. The changes that the new Code will bring will need to be firmly embedded and I hope that they continue to be the backbone of ethical decision making within Wyre Forest.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow committee members for their patience and dedication, in particular at a time when there has been so much to read and digest. I feel that the balance of both elected Members and Independent Members on this committee is of benefit to the council and community offering balanced and objective views to all that comes before us.

Finally, I would like to thank the Monitoring Officer for the support and guidance that she has given the Committee, in particular guiding us through the Localism Act and the new Code of Conduct.

**Reverend J A Cox**  
**Chairman – Ethics and Standards Committee**

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

### **Independent Members**

Reverend J A Cox (Chairman), Mrs C A Noons, Mr T J Hipkiss,  
Mr R Reynolds

### **Town and Parish Members**

Vacancy for Town Council Member, Councillor R Hobson,  
Councillor J Swift

### **Wyre Forest District Council Members**

Cllr G Ballinger, Councillor R Bishop, Councillor H E Dyke  
Councillor D R Godwin, Councillor M J Hart, Councillor M B Kelly,  
Councillor C D Nicholls, Councillor N J Thomas

### **Terms of Reference**

1. Promotes and maintains high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-opted members.
2. Assists the councillors and co-opted members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct.
3. Advises the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct.
4. Monitors the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct.
5. Advises trains or arranges to train Councillors and co-opted members and on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct.
6. Considers complaints against any member relating to alleged breach of the National Code of Local Government Conduct or such local code as shall replace the National Code, to make findings of fact and decisions in respect of the action to be taken, and where necessary to make recommendations to full Council.
7. Advises and brings forward proposals to the Council on a local Code of Conduct, including provisions which properly reflect the mandatory elements of the Model Code to be produced nationally, once such a code is available.
8. Exercises (1) to (8) above in relation to the Parish Councils wholly or mainly within the Wyre Forest District area and the members of those Parish Councils.
9. Recommends approval and adoption of relevant codes, plans and policies.
10. Oversees the Whistle Blowing Policy.
11. Oversees the complaints handling and Ombudsman investigations
12. Keeping the operation of the constitution under review so far as it relates to ethics and standards of behaviour.

### **Activities**

The Ethics and Standards Committee met twice during the 2011/2012 municipal year with our main focus being the Localism Act and the impact that it would have on the Code of Conduct for Members and processes that are used to investigate complaints.

### **Local Determination of Complaints**

During the 2011/2012 municipal year there has been one case that was referred to the Assessment Sub-Committee which was subsequently referred for investigation and finally a hearing by the Hearings Sub-Committee.

The Hearings Sub-Committee found that there had been a breach of the Code of Conduct and the Member concerned was advised accordingly of the need for appropriate behaviour when conducting Council business.

### **Complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman 2011/2012**

The Committee considered a report that outlined the outcome of complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman for the municipal year 2010/2011. The Committee were pleased to learn that only 2 complaints were considered by the Ombudsman and in both cases it was found that there had been no maladministration. This is a positive reflection on the work of the Council to treat its citizens fairly.

### **Training**

A training session was held in May 2011. The training took the form of an interactive session where the Monitoring Officer asked the participants questions and then the group considered the answers that were given to the questions.

A number of parish members attended and the feedback was very positive on this training session.

### **Review of Constitution**

Pursuant to the Terms of Reference of this Committee, the Ethics and Standards Committee will need to make appropriate recommendations to Council to establish, promote and maintain high standards of ethical governance. The Committee will need to implement a robust investigations procedure and adjudicate on and make recommendations to Council on future breaches of the ethical framework .

Following the publication of the Discloseable Pecuniary Interests it will be essential to ensure district and Parish Councillors receive appropriate training on the scope and detail of the new interests and the in the new criminal sanctions.

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**23 MAY 2012**

**HALF-YEARLY REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

- 1 In discussing my most recent annual report to Council in September 2011, Council asked me to report twice a year. This is therefore my first half-yearly report, and I intend to report to Council each year at its AGM and at the Council's meeting in November/December. I will concentrate on an overview of the issues facing the district and the Council; key actions being implemented against the priorities in the corporate plan for 2011-14; and the progress that we have made in transforming the council.

**Overview of the issues facing the district and the Council**

- 2 Following the Wyre Forest Forward, the Council was able to set a balanced budget for the next 3 years, with net revenue expenditure falling from £14.3m in 2011-12 to £13.0m in 2014-15. The budget continues to draw on general reserves and there is uncertainty about future levels of Government grant support. The Council was nevertheless able to invest in its priority of securing the economic prosperity of the district, with £1m capital and revenue in 2012-13 and ongoing revenue support in later years. The "State of the Area debate" was an invigorating process and involved a wide range of partners in helping to shape plans for how this investment can be used to best effect. The Council is investing some of its own resources in creating at least three additional apprenticeships and a university placement in planning.
- 3 The Council has continued with its strong track record of implementing efficiency savings and other cost reductions. This has concentrated recently on reducing the costs of waste collection and revenues and benefits. Where possible, these are achieved by making efficiencies that protect services. New waste collection arrangements were launched on 15 May, with collections being made on 4 days a week instead of 5. Using "systems thinking", we have simplified processes in revenues and benefits, improved service for customers with more casework being dealt with at the point of contact in the hub and reduced costs. Since staffing costs represent a significant proportion of our controllable expenditure, reducing our expenditure often means that we have to reduce staffing levels. So far, staffing reductions have largely been achieved through volunteers and the number of compulsory redundancies has been kept low.
- 4 The peer review team organised by the Local Government Association spent 3 days with us in November 2011 and one day in March. They successfully "held up a mirror" to our transformation programme and we have made a number of changes as a result. The Transformation Board has been replaced by a regular meeting of Group leaders and their deputies with members of the Cabinet and Corporate Management Team – it oversees all aspects of our transformation which has been brought together under the Wyre Forest Forward brand. This provides clarity for staff and councilors and ensures that all the political groups are involved. The introduction of the Members' Forum has provided a stronger mechanism for ensuring that all members are briefed on key issues and that they receive reports back from members sitting on external bodies.



