

Open

Council

Agenda

6pm
Wednesday, 27th November 2013
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster



Council

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COUNCIL MEETING

19th November 2013

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. on Wednesday 27th November 2013**, in the Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster.

The Agenda for the meeting is enclosed.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Miller
Chief Executive

Declaration of Interests by Members – interests of members in contracts and other matters

Declarations of Interest are a standard item on every Council and Committee agenda and each Member must provide a full record of their interests in the Public Register.

In addition, alongside the Register of Interest, the Members Code of Conduct (“the Code”) requires the Declaration of Interests at meetings. Members have to decide first whether or not they have a disclosable interest in the matter under discussion.

Please see the Members’ Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of this constitution for full details.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) / Other Disclosable Interest (ODI)

DPI’s and ODI’s are interests defined in the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the District.

If you have a DPI (as defined in the Code) in a matter being considered at a meeting of the Council (as defined in the Code), the Council’s Standing Orders require you to leave the room where the meeting is held, for the duration of any discussion or voting on that matter.

If you have an ODI (as defined in the Code) you will need to consider whether you need to leave the room during the consideration of the matter.

(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.

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

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

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

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

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

Wyre Forest District Council

Council

Wednesday, 27th November 2013

Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster

Part 1

Open to the press and public

Agenda item	Subject	Page Number
1.	Prayers To be read by Pastor Rob Palmer of Franche Evangelical Church, Kidderminster.	
2.	Apologies for Absence	
3.	Declarations of Interests by Members In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's) and / or Other Disclosable Interests (ODI's) in the following agenda items and indicate the action that they will be taking when the item is considered. Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's Constitution for full details.	
4.	Minutes To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 th September 2013.	11
5.	Public Participation In accordance with the Council's scheme for public speaking at meetings of Council, to allow members of the public to present petitions, ask questions, or make statements, details of which have been received by 12 noon on Monday 18 th November 2013. <i>If you wish to speak on an urgent matter that has arisen since the deadline and you could not reasonably have known about it at the time, you should register your interest in speaking no later than 9am on the day of the meeting of Council. In the case of a request to speak on an urgent matter, the Solicitor to the Council will rule on whether or not the matter is urgent and that ruling will be final.</i>	

<p>6.</p>	<p>Questions</p> <p>Twelve questions have been submitted in accordance with Standing Order A5 by Members of the Council.</p> <p><i>In the case of an urgent matter that has arisen since the deadline above, and could not have been reasonably known at that time, it must be delivered in writing to the Solicitor to the Council no later than 9am on the day of Council.</i></p>	<p>20</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Chairman's Communications</p> <p>To note the engagements of the Chairman of the Council since the Council's last meeting.</p>	<p>22</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Leader of the Council Announcements</p> <p>To receive announcements from the Leader of the Council.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Motions Submitted under Standing Orders</p> <p>Two motions have been received in accordance with Standing Orders (Section 7, 4.1).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>From Councillor C Brewer, Independent Community & Health Concern</i> <p><i>"Council resolves to support the introduction of a Financial Transaction Tax to raise £20bn a year from the financial sector. This tax would recognise the banks' responsibility for the financial crisis, which has required significant public expenditure reductions, and should be adopted in preference to further cuts in funding for local government and reductions in services for local people."</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. <i>From Councillor J Shaw, Leader of the Labour Group</i> <p><i>Council</i></p> <p><i>notes with concern the government statistics which show that Worcestershire has a rate of homelessness higher than the national average;</i></p> <p><i>recognises that there has been a significant shortage of accommodation and support for vulnerable young people throughout North Worcestershire, including Wyre Forest;</i></p> <p><i>values the contribution made by, amongst others, West Mercia Homes and St Basils, working in partnership with Local Authorities, to address this problem, such as the provision at Park Street, Kidderminster;</i></p> <p><i>expresses its profound concern about the implications of Worcestershire County Council's proposal to reduce drastically, and narrow the focus of, its Supporting People budget;</i></p> <p><i>accepts the conclusion drawn by St Basils and West Mercia Homes</i></p>	

	<p><i>that, without ongoing support from the Supporting People budget, the nearly-completed £1.6m Bromsgrove Street Kidderminster Foyer project, planned to provide nineteen units of supported accommodation, will not be able to be used for this purpose, because of insufficient revenue funding;</i></p> <p><i>accepts, further, the conclusion that, in total, sixty-three bedspaces across North Worcestershire will be affected;</i></p> <p><i>acknowledges that there is a real danger that the capital grant provided by the Homes and Communities Agency for the Bromsgrove Street project may be withdrawn, because the building cannot be used for its intended purpose, therefore, potentially leaving the other partners, including Wyre Forest District Council, liable for the funding gap,</i></p> <p><i>acknowledges, further, that failure to deliver this project might damage the chances of success of bids for future HCA grants,</i></p> <p><i>believes that neither the Bromsgrove Street Foyer project, nor the wider provision for vulnerable young people in North Worcestershire can be allowed to founder,</i></p> <p><i>urges, therefore, that joint representation with Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils be made to Worcestershire County Council, the relevant Members of Parliament and the Department for Communities and Local Government, seeking a radical revision of Worcestershire's Supporting People budget, so that all existing and currently-planned supported accommodation in North Worcestershire can be funded, in order to meet the needs of vulnerable young adults.</i></p>	
10.	<p>Urgent Motions submitted under Standing Orders</p> <p>To consider motions in the order they have been received which, by reason of special circumstances, should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Standing Orders (Section 7, 4.1 (vii)).</p>	
11.	<p>Submission to Local Government Boundary Commission about warding arrangements for the Council</p> <p>To consider a report from the Chief Executive which sets out the submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission about future warding arrangements for the Council.</p>	23
12.	<p>Corporate Governance</p> <p>To consider a report from the Solicitor to the Council which asks Council to agree the revised political balance.</p>	33

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

18.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.	
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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY,
KIDDERMINSTER**

25TH SEPTEMBER 2013 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: F M Oborski (Chairman), D C H McCann (Vice-Chairman), J Aston, G W Ballinger, R Bishop, C Brewer, J-P Champion, S J M Clee, E Davies, N J Desmond, H E Dyke, P Dyke, 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, T Ingham, N Knowles, C D Nicholls, T L Onslow, J W Parish, J Phillips, M Price, M Rayner, C Rogers, M A Salter, A M Sewell, D R Sheppard, N J Thomas, S J Williams and G C Yarranton.

C.40 Prayers

Prayers were said by Pastor Philip Hearn from Kidderminster Evangelical Church.

C.41 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: N Gale, M B Kelly, H J Martin, B McFarland and J A Shaw.

The Chairman welcomed Craig Bateman to the public gallery, who is a very active member of the Youth Cabinet representing Wyre Forest. Members were informed that he had received a tour of the building and was here to observe how the Council conducted itself.

C.42 Declarations of Interests by Members

Councillor F M Oborski declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item no. 13 – Community Housing Group – future right to buy receipts, as she is a board member of The Community Housing Group but she had a dispensation from the Ethics & Standards Committee.

Councillor M Rayner declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item no. 13 – Community Housing Group – future right to buy receipts, as she is a board member of The Community Housing Group but she had a dispensation from the Ethics & Standards Committee.

