

Open

Cabinet

Agenda

**6pm
Tuesday, 23rd June 2015
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster**



Cabinet

The Cabinet Members and their responsibilities:-

Councillor M J Hart	Leader of the Council & Strategy
Councillor I Hardiman	Deputy Leader and Operational Services
Councillor J-P Campion	Planning and Economic Regeneration
Councillor N J Desmond	Resources
Councillor S Chambers	Health Well-Being and Housing
Councillor S Fearn	Transformation & Change

Scrutiny of Decisions of the Cabinet

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

In accordance with Section 10 of the Council's Constitution, Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, and Standing Order 2.4 of Section 7, any item on this agenda may be scrutinised by the Scrutiny Committee if it is "called in" by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and any other three non-Cabinet members.

The deadline for "calling in" Cabinet decisions is 5pm on 3rd July 2015.

Councillors wishing to "call in" a decision on this agenda should contact Sue Saunders, Committee and Electoral Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster. Telephone: 01562 732733 or email susan.saunders@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Urgent Key Decisions

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

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 the Council's 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.

For further information

If you have any queries about this Agenda or require any details of background papers, further documents or information you should contact Sue Saunders, Committee and Electoral Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF. Telephone: 01562 732733 or email susan.saunders@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Documents referred to in this agenda may be viewed on the Council's website - www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/meetings/main.htm

WEBCASTING NOTICE

This meeting is being filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's website site (www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wyre Forest District Council

Cabinet

Tuesday, 23rd June 2015

Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster

Part 1 - Open to the press and public

Agenda item	Subject	Page Number
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	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.	
3.	Minutes To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on the 17 th March 2015.	6
4.	CALL INS a verbal update will be given on any decisions which have been "called in" since the last meeting of the Cabinet.	
5.	Items Requiring Urgent Attention To consider any item which, in the opinion of the Chairman requires consideration at the meeting as a matter of urgency.	
6.	Public Participation In accordance with the Council's Scheme for Public Speaking at Meetings of Full Council/Cabinet, 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 15 th June 2015. (See front cover for contact details).	

7.	Leader of the Council	
7.1	Leader's Announcements	

8.	Councillor N J Desmond	
8.1	Report on Provisional Final Accounts 2014-15 To consider a report from the Chief Financial Officer which provides on the provisional outturn position in relation to the Final Accounts for 2014/15	9

9.		
9.1	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Councillor S Fearn</i></p> <p>Welfare Support Fund – consultation on potential changes to council tax reduction scheme for 2016-17 onwards</p> <p>To consider a report from the Chief Executive on whether to consult on potential changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2016-17 onwards.</p>	15

10.		
10.1	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Councillor J-P Champion</i></p> <p>Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)</p> <p>To consider a report from the Planning Policy Manager which updates Members on the responses received to the Draft Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation and to agree the final version of the SPD for formal Adoption. To also consider the recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny from its meeting on 4th June 2015.</p>	32
10.2	<p>Extensions to Leases at Coppice Industrial Estate</p> <p>To consider a report from the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place to agree to extend a number of leases on the Council owned Coppice Industrial Estate, Kidderminster.</p>	118

11.	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.	
12.	<p>Exclusion of the Press and Public</p> <p>To consider passing the following resolution:</p> <p>“That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of “exempt information” as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act”.</p>	

Part 2 - Not open to the Press and Public

13.	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.	
------------	--	--

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER
17TH MARCH 2015 (6.00 PM)**

Present:

Councillors: M J Hart (Chairman), J-P Campion, N J Desmond, H E Dyke and A T Hingley.

Observers:

Councillors: P Dyke and J Shaw.

CAB.49 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CAB.50 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB.51 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17th February 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.52 Call Ins

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

CAB.53 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.54 Leader's Announcements

The Leader of the Council advised Members there were new tenants in Wyre Forest House, the surface on the car park was being relaid and the visitors car park had been completed. The heating in the building had now been resolved with a new gas boiler having been commissioned. He also announced that planning consent had been granted for the new leisure centre at the Silverwoods site in Kidderminster with a view to opening in Summer 2016.

CAB.55 Kidderminster's Music Heritage Trail – Consultation Response and Revised Strategy document

A report was considered from the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place which detailed the results of the public consultation on the draft Music Heritage Trail and to agree the Kidderminster Music Heritage Trail Art Strategy. The recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 5th March 2015 were also considered.

Decision: The Music Heritage Trail be approved

CAB.56 Public Space Protection Order for Kidderminster Town Centre

A report was considered from the Director of Community Well-Being and Environment which outlined the results from the consultation process.

Decision:

- 1. A Public Space Protection Order to prohibit consumption of alcohol within the specified area, outlined in Appendix 3 of the report to Cabinet (using the outer edge of the ring road as the boundary), be implemented.**
- 2. The Public Space Protection Order be reviewed 6 months after its implementation.**

CAB.57 Disposal of Land at Broad Street, Kidderminster

A report was considered from the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place which asked Cabinet to agree to the disposal of land at Broad Street, Kidderminster forming the public car park, also known as 'Horsefair Car Park'.

Members were informed that as part of the financial strategy, the Council's assets were to be looked at and it was proposed that the Broad Street car park be disposed of as it was under utilised and the Council only received a small sum of money from car parking fees.

Decision:

Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Operational Services to:

- 1. Agree terms for and disposal of land at Broad Street for a capital receipt that will be made available for the Evergreen Investment Fund.**
- 2. Advertise the removal of the Broad Street Car Park from the Wyre Forest (Off-Street Parking Places) (Consolidation) Order 2009 ("the Parking Places Order"); consider any objections made as a result of the advertisement; and, following such consideration, decide whether the car park should be removed from the Parking Places Order.**

CAB.58 Recommendations from Committees

Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 19th February 2015

- **Wyre Forest House – Heating and Cooling System**

Members were advised that Overview & Scrutiny Committee had looked in depth at the report and a good debate had been held.

Decision: The following be noted:

1. **The Committee considered the information in the report and concluded that all reasonable steps were taken in the design of the building and in dealing with the issues encountered with the heating and cooling system.**
2. **Strong advice to Cabinet that for future projects we continue to ensure that all possible measures are taken to protect the authority's position, with maximum transparency and a strong audit trail.**

The meeting closed at 18.25 pm.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET REPORT****23RD JUNE 2015****Report on Provisional Final Accounts 2014/15**

OPEN ITEM	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor N J Desmond
DIRECTOR:	Chief Financial Officer
CONTACT OFFICER:	Tracey Southall Ext. 2100 tracey.southall@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 - Explanation of Major Variations on Revised 2014/15 Budget

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To receive the provisional outturn position in relation to the Final Accounts for 2014/15.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to NOTE that as detailed in Appendix 1:-

- 2.1 Following the creation of the additional earmarked reserves detailed below, savings compared to the revised budget of £260,800 have been generated from the 2014/15 surplus.
- 2.2 That £100,000 from the 2014/15 savings has been used to create an earmarked reserve for Business Rate Funding shortfalls, further detail is provided in paragraph 4.2.
- 2.3 That £150,000 from the 2014/15 savings has been used to increase the existing earmarked reserve for the Transformation Fund to continue to meet the costs of our challenging Wyre Forest Forward Programme as detailed in paragraph 4.6.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 have been incorporated into the Council's Financial Regulations. These regulations require that the Council's Statement of Accounts be produced and approved by the Chief Financial Officer on or before 30th June, 2015.
- 3.2 The Audit Committee will be considering and endorsing the full Statement of Accounts on 29th June 2015, and a full copy of the Statement of Accounts will be made available on the Council's Intranet for Members' perusal.
- 3.3 The Statement is then subject to audit. The Council's external auditor; Grant Thornton has until 30th September 2015 to complete the audit, after which the Statement will be published.