- 5 Following the peer review, we have done a considerable amount of work on clarifying the purposes of the Council in accordance with systems thinking methodology and produced a one page diagram showing how they support the three priorities in the corporate plan. Our attention is now focused on the measures that we will use to monitor performance and progress, and these will form part of the Wyre Forest Forward annual plan which will be brought to the Group leaders' meeting in June.
- 6 The major challenges over the coming year relate to:
  - 6.1 a successful move to the new HQ, Wyre Forest House, in September 2012;
  - 6.2 rolling out the full effect of systems thinking, in how I and other senior managers spend our time and where we focus our efforts. Alongside this, we need to move into other service areas later in 2012 so that we can start to produce savings towards the £500k target that has been agreed;
  - 6.3 identifying other savings/income opportunities so that we can be further assured of a balanced budget by 2015 at the latest (we have enough reserves on current projections to last us till 2016 but we need to know future Government funding plans before we can be more confident);
  - 6.4 changes to the council tax support system and how business rates are retained and distributed – these involve significant policy decisions;
  - 6.5 driving forward the work on economic prosperity including how the £1m fund for 2012-13 can be used to greatest effect;
  - 6.6 undertaking the site acquisition and procurement process for the new leisure centre, which is our next major project after the new HQ.

**Key actions implemented against the priorities set in the corporate plan**

- 7 We have seen further significant progress on major projects that contribute to our priority of “delivering together, with less”. The new cemetery and crematorium was completed by our private sector partner at the end of 2011 and officially dedicated in February. Construction for our new HQ building is well under way, although the completion date is now end July 2012. The project remains within the (reduced) budget of £10m and will save over £500k a year in building and staff running costs. In addition to the shared services successfully implemented during 2011 for economic development and regeneration, watercourses/flooding and building control, the shared emergency planning service for North Worcestershire went live on 1 April. Three of these generally smaller shared services are hosted by Wyre Forest.
- 8 The Council will continue to take steps to sustain local facilities and services but at lower cost to itself, through transferring them to town or parish councils or other community groups. The most significant project is the future of the Civic Hall and Civic Centre in Stourport-on-Severn - the transfer has already been agreed in principle by the Cabinet and implementation now depends on key decisions to be taken shortly by potential tenants, including the county council.

- 9 In terms of “securing the economic prosperity of the district”, in addition to the major financial investment made by the Council, we have seen progress on the following fronts:
- 9.1 being well advanced in completing our local development framework. We are still the only council in Worcestershire or the area of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull local enterprise partnership to have an adopted core strategy. The detailed development plan documents will be coming to Council in June for approval for consultation and we are on course to have them adopted by late 2012/early 2013. Having plans in place gives greater certainty to developers in bringing forward proposals, including for the 4,000 housing units that are required over the period to 2026 to meet identified need in our communities;
  - 9.2 our involvement in the two Local Enterprise Partnerships, for Worcestershire and for Greater Birmingham and Solihull, has borne fruit, with both LEPs providing funding from the Growing Places Fund for the first stage of the Hoobrook link road which will open up the development of the former British Sugar site. We supported the site owners, St Francis Group, in making the successful applications;
  - 9.3 we have consulted on a local development order to simplify the planning process within the area of the South Kidderminster enterprise park. Again this will be coming to Council in June for adoption, prior to formal approval by the Secretary of State.
- 10 These achievements are not attributable solely to me or the directors: it depends on the contribution and commitment of the Council’s staff, to which I would like to pay tribute. It is very pleasing that staff’s work has been recognised by several further awards since September including:
- 10.1 Our garden waste collection crew was runner up in the 2012 Let’s Recycle Awards for Excellence Crew of the Year, having won the award in 2011. The two man crew, consisting of Carl Bilboe and Dave Hemming, has been receiving praise for the high level of service they provide. The same team has also been nominated in the Local Authority Team of the Year category in the National Recycling Awards, with results due on 3 July. This is an outstanding achievement;
  - 10.2 the Council’s waste management team has also been shortlisted for the Efficiency Initiative Award in the National Recycling Awards. The nomination recognises how Steve Brant and his team have fully integrated efficiency into their work;
  - 10.3 SOCITM’s annual assessment of websites ranked Wyre Forest as 4 star and one of the twenty best council web sites in Britain. This follows being ranked first in the social media reputation index for councils for July 2011, run by CouncilMonitor. It praised the way the Council’s website and social media sites are run. Recognition by these two bodies suggests we have a growing strength in this area;

10.4 as part of a consortium of district councils in Worcestershire and Warwickshire, we achieved second place in the 2011 Society of Purchasing Officers' award for Outstanding Achievement in Procurement. Again this builds on an earlier victory in the same category in 2009-10.