Councillor P Dyke declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item no. 13 – Community Housing Group – future right to buy receipts, as he is employed by The Community Housing Group.

Councillor H Dyke declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item no. 13 – Community Housing Group – future right to buy receipts, as her husband is an employee of The Community Housing Group.

Councillor G Yarranton declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item no. 13 – Community Housing Group – future right to buy

receipts, as he is a board member of The Community Housing Group but he had a dispensation from the Ethics & Standards Committee.

Councillor S J Clee declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item no. 13 – Community Housing Group – future right to buy receipts, as he is a board member of The Community Housing Group but he had a dispensation from the Ethics & Standards Committee.

Councillor D Godwin declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item no. 13 – Community Housing Group – future right to buy receipts, as he is a board member of The Community Housing Group but he had a dispensation from the Ethics & Standards Committee.

Councillor J Hart declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item no. 13 – Community Housing Group – future right to buy receipts, as he is a board member of The Community Housing Group but he had a dispensation from the Ethics & Standards Committee.

Councillor J Greener declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item no. 13 – Community Housing Group – future right to buy receipts, as she is a board member of The Community Housing Group. She also declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item no. 17 – Sale of Property and Future Funding Arrangements as she is a personal trustee of the occupiers of the property for disposal.

Councillor P Harrison declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item no. 17 – Sale of Property and Future Funding Arrangements as he is a Council representative of the occupiers of the property for disposal.

Councillor J Phillips declared an Other Pecuniary Interest in agenda item no. 13 – Community Housing Group – future right to buy receipts, as he has a shared ownership in a property owned by The Community Housing Group.

C.43 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 24th July 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C.44 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

C.45 Questions

The Council had received two questions.

Question from Councillor N Knowles to the Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being, Councillor I Hardiman.

The Conservative Council Administration is set upon reducing Council's 42 seats to 33. I see this as a loss of democratic accountability for the public. Would the Cabinet Member agree that an elected Kidderminster Town Council would help restore this deficit of public accountability and would he agree to continue trying to get a Town Council for Kidderminster, as I shall?

Response from Councillor I Hardiman

Yes, the Council is committed to reducing the number of District Council seats to 33. No, I do not see this as a loss of democratic accountability for the public. I am sure the Councillors of the newly defined district wards will adequately adjust to a slightly increased workload similarly to the way that many District Council employees are already doing so. It is appropriate that we Councillors accept some degree of added workload at a time that our Council must reduce costs in order to maintain front line services. I do not believe that there is a deficit of public accountability to be addressed. I shall continue trying to achieve parish status for Kidderminster as is evidenced by my continued membership of the Charter Trustees parishing committee and I can also say that the Chief Executive will, prior to the next full Council, convene a cross party group drawn from Kidderminster Councillors to consider future options.

Supplementary Question from Councillor N Knowles

I would like to hear how the Councillor denies that there will be a loss of democratic accountability when you take out 11 councillors from the district and secondly, I wonder if he might want to offer an opinion to the Council and the public regarding the Conservatives wobble two/three months ago at the Town Hall in Kidderminster when it seemed as if they were back peddling as fast as the vehicle would take them and that they definitely had a major wobble when we couldn't get a renewed commitment from them for the Town's Council. I just wondered what the revelation had been to keep them on the track.

Supplementary Answer from Councillor I Hardiman

All I can respond is that in fact it is not a reduction of 11 councillors, it is 9.

Question from Councillor N Knowles to the Leader of the Council.

At the last Council meeting I asked the Leader if he would invite the Directors of the Icelandic Banks that owe Wyre Forest District Council money, to our next meeting and he said he would. Where are they?

Response from Councillor J-P Campion

Thank you Councillor Knowles and good evening Council, the crux of your question being the end part where are they? I'm sorry to report to Council I am not aware of the location of the directors of the Icelandic Banks.

Supplementary Question from Councillor N Knowles

It's almost funny, if it wasn't so flippant. The real point is that we had a debate about this ad nauseam and I did ask him and he did say yes and he promised to invite or deliver the town clerk on the issue of the elected town council for Kidderminster, well I'm not pursuing that one at the moment but I did definitely ask if he would invite the Icelandic Bank Directors and he said yes, and so I ask again did he approach any of the Icelandic Banks through

the officers of the Council to invite them here to Kidderminster to explain why they have got millions of pounds of our money still and we're taking out loans on the market.

Supplementary Answer from Councillor J-P Campion

Far be it from me to read his initial question back, he sets out of course that he asked me to invite them and then his question is where are they, so I answered the question you asked me which is I don't know where they are. Of course they have been invited but you do it or indeed you did it to start with trying to make political points. The directors of the Icelandic Banks are not going to come to explain themselves to this Council. They are probably not even the same directors that were there when this issue happened back in 2008. This Council has a long process associated with this issue that has been cross party to understand not only what happened but to ensure that it doesn't happen again and there has been a cross party process. Now I know Councillor Martin wasn't a Labour Member at the time but he was still a Member of the opposition and he led that process and there was a report and indeed those details of that report were made public. What Councillor Knowles you're trying to do is associate some blame with the Conservative Administration over this which for me I don't really understand. It was a result of a national issue to do where the country itself had a run on it, and indeed the strength of those organisations we are seeing now in my report a little later that we are getting the vast majority of that money back. If those had been bad investments we wouldn't be getting the vast majority of the money back and what we did see was the subject of a run on a country and we were the victims of that. I would suggest that instead of making cheap political points you contribute to the issue and I think that would be far better for the public that you serve.

C.46 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 of the Council announced that she had attended the Bewdley Concert Band. She reminded Members of the charity quiz evening, where teams should consist of 4 members, and the cost was £10 per team. This would be held at the Civic Hall in Stourport-on-Severn and funds would go towards the Scanner appeal and the foodbank. She reminded Members that if they required any more raffle tickets, these were available. Prizes consisted of a VIP family ticket for the Safari Park, wine, champagne, etc. She also announced that she would be holding her carol service on 20th December 2013 at 6pm at St Marys Church, Kidderminster.

C.47 Leader of the Council Announcements

Council were informed that a proposal from the Fire Authority was to reduce one of the fire engines in Kidderminster and the closure of the Bewdley Fire Station. It was hoped that the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee would hold a special meeting during October 2013 where the Chief Fire Officer would be invited to answer questions.

Members were informed that it was not appropriate to agree anything at Council until after the Fire Authority had held their meeting on 3rd October 2013 when a decision on the consultation would be made.

An update on the Icelandic investments had been circulated to Members prior to the commencement of the meeting.

A Member commented that 72% of the money so far returned in the Icelandic investments was not good enough. The Leader of the Council commented that the Treasury Management Review Panel had been set up to look at the issues with the investments.

C.48 Motions Submitted under Standing Orders

1. A notice of motion was received from Councillor J Shaw, Leader of the Labour Group in accordance with Standing Orders regarding Rewiring Council Services.

Councillor N Knowles moved and Councillor C D Nicholls seconded the motion. Members unanimously agreed that the Local Government Association's Rewiring Public Services campaign should be supported.