- 3.4 Should it be necessary for Grant Thornton to agree technical changes with the Chief Financial Officer while the accounts are subject to audit, these will be made under delegated powers. All Members of the Council will be provided with a published copy of the Statement.
- 3.5 Members may wish to note that the Council's Accounts will be made available for public inspection as required by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, between 16th July 2015 and 12th August 2015. Grant Thornton will be available on the 13th August 2015, at the Accountancy Section, Wyre Forest House, if any local government elector for the area has any questions on the Accounts that they wish to raise with them. Appointments for any meetings with the Auditors must be made in advance, in writing.
- 3.6 The provisional revenue outturn position has identified savings of £260,800 (subject to audit and after the creation of the earmarked reserves for the Business Rates Risk Reserve of £100k and Transformation Fund £150k) compared to the Revised Budget allowing £553,460 to be added to General Reserves rather than the planned £292,660. Appendix 1 summarises major variations from the Revised Budget for Members' information.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The most significant issue facing the Council remains its financial position. The updated medium term financial strategy, approved by February Council, provides a balanced approach for the next three years. It continues to draw on general reserves after 2014/15 at a rate of up to about £550k a year and this is now the scale of savings that needs to be achieved by further efficiency measures and potentially some service changes. More will be known following the Emergency budget on 8th July 2015 when there is likely to be a further Spending Review.
- 4.2 This has been the second year of the Business Rates Retention Scheme and the increase in the number of appeals lodged with the Valuation Office, particularly in view of the change from April 2015 to restrict the time period for back-dating of appeals have contributed to this Council's results. We have exceeded our budgeted target of £2.547m by a net £46k based on the membership agreement of the Worcestershire Business Rates Pool. We paid into the risk reserve this year, rather than receiving a payment from it as was the case in 2013/14. The 2014/15 risk reserve was fully paid over to Malvern Hills towards their funding shortfall. This is an improvement on our performance for 2013/14 where we fell below baseline. However, the increased risk around in appeals is disappointing and although we have made provision within the accounts for such payments it is unknown if this will be sufficient. We currently hold a Business Rates Risk Earmarked Reserve of circa £200,000 but this may prove insufficient and to cover the increased uncertainty and reduce risk it is prudent to increase this reserve by £100,000. This will continue to be closely monitored and the reserves and provisions reduced if the estimates prove excessive compared to appeals finally settled by the Valuation Office.
- 4.3 Included within Appendix 1 is the identification of the significant variances against the Revised Budget for 2014/15. These variances include:
- i) Pay, General Administration and Miscellaneous Corporate savings of £197k

These relate to various accounts across the whole of the Council which are then reallocated to front line services. It is clear that reductions have been made in expenditure across the Authority as austerity continues. This includes savings for further reductions in the audit fee and bank charges of £23k.

- ii) Benefit Payments, positive variance of £46k
The Council has been successful in the recovery of more overpayments than had been expected generating an extra £46k.
- iii) Provision for Bad Debts
Although the overall position in relation to provision to bad debts is more or less neutral, it is important to note that the Housing Benefits element increased by £45k due to increased identification of fraud and overpayments that must now be recovered, whilst the sundry debt provision reduced by £40k as a result of extra debt recovery activity being resourced improving our position.
- iv) Property-related lease extension premium income - adverse variance of £123k
The adverse variance is due to delayed finalisation of the extension of industrial estate leases so this income should be received in 2015/16.
- v) Additional net expenditure in relation to the Depot/Transport costs of £47k offset by reduced costs of depot repairs and maintenance and other general expenditure of £22k and additional waste income of £30k.
There have been some unforeseen additional vehicle repairs this year but fortunately these fleet costs are offset by reduced costs/increased income in other depot related areas.
- vi) Public Conveniences – savings in refurbishment costs of £46k
This saving is as a result of the use of an earmarked reserve and capital funding being used for the refurbishment of Load Street toilets.
- vii) Carbon Managements savings not achieved of £34k
The implementation of the programme of work to achieve the forecast Carbon Management savings is taking longer than originally predicted.
- viii) Additional External Interest income received of £25k,
This additional interest on investments has resulted from slightly longer durations and robust treasury management of funds.
- ix) Reduced net income from Car Parking and Civil Enforcement of £26k
Car parking income has failed to reach budget estimates this year but has been partially offset by reduced running costs. It should also be noted that there is £21k pay savings included within the corporate variations that mitigates this overspend for the service as a whole.
- x) Parks and Green Spaces and other Grounds Maintenance increased costs of £21k.
Due to increased costs of agency of £49k following a challenging restructure and direct material costs totalling £62k offset in part by reduced costs of playground equipment of £20k and additional sponsorship and other external income of £19k.
- xi) Additional Cemetery Income and lower repairs and maintenance totalling £42k

The extra sale of plots at the old cemetery and reduced repairs and maintenance has resulted in this saving.

- xii) District Local Development Framework Reduced costs of £30k and Homelessness savings of £20k
These savings are as a result of careful budget management.
- xiii) Leisure Centre savings - £65k
Leisure Centre repairs and maintenance and plant replacement is being closely managed with only essential expenditure being made in the run up to the opening of the new leisure centre.
- xiv) Bewdley Museum savings in the costs of repairs and maintenance of buildings / general savings and additional income of £33k
Careful management of this budget has resulted in reduced costs and increased income over most budget areas.
- xv) Additional earmarked reserves new for this year of £250k
The variance analysis includes expenditure to supplement the existing Business Rates Risk earmarked reserve by £100k as detailed in paragraph 4.2 and £150k to replenish the Transformation Fund to assist the Wyre Forest Programme of Transformation.

- 4.4 It is clear that the future financial position for the Council will continue to be challenging in the aftermath of the May General Election with austerity measures already being reaffirmed. The Emergency budget on 8th July 2015 will reveal more about the Governments plans and a review of our position going forward will be undertaken following this date. The reduced level of funding currently programmed for the Council in the future is being mitigated by a raft of transformational reviews being implemented as part of the Wyre Forest Forward programme.
- 4.5 The draft position for 2014/15 demonstrates that through prudent financial management, additional resources of £250,000 were made available to fund additional earmarked reserves as set out in paragraph 4.7.
- 4.6 The transformation fund set up in 2011/12 for one-off implementation costs to support the Wyre Forest Forward programme has been extremely successful in delivering the change programme. This was previously supplemented by an additional £200k from the 2014/15 budget to help fund the challenging savings programme moving forward and this report proposes an additional £150k to supplement this reserve from final account savings. Taking this into account £536k remains from this fund at the end of 2014/15, with £266k being uncommitted.
- 4.7 Cabinet is asked to note additional funding for the following significant earmarked reserves from the surplus in 2014/15. The first is £100k to top up the Business Rates Risk Reserve; the second is £150k to replenish the Transformation Fund.
- 4.8 It should also be noted that, the Working Balance remains at £1m to reflect the significant financial risks faced by this Council as a result of the fundamental changes to the Government Funding Regime in 2014/15, inevitable further austerity measures expected and also the impending Welfare Reform changes.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The positive variance of £510,800 compared to the Revised Budget, reducing to £260,800 following the creation of additional significant earmarked reserves, resulting in the increased contribution to General Reserves of £553,460 is welcomed. The resultant reserves will be reconsidered in accordance with the Council's Finance Strategy, as part of the budget process for 2015 onwards. This is greater than reported at Quarter 3 budget monitoring. However, a number of events and decisions in the last quarter coupled with year end transactions have led to the increase in the savings. This saving represents less than 1% of total gross revenue expenditure of £55m.
- 5.2 These remain extremely challenging times for this Council given the previous changes to the landscape of the Government's funding regime, and inevitable further revisions that will emerge when the Emergency Budget is published on 8th July. The saving on outturn is welcomed and has been utilised to earmark funds to meet potential liabilities and also to increase General Balances compared to forecast, to mitigate the potential future impact of funding volatility.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The principal risk to the Council is non-achievement of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 deadline, in respect of production and approval of the Statement of Accounts before 30th June 2014, and qualification of the Accounts by the Council's External Auditors.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 This is a financial report and there is no requirement to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 This report details the outturn position as at 31st March 2015 and provides information on the creation of further significant earmarked reserves.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 CLT/Cabinet.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.
Financial Strategy 2015/18.