### **The progress that we have made in transforming the Council**

- 11 Underpinning all our transformation efforts is the ICT strategy - implementation has continued to progress satisfactorily, and we have a more resilient and cost-effective infrastructure. The main focus recently has been the roll-out of Outlook as the email package for all users and the work to support the move to the new HQ which will take up an increasing amount of time during the summer. Over 80 staff are now working wholly or mainly from home and mobile technologies are being implemented for front-line staff. This has been underpinned by work on back-scanning records so that they are available electronically and reducing our stores of paper documents. The second phase of the administration review has been implemented.
- 12 The Corporate Management Team has continued to operate well as a cohesive and mutually supportive unit. The departure of David Buckland has allowed "new blood" to be introduced and I look forward to the new dynamic that Joanne Wagstaffe will bring to the team when she joins the Council on 11 June. Tracey Southall has ably fulfilled the role of acting Director of Resources since March and I would like to place on record my appreciation of her contribution and commitment in that time. We have continued to invest in forging stronger links with senior managers in WF20, and the initial "secondments" for some managers to CMT meetings have been positive.

### **Conclusion**

- 13 I am very proud to be Wyre Forest's Chief Executive and, whilst we may face many challenges, I know that with the support of Councillors and our staff we can strive to meet them together. The role continues to be exceptionally challenging, interesting, and enjoyable. I have deepened my knowledge of the area, not least as a resident – we move into our house in Kidderminster at the end of this week, having rented a house in Stourport-on-Severn until now. I would like to thank members and others for the support that I have received.
- 14 The Council faces significant challenges over the coming period and I continue to feel confident that it will rise to meet them, demonstrating its ability to provide effective community leadership.

Ian Miller  
May 2012

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> MAY 2012**

**Community Governance Review**

<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:</b>	-
<b>CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY:</b>	Improving Community Well-Being
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Cabinet Member for Place-Shaping
<b>DIRECTOR:</b>	Director of Community Assets and Localism
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Penny Williams penelope.williams@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	Appendix A Minute from Bewdley Town Council meeting of 2 April 2012. Appendix B Summary of Comments Appendix C Ribbesford Petition Appendix D First Stage consultation results

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To consider all representations received in response to the Council's consultation as part of the Community Governance Review (CGR) for the parish of Rock and Ribbesford.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**The Council is asked to consider the responses from the consultation whilst taking into consideration the identity and interests of the local communities in Rock and Ribbesford; and to reach a conclusion for the Community Governance Review.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Just prior to the elections in May 2011, Rock Parish council requested a CGR to consult on merging Ribbesford into the Parish of Rock. Following the receipt of the valid petition and the draft terms of reference by Council in September 2011, consultation was undertaken with the residents of Rock and Ribbesford and other interested parties. A copy of the CGR timetable agreed at Council in September 2011 is detailed below.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Report to Council to approve the Terms of Reference.		28 <sup>th</sup> September 2011
Publication of Terms of Reference.		30 <sup>th</sup> September 2011
Introductory Stage – Invite initial submissions.	3 months	30 <sup>th</sup> September – 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2011
Preparation of draft proposals.	2 months	January – February 2012

Publication of draft proposals. (Following approval by Council)		February 2012
Consultation on draft proposals.	2 months	March 2012 – April 2012
Preparation of Reorganisation Order and approval by Council (if approved).		May 2012
Publication of Reorganisation Order.		June 2012
Effective date of Order.		July 2012
Parish Council elections		May 2016

3.2 The results of the initial consultation phase were presented to Council in February 2012 and at that meeting Council agreed to a second stage of consultation that would run from 1<sup>st</sup> March until 30<sup>th</sup> April 2012. The results of the first stage on consultation are attached as Appendix D. However these results were not divided into individual area's; the information was gathered to illicit if there was sufficient interest to move forward to the second stage of consultation.

3.3. During the second stage of consultation letters were sent to 1289 properties in Rock (1054) and Ribbesford (235) asking the following questions;

Question 1 - Are you in favour of Ribbesford being incorporated into Rock Parish?

Question 2 - Are you in favour of the Parish being called Rock?

The letter also gave the opportunity for people to record if the response was from more than one person in the household. In some cases the forms indicated that the responses were from more than one person in the household and this figure has included in the number of individual responses.

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

4.1 The premise upon which the petition from Rock is based are administrative and financial. Rock Parish Council feels that they provide services for Ribbesford for which they are not recompensed and many of the responses from Rock residents reflect this sentiment. This is in contrast to the comments that have been received from Ribbesford where many of the responses speak of a strong sense of identity for Ribbesford that is separate from Rock and a close sense of affinity to Bewdley both in location and community. It is worth noting that no comments were received from either party that illustrate a joint sense of identity or affinity.

4.2 Of the electorate that reside in Ribbesford, 67.6% of those who responded do not wish to be incorporated into Rock Parish. 42 (33.6%) of the replies were from Ribbesford hamlet residents of which 91.3% of those that responded were against being incorporated into Rock.

4.3 17.9% of Ribbesford residents replied to the consultation and 16.3% of Rock residents. Moreover, an additional petition signed by 38 (10%) Ribbesford Residents was received which opposed the merger. The purpose of the petition was to state that the undersigned did not want to become part of Rock Parish.