Decision: The motion as set out below be agreed:

That England is now widely recognised to be the country with the most centralised system of government in Europe;

that devolution has brought decisions about tax and spending, and the quality of public services, closer to voters in Scotland and Wales, while English voters have not gained comparably greater influence over decision-making that affects their taxes and services;
considers

that the likely scale of change in how public services are funded and provided makes it democratically unsustainable for those changes to be decided within the existing over-centralised model;

that services need to be reformed and integrated across local agencies to enable them to prevent problems, rather than belatedly picking up the fragmented pieces;

that voters should be given back a meaningful say on a wider range of tax and spending decisions, through place-based budgetary arrangements, the abolition of the Barnett formula and the reinstatement of fair financial distribution agreed among English councils, the re-creation of a municipal bond market, and the certainty of multi-year funding settlements for the life of a Parliament;

that central government should enable such enhanced local decision-making by joining up and reducing in size Whitehall departments, and by reducing Ministers' powers to intervene in local decisions;

that such a revised settlement between central and local government should be put beyond capricious future revision by giving formal constitutional protection to local democracy;

and resolves

to support the Local Government Association's Rewiring Public Services campaign, which embodies these objectives;

to ask Wyre Forest's Member of Parliament, Mark Garnier, to support the campaign, and

to make the council's position clear to the Secretary of State

2. A notice of motion was received from Councillor J Shaw, Leader of the Labour Group in accordance with Standing Orders regarding Supermarket Levy

Councillor V Higgs informed Members that she felt that the big supermarkets should pay a levy in order to help the local economy.

Councillor V Higgs moved and Councillor C D Nicholls moved the motion. Members unanimously agreed that the Supermarket Levy should be taken through the scrutiny system.

Decision: The motion as set out be passed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to explore the option:

"Council, as a partner with seventy other local authorities in the "Local Works" Supermarket Levy campaign, resolves to submit the following proposal to the government under the Sustainable Communities Act:

"That the Secretary of State gives Local Authorities the power to introduce a local levy of 8.5% of the rate on large retail outlets in their area with a rateable annual value not less than £500,000 and requires that the revenue from this levy be retained by each Local Authority, in order to be used to improve local communities in its area, by promoting local economic activity and local services and facilities, in so doing contributing to community wellbeing and protection of the environment."

Council notes that, under the terms of the Sustainable Communities Act, evidence about the impact of supermarkets on other retail outlets locally, and the opinions of interested local persons, have to be presented in the submission to government."

C.49 Urgent Motions Submitted Under Standing Order No. D1 (7)

There were no urgent motions.

C.50 Corporate Governance Report

A report was received from the Solicitor to the Council which asked Council to agree Corporate Governance updates and appropriate changes to the Council's Constitution.

The Leader of the Council asked for nominations to be sent to him for the representative for the joint scrutiny committee for the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP Supervisory Board.

Officers were thanked for their input into the revised Protocol for Member/Officer Relations.

Decision:

- 1. The Protocol for Member/Officer Relations attached at Appendix 1 of the report to Council be adopted and incorporated into the Council's Constitution;**
- 2. A joint Scrutiny Committee to oversee the decisions of the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP Supervisory Board that provides for at least one member representation from Wyre Forest be established.**
- 3. The Solicitor to the Council be authorised to agree and enter into all necessary legal documents to effect the above decisions and update the Council Constitution accordingly.**

C.51 Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013

A report was received from the Director of Worcestershire Regulatory Services on behalf Wyre Forest District Council on the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 which comes into force from 1st October 2013.

Members reported that the briefing held had been interesting and perceived that the whole industry needed to be tightened up. Members were concerned that the enforcement of the scrap metal dealers would be difficult to enforce. They also felt that the fee was too low but were informed that this would be reviewed in six months' time.

Decision:

- 1. Under section 5 of the Constitution in part 8 after the words "the Gambling Act 2005 that the words "applications made under paragraph 2 or 3 of Schedule 1 of the Act for the grant or variation of a licence where there is doubt as to the suitability of the applicant or to revoke or vary a licence under section 4**

of the Act;” be added.

2. **The fees to be charged under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 are set as shown in the table at Appendix 3 of the report to Council.**

C.52 Policy and Budget Framework

Matters which require a Decision by Council.

Recommendations from Cabinet 17th September 2013

- a. **Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Backward Look 2012/13**

Decision:

1. **The actual 2012/13 prudential and treasury indicators in this report to Cabinet be approved.**
2. **The annual treasury management report for 2012/13 be noted.**

- b. **Community Housing Group – future right to buy receipts**

Councillor C Nicholls moved an additional comment to be added to the recommendations asking for the District Council receipts to be ringfenced for housing purposes to include new build and refurbishment of units of accommodation.

The Leader of the Council commented that the right to buy monies were used in lots of different ways so the additional recommendation went too far and it was the wrong thing to do to reallocate monies.

Upon a vote the amendment was lost.

Decision:

1. **Subject to clarification from the Secretary of State regarding a variation to the original transfer deed, preserved right to buy receipts in the period from 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2019 be shared equally between the Community Housing Group and Wyre Forest District Council.**
2. **The receipts retained by CHG will be invested in affordable housing in Wyre Forest, with the mix of affordable housing units concerned being agreed with WFDC.**

C.53 Elections and Preparing for Individual Electoral Registration

Council received a report from the Chief Executive on the May, June and August 2013 elections, and the preparations towards Individual Electoral

Registration.

Councillor V Higgs pointed out that polling station numbers 36 and 39 were not in Mitton. This was noted and would be followed up.

Members commented that the turnout figures across the district were very low but did not know the reasons why this was. It could be that engagement was not happening with the public individually or the Council could do more.

Councillor G W Ballinger stated that he thought that the Council Chamber used for the two by-elections was unsatisfactory and people could not see everything that was going on.

In response to a question, the Chief Executive advised that the costs for Individual Electoral Registration was not known at this stage, but Members would be advised as soon as they were available.

The Leader of the Council responded that he did not have the power to decide on cuts to polling stations. The number of polling places was decided by the Council.

Decision: The report on the Worcestershire County Council Elections held in May 2013, the By-Elections in June and August 2013, and preparations towards Individual Electoral Registration be noted.

C.54 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Decision: Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of “exempt Information” as defined in paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Councillor J Greener left the meeting at this point, (7.19pm).

C.55 Sale of Property and Future Funding Arrangements

Council received a report from the Solicitor to the Council on the disposal of a property in Kidderminster.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the Council had written to the occupiers of the property inviting them to discuss the sale.

Decision: Delegated authority be granted to the Solicitor to the Council, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer, authority to dispose of a property in Kidderminster.

The meeting ended at 7.25 p.m.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING
27TH NOVEMBER 2013
QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL

1. Question from Councillor G W Ballinger to the Leader of the Council

Which 25 local businesses are specifically benefitting from the Council initiative “to help new businesses to set up in empty premises”?

2. Question from Councillor G W Ballinger to the Leader of the Council

Has the Council Cabinet recently considered the operation of the current Committee structure?

3. Question from Councillor N J Thomas to the Leader of the Council

By cutting the number of Councillors from 42 to 33 will this reintroduce democracy into our Council or will it disappear out of sight?

4. Question from Councillor N J Thomas to the Leader of the Council

Would it not be appropriate in these times of austerity to consider suitable partners for the leisure centre development?