PROVISIONAL OUTTURN
MAJOR VARIATIONS BETWEEN REVISED BUDGET
AND ACTUAL NET EXPENDITURE FOR 2014/15

Total Revised Budget 2014/15

12,789,130

LESS:

Actual Net Expenditure - not finalised - still subject to validation

12,574,170

SAVINGS COMPARED TO 2014/15 REVISED BUDGET

(214,960)

Increase in Funding from Business Rates

(45,840)

OVERALL SAVING COMPARED TO REVISED BUDGET INCLUDING FUNDING

(260,800)

Description of Estimated Major Variances	Extra Costs/ Reduced Income £	Savings/ Additional Income £
Chief Executive		
1. Housing Benefit - additional recovery of overpayments		(45,580)
2. Increase in Bad Debt provision for Housing Benefits due to increased identification of fraud and overpayment	45,000	
3. Further reduction in Audit Fee and Bank Charges		(23,880)
Community Well Being and Environment		
1. Green Street - Repairs and Maintenance of Buildings, Utilities and reduced property rental income		(21,860)
2. Depot Transport - Direct materials -for unforeseen essential repairs	47,100	
3. Increased income - Waste contracts including garden and trade		(29,760)
4. Saving in Repairs and Maintenance Public Conveniences - earmarked reserve and capital used for Load Street refurbishment		(45,640)
5. Parks and Green Spaces and other Grounds Maintenance - net additional costs	21,130	
6. Savings in Repairs and Maintenance and increased Income - for the Cemetery		(42,320)
7. Reduced Income - Car Parks - fine income and season tickets, net of reduced running costs	25,740	
8. Saving - Leisure Centres - Maintenance of buildings, grounds and plant replacement		(65,230)
9. Saving - Bewdley Museum - Repairs and Maintenance of Buildings, general expenses and increased income		(33,300)
10. Saving - Kidderminster Town Hall Electricity		(11,220)
Economic Prosperity and Place		
1. Income shortfall - Property section - delay in the sale of lease premiums	122,900	
2. Property Repairs and Maintenance Under spend		(33,400)
3. Improved income - Licensing		(13,460)
4. District Local Development Framework Under spend		(30,000)
5. Carbon Management Savings Not Achieved	33,950	
6. Homelessness saving in costs of service provision		(20,000)
Capital Account		
1. External Interest- additional income from treasury management activities		(25,000)
Corporate Variations		
1. Payroll related savings (including saving of £21k in Car Parking)		(78,950)
2. Admin Expenses - savings		(94,000)
3. Decrease in Sundry Debtor Bad Debt Provision due to extra debt recovery activity		(40,000)
4. Improvement in Business Rates income net of pool adjustments		(45,840)
5. Increase in Business Rates risk reserve	100,000	
6. Miscellaneous Savings		(107,180)
7. Replenishment of Transformation Fund	150,000	
	545,820	(806,620)
REDUCED NET EXPENDITURE ON YEAR 2014/15 - PROVISIONAL		(260,800)

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
23rd June 2015

Welfare support fund – consultation on potential changes to council tax reduction scheme for 2016-17 onwards

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor S Fearn
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Chief Executive
CONTACT OFFICER:	Lucy Wright, Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Manager Ext. 2948 Lucy.wright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES	Appendix 1 – draft consultation paper

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider whether to consult on potential changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2016-17 onwards.

2. RECOMMENDATION

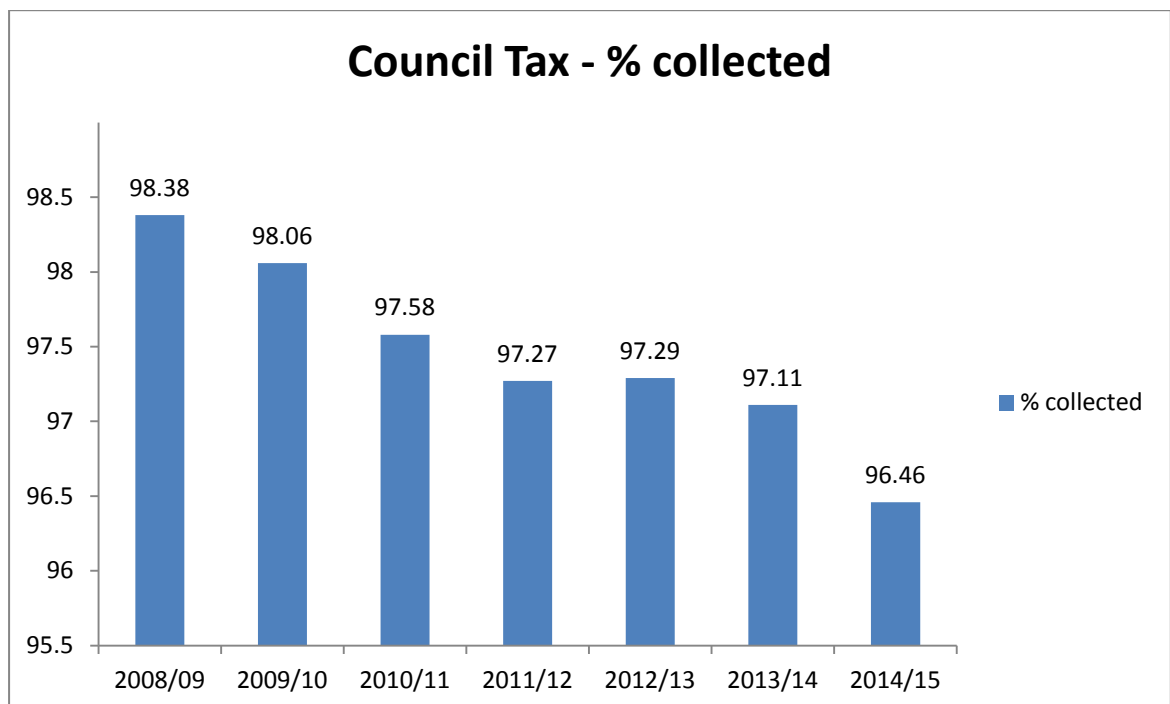
- 2.1 **Cabinet is asked to APPROVE issuing the consultation paper in appendix 1.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council Tax Reduction Scheme replaced council tax benefit with effect from 1 April 2013. In transferring responsibility to councils, the Government reduced funding by 10% initially and has reduced it further since as the funding support is not provided as a specific grant. The Government has protected claimants of pensionable age, and they continue to receive support up to 100% of their council tax bill depending on their personal financial circumstances. It is open to councils to require a contribution from people of working age. The arrangements in Wyre Forest have been:

	Minimum contribution required from people of working age
2013-14	8.5%
2014-15	10%
2015-16	10%

- 3.2 The main features of Wyre Forest District Council's scheme for working age claimants currently are:
- The maximum award is 90% so working age claimants pay at least 10% of their council tax liability;
 - Council Tax Reduction is granted where the award is above £5 per week;
 - We assume a level of income from savings of £1 per week for every £200 (or part thereof) held above £6,000;
 - We do not backdate claims for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme;
 - There is no second adult rebate for working age claimants.
- 3.3 Under paragraph 4 of Schedule 1A to the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council is required to consider whether to revise its scheme or to replace its scheme for the forthcoming financial year. This report discharges that duty. There is a separate duty to consult on any changes that the Council might propose to its scheme.
- 3.4 The council tax reduction scheme has increased the Council's potential income from council tax although there has been an impact on collection rates as shown below:



- 3.5 The current scheme has worked well and provides additional protection and support for those in need together with incentives to start work. A council tax support fund is operated, funded with £25k from the county council, matched by £25k pa from this council to help people facing genuine difficulties in paying their council tax bills.

- 3.6 Three other councils in Worcestershire introduced schemes in 2014 that require a minimum contribution of 20% from people of working age, and it is appropriate to review WFDC's scheme in the light of their experience.