4.4 Moreover, the CGR was discussed at a meeting of Bewdley Town Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. The Town Council agreed that the current proposal to incorporate the entirety

of Ribbesford into Rock would **not** be supported. An alternative proposal was suggested whereby Ribbesford comprising the historic hamlet (comprising those properties adjoining and to the south east of Bewdley to Heightington Road) could be brought within the Bewdley boundary and the remainder (comprising in the main the Little Lakes Caravan Park) could be incorporated within Rock would find favour. A copy of Bewdley Town Council minutes is attached as Appendix A.

- 4.5 Ribbesford is split into two main areas of population. Of the 341 residents in Ribbesford 255 reside on Little Lakes Caravan Park with the remaining 125 people residing in the hamlet of Ribbesford. This geographical split has been considered by Bewdley Town Council when they made their recommendations as detailed in Appendix A of the report.
- 4.6 A statistical evaluation of the responses received is detailed below. Question 2 is predicated by the outcome of Question 1. However the legislative criteria for the decision must be based on community cohesion and identity rather than purely statistical information.

**Question 1** Are you in favour of Ribbesford being incorporated into Rock Parish?

Ribbesford Residents (No) *	46 (12.1%) of the Ribbesford population
Ribbesford Residents (Yes)	22 (5.7% of the Ribbesford population **)
Rock Residents (Yes)	306 (14.9% of the Rock population ***)
Rock Residents (No)	27 (1.3%)

\*This figure includes those who have signed the petition but have not returned their forms.

\*\* 380 electors registered in Ribbesford as of 9 May 2012

\*\*\* 2041 electors registered in Rock as of 9 May 2012

17 letters were returned gone away of which 10 were from Ribbesford and 7 from Rock.

2 replies were returned that did not indicate a preference for Question 1.

**Question 2** Are you in favour of the Parish being called Rock?

Of the replies 286 were content with the Parish being called Rock Parish, 7 replied no and 6 suggested alternative names that are noted in Appendix B.

Questionnaires were sent to 2421 properties of which 401 replies were received (16.5%).

- 4.7 Community cohesion is linked to the identities and interests of local communities. The governance of such an area should be both effective and convenient to all within the community. A Parish should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities, each with their own sense of identity and the feeling of the local community and the wishes of the local inhabitants should be primary considerations. One of the factors that can define a neighbourhood is the geography and the makeup of the local community and the sense of identity.

- 4.8 The 2007 Act requires principal councils to have regard to the need to secure community governance that reflects the identity, interests and cohesion of the community. Cohesion is linked to how people perceive how their local community is composed and what it represents. Community cohesion is about local communities where people should feel they have a stake in the local community in which they live and have an opportunity to influence the decisions that affect them. This may include what type of community governance arrangements they want in their local area.
- 4.9 Principal Councils should be able to decline to set up such community governance arrangements where they judge that to do so would not be in the interests of either the local community or surrounding communities and where the effect would be likely to damage community cohesion and the Council will need to reach a balanced judgement in taking into account community governance arrangements in Rock and Ribbesford.
- 4.10 In deciding the recommendations, the Council must have regard to the need to secure community governance that reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient. The 2007 Act provides that it must also take into account any other arrangements (apart from those relating to parishes and their institutions) that have already been made, or that could be made for the purposes of community representation or community engagement.
- 4.11 The recommendations must take into account any representation received and should be supported by evidence which demonstrates that the recommended community governance arrangements would meet the criteria set out in the 2007 Act. Where a principal Council has conducted a review following a petition, it will remain open to the Council to make a recommendation which is different to the recommendation the petitioners wishes the review to make. This will particularly be the case where the recommendation is not in the interest of the wider community, such as where giving effect to it would likely to damage community relations by dividing communities along ethnic, religious or cultural lines.
- 4.12 The aim of the 2007 Act is to open up a wider choice of government to communities' at the most local level. However, the Government feels that there is sufficient flexibility for principal councils not to feel forced to recommend that matters included in the petition be implemented.
- 4.13 Under the 2007 Act, the principal council must both publish its recommendations and ensure that those who may have an interest are informed of them.
- 4.14 Parish Councils have two main roles: community representation and local administration. For both purposes it is desirable that a parish should reflect a distinctive and recognisable community of place, with its sense of identity. The general rules should be that the parish is based on an area that reflects community identity and interest and is viable and an administrative unit of local government. *(CLG Guidance on Community Governance Reviews)*
- 4.15 Section 93 of the 2007 Act requires principal councils to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient. The governance arrangements should reflect and be sufficiently representative of, people

living across the community as a whole, and not just a discrete cross section or small part of it.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 If the result of the CGR is for Ribbesford to merge with Rock parish, the parish precept will be levied on Ribbesford residents. This will be £16.86 in Band D in 2012/2013

**6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 sets out the powers associated with Community Governance Reviews and provides the power for the Council to take decisions regarding matters arising from the review, as proposed in the terms of reference. The Council is required by Section 100(4) to have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State relating to Community Governance Reviews.
- 6.2 In addition to the 2007 Act, legislation relating to parishes will have to be considered during the review as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Government Act 1992.

**7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 In carrying out this review the Council has been cognisant of the need to engage with local communities and the need to address community cohesion.