5. Question from Councillor E Davies to the Leader of the Council

Will the Leader please inform Council on the use of external consultancies in the financial year 2012/13 and in the current financial year? Please include the number of such contracts, on which subjects and the cost to the Council of these external contracts.

6. Question from Councillor C Nicholls to the Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being, Councillor I Hardiman

With reference to the identification of Silverwoods as the site for the new leisure centre, to what extent were the council’s Planning Officers consulted?

7. Question from Councillor M Kelly to the Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being, Councillor I Hardiman

Where on the site, and on land zoned for which purpose, is it proposed that the new leisure centre be located?

8. Question from Councillor H Martin to the Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being, Councillor I Hardiman

Was the case for funding a road linking the A451 with the A449 through this site based on the justification that the land was zoned for industrial use?

9. Question from Councillor A Sewell to the Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being, Councillor I Hardiman

Is the extent of Sport England's "additionality" to the original plans fixed; i.e., there must be the extra two courts and the climbing wall, or their equivalent; or are the added facilities dependent on the size of the grant?

10. Question from Councillor B McFarland to Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being, Councillor I Hardiman

Is the proportion of the grant to be spent on "additionality" fixed, or subject to negotiation?

11. Question from Councillor N Knowles to Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being, Councillor I Hardiman

Were there alternatives to the "additionality option" of two extra courts and a climbing wall presented to the Cabinet for discussion at any point before, or at its meeting on, 22nd Oct?

12. Question from Councillor V Higgs to Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being, Councillor I Hardiman

Did Sport England require explicitly the closure of Stourport Sports Centre as a condition of any size of grant received from it?

CHAIRMAN'S FUNCTIONS

2013/2014

October

- 2nd Meeting with Worcestershire Ambassadors
- 5th Shrewsbury Mayor's Autumn Ball
- 9th No Barriers Awards
- 10th Bewdley Mayor's Charity Bingo Night
- 13th Pershore Civic Service
- 16th Members and Officers – Opportunity to Meet up
- 17th "Knocking Doors" Play at Bewdley Festival Fringe
- 18th WFDC Chairman's Charity Quiz
- 22nd Citizenship Ceremony
- 23rd Wyre Forest Sports Awards
- 24th Mayor of Worcester Charity Pudding Evening
- 25th Wychavon Gala Dinner
- 27th Hereford Mayor's Charity Cocktail Evening

November

- 3rd Annual Service of Enrolment – Boys Brigade
- 10th Remembrance Parade
- 11th Award of Tenancy Training Certificates
- 16th Kidderminster Christmas Lights Switch on
- 16th Bewdley Quiz Night
- 17th 19th RoadPeace Service
- 18th Bewdley Mayors Pre Christmas Charity Celebration
- 19th Army Reserve Centre Open Evening
- 20th University of Worcester Award Ceremony
- 22nd King Charles I School Founders Day Service
- 22nd Mayor of Kidderminster Charity Supper

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**COUNCIL**
27TH NOVEMBER 2013**Submission to Local Government Boundary Commission about warding arrangements for the Council**

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:	-
CORPORATE PLAN AIM:	Delivering together, with less
CABINET MEMBER:	Leader of the Council
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Chief Executive
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ian Miller, Ext. 2700 ian.miller@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix A : draft submission to LGBC

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission about future warding arrangements for the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **Council is RECOMMENDED to APPROVE the submission about warding arrangements of the Council in Appendix A.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following the Council's resolution of 18th May 2011, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England commenced its review in April 2013. Council approved a submission on 15th May 2013 that proposed a council size of 33 members and, following consultation, the Commission confirmed 33 members as its proposal in September. The review will be completed by the autumn of 2014 and implemented through all-out elections in May 2015. The timetable is set out in "next steps" in section 4 of this report.
- 3.2 The Commission has invited submission of proposals for the new wards to be used. It must, by law, take into account several key factors when taking decisions on an electoral review.

The need to secure equality of representation across the local authority area.

The need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities.

The need to secure effective and convenient local government.

The need to ensure that the electoral arrangements of a local authority reflect its electoral cycle.

- 3.3 These are known as the statutory criteria. As the Commission takes decisions on the most appropriate electoral arrangements, it will seek to achieve a balance between the criteria.
- 3.4 The Commission will base its proposals and decisions on the estimate of electorate in 2019 that Council noted and submitted in May. The estimated electorate is 81,908. Population figures as recorded in the census are irrelevant. The Commission seeks arrangements where the number of electors per councillor is the same (electoral equality) but allows variance of up to 10% in either direction.

Table 1

Electorate (2019)	81908	Councillors	33
Electors per councillor	2482		
	Variance 10% above	Equality	Variance 10% below
Three member ward	8191	7446	6702
Two member ward	5461	4964	4468
One member ward	2730	2482	2234

- 3.5 The rules that the Commission must apply are:
- **Delivering electoral equality for local voters** – this means ensuring that each local councillor represents roughly the same number of people so that the value of your vote is the same regardless of where you live in the local authority area.
 - **Reflecting the interests and identities of local communities** – this means establishing electoral arrangements which, as far as possible, maintain local ties and where boundaries are easily identifiable.
 - **Promoting effective and convenient local government** – this means ensuring that the new wards or electoral divisions can be represented effectively by their elected representative(s) and that the new electoral arrangements as a whole allow the local authority to conduct its business effectively. In addition, the Commission must also ensure that the pattern of wards reflects the electoral cycle of the council.
- 3.6 The Commission is able to make recommendations for changes to parish electoral arrangements (i.e. the number of councillors for the parish and for each parish ward, and the number, names and boundaries of parish wards) as part of an electoral review. However, this is restricted to parish councils that are affected by the Commission’s recommendations for changes to district wards. The Commission cannot make recommendations to create, abolish or amend the external boundaries of parishes. Thus any district wards that split parishes will not automatically result in new parish councils being created. In the Commission’s words: “The importance of parishes should not be underestimated given that, where they exist, we will seek to use them as the building blocks for wards.”

4. KEY ISSUES

4.1 The options for future warding arrangements have been considered by a cross-party working group which met in August and October. The submission in Appendix A reflects the consensus view that emerged for each area, which can be summarised as follows:

Stourport-on-Severn 7 members
 Bewdley, Upper Arley and Rock 5 members
 Wolverley, Cookley, Blakedown and Chaddesley Corbett 3 members
 Kidderminster 18 members

4.2 The submission describes the proposed boundaries for each ward; the number of councillors that it would have (generally three, because the council elects by thirds, but three wards would have two members in order to avoid crossing parish/town boundaries or other anomalies); and the suggested name for each ward.

4.3 The Commission has set out the following timetable for the remaining steps of the review:

24 th September – 16 th December 2013	Consultation and submission of information and proposals for ward boundaries
18 th March 2014	Commission’s draft recommendations on warding arrangements published
18 th March – 9 th June 2014	Public consultation on draft recommendations
23 rd September 2014	Completion of review – Commission publishes final recommendations which will take effect, subject to Parliamentary procedure
7 th May 2015	All-out elections for Wyre Forest District Council

4.4 The Council will have the opportunity to comment next year on the Commission’s proposals for warding patterns as part of the public consultation process: they would be the subject of reports to full Council at the appropriate times. Ultimately, however, the decisions on what recommendations to make and implement are for the Commission, subject only to the ability of Parliament to overturn them.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications that arise directly from approving the submission to the Commission. The costs of responding to the Commission’s consultations during the electoral review will be met from existing budgets.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The relevant provisions governing the review are in Part 3 of, and Schedule 2 to, the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The proposals in this report have been screened for their impact on the various equality strands. No adverse impact has been identified and a full impact assessment is not therefore required.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The Commission is responsible for managing risks related to the completion of the review. For its part, the Council continues to put in place timely consideration of its input to the review.