4 KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 It is timely to consider whether the main features of the council tax reduction scheme in Wyre Forest should be reviewed, in light of experience of its operation locally and approaches adopted elsewhere. If changes are proposed, a careful balance will need to be struck in terms of impact on poorer people of working age and the Council's financial position, including the implications for council tax administration and collection.
- 4.2 Any increase in the contribution required from people of working age would strengthen the incentive to seek work or higher paid work/more hours of employment. However this needs to be balanced by careful consideration of the potential impact on poverty, including child poverty. The council tax support fund would need to be increased, and/increased use of the collection fund made to meet the cost of any uncollected taxes. Discussions are under way with the major precepting authorities including the county council on these issues.
- 4.3 The consultation paper in appendix 1 therefore seeks views on whether or not the contribution from people of working age should be increased up to 20% with effect from 1 April 2016. If such a change was ultimately decided, and while there is a legal duty to consider whether to revise the scheme each year, the Cabinet would be able to adopt as a statement of general intent that it would not propose revisiting the level of contribution from people of working age until 2019, unless there were significant factors that required earlier action. This would give a period of stability and certainty to council tax payers and the Council alike.
- 4.4 The case for proposing changes also relates to the Council's ability to continue sustaining the present scheme. For 2015/16 no changes were proposed and therefore wider public consultation was not undertaken. However for 2016/17 onwards, the Council and all its major precepting authorities continue to face significant financial challenges to meet savings targets in order to meet the impact of continued reductions in Government grants. Thus changes to the council tax reduction scheme could assist in addressing these challenges. However, as spelled out in the consultation paper, the Council alternatively could:
- Increase the level of council tax for all households but this would be subject to central government restrictions
 - Continue to use the Council's rapidly diminishing reserves but these are forecast to run out after 2017
 - Reduce funding available for other council services
- 4.5 The consultation paper also seeks views on some technical changes that can be summarised as:

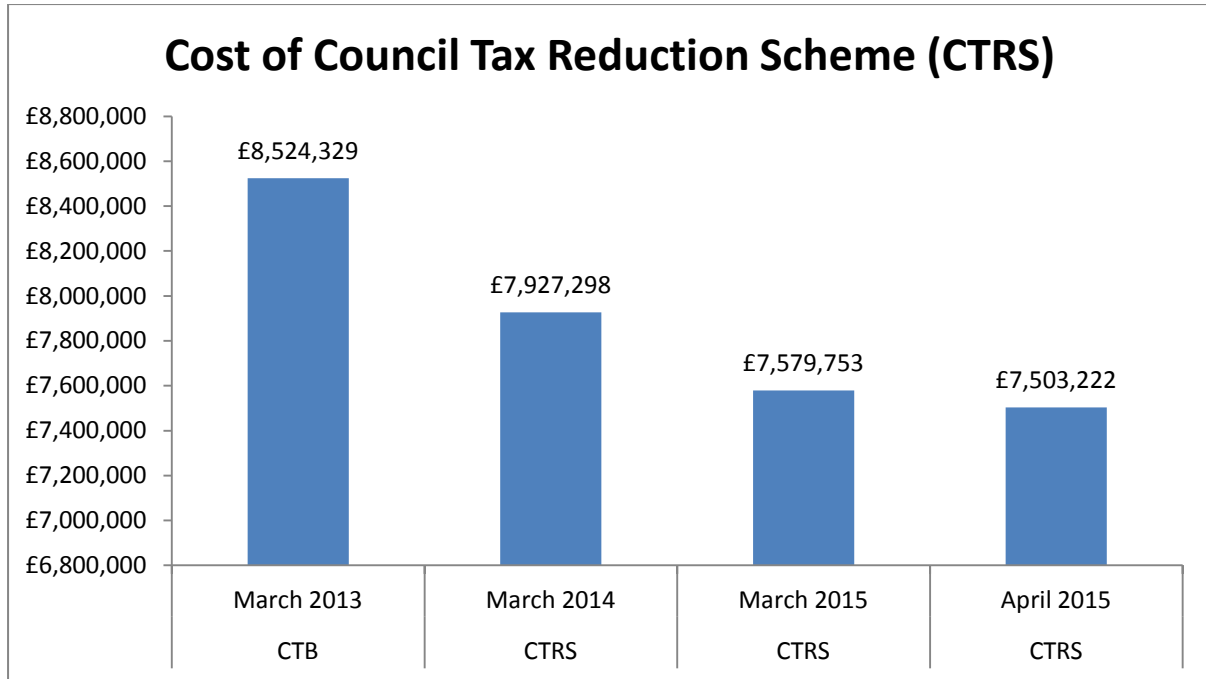
- Changing from a reduction in entitlement where the percentage (10% under our current scheme) is taken off the award figure to a cut in council tax liability before any entitlements are calculated. This will be at a percentage rate to be agreed following consultation. Such a change would bring that element of the scheme in line with the vast majority of councils and in particular with Wychavon, Redditch and Bromsgrove;
- Reducing the minimum award of Council Tax Reduction from £5 per week to 50p per week in line with housing benefit minimum entitlement. This would benefit some claimants who are theoretically entitled to support worth up to £250 a year but in practice receive nothing as their weekly award is less than £5;
- Reducing the capital limit from £16,000 to either £12,000 or £6,000. This would impact on up to approximately 100 working age claimants based on current caseload;
- Allowing backdating of CTRS awards at the council's discretion in line with housing benefit regulations;
- Maintaining an increased council tax support fund to ensure the most vulnerable households are protected. As noted above, the proposal is for the payments to be met from the collection fund so all preceptors share in the associated costs of any reductions in liability due to hardship.

4.6 The next steps would be as follows:

Consultation	6 July to 27 September 2015
Consideration of consultation responses by Cabinet and final recommendations to Council	November 2015
Decision by Council on changes to council tax reduction scheme for 2016-17	9 December 2015 (Any decision to change the scheme must be agreed by full Council by 31 January 2016)
Scheme takes effect	1 April 2016

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The annual cost of the scheme introduced by Wyre Forest District Council is reducing each year as shown in the chart below:



5.2 The real cost of the scheme for the current year 2015-16 cannot be accurately determined until the end of the financial year. It is expected that the savings will be greater as the cost of the scheme is likely to reduce during the remainder of the year. The reasons for the expected reduction are due to emerging trends including an improvement in the local economy.

5.3 The additional income generated by the introduction of the scheme since the cessation of Council Tax Benefit is estimated to be £2,563,000 over 3 years. The share of this income is summarised in the table below:

	2013/14 8.5% scheme	2014/15 10% scheme	2015/16 (estimate) 10% scheme	TOTAL
Worcestershire CC	£ 412,000	£ 652,000	£ 704,500	£ 1,768,500
Wyre Forest DC	£ 77,000	£ 123,000	£ 133,000	£ 333,000
Police	£ 72,000	£ 113,000	£ 122,500	£ 307,500
Fire service	£ 30,000	£ 47,000	£ 51,000	£ 128,000
Parish/town council	£ 6,000	£ 10,000	£ 10,000	£ 26,000
TOTAL	£ 597,000	£ 945,000	£ 1,021,000	£ 2,563,000

5.4 These figures include a small element of natural growth due to factors other than additional income generated as a result of the council tax reduction scheme alone. The figures are based on both working age and pension age claimants and not all the additional income would have been collected in accordance with our current collection rates shown on the chart in paragraph 3.4.

5.5 The additional income above does not include the increased income obtained from changes made to council tax exemptions and discounts. It is estimated that changes to council tax exemptions and discounts have resulted in

additional income in the region of £1,335,000 over 3 years. The share of this is summarised in the table below:

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16)	TOTAL
Worcestershire CC	£ 258,000	£ 331,500	£ 331,500	£ 921,000
Wyre Forest DC	£ 48,500	£ 62,500	£ 62,500	£ 173,500
Police	£ 45,000	£ 57,500	£ 57,500	£ 160,000
Fire service	£ 19,000	£ 24,000	£ 24,000	£ 67,000
Parish/town council	£ 3,500	£ 5,000	£ 5,000	£ 13,500
TOTAL	£ 374,000	£ 480,500	£ 480,500	£ 1,335,000

- 5.6 The financial implications of the various options available have been forecast and are shown in the following table. This table includes the potential extra income for Wyre Forest District Council that would be generated by any changes, which is estimated to be in the region of £60,000 maximum.

Scheme variation	Annual additional council tax income	Annual additional council tax income for WFDC
15% Bottom slicing (£5 minimum)	£201,000	£26,000
20% Bottom slicing (£5 minimum)	£398,000	£52,000
15% Top slicing (£5 minimum)	£273,000	£35,000
15% Top slicing (50p minimum award)	£248,000	£32,000
20% Top slicing (£5 minimum)	£491,000	£64,000
20% Top slicing (50p minimum award)	£461,000	£60,000
10% Top slicing (£5 minimum)	£35,000	£4,000
£6,000 Capital limit	£22,000	£3,000
£12,000 Capital limit	£10,000	£1,300

Notes

The current scheme is 10% bottom slicing with £5 minimum entitlement. The estimates in the table assume 100% collection rate

- 5.7 Discussions are underway with the County Council and other major preceptors to agree appropriate levels of increased financial support if these potential changes to our Council Tax Reduction Scheme are progressed. These negotiations will seek to agree an equitable arrangement that reflects and reduces the possible financial risk to the district council.

6.0 LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The report discharges the requirement to decide whether to review or replace the Council's council tax reduction scheme. The proposed consultation paper discharges the duty to consult about any changes.