**8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 Risks will be mitigated by ensuring that the CGR accords with the legislation and guidance given the Electoral Commission.

**9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The Council has been under a duty to conduct the community governance review in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. All residents in the area affected have been given the opportunity to respond to the consultation and to engage in the CGR process.
- 9.2 The impact on community cohesion is a key driver when considering the outcome of a CGR and the Ribbesford residents that replied, have expressed a view that they do not identify with the community in Rock and they are more closely affiliated with Bewdley.
- 9.3 In making its recommendations, the review should consider the information it has received in the form of expressions of local opinion on the matters considered by the review, representations made by local people and other interested persons, and its own knowledge of the local area. In taking this evidence into account and judging the criteria in the 2007 Act against it, a principal Council may reasonably conclude that a recommendation set out in a petition should not be made.



**10. CONSULTEES**

- 10.1 Consultation has been undertaken with all of the residents of Rock and Ribbesford and other interested parties . A summary of the consultation responses are listed in Appendix B of the report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Report to Council 28<sup>th</sup> September 2011.  
11.2 Report to Council 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012  
11.3 CLG Guidance on Community Governance Reviews.

**7410 ROCK & RIBBESFORD GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

The District Council had initiated a Community Governance Review for Rock and Ribbesford and had produced a report for consultation incorporating the responses received from members of the public to the proposal to include Ribbesford (which did not have its own Parish Council) as part of Rock Parish and, if agreed, the name by which it would then be called.

Councillors noted the responses from which it was apparent that Ribbesford was not a unified community as such but one where a majority of residents (largely linked to the Little Lakes caravan park) were geographically close to Rock but where the minority of residents (comprising the historic hamlet) were much closer in historical, social, political and ecclesiastical terms to Bewdley.

**AGREED**

That the current proposal to incorporate the entirety of Ribbesford into Rock would not be supported. However, an alternative whereby Ribbesford comprising the historic hamlet (comprising those properties adjoining and to the south east of the Bewdley to Heightington road) could be brought within the Bewdley boundary and the remainder (comprising in the main the Little Lakes caravan park) could be incorporated within Rock would find favour.

**Responses for Community Governance Review – Rock and Ribbesford:**

**Questions:**

- 1) Are you in favour of Ribbesford being incorporated into Rock Parish?
- 2) Are you in favour of the Parish being called Rock Parish?

**Answers No / No**

- We would benefit in no way at all from being incorporated into Rock. We are a scattered parish with none of the shared amenities such as bus shelters, village green, parish hall etc that more concentrated communities like Rock have, and with which Parish councils concern themselves. We have no wish to pay extra community tax to line Rock's coffers which will bring us little or no return. As for increasing the size of rock parishes' area and presumably the corresponding status of the Councillors and Mr Clee, no thank you – not at our expense.
- I can see no benefit whatsoever in Ribbesford being incorporated into Rock parish, the whole idea seems to be a complete waste of time and money. This consultation is a waste of money. There are no practical benefits for Ribbesford which is quite clearly geographically and historically linked to Bewdley. I can only assume that someone on the Rock parish council is keen to add additional constituents in an effort to increase revenues? Who is it, I wonder trying to twist the system? And to whose benefit? I cannot see any democratic reason why this change should take place if the residents of Ribbesford do not want it. The views of Rock residents are irrelevant. Stop wasting our money.
- Nowhere in the brief info sent to me does it state any advantage to we residents, so why change an ancient parish name?
- Are we to be sent demands for contributions amenities we do not enjoy? Or can we look forward to a bus service, village green, village pond etc? I think not! There is clearly no advantage to this ridiculous scheme. It sounds like some jumped up [inappropriate language omitted] doing a bit of empire building (and does said person live in Ribbesford?) There is a very strong objection in Ribbesford to this proposal.
- I can see no good or justifiable reason for incorporation whatsoever. Clearly, Ribbesford is a community in its own right, and incorporation would fail to meet any of the criteria laid down in the "Scope of the Review" document. A new parish would not
- Request the interests of the community of Ribbesford
- Reflect the identity of our community – it takes 20 minutes to drive from Ribbesford to Rock! Be either effective or convenient – who would wish to undertake a lengthy journey to attend a PC meeting in Rock, - and which parish councillors would undertake regular visits to Ribbesford, especially if expenses are not paid.
- The two communities of Ribbesford and Rock will never form a cohesive unit – if incorporation were to take place then there would always be a great resentment from the residents of Ribbesford.