9. CONSULTEES

- 9.1 On this report: the Leader of the Council and Corporate Management Team.
- 9.2 On the submission at Appendix A: the cross-party working group and Group Leaders.
- 9.3 The lead Commissioner for the review, Dr Peter Knight, held briefing meetings with councillors, group leaders, parish councils and relevant officers on 8th May 2013.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

(These papers are available electronically)

- 10.1 The LGBC's guidance on new wards can be seen at this link:
http://www.lgbce.org.uk/_documents/lgbce/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidance/proposing-new-wards-guidance.pdf

The full technical guidance is at this link:

http://www.lgbce.org.uk/_documents/lgbce/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidance/electoral-review-guidance-august-2012.pdf

- 10.2 Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/20/part/3>
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/20/schedule/2>

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NEW ELECTORAL WARDS – SUBMISSION TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT
BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND**

November 2013

Introduction

- 1 Wyre Forest District Council welcomes the opportunity to submit its proposals for the boundaries and names of wards to be used for the election of 33 councillors in May 2015.
- 2 In summary, the Council proposes that there should be 12 wards, made up of nine three member wards and three wards with two members. The Council does not believe that it is possible to achieve three member wards in all areas, as this would involve crossing parish/town boundaries. The Council's proposals would provide the following pattern of representation:

Stourport-on-Severn 7 members

Bewdley, Upper Arley and Rock 5 members

Wolverley, Cookley, Blakedown and Chaddesley Corbett 3 members

Kidderminster 18 members
- 3 The Council has developed its proposals through a cross-party working group. It has not been possible to achieve unanimous views on every area and the Council's submission therefore reflects the consensus that has emerged in each of the four geographic areas mentioned above.
4. The proposals reflect the interests and identities of local communities, aligning the wards with identifiable communities. They build on existing polling districts wherever possible in order to minimise confusion and disruption for voters, and do not involve any proposals to split a parish. Key transport links and community facilities are taken into account. Significant geographical features are respected wherever possible, and some minor anomalies in existing ward boundaries are resolved by the proposals. Where possible, the proposals for ward boundaries seek to provide better alignment with Worcestershire County Council electoral divisions. All the proposals lie within the Commission's acceptable range for electoral equality.
- 5 The proposals promote effective and convenient local government, reflecting the electoral cycle as far as possible. All wards would have two or three members, allowing some sharing of workload. With the exception of the three proposed wards with two members, every ward would have three elections in

each cycle of four years. Proposals for wards with two members have been included in order to meet the guiding principle of delivering equality for voters and that the ward boundaries do not split parishes or towns.

- 6 The detailed suggestions for the boundaries and names of wards, and the rationale for them, are set out in the remainder of this submission.

Stourport-on-Severn

- 7 The choice lies between either two 3 member wards and a single member ward or one 3 member ward and two 2 member wards. The Council’s proposals recognise that the River Severn marks a major boundary through the town, defining communities, even though both banks are joined by a major road and pedestrian bridge. The proposal is to retain Areley Kings as a two member ward as this respects the river boundary and the defined communities in Areley Kings, which are served by a primary school and a number of faith and community facilities. It follows that the remainder of the town should be covered by a three member ward and a two member ward. This will involve merging polling districts in Lickhill and Mitton to produce two new wards. The Council’s preferred option largely follows the main north-south axis of Minster Road and the canal as the boundary line and ensures that all the areas around Lickhill Park are in the same ward.

Proposed new ward	Current polling districts	Estimated electorate, 2019 and variance from electoral equality
Areley Kings Two member ward	AK-A, AK-B, AK-C	4786, -3.6%
Lickhill Three member ward	LI-A, LI-B, LI-D, MI-D	7587, +1.9%
Mitton Two member ward	LI-C, MI-A, MI-B, MI-C	5087, +2.5%

Bewdley, Upper Arley and Rock

- 8 Any consideration of Bewdley is bound to look at the situation of Rock as that parish is adjacent only to the present Bewdley and Arley Ward. Rock falls outside the variance permitted for single member wards. The Council believes that the only workable option in this area sees Rock added to Bewdley town and the parish of Ribbesford to produce a three member ward. With the exception of Upper Arley, the proposed **Bewdley and Rock** ward covers the same area as the county council division for Bewdley.

- 9 This would provide a two member ward for the remaining area. Wribbenhall has two community Centres, one associated with the Church and another on the Queensway housing estate. Upper Arley centres on the village itself with outlying hamlets in Shatterford and in Pound Green, as well as the Severn Valley Railway station to the south of the village. Upper Arley parish sits on both banks of the River Severn with the only physical link between Upper Arley (BE-D) and Pound Green (BE-E) being provided by a footbridge. While the River Severn is used as a boundary between wards in Stourport and Bewdley, the Council has paid regard to the Commission’s preference not to split parish council areas. The proposal therefore is for the whole of Upper Arley parish to be included in a ward with Wribbenhall and Kidderminster Foreign parish.

Proposed new ward	Current polling districts	Estimated electorate, 2019 and variance from electoral equality
Bewdley and Rock Three member ward	BE-A, BE-B, BE-C, RO-A, RO-B, RO-C	6947, -6.7%
Wribbenhall and Upper Arley Two member ward	WR-A, WR-B, WR-C, WR-D, BE-D, BE-E, BE-F	4758, -4.1%

Wolverley, Cookley, Blakedown and Chaddesley Corbett

- 10 The existing wards in this area are too small to justify retention of the current pattern. There has to be change. Exhaustive consideration has been given to various alternatives but they would involve either wards that fall outside the acceptable range for electoral equality or wards that cross the boundary with Kidderminster and attach rural areas to adjacent parts of the town. While Kidderminster is not presently parished, the Council believes that the latter approach would be inappropriate. The proposal recognises the common interest that exists between the villages, hamlets and rural areas that lie to the north and east of Kidderminster. Each has its own community and faith facilities which provide a community focus.
- 11 The proposal therefore is for a three member ward covering these 6 rural parishes of Wolverley and Cookley, Churchill and Blakedown, Stone, Broome, Rushock, and Chaddesley Corbett. This has historical resonance, being the area covered by the Kidderminster Rural District Council prior to 1974. The proposed ward is well served with main roads, with the A449 running towards Wolverhampton in the north, the A456 north east towards Birmingham and the A448 running east towards Bromsgrove. The railway line runs through the

ward, with a station at Blakedown, but it has several vehicular and pedestrian crossing points.