7.0 EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 There are not believed to be any issues that affect the protected characteristics under the Equality Act. However because of the potential impact on poverty including childhood poverty, an impact assessment will need to be undertaken before final decisions are taken. The results will be presented in the report to Cabinet in November.

8.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The report addresses the legal requirements and other factors that will have to be balanced carefully in taking final decisions.
- 8.2 If the Council increases the minimum contribution required from people of working age, there is a risk of increased arrears. This would need to be mitigated by ensuring the correct level of resource was put into recovery within the revenues section. Options for addressing this risk will be considered further during the consultation period, including discussions with the major precepting authorities as set out in paragraph 5.7.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Cabinet is invited to approve issue of the consultation paper in appendix 1.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Cabinet
10.1.1 Corporate Leadership Team

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Council Tax Benefit Reform, Overview and Scrutiny Committee 8th November 2012
Council Tax Benefit Reform, Cabinet 12th November 2012
Council Tax Benefit Reform, Council 21st November 2012

Detailed information on the current council tax reduction scheme can be found at www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/counciltax



2016/17 Council Tax Reduction Scheme Consultation

Background Information

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) helps the poorest residents in our communities by reducing the amount of council tax they have to pay. The amount of help we give is based on a claimant's financial situation. Detailed information on the current CTRS can be found at www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/counciltax

CTRS has been in place since April 2013 and in Wyre Forest the scheme largely reflects the previous Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme, which was fully funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

From April 2013 responsibility passed to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) who introduced a number of key elements namely:

- The duty to create a local scheme for working age applicants was placed with billing authorities, i.e Wyre Forest District Council
- Government funding was reduced by the equivalent of 10% from the levels paid through benefit subsidy to authorities under the previous CTB scheme
- Persons of pension age although allowed to apply for CTRS, would be dealt with under regulations prescribed by central government and **not** the councils' local scheme.

The main features of Wyre Forest District Council's scheme for working age claimants since 2013 currently are:

- The maximum award is 90% so working age claimants pay at least 10% of their council tax liability
- Council Tax Reduction is granted where the award is above £5 per week
- We assume a level of income from savings of £1 per week for every £200 (or part thereof) held above £6,000
- We do not backdate claims for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- There is no second adult rebate for working age claimants

Each year the council reviews its scheme in consultation with its precepting authorities namely Worcestershire County Council, Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service and West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner. For 2015/16 no changes were proposed and therefore wider public consultation was not undertaken. However for 2016/17 all authorities continue to face significant financial challenges to meet savings targets in order to meet the impact of continued reductions in government grants. An indication of the scale of estimated expenditure reductions (before the impact of Emergency Budget on 8th July 2015) is shown overleaf:

	2016/17 £'m	2017/18 £'m	2018/19 £'m
Worcestershire County Council	28.000	24.500	25.000
West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner	4.116	6.000	6.000
Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue	0.3000	1.627	2.493
Wyre Forest District Council	1.000	1.000	1.000

Conclusion

Both the district council and all precepting authorities in Worcestershire have a difficult financial situation to manage over the next three years and will have to make savings and increase their income. In the case of Wyre Forest District Council, part of these £1m savings **could** come from reducing the amount of help provided to residents through CTRS. Alternatively we could:

- Increase the level of council tax for all households but this would be subject to Central Government restrictions
- Continue to use the council's rapidly diminishing reserves but these are forecast to run out after 2017
- Reduce funding available for other council services

In reality a combination of options will need to be used to close our entire funding gap.

No decisions have been made yet and the following questionnaire seeks your views and suggestions to help us design the scheme for 2016/17 onwards.

Please visit www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/consultations and click on Council Tax Reduction Scheme Consultation to complete the consultation online.

Please email our customer services team at worcestershirehub@wyreforestdc.gov.uk or call 01562 732928 for a paper version.

Timescale

Any decision to change the scheme must be agreed by full Council by 31 January 2016.

This consultation will take place for 12 weeks from 6 July to 27 September 2015.

Please note that any changes would affect **working age applicants** only. The scheme for pension age applicants is set by central government and is not affected by any of the options.

Consultation Questionnaire

1. The council is very keen that you have all the information you need in order to provide informed answers. The background information above explains the scheme itself and also how the scheme is currently funded. Please confirm that you have reviewed this information:

I have read the background information about the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Yes/No

Paying for the scheme

2. Do you agree that the council should change the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme to help make the savings needed?

Please select one answer only

Yes – change the scheme to make savings (if yes, go straight to options)

No – do not change the current scheme (if no, go to Q3)

Don't know (if don't know, go to next question then onto the options)

Please use the space below to make any comments you have:

3. If Wyre Forest District Council keeps the current scheme **unchanged** it will need to find extra income through other changes.

This could mean an increase in council tax which would be beyond the governments allowed limit and would trigger a referendum.

The shortfall could be met from council reserves for 2016/17 but levels of reserves are relatively low and are forecast to run out after 2017/18 so this would be a short term option only.

Alternatively, this amount would need to be found by reducing funding of other council services.

How do you think Wyre Forest District Council should make savings if there is no change to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme?

Please tick one box in each line

Increase the level of council tax

Use the council's limited reserves

Reduce funding available for other council services

Yes	No	Don't know

Agenda Item No. 9.1 Appendix 1

4. If Wyre Forest District Council did not make changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, what would be your preference in ways to make the savings required?

Please rank in order of preference (1, 2, or 3), where 1 is the option you most prefer and 3 being the least. Please mark one box in each line:

	1	2	3
Increase the level of council tax			
Use the council's limited reserves			
Reduce funding available for other council services			

Please use the space below to make any other comments you have about the scheme:

--

Options for making changes to the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)

If Wyre Forest District Council was to make alterations to the scheme, the following are our ideas on how the scheme could be changed. These changes would contribute to the savings targets identified by each authority. Set out below are four options that are being considered, some of which involved making technical changes which we have explained in more detail under each of the headings. The changes if implemented would reduce the amount of support paid, for those people affected by the changes.

Option 1 – Changing the way we calculate awards

We propose to change how we calculate the entitlement to Council Tax Reduction. At present we work out awards based on 100% of the council tax liability which gives a higher level of support than the alternative suggestion. The alternative option would start the calculations using 90% (based on the current scheme) and would produce lower levels of support for some claimants. This change *would not* affect the poorest working age claimants as they would continue to receive the same level support unless there is a non dependant deduction within their calculation. The change *would* affect everyone of working age who receives some but not maximum levels of support. The extra income from this change alone would be approximately £35,000.

The benefits of doing this are:

- The poorest working age will not be affected
- The changes will generate more income and contribute to the savings needed
- The scheme will be in line with the majority of other local authority schemes

The drawbacks of doing this are:

- The change won't affect everyone; only those in receipt of partial benefits
- It does not create much saving if it is changed in isolation of other options suggested in this consultation

We also propose reducing the minimum amount of entitlement from £5 to 50p per week. This would mean more claimants in receipt of partial benefits may be eligible for help.

Question – Option 1

1) Thinking about Option 1 (technical changes), do you support these proposed changes to the way the calculations are made?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please use the space below to make comments you have about Option 1:

Option 2 – Increase the minimum amount of council tax working age claimants have to pay

All working age residents eligible for help under the scheme have to pay a minimum of 10% of their council tax bill. We are looking at options to increase the minimum payments required to 15% or 20% of the council tax for the property. This would provide extra income to be shared across all authorities of:

£ 201,000 at 15% (without technical changes in option 1)
£ 248,000 at 15% (with technical changes in option 1)
or
£ 398,000 at 20% (without technical changes in option 1)
£ 461,000 at 20% (with technical changes in option 1)

The benefits of doing this are:

- Every working age person is required to pay at least the minimum percentage suggested. This could be more as their income increases above the allowances (applicable amounts) used within the scheme.
- If a higher percentage reduction is chosen, it will easily achieve the savings needed.

The drawbacks of doing this are:

- Working age residents currently in receipt of Council Tax Reduction will, in most cases, be expected to pay more towards their council tax than they do currently.
- A minimum amount has to be paid irrespective of an applicant's financial circumstances.
- Higher levels of council tax are likely to lead to an increase in arrears and enforcement action.

Example of a reduction in maximum liability of 20% reduction – A working age taxpayer living in a Band A premises is currently required to pay £1000 per year. Irrespective of their financial circumstances and by applying for Council Tax Reduction, they would be required to pay a minimum of £200 per year (20% minimum payment) or approximately £4 per week.