- A parish which incorporated both Ribbesford and Rock would simply be too big. In terms of geographical size – what value would there be in creating the largest parish in England?
- In terms of population, does Rock really need an additional 390 electors? There would be huge democratic deficit for both communities.
- An incorporated parish would put the boundary of Rock into the river Severn. Rock is a parish which is “up on the forest” – not down in the Severn Valley!
- I cannot believe that any Councillor on WFDC would read the terms of the review and come down in favour of incorporating the two parishes. The two are, quite simply, incompatible.
- I am strongly against the proposal for Ribbesford to become part of / merged with Rock parish.
- Question 2 is an insult to Ribbesford residents. The incorporation of Ribbesford into Rock parish would not reflect the interests nor identities of the two communities. Most Ribbesford residents that I have spoken to identify with Bewdley and not Rock. Ribbesford parish church, St Leonards, is the main church of St Anne’s in Bewdley. The rector is the rector of both churches. It is not connected to Rock parish. The churchyard is the burial ground for Bewdley and Ribbesford . The views of the residents of Ribbesford should be carefully considered by the full council and not ignored as appears to have been the case in the final stage of the consultation.
- Why?  
No good reason for anyone in Ribbesford.  
There must be a majority of people who reside in Ribbesford saying yes, because there is a benefit. No-one has created a sensible, practical case for this change. What we have works.  
No-one in Ribbesford associates with Rock.  
Ribbesford, through the manor and church, has an identity and history that should be preserved. It would disappear under these proposals. Would people of Rock be prepared to merge and be called Ribbesford? I think not.  
This decision must be made based on the views of the people of Ribbesford ONLY, as it their parish that is being affected, not that of Rock.
- I do not understand, I had a leaflet put through my door to ask me to put NO
- We have no association with Rock parish. Do not have reason to drive through Rock to access shops etc. Our link with any parish has always been with Bewdley, as parish boundaries indicate.
- Not really, it is a shame to lose the Heightington name. We are losing our history.
- If anything, Rock should be incorporated into Ribbesford or Rock renamed to Ribbesford Parish, since Ribbesford was named in the Domesday book as a berewick of Kidderminster and Rock had no such entry in the said book.  
Henry de Ribbesford would turn in his grave at such a suggestion.
- Being fairly new to the area, I have no idea where Rock is. Ribbesford is, in the main, a small conservation area, two minutes from Bewdley. I see no advantages belonging to a larger discipline, as regards to servicing.
- Our interests would not be served by people who are too far away to understand local issues. Bigger is not necessarily better and any supposed financial benefits are unlikely to benefit us.

- Keep Ribbesford as its own parish, in order that it will remain ours. I am quite sure that the parish council for Ribbesford will have the interests of its residents at heart, where I feel Rock would not.
- We did not like the way the vote was carried out, it should have been a proper voting station. We are totally against Rock and Ribbesford being merged.
- In your letter you say “from the responses received to date it appears that there is support for Ribbesford being incorporated in Rock parish and for a new parish to be called Rock Parish”. I imagine the “support” is coming from Rock. We are miles away from Rock – why has this question ever arisen? What is there in this for Ribbesford residents? If someone in your department has time, perhaps they would phone me?
- I am particularly happy with the situation as it stands.
- It seems more sensible to me to incorporate Ribbesford into Bewdley. It seems to have no connection with Rock.
- Should be attached to Bewdley
- No thank you
- If it is to be incorporated, totally against it being called Rock Parish we need to retain our identity and if we’re to contribute we need our voice and share of the resources.
- Keep them separate
- If Town councils follow European politics they will have more power and resources. Our vote should be with Bewdley.  
We are a long way from Rock – at least 3 miles  
We are only 1 mile from Bewdley.  
We have never been part of Rock, attended events there or used the church there. The Councillors of Rock would act for Rock residents – not Ribbesford residents. We are near to Bewdley.  
We walk into Bewdley from home, several times a week.  
We are part of Bewdley and are affected by everything that happens in Bewdley. We do not feel the consultation process has considered the above points, or the views of Bewdley Councillors. (signed by 3 residents)
- Ribbesford is primarily linked to Bewdley. This link is geographical, historical, and ecclesiastic. Myself and my household do not support the annexation of Ribbesford by rock. We do not object to paying for any services provided by the Parish council but believe that Bewdley is better suited to provide these services.

**Answered No / Yes**

- Why change this, we have always had Rock Parish?
- I don’t want any change, thank you.
- Frankly, whilst the local authority is spending £10 million on new offices (and what will the final cost be?) plus new leisure centre in times of such financial constraint is indefensible. In face of this, and central Governments financial performances, I find the question of Rock and Ribbesford of no consequence whatsoever. Does anyone really think it is important?
- Ribbesford would be better served as part of Bewdley parish. They are close and use common services. Rock is too far away to be of any use to Ribbesford residents.

- The people of Ribbesford do not want to be in our parish. It's always been Rock parish without them, so leave it be. We do not want them in Rock parish any more than they do.
- I worry that the parish is too large already and the logistics of running a much larger parish would be a problem in the future.  
I agree with the name Rock Parish

**Answered Yes / No**

- It would be nice if it was called Ribbesford Rock Parish, it has more of a ring to it and you would know it was joint. There are 2 of us in this dwelling and we are of the feelings for the new name.
- Don't mind.
- Ribbesford is a very ancient parish and should not disappear. I suggest the name of the new parish should be "Rock and Ribbesford"
- It would be a pity to lose the Ribbesford part of the name – historic church, house and the woods would be marked if the parish were called "Rock with Ribbesford" (for example) as in many other parts of England.
- Would like the name of the parish to be "Rock and Ribbesford Parish"
- I do not believe that Ribbesford should lose its identity so would prefer Rock and Ribbesford or Rock incorporating Ribbesford.