Proposed new ward	Current polling districts	Estimated electorate, 2019 and variance from electoral equality
Wyre Forest Rural Three member ward	WO-A, CO-A, BL-A to BL-H	7209, -3.2%

Kidderminster

- 12 The Council's proposals for Kidderminster start by building on the **Broadwaters** ward. While the present ward would fall within the variance for a 3 member ward, it would have 7032 electors, a variance of -5.6%. The proposal is to add most of GR-A1 polling district to this ward, including bringing the whole of Hurcott village into the same ward. The proposal sees the continuation of the southern boundary of the ward eastwards from St George's Church along the Birmingham Road A456. In the south-eastern corner of the ward, the boundary would be drawn to the east of Cairndhu Drive.
- 13 It is recognised that the Birmingham Road has a dual carriageway section that divides GR-A1 from GR-A2. The railway line to the north of Offmore and Comberton ward also presents a significant physical division. There are many cases where wards already cross such physical divisions in Kidderminster and that is likely to continue to be so. Against this backdrop, it is appropriate to merge the remainder of GR-A with neighbouring polling districts in Offmore and Comberton. Residents in GR-A2 to the south of Birmingham Road tend to look towards the Offmore district shopping centre; and it is also the case that families on both sides of Birmingham Road in GR-A are served by the Offmore Primary School.
- 14 A reordering of wards in the eastern and central parts of Kidderminster is necessary. It is best achieved in the Council's view by linking remaining parts of Greenhill ward (apart from GR-B and GR-E) with the bulk of the present Offmore and Comberton ward to form a new **Offmore and Comberton** Ward. This would be centred on the communities of the Offmore and Comberton housing estates. Both estates have distinct community and faith centres. The proposal also uses the A448 Comberton Hill/Comberton Road as a natural boundary to extend the ward towards the Town Centre Ring road, which provides a further natural boundary. The proposed ward uses the A448 would as the boundary for its entire length, and part of OF-C to the north east of the road would therefore fall within the Offmore and Comberton ward.

- 15 GR-E and the bulk of the OF-C polling districts would be added to **Aggborough and Spennells**, although a new western boundary to the ward would follow the Worcester Road and the Bromsgrove Road would be used as the boundary between this ward and Offmore and Comberton. The proposed ward encompasses the clearly identified community around the housing estate of Spennells, together with the Aggborough area encompassing the whole of Hoo Road and adjacent estates. The proposals use the A449 Worcester Road as a clearly defined boundary to divide the AG-A polling district, with roads to the east of the A449 in AG-A to be included in the ward. The A449 is a busy main road, with few clearly defined crossing points.

- 16 Finally, a new **Oldington and Central Ward** would be created taking in the present Oldington and Foley Park, parts of Sutton Park ward, the whole of the town centre (GR-B and a small part of HA-A) and AG-A to the west of Worcester Road. While this would be a large ward in terms of geography within the town, it covers much of the same area as the St Marys electoral division of Worcestershire County Council. It also has the advantage of bringing together in one ward the main commercial and industrial areas of the town along the Stourport and Worcester Roads as well as the town centre. The ward will be strongly linked together by the Hoobrook link road, the first phase of which has been built. The second phase is expected to be completed by 2016: it will link A451 Stourport Road and A449 Worcester Road. The proposed ward has a wealth of community facilities within it, and with the completion of the new road will be very well connected.

- 17 In the western part of Kidderminster, there would be two new wards to replace the remainder of Sutton Park, Habberley and Blakebrook and Franche wards. The proposal would bring all of the roads on both sides of Bewdley Hill within the **Sutton Park and Habberley South** ward. This shares the same boundaries as the St Johns County Council division, in order to avoid any confusion for voters. The proposed ward has Sutton Park Primary School at its heart, with community and faith facilities on Greatfield Road, Lister Street and Sutton Park Road.

- 18 The proposed **Franche and Habberley North** ward is coterminous with the County Council electoral division of St Barnabas. It contains the communities of Franche, Ferndale, Marlpool Gardens and Habberley, each of which has its own community, faith and education centres. The proposal uses Baxter College secondary school as the natural boundary to the south, the outer boundary of Kidderminster to the north and west, and the geographic boundary of Puxton Marsh in the east.

- 19 As noted above, the Council's proposals address two minor anomalies in the boundaries of present polling districts/wards:
- (a) bring the whole of Hurcott village into Broadwaters ward, using the east-west footpath that runs to the south of the village as the boundary. At present, this hamlet is split between Broadwaters and Greenhill. The proposal affects approximately 20 electors;
 - (b) bring the Weavers Wharf development and the site occupied by the Matalan store (currently part of HA-A2) into the Oldington and Central ward. This area has no electors living in it at present. The proposal ensures that all the town centre falls within one ward.

Proposed new ward	Current polling districts	Estimated electorate, 2019 and variance from electoral equality
Broadwaters Three member ward	BR-A, BR-B, BR-C, BR-D, eastern part of GR-A1 including all of Hurcott village (boundary to be drawn east of Cairndhu Drive)	8175, +9.8%
Offmore and Comberton Three member ward	OF-A, OF-B, remainder of GR-A1, GR-A2, GR-C1, GR-C2, GR-D1, GR-D2	8171, +9.7%
Aggborough and Spennells Three member ward	OF-C, most of AG-A (east of Worcester Road), AG-B, GR-E	7113, -4.5%
Oldington and Central Three member ward	GR-B, SP-A1, SP-A2, SP-C2, part of AG-A (west of Worcester Road), small part of HA-A2, OL-A1, OL-A2, OL-B	6901, -7.3%
Sutton Park and Habberley South Three member ward	SP-B1, SP-B2, SP-C1, bulk of HA-A2, HA-B2, HA-C	7185, -3.5%
Franche and Habberley North Three member ward	HA-A1, HA-B1, FR-A, FR-B, FR-C	7990, +7.3%

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
27TH NOVEMBER 2013

Corporate Governance

OPEN	
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:	-
CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY:	Delivering Together with Less
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor J-P Campion
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Solicitor to the Council
CONTACT OFFICER:	Caroline Newlands, Ext. 2738 caroline.newlands@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 – Revised Political Balance

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree the revised political balance of the Council as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to DECIDE that:

- 2.1 **The revised political balance of the Council as set out in Appendix 1 of this report be agreed.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council is required under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to agree the political balance of its committees.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The balance of the Council has changed since the last meeting on 25th September 2013 following the resignation of Councillor M A Salter from the Liberal and Independent Group and becoming a Member of the Independent Community and Health Concern Group.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Up until 3rd October 2013 the Independent Community & Health Concern Group (IHC) were the joint largest opposition group with the Labour Group and the Leaders of these groups shared the Special Responsibility allowance for “Leader of the Main Opposition Group”, as set out in the Council Constitution (Section 17 - Members’ Allowance Scheme).
- 5.2 Following Councillor M A Salter joining IHC Group, IHC became the main opposition group with a total of 9 Members and therefore the Special Responsibility

allowance for the Leader of the largest opposition is payable solely to the Leader of ICHC.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The changes to the political balance of the Council accord with the provision of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 There are no significant risk management issues associated with the proposed changes to the political balance of the Council's committees.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The change in political balance is considered to be acceptable and in line with legislative requirements and the changes to the Appraisal Panel will help to ensure a greater degree of continuity in the membership of the panel.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Corporate Management Team.
10.2 Leader of the Council.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