Question – Option 2

2) Thinking about Option 2 (reducing the maximum level of support), what level of minimum payment do you think should be applied?

- 15%
- 20%
- Don't know

Please use the space below to make any additional comments you have about Option 2:

Option 3 - Reducing the capital limit

At present, residents with savings and investments of more than £16,000 are not entitled to any Council Tax Reduction. Under a proposed new scheme this limit could be reduced. This change would provide up to £22,000 to be shared across all authorities.

The benefits of doing this are:

- Only those working age residents with a certain amount of savings will be affected. There will be no impact to residents who have little or no savings;
- It is a simple alteration to the scheme;

The drawbacks of doing this are:

- Where a working age resident has more than the agreed amount (to be decided following consultation) in savings, no reduction whatsoever will be given. The current scheme would allow for some support to be provided, although the higher the level of savings the lower reduction is awarded.

Example of a reduction in the capital limit – A working age taxpayer has £8,000 in savings. Under the current scheme this level of savings would mean their income would be increased by £10 per week by the assumed income from savings (An assumed income is calculated as £1 per week for each £200 block or part thereof over £6000). Depending on their overall income they could still qualify for Council Tax Reduction.

Under this proposed option, if they have savings more than either £6,000 or £12,000 depending on the final scheme, no Council Tax Reduction would be payable. If a capital limit of £12,000 is decided and someone has savings between £6,000 and £12,000, then this would be subject to assumed income as above.

Questions – Option 3

3a) Thinking about Option 3 (reducing the capital limit), do you agree with the principle that the level of capital is reduced?

- Yes (if yes, go to 3b)
- No (if not, move to next option)
- Don't know

3b) How much do you think the savings limit should be before support is stopped?

- £6,000 maximum savings
- £12,000 maximum savings
- Other (free text option)

Please use the space below to make comments you have about Option 3:

Option 4 - Maintaining a Council Tax Support Fund for residents

In order to ensure that the most vulnerable households are protected, it is proposed that the council continues to provide a Council Tax Support Fund. Residents are able to apply for additional help and the council can assess their applications based on a number of factors including:

- The residents income;
- Their personal circumstances; and
- The level of their *essential* expenditure.

Each case is examined on its own merits and where any resident qualifies for support from the Council Tax Support Fund it is paid in addition to any Council Tax Reduction. Please note that the Council Tax Support Fund is separate from the Discretionary Housing Payments scheme, which is available for Housing Benefit only.

Question – Option 4

4) Thinking about Option 4 (maintaining a Council Tax Support Fund), do you agree with the principle of the council maintaining such a fund?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Please use the space below to make comments you have about Option 4:

Your Comments

Please use the space below if you would like the Council to consider other options (please state);

If you have any further comments to make regarding the Council Tax Reduction scheme please use the space below:

About You

Why do we ask these questions? The following questions will help inform us about what decision we should take. They will also help us monitor what different groups of people think about the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme. All information you provide is completely confidential and anonymous. This means that your personal information will not be passed on to anyone and your personal details will not be reported alongside your responses.

What is your gender?

Female

Male

What is your age?

18-24 years

40-54 years

65-79 years

25-39 years

55-64 years

80 years+

How long have you lived in the Wyre Forest District?

Up to 1 year

10-15 years

1-3 years

15-20 years

3-5 years

20 years or more

5-10 years

Don't know/can't remember

Where do you live?

Kidderminster
Bewdley

Stourport on Severn
Other

Are you in receipt of Council Tax Reduction?

Yes

No

Next steps

There is a legal requirement for the Council to adopt any changes to its scheme by 31 January 2016 at the latest if changes are to take effect from 1 April 2016. The consultation will be available for comment for 12 weeks from 6 July and will close on 27 September 2015.

A report will be presented to the Councils Cabinet in November 2015 to put forward the result of the consultation and for Cabinet to make recommendations to Council. We will listen carefully to what residents tell us and the consultation results will be considered alongside other evidence and information for the Full Council to make the final decision on which scheme to adopt.

The results from the consultation will be available on the Council's website.

Any new scheme will start on 1 April 2016. The Council will consider the impact of the scheme annually and consult again if it thinks further changes need to be made.

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
23RD JUNE 2015

Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document – Adoption

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor J P Campion
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Planning Policy Manager
CONTACT OFFICER:	Heather Stone x 2520
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 – Consultation Statement Appendix 2- Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document Appendix 3 – Validation Checklist Appendix 4 – Equalities Impact Assessment

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Cabinet Members on the responses received to the Draft Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation and to agree the final version of the SPD for formal Adoption.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE that:

- 2.1 **The Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document as set out at Appendix 2 to the report is adopted and that the Consultation Statement as set out at Appendix 1 to this report is endorsed for publication.**
- 2.2 **That delegated authority be given to the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place to make any final changes to the formatting and images of the Supplementary Planning Document.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Regulation 12 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 sets out the legal requirements for preparing a SPD. Before an SPD is adopted it must be made available for a period of four weeks or more to allow representations to be made on its content.
- 3.2 Work on the SPD review commenced in 2014 with an Early Engagement consultation which was undertaken between 23rd January and 21st February 2014. This also included a stakeholder workshop (held on February 13th 2014).
- 3.3 Feedback from the early engagement consultation was used to help develop the Draft Design Guidance SPD. Following Cabinet approval, this was published for a six week consultation between 31/10/14 and 12/12/14.

- 3.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Adoption version of the Design Guidance SPD at its meeting on 4th June. Officers can provide a verbal update for Cabinet which outlines their comments and suggestions.

4. KEY ISSUES

4.1 Responses to the Draft Design Guidance SPD

A total of 127 representations were received from 11 respondents. These were all either supporting comments or suggested amendments. No objections were received. All representations were comprehensively considered in developing the final version of the SPD. A table of the representations along with the Officer's response and any corresponding amendments to the SPD is set out within the Consultation Statement at Appendix 1 for Members' information.

- 4.2 A quick summary of the key points raised through the consultation which have resulted in amendments to the SPD is set out below:

- Development Management colleagues have made a number of very practical suggestions for amendment to help make the SPD more user friendly. These focus on a more streamlined structure; an emphasis on Building for Life 12 (BfL12) for assessing new proposals; an emphasis on the validation checklist and process; the need to ensure that space standards reflect the national requirements and are enforceable.
- Worcestershire County Council has made a number of suggestions for clarification purposes with regard to links to landscape characterisation and the historic environment.
- The Environment Agency raised a number of detailed points and amendments. Some of these are considered to be too detailed for inclusion within an SPD, or would add new policy that isn't reflected within the Adopted Local Plan.

4.3 Developing the final SPD for Adoption

In addition to the amendments resulting from the comments made above, Officers asked MADE (Centre for Place Making) to provide a critical friend review of the Draft Design Guidance to ensure that the adopted SPD is effective and fit for purpose. This resulted in a number of suggested amendments to the overall structure of the document. MADE's comments were focussed on:

- Checking for consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework and Practice Guidance and ensuring that there is no duplication.
- Ensuring the specific characteristics of the District are reflected in an aspirational document.
- Space standards need to reflect newly published national standards.
- The need to clearly distinguish between Design Policy and the Development Management process to make the SPD more user friendly.
- Considers the SUDs section to be too long and disproportionate to the rest of the SPD.

- 4.4 The final amended version of the Design Guidance SPD is attached at Appendix 2 to this report. Once adopted this will support the Council's existing Local Plan Design

policies and will provide a more detailed layer of policy guidance to applicants. It will be used by Development Management Officers to help determine new planning applications within the District.

- 4.5 Development Management Officers have produced a planning application Validation Checklist which is attached at Appendix 3 to this report. This is a live document and will be continually updated due to changing circumstances arising from national planning policy and practice guidance. There will be a link from the Design Guidance SPD to the latest version of the checklist.