**Answers Yes / Yes**

- I thought Ribbesford was closer to Bewdley. Is there a Bewdley Parish Council?
- This makes sense and also reduces costs.
- As long as the new parish name does not again become part of our address- as it used to cause great confusion, particularly with deliveries.
- It appears that the inhabitants of Ribbesford have been subsidised in terms of Parish taxes for some time. This move to incorporate Ribbesford into Rock Parish on an official basis is long overdue.
- About time Ribbesford residents paid for their parish services – why change the name? Absolutely pointless and more unnecessary expense.
- I think that the Parish should definitely be called Rock Parish so as not to lose our identity.
- Makes sense – cuts out unnecessary duplication – offices.
- When budgets are being slashed so heavily is this a worth while use of the tax payer's money ?!!  
My partner works for the Council and is on an "at risk" register for job loss.  
Do we need a second stage consultation??  
How much has this process cost?  
Even your reply envelope says "do you need to post"?!  
• It makes logical sense (this represents 3 peoples views)
- Fully support.
- I think it would be a good thing for Ribbesford to be incorporated.

- Presumably this will only have a positive impact on the Parish precept i.e. we will either pay the same or less.
- Will Ribbesford church join the 6 other churches in the Diocese?
- Seems logical to all come under one parish, strength in numbers.
- Yes to both questions 1 and 2.
- Providing house bands are not increased.
- I am in favour of items 1 and 2.
- Yes I am in favour of Ribbesford being incorporated into Rock parish. I think the economic of there being separate is not justified.
- Residents in Ribbesford must pay the Council Tax position to Rock parish as I understand they have not been doing so, although Rock parish continued to do other work.
- We hope the name Ribbesford does not disappear certainly if it is to be subsumed into Rock Parish. Otherwise, yes to both.
- Yes – two people in household.
- Not bothered either way.
- Rock Parish Council has always taken Ribbesford “under their wing” so to speak. This was rather unsatisfactory as there no person at Ribbesford especially given the task of telling the other residents if, for instance, a plan affecting their area was on the agenda. Hopefully there will be a Councillor elected to cover Ribbesford who knows Ribbesford well, and is prepared to learn the other areas within rock parish to that when voting takes place they will not vote “blind”.  
Rock is the second biggest parish in England; would the addition of Ribbesford make it the largest?
- I would like to know why and what this will mean to the people who live in Rock Parish?  
We pay very high council tax here; I wonder what we get for our money?  
No street lights,  
No footpaths,  
No litter pick up,  
Street cleaning?  
Would this mean us getting even less for our money?  
If it is that Ribbesford parish were to join us and pool monies and we are still Rock parish, then I see no problem with it.
- I agree with Ribbesford being incorporated into Rock parish. Also in favour of the parish being called Rock parish.
- The parish of Rock currently encompasses the villages of Bliss Gate, Far Forest, Clows Top etc. As they are included in the Parish title, I see no reason why Ribbesford should not be also.
- As long as Ribbesford pays the same as us for the parish services.
- There are two people in the household, and the responses represent both views.
- All parishes should be accountable and pay accordingly. This should be a fair merger and all costing equally represented and allocated.
- It seems to be a sensible solution – all three residents agree.

- Why are so many new signs being erected? Most of them are unnecessary and in these times are surely a waste of money. There is also an aesthetic argument against them. Rock village has been spoilt by so many useless signs.
- I would like to know if it's true about people who live on caravan parks full time, that its going through Parliament that we are allowed to stay in our homes in January and not having to vacate each year?
- I do not feel that I have the necessary information on this matter to make a judgement.  
Why is it deemed to be a good idea?  
Are there any "cons"?  
How will this affect me as a householder?  
Will my council tax change?  
Will the amounts of parish council members enlarge to reflect the increased area?  
As a resident of the present Rock parish, I am of course happy for the name to remain. However, if I was a householder in Ribbesford I might feel that we were losing our identity.
- We have no strong feelings either way and do not feel that we have sufficient knowledge on which way to make an informed decision, so will take the risk and say a "yes".
- I thought Rock parish was Rock with Heightington so why not call it Heightington and Ribbesford?
- Will there be a representative from each area with a position on the Council? We need the most cost effective approach for the area in terms of Council management.
- In my opinion, this is the appropriate way to give proper representation for Ribbesford.
- These votes are for 2 people.
- As a former resident in Ribbesford parish, it is obvious the parish is too small to stand on its own. It is important to have a proper proportionate representation from Ribbesford parish on the new Rock Council.
- Subject to the residents of Ribbesford being in agreement.
- The country has already gone to the dogs. I am coming up to 89 years old and my wife is coming up to 84 years old so it's no good worrying anymore, the savings are a waste of time, little or no interest, - a life not worth living.
- Will the incorporation of Ribbesford in value Rock Parish becoming responsible for any financial liabilities, or alternatively could the move bring some financial advantages.
- It is important that we retain the name of Rock parish, because of its history and being one of the largest parishes in England.
- As long as the merger saves money and no extra charges to Rock parish!
- In favour of both. No further comment necessary.
- Yes, I think it would be a good thing, problems shared is problem halved. Yes to be called Rock parish.
- A very good idea.
- It seems fine, I can't see any problems. You've got all your districts now in a block.
- I would hope for economics of scale in delivery services.