		Conservative		Independent Community Health Concern		Labour		Liberal & Independent Group		Total
No. of Cllrs.			19		9		8		6	42
Percentage			45.24%		21.43%		19.05%		14.29%	100.00%
Executive Cttees		Membership								
Appts & Appeals	8	4	3.62	2	1.71	1	1.52	1	1.14	8
Audit cttee	8	4	3.62	2	1.71	1	1.52	1	1.14	8
Ethics & standards *	6	3	2.71	1	1.29	1	1.14	1	0.86	6
Scrutiny										
Scrutiny Committee	12	5	5.43	3	2.57	2	2.29	2	1.71	12
Strategic Review Committee										
	11	5	4.98	2	2.36	2	2.10	2	1.57	11
Regulatory										
Planning	16	7	7.24	4	3.43	3	3.05	2	2.29	16
Lic & Env	15	7	6.79	3	3.21	3	2.86	2	2.14	15
Total										
	76	35	34.38	17	16.29	13	14.48	11	10.86	76
Percentage										
		46.05%		22.37%		17.11%		14.47%		100.00%
Difference between % No. of Cllrs. And % Number of Seats										
		0.81%		0.94%		-1.94%		0.19%		

* the table shows only district councillor members

1. Each member is required to notify the Proper Officer which political group, if any, he or she wishes to be identified with. A group comprises of two or more members.
2. Each Group Secretary is required to notify the Proper Officer which members of his or her groups he/she wishes to sit on each relevant committee or sub-committee.
3. The allocation of seats required the rounding up or down of calculated figures to give whole numbers.
4. Single party representatives and independent members (who do not form part of a political group) are not legally entitled to seats on committees to which the rules of proportionality apply.

- 19 Conservative Group
- 9 ICHC Group
- 8 Labour Group
- 6 Liberal & Independent Group

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
27TH NOVEMBER 2013
HALF-YEARLY REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 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.

2. Overview of the issues facing the district and the Council

- 2.1 The most significant issue facing the Council remains its financial position. I am pleased to report that the action taken by Council this year, in establishing the cross-party Strategic Review Committee, has enabled detailed work to be done on future options for the medium term financial strategy at a much earlier stage than usual. The Committee's work has been carefully considered by the Cabinet and its proposals are on tonight's agenda.
- 2.2 If the proposals are endorsed, our net revenue budget will have reduced from £16.4m in 2009-10 to £10.5m in 2016-17. This represents a fall of over 35% in absolute terms, and more in real terms. The proposals go a very considerable way towards closing the gap between what we are spending and our income. There is still some uncertainty, relating mainly to future Government funding such as whether the top-slice of new homes bonus will go ahead: we hope that the "autumn" statement on 5 December will provide some answers.
- 2.3 After tonight's debate, the focus will shift to implementation. There are significant targets to grow income and to reduce costs, and in many cases there are more detailed reviews or business cases to prepare before we can secure the savings. The medium term financial strategy renews our commitment to focus on purposes and on using systems thinking to simplify processes, improve customer service and reduce costs. The savings targets from the Wyre Forest Forward programme are being increased from £801k to £1.3m in 2016-17, of which we have already achieved or identified £624k. The further target is challenging but achievable, when we consider the Council's strong track record in reducing expenditure since 2009.
- 2.4 While our revenue expenditure and the size of the Council will continue on a downward trajectory, we remain a multi-million pound organisation overseeing a significant capital investment programme, including the new leisure centre at Silverwoods and helping to facilitate major developments such as Exchange Square in Kidderminster town centre and at other locations in the district. The medium term financial strategy envisages the Council enabling redevelopment of a number of sites and buildings it owns, but in a way that also generates a revenue return for the Council. The incubator units at "Space" are now available for rent on favourable terms for start-up businesses.
- 2.5 These initiatives will help to underpin future growth in business rates income, which will assist the Council's financial position, however marginally. There has been rapid progress with the first phase of the Hoobrook link road and housing developments at Silverwoods, and the planning application for the remainder of the link road has been submitted. A number of other housing developments across Stourport-on-Severn and Kidderminster are under way, some of them having been "stalled" for some time, suggesting that there has been an improvement in developers' confidence. This is underpinned by the Council's

approval in July of the final elements of its local development framework, the only up-to-date plan in Worcestershire. Recent news of further delay to the South Worcestershire development plan means that Wyre Forest will continue to enjoy an advantage, with certainty for developers about future areas for housing and employment uses. The medium term financial strategy demonstrates how the Council remains focussed on securing growth in housing and the local economy, as they are important to its future financial health.

3. Key actions implemented against the priorities set in the corporate plan

- 3.1 I have already mentioned some of the most significant achievements since my last report:
- a. approval of our local development framework;
 - b. impacts now being achieved by the £1.5m fund for “securing the economic prosperity of the district” following the State of the Area debate in 2012. The business incubator units are available for rent, and a number of key developments have moved forward in terms of detailed proposals. They include the master plan for the hotel, conference centre and leisure facilities at the West Midlands Safari Park; proposals for demolition of Crown House and redevelopment of Lower Mill Street and Bullring, led by Henderson Global Investors; and plans for a medical centre and library in Bewdley and for town centre realm improvements in Kidderminster;
 - c. while outline planning permission for the leisure centre site was obtained from the Planning Committee in May, due diligence work by the Council identified site conditions which made it economically unviable. A new preferred site was selected and announced in October. A bid has been submitted for significant funding from Sport England and the overall net revenue cost of the project is projected to be lower than the figures previously approved by Council.
- 3.2 We have been in Wyre Forest House since October 2012. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July received an updated report on achievement of annual revenue savings, which significantly exceed the business case projection of £500k. The capital account has still not been finalised because of unresolved issues relating to various issues, principally the ground source heat pump system. Independent technical advice has been received on the steps that need to be taken to ensure that the system works fully effectively, and to allow us to protect the Council’s position in discussions with the contractor.
- 3.3 During the summer we also had to deal with a number of unexpected events that caused significant work for teams in the Council, including two county council by-elections and the fire at Lawrence’s Recycling. While there are always improvements that can be made to communications in dealing with significant incidents, the Council’s coordination of a web page for all information about the Lawrence’s fire set new standards of transparency in terms of publication of air quality monitoring data and other information.
- 3.4 These achievements are not attributable solely to me or the directors: it depends on the contribution and commitment of our staff, to which I would like to pay tribute. The Council and its staff continue to be recognised in regional and national awards. Since my report in May, the following have been received:
- a. Maria Dunn, the Council’s Senior Forward Planning Officer, was named as the Regional Young Planner of the Year by the West Midlands Region of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). Maria has been nominated for her active work in delivering

planning in the community, spreading the word of planning and promoting it as a positive vehicle for people. She has been an active member of the Young Planners in the West Midlands being secretary and treasurer; and is a volunteer with Planning Aid. She has provided mentoring and coaching support to less experienced planners and has assisted them with gaining their professional membership of the RTPI. Maria has shown leadership in the planning profession demonstrated by her work on planning policy documents;

- b. Mark Tipper, the Council's Land and Property Gazetteer Officer, won two Exemplar Awards from Geoplace. He won 'Best in Region' Award and a Gold Award for address data. The awards are designed to capture projects which make a difference and demonstrate to others the value of the information that local authorities manage on a day-to-day basis. Mark's work has contributed to the rate of matches from the "dry run" for individual electoral registration being higher than regional and national averages;
- c. Bewdley Tourist Information Centre was Highly Commended in the Sustainable Tourism category of the Visit Worcestershire Awards for Excellence. This award follows one last year for outstanding customer service;
- d. The Council achieved Level one accreditation in the Worcestershire Works Well scheme, which recognises employers that demonstrate they take employee health and well-being seriously;
- e. Wyre Forest House has received the following recognition:
 - LABC Regional Building Excellence award, West of England, June 2013 (winner of best sustainable project and shortlisted for best large commercial building)
 - LABC National Building Excellence award, November 2013 (finalist).