- 4.6 Cabinet should note that although the text will now remain the same, the SPD will require some further formatting and editing including the insertion of appropriate photographs prior to its final publication.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The costs of producing the Design Guidance SPD have been met from the Planning Policy budget.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Design Guidance SPD has undergone two stages of consultation and has been prepared in accordance with all the legal requirements. Once adopted this SPD will carry material weight in the determination of future planning applications. It will provide more detailed information on implementing the Local Plan's design policies and help to support local distinctiveness across the District.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An EIA has been produced and is attached at Appendix 4 to this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The Design Guidance SPD will help to provide clearer guidance on the Council's design requirements for locally distinctive developments within the District. It will help to ensure a high standard of development is maintained.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Design Guidance SPD has undergone two stages of consultation and a critical friend check from MADE. It has been prepared in accordance with all legal requirements. Adopting the SPD will help to ensure high standards of design in new developments across the District. Cabinet is now asked to adopt the Design Guidance as a Supplementary Planning Document that will carry material weight in considering new development proposals across the District.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Wyre Forest Development Management.
- 10.2 MADE.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Draft Design Guidance SPD (October 2014).

11.2 Early Engagement Leaflet (January 2014).

11.3 Design SPD (Taylor Young 2004) .

**Design Guidance
Supplementary Planning
Document**

Statement of Consultation

June 2015



Wyre Forest District Council

Contents

	Page No
1. Introduction	p.1
2. Name and purpose of the SPD	p.1
3. Who was consulted on the SPD?	p.1
4. How were people consulted?	p.2
5. Summary of responses	p.2
6. Summary of the main issues raised	p.2
7. How have those issues been addressed in the SPD?	p.2
Appendix A: List of Consultees	p.3
Appendix B: Summary of Representations and Officer Responses	p.5

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This consultation statement sets out details of the consultation undertaken in accordance with Regulation 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The statement sets out who was consulted, when, and how, and summarises the representations received and how they have influenced the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

2. Name and Purpose of the SPD

Name

- 2.1 Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Purpose

- 2.2 The aim of this SPD is to provide detailed advice on the District Council's expectations for delivery of high quality development. The SPD sets out how the District Council's design policies should be interpreted. This will provide certainty and clarity for those bringing forward development within the District. Wyre Forest District Council's Development Plan is made up of the Adopted Core Strategy (2010), the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan (2013) and the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (2013). The following District Council planning policies relate to design:

- Adopted Core Strategy - CP01 Delivering Sustainable Development Standards; CP03 Promoting Transport Choice and Accessibility; CP11 Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness; CP12 Landscape Character; CP13 Providing a Green Infrastructure Network; CP14 Providing Opportunities for Local Biodiversity and Geodiversity; CP15 Regenerating the Waterways
- Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan – SAL.UP3 Providing a Green Infrastructure Network; SAL.UP5 Providing Opportunities for Safeguarding Local Biodiversity and Geodiversity; SAL.UP6 Safeguarding the Historic Environment; SAL.UP7 Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness; SAL.UP8 Design of Extensions; SAL.UP9 Landscaping and Boundary Treatment
- Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan – KCA.UP1 Urban Design Key Principles; KCA.UP2 Public Realm

- 2.3 The Design Guidance SPD has been prepared to provide more detailed guidance on the District Council's expectations for the delivery of good development in accordance with adopted policy. It explains how developers should interpret the District's design policies.

3. Who was consulted on the SPD?

- 3.1 The consultation was targeted towards those organisations and individuals with an interest in design issues. Appendix 1 lists those organisations consulted and this includes statutory consultees set out within Regulation 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. A collaborative approach has been taken to preparing the SPD.

Colleagues within a number of Council departments have been directly involved with the preparation of the SPD.

4. How Were People Consulted?

- 4.1 The consultation period ran from 31st October to 12th December 2014. A draft SPD was prepared and made available on the District Council's web-site and in the Wyre Forest Customer Service Centre, Kidderminster as well as at Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley libraries. Notification letters were sent to those parties set out at Appendix A to arrive in time for the start of the consultation. The draft SPD was also made available on the District Council's consultation portal to allow representations to be made electronically. A press release was prepared to mark the start of the consultation.

5. Summary of Responses

- 5.1 A total of 127 representations were received from 11 respondents. Only one response was received from an individual.
- 5.2 All of the responses were either in support of the SPD or raised comments in relation to its proposed content. No objections to the SPD were received.
- 5.3 Summaries of all representations received and the District Council's response to each one can be found in Appendix B.

6. Summary of the Main Issues Raised

- 6.1 The table at Appendix B sets out a summary of the representations received.

7. How have those Issues been addressed in the SPD?

- 7.1 The table at Appendix B sets out how each of the comments made has been considered within the SPD.

Specific Consultees

Wyre Forest District Parish/Town Councils

Bewdley Town Council
Broome Parish Council
Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council
Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council
Kidderminster Charter Trustees
Kidderminster Foreign Parish Council
Rock Parish Council
Rushock Parish Council
Stone Parish Council
Stourport-on-Severn Town Council
Upper Arley Parish Council
Wolverley & Cookley Parish Council

Other Specific Consultees

Bromsgrove District Council
Central Networks
Directorate of Adult Services and Health (DASH)
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
English Heritage
Environment Agency
Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership
Hereford & Worcester Ambulance Service
Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service
Highways Agency
Homes & Communities Agency
Malvern Hills District Council
Mobile Operators Association
National Grid
Natural England
Network Rail
Office of Rail Regulation
Oil and Pipelines Agency (The)
Severn Trent Water Ltd
Shropshire Council
South Staffordshire District Council
South Staffordshire Water Plc
South Worcestershire Development Plan
Staffordshire County Council
Staffordshire Police Authority
The Coal Authority
Transco West Midlands Local Distribution Zone
West Mercia Constabulary
Western Power Distribution
Worcestershire County Council
Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership
Worcestershire Partnership

Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Wychavon District Council
Wyre Forest Clinical Commissioning Group

General Consultees

Organisations registered in the Planning Policy database including:

- agents
- developers
- housing interest groups
- local architects
- local interest groups
- registered providers
- service providers

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
Core11	DDG2	Support	Whole document	Support	Noted
Coal Authority	DDG26	Comment	Whole document	Having reviewed the document, I confirm that we have no specific comments to make at this stage.	Noted
Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council	DDG27	Comment	Whole document	The Parish Council have studied the above draft document and are pleased to say that we agree with most of the policies and have no further comments to make	Noted
WCC-Env.Policy & Strategic Planning	DDG29	Comment	Whole document	We are pleased to see that the document has regard to the important and salient points pertaining to the treatment of public rights of way.	Noted
WCC-Env.Policy & Strategic Planning	DDG39	Comment	Whole document	<p>Minerals and Waste</p> <p>We strongly advise that the proposed SPD should:</p> <p>-refer to the Waste Core Strategy as part of the Development Plan and refer to and take account of policies WCS 11 "Sustainable Design and operation of facilities", WCS 12 "Local characteristics" and WCS 17 "Making</p>	Noted. Section on building stone (para.5.10) together with references to the Waste Core Strategy will be moved to the Character and Identity chapter.

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
				<p>provision for waste in all new development,"</p> <p>-recognise that "Local Distinctiveness" will be compromised by lack of local sources of building stone to build new and repair existing vernacular and listed features and buildings which incorporate local stone.</p> <p>The SPD's support for the emerging Minerals' Local Plan proposals to encourage local sources of building stone would be appreciated. More practically WFDC could encourage the salvage, collection storage and re-sale of local stone produced during redevelopment and rebuilding to enable their re use locally. The Waste Core Strategy would encourage any such proposals but existing builders yards and merchants could incorporate this, if they don't already probably as PD/de minimis development. WFDC could nonetheless ascertain if this is their current practice and if it is not encourage such salvage.</p>	
Environment Agency	DDG49	Comment	Whole document	The EA has previously discussed the potential to develop supporting flood risk guidance to build on policy with the adopted plans, e.g. CP02. Given the context within the Design Guidance SPD and link to FRA Guidance within the KCAAP, we would	Comments are noted. Separate flood risk guidance to be progressed in conjunction with Environment Agency.

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
				anticipate this being produced as a separate document for Kidderminster. We would welcome discussions with you about how to progress this.	
Natural England	DDG52	Comment	Whole document	Natural England's statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development. We welcome this opportunity to comment. Our comments are provided as general advice on the opportunities that design related SPDs offer in relation to our remit, and guidance on further sources of information.	Comments are noted.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG59	Comment	Whole document	Document needs restructuring. WFDC - Dev. Control happy to meet with Planning Policy to discuss further.	A revised structure has now been agreed.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG58	Comment	Whole document	New images required for front cover - montage of examples	Agreed. Officers to make suggestions for suitable photographs to include.
Environment Agency	DDG51	Comment	Whole document	Water Efficiency: The 'Water Management' section (para. 7.7) highlights water resource but there is limited reference to water efficiency elsewhere. We	Comments are noted. Water efficiency is covered by the new housing standards which will come into effect via updated building regulations.

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
				recommend that you include a section on the need for water efficiency standards linked to Policy CP01. Suggest you explore whether more stringent standards would be required for certain parts of District informed by Water Cycle evidence base.	
Environment Agency	DDG50	Comment	Whole document	<p>Sustainability Checklist</p> <p>There is no reference to a local sustainability checklist. At Para. 6.29 of the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan, reference is made to the West Midlands Sustainability Checklist. However, we recommend that you produce a local sustainability checklist rather than relying on the West Midlands template. This should promote the delivery of high quality low carbon development. The Shropshire checklist covers several issues including sustainable water, energy and waste management requirements for new development.</p>	Comments are noted. A local sustainability checklist is not being progressed at the present time. With changes to standards for water efficiency etc. being brought in via building regulations, any additional requirements could be implemented via new policies contained within the local plan review subject to viability assessment.
MADE	DDG121	Comment	Whole document	Process guidance, good examples, and policy additions.	Comments noted. Officers will research good examples from other authorities and also look at where additional policy may be required.

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
MADE	DDG127	Comment	Whole document	Detailing and materials – more information/guidance is required to make it place specific. Images are also important here.	See previous comments on building materials. Additional section to be added to Character and Identity chapter. Local images required.
MADE	DDG128	Comment	Whole document	Discussed images and document design – needs to look good and be innovative. Could use a freelance photographer? Move away from Limehouse/Objective to produce the document. Use graphic designers?	Comments noted. Budget constraints make it unlikely that suggestions will be taken on board. To be done in-house.
MADE	DDG114	Comment	Whole document	Do we actually need it with the National Planning Policy Guidance? Have we checked that it is consistent? NPPG/NPPF, what are the gaps?	It is vital that this SPD signposts users towards the National Planning Policy Guidance and that areas not covered by this but of particular relevance to Wyre Forest are highlighted. The key characteristics of the district include its rivers and canals, flooding issues, the rural landscape and woodlands and heathland/grassland habitats.
MADE	DDG115	Comment	Whole document	How can it reflect the specific characteristics of the District? What do we want the District to look like? A more aspirational document	The overarching design objectives will be expanded to tie in with the locally distinctive vision set out in the Core Strategy.
MADE	DDG116	Comment	Whole document	The document can be rendered down – ask ourselves what value it adds to existing	Agree that there is no purpose in repeating what is already in policy or

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
				guidance. E.g. residential extensions repeats Local Plan Policy?	in existing guidance. The document should simply signpost readers to the WFDC - Dev. Control Practice Notes.
MADE	DDG117	Comment	Whole document	Space standards need to reflect the national position – we can't specify garden standards. Will be too restrictive on innovative high density schemes such as that next to Foregate Street, Worcester.	Remove reference to garden standards as per other comments. Refer to national space standards and latest government announcement.
MADE	DDG118	Comment	Whole document	We need to clearly distinguish between process and policy. Is it in the validation checklist?	Validation checklist will be agreed by development management team and referenced as part of this SPD.
MADE	DDG119	Comment	Whole document	We don't mention Design Review – we need to	Details of the Design Review process will be included in a revised Design Process chapter.
MADE	DDG120	Comment	Whole document	What about Para. 55 and 63 – creativity and innovation. Gets no mention.	A reference to the potential for schemes to be submitted under these clauses will be added to the document.
MADE	DDG122	Comment	Whole document	Streetscene – we need to re-do the pictures and show the streets/demonstrate an edge to the streets	Noted. Diagrams to be revised to be more understandable.
MADE	DDG123	Comment	Whole document	Flow chart a good idea, but needs to be revised. Incorporate design and access statement. Steps diagram – start with the site.	Agree that flow chart can be simplified to show simple steps in process

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
MADE	DDG124	Comment	Whole document	Overall vision – what we want, should reflect the Local Plan vision. 2 nd section, how we get it, local validation checklist and processes (look at Newcastle Under Lyme's). Examples of good practice (Q. Concern about the GBSLEP approach to a universal checklist, this won't be conducive to locally specific requirements?) Checklist should include reference to the Statement of Community Involvement, Building for Life Standards and Design Review Panel.	Agree that document should be restructured to start with the local plan vision for the district and then look at relevant policies, both national and local. Next section will cover the planning process with reference to SCI, BfL12 and Design Review.
MADE	DDG125	Comment	Whole document	MADE are now undertaking place reviews – looking at places and their context rather than just specific sites. The good, the bad and the ugly. Place Reviews could be undertaken for Lea Castle and Stourport-on-Severn?	Noted. Kidderminster already has the KCAAP adopted. Agree that Stourport would be a good example for a 'Place Review'. Lea Castle will also require a detailed masterplan.
MADE	DDG126	Comment	Whole document	SUDs section – more like a manual than design guidance. This section is too long and disproportionate to the rest of the SPD. It should be more central to design, so for example at the “start with the site stage”	See previous comments. The water management section will be shortened with much of the detail moved into the relevant appendix.
Core11	DDG3	Support	Para. 1.1	Support	Noted
	DDG1	Comment	Para. 1.2	Identify diverse areas and characteristics.	Final document will contain details of different character areas and local distinctiveness

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
Core11	DDG4	Comment	Para. 1.2	Please note that open space is recognised as per the NPPF, when dealing with the environment aspect of planning applications.	Noted
Core11	DDG5	Support	Para. 1.3	Support	Noted
Core11	DDG7	Support	Para. 1.3	Support	Noted
Core11	DDG6	Support	Para. 1.4	Support	Noted
Core11	DDG8	Support	Para. 1.4	Support	Noted
Core11	DDG9	Comment	Para. 1.5	Special attention to NPPF should be given / all open space to be treated as green belt	Para.1.5 refers to Strategic Environmental Assessments. The comments are not relevant to this.
Core11	DDG10	Support	Para. 1.6	Support	Noted
Core11	DDG11	Support	Para. 1.7	Support	Noted
Core11	DDG12	Comment	Para. 1.7	Design should underline any roofing parameters and constraint which involve solar panels	Comments noted
Core11	DDG13	Support	Para. 1.8	Support	Noted

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
Core11	DDG14	Comment	Para. 1.10	Size of plan must adhere to NPPF / Small or large	Noted. All schemes must be in conformity with NPPF
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG60	Comment	Para. 1.10	Building for Life 12 - What is this? Requires more explanation. Should it be in an appendix?	Noted. Insert into final sentence 'Building for Life 12 (a government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods)
Core11	DDG15	Comment	Para. 1.11	A difficult aspect of planning, viewed alongside recent central government guidelines. Small private alterations, extensions, or developing in gardens. Open Plan requirements, Here, neighbours and local authorities must be consulted and agreement given, any possible breaking of existing laws must be addressed. Balancing NPPF with intermediate government indicators invokes the Law- verses Politics special administration needed.	Comments are noted.
Core11	DDG16	Support	Para. 1.12	Support	Noted
Core11	DDG17	Support	Para. 1.13	Support	Noted
Core11	DDG18	Comment	Para. 2.1	Structural design must give way to green infrastructure. To include paths and cycling to help travel to work and leisure.	Comments are noted

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
Core11	DDG19	Support	Para. 2.3	Support	Noted
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG61	Comment	Para. 2.3	Add in Policy SAL.UP9	Agreed. Add 'SAL.UP9 - Landscaping and Boundary Treatment' to end of 2nd bullet point
Core11	DDG25	Support	Para. 2.4	The aspirations are as they should be	Support is welcomed
Core11	DDG20	Support	Para. 2.4	Support	Noted
Core11	DDG21	Support	Para. 2.5	Support	Noted
Core11	DDG22	Support	Para. 2.6	Support	Noted
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG62	Comment	Para. 2.6	Add in CP13 and SAL.UP9	Agreed. Add to 1st bullet point ' CP13 - Providing a Green Infrastructure Network' Add to 2nd bullet point 'SAL.UP9 - Landscaping and Boundary Treatment'
Core11	DDG23	Support	Para. 2.7	Support	Noted
Core11	DDG24	Support	Para. 2.8	Support	Noted
WFDC - Dev.	DDG63	Comment	Para. 2.9	Add in WCC