- The above answers are represented by 2 people in the household.
- It would be good if we could keep being one parish. We could keep our individual identities.
- Possibly this incorporation of Ribbesford could make for a stronger parish, with a wider range of views. As for the name of Rock parish, having not been born and bred in this area I would say that the name, as a name is ok.
- It is time residents of Ribbesford had a voice in their affairs and that Rock parish should be paid for any service rendered e.g. planning or lengths man.
- Ribbesford has been classed as part of Rock parish for as long as I can remember. It will be satisfying for it to be official.
- My main concern is if this is going to hike the costs to existing Rock Parish residents. Also, I am aware of a caravan site (travellers) in Ribbesford. Will this boundary change make it easier for them to gain a foothold in this area, given the hostility to the proposed site for them at Clows Top which was thankfully prevented.
- How big will the parish of Rock be once Ribbesford is incorporated? At the moment I think Rock Parish is the second largest in the country. Would the increase in area have any benefits?
- As the reply envelope was addressed to “Register of Electors” were we also supposed to receive an electoral register form?
- We have no objections to either question – just we thought Ribbesford was part of Bewdley.

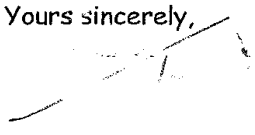
1 Home Farm Cottages  
Ribbesford  
Bewdley  
DY12 2TQ

16 April 2012  
Penny Williams  
Democratic Services Manager  
Wyre Forest District Council  
Civic Centre  
New Street  
Stourport  
DY13 8UJ

Dear Penny,  
Please find enclosed a petition regarding the *Community Governance Review*.  
Would you be kind enough to present it to the Council on our behalf.




Many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

  
Tony and Meg Clay  
Enclosure (1)

PETITION

We, the undersigned, are residents of Ribbesford Civil Parish  
 We wish it to be known that we do not want to become part  
 of Rock Parish.

Name	Address	Signature
✓ E.R. SMART	3 RIBBESFORD HOUSE RIBBESFORD. BENDLEY	
D.D. SMART	" " "	
Diane Mays 	2 Ribbesford House Bendley.	
	2 RIBBESFORD HOUSE BENDLEY	
✓ D. Almes	1 Ribbesford House HOLE BARN, RIBBESFORD	
 W. Kitch	Home Barn Ribbesford	
✓ B.S. Moore Julie Boyley	2 Home Farm Cottages Church View Home Farm Rd Barns Ribbesford	

Petition to be presented to Wyre Forest District Council by A R Clay, resident of Ribbesford, in response to Community Governance Review, March 2012

PETITION

We, the undersigned, are residents of Ribbesford Civil Parish  
 We wish it to be known that we do not want to become part  
 of Rock Parish.

Name	Address	Signature
A. R. CLAY	1 HOME FARM COTTG. RIBBESFORD	
M. CLAY	" "	
A. PAGE	RIBBESFORD BARN RIBBESFORD	
D. JONES - PERCIVAL	ST LEONARDS VIEW RIBBESFORD BEWDLEY.	
S Jones-Percival	St Leonards View Ribbesford, Bewdley	
Sophie Jones	St Leonards View Ribbesford, Bewdley	
Charlotte Jones	St Leonards view, Ribbesford Bewdley.	
Mrs. Stuart Bell	Church Cottage Ribbesford Bewdley	
Dr James Hall		

Petition to be presented to Wyre Forest District Council by A R Clay, resident of Ribbesford, in response to Community Governance Review, March 2012

PETITION

We, the undersigned, are residents of Ribbesford Civil Parish  
 We wish it to be known that we do not want to become part  
 of Rock Parish.

Name	Address	Signature
Isaac Newman	Rowan House, Ribbesford	
Jan Newman	" " Ribbesford	
Ike Newman	" " Ribbesford	
J Griffin	Ribbesford	
J. Dunn	POOLSIDE " "	
Kim Dunn	POOLSIDE	
F. Dunn	POOLSIDE R. Ribbesford.	
V.D. Dunn		
R PUNSHON	OAK BARN, RIBBESFORD	
W. PUNSHON	" " " "	
2. KIRK	" " " "	
3. KIRK	" " " "	

Petition to be presented to Wyre Forest District Council by A R Clay, resident of Ribbesford, in response to Community Governance Review, March 2012

PETITION

We, the undersigned, are residents of Ribbesford Civil Parish  
 We wish it to be known that we do not want to become part  
 of Rock Parish.

Name	Address	Signature
✓ JANET PRINCE	The Stables, Park Farm Ribbestord, Bewdley DY12 2TW	
✓ CLIVE PRINCE	— " —	
PHILL POTTER	Oak Barn, Park Farm Ribbestord, Bewdley DY12 2TW	
HELEN POTTER	— " —	
? NICK CROGG	PARK FARM, RIBBESTORD BOWBUSY DY12 2TW	
✓ LIZ DAVIES.	The Granary Park Farm Bewdley, DY12 2TW	
Trevor Davies	Granary DY12 2TW	
✓ Ben Prince	The Stables DY12 2TW	

Petition to be presented to Wyre Forest District Council by A R Clay, resident of Ribbesford, in response to Community Governance Review, March 2012

Results of the first stage of consultation.

Appendix D  
First Stage Consultation Results

Publication of public notice was followed by a six-week consultation period. 823 replies were submitted.

The two questions that residents were consulted upon were as follows.

**Question 1 – Do you support the setting up of a single Parish Council for Rock and Ribbesford?**

**Question 2 – Do you support the name of Rock and Ribbesford Parish council for a single parish council?**

713 supported the setting up of a single Parish Council.

110 did not support the setting up of a single Parish Council

8 supported the name of Rock and Ribbesford Parish Council

54 did not support the name of Rock and Ribbesford Parish Council