4. The progress that we have made in transforming the Council

- 4.1 We have continued with the arrangements for involving members in the Wyre Forest Forward transformation programme. There is a regular meeting of Group leaders and their deputies with members of the Cabinet and Corporate Management Team, to oversee all aspects of the programme; and we have continued with regular meetings of the Members' Forum to ensure that members are briefed on key issues and that they receive reports back from members sitting on external bodies. The Forum is generally well-supported with over half of councillors attending each meeting. Members have set a full programme of topics that they wish to consider over the coming 12 months.
- 4.2 Our transformation work is proceeding satisfactorily. The latest reviews using systems thinking resulted in new processes and savings including a significant reduction in management costs in respect of depot-based services; and have transformed how planning applications are handled. A review of accountancy has commenced and further reviews are being planned in order to meet the targets for savings in the medium term financial strategy. The senior management restructuring was successfully implemented by the beginning of August. The shared services that we host are all progressing well. This autumn's staff survey produced more positive results in terms of staff satisfaction and morale than 2012. For example, 87% of staff who took part said that they enjoyed their job (80% in 2012); 81% had a good work/life balance (75%) and 77% were happy with their work environment

(70%). We will continue with the actions that we put in plan earlier in 2013, particularly efforts to maintain better balance in team and individual workloads and to provide greater certainty to staff about the future. "Meet ups" have been introduced to help staff from different teams get to know each other better and the first "meet up" for Councillors and staff was successfully held in October.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The Council continues to face significant challenges over the coming period. Despite their magnitude, I continue to feel confident those Councillors and our staff will rise to meet them, and that the Council will continue to demonstrate its ability to provide effective community leadership. Finally I would like to thank members and others for the support that I have received.

Ian Miller
November 2013

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
27TH NOVEMBER 2013

POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK
MATTERS WHICH REQUIRE A DECISION BY COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET –22ND OCTOBER 2013

Purpose of Report

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

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Would Councillors please note that the related reports and documents have not been included in the Council book, as they have already been sent to Members via the Cabinet agenda. Copies have been included in the electronic circulation of the Council agenda and a public inspection copy is available on request. The policy documents, referred to below, have been posted on the Council's website.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL	CABINET MEMBER
<p>Development of New Corporate Plan 2014/19</p> <p>Recommend to Council: The draft Corporate Plan 2014/19, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report to Cabinet, be adopted. (Attached)</p>	<p>Councillor John-Paul Campion</p>
<p>Revised Local Development Scheme (2013-16)</p> <p>Recommend to Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Proposed Draft Revised Local Development Scheme (2013-16) be endorsed and published as a basis for the future production of the District's Local Plans. 2. Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place to undertake any necessary formatting amendments to the Draft Revised Local Development Scheme prior to its publication. 	<p>Councillor Anne Hingley</p>

Corporate Plan 2014/19

Wyre Forest District

Vision: Wyre Forest – where people have the opportunity to enjoy a good quality of life and want to live, work, visit and invest

Our Values: We will

- Be confident and honest in expressing our views
- Work as one team and support each other
- Put our customers first
- Be innovative and flexible in the ways we work
- Invest in giving people the skills to do the job
- Celebrate good performance

Our Priorities	
Support you to contribute to a successful local economy.	Support you to live in clean, green and safe communities.
Our Strategic Actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with partners to create the conditions and certainty to foster a growing and sustainable local economy • Bringing forward regeneration and development opportunities and the infrastructure to support them • Creating new job opportunities and improving skills • Helping new businesses to start up and existing businesses to grow • Attracting inward investment and accessing alternative funding sources • Promoting the District as a great place to invest in, live in and visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a greener and cleaner local environment • Supporting the provision and maintenance of high quality public spaces • Working with partners to reduce crime and the fear of crime • Working towards meeting current and future housing needs, with an up-to-date local development plan that provides for growth in the number of houses • Preventing and reducing homelessness
Our Actions will support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community with lower unemployment and improved skills • A diverse and well connected economy with vibrant and successful town centres • Successful and sustained business growth • Increased visitor opportunities • Redevelopment of redundant and under-used land and buildings • Improved infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean streets and quality open, green public spaces that are enjoyed by all • An environment that is respected and cared for, and where local people take pride in their surroundings • Low levels of crime and anti social behaviour • An increased supply of good quality and decent homes that are affordable to individuals and families • A reduction in the number of people becoming homeless

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
27TH NOVEMBER 2013

POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK
MATTERS WHICH REQUIRE A DECISION BY COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET –19TH NOVEMBER 2013

Purpose of Report

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

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Would Councillors please note that the related reports and documents have not been included in the Council book, as they have already been sent to Members via the Cabinet agenda. Copies have been included in the electronic circulation of the Council agenda and a public inspection copy is available on request. The policy documents, referred to below, have been posted on the Council’s website.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL (subject to the Cabinet meeting on 19th November 2013)	CABINET MEMBER
<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014-2017</p> <p>Endorse and Recommend to Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council’s updated Medium Term Finance Strategy; 2. Cabinet Proposals – taking into account the impact on the Council’s Capital and Revenue Budgets for 2014-17 (Appendix 3 of the report to Cabinet); 3. The level of net expenditure and resultant Council Tax for 2014-17 as per paragraph 8.2 of the report to Cabinet; 4. The fees and charges in line with this strategy and the impact on the Council’s Revenue Budget for 2014-17, as shown in Part 3 of Appendix 4 of the report to Cabinet, and supplemented by the Cabinet Proposal on increasing external income included in Appendix 3 of the report to Cabinet, where relevant. 	<p>Councillor Nathan Desmond</p>

<p>Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Mid Year Review Report 2013/14</p> <p>Recommend to Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Treasury Management Mid-year Review be approved.2. The updated Prudential Indicators be approved.	<p>Councillor Nathan Desmond</p>
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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Council
27th November 2013**

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee
7th November 2013**

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority – Draft Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that the following response should be submitted to the consultation:

- 1. Wyre Forest District Council makes no comment about the proposal relating to Bewdley but objects to any proposal to reduce Kidderminster to a single engine when much smaller towns (such as Bromsgrove, Malvern and Droitwich) are proposed to retain two engines. It is recognised that the other towns have their first engine crewed on a different basis, which is not whole-time shift;**
- 2. The number of members of the Fire and Rescue Authority should be reduced, together with a reduction in related training costs;**
- 3. The Council considers that any further reductions in fire cover for Wyre Forest in future would be unacceptable.**

Background paper: Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 7th November 2013

<http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/meetings/com193.htm#mt7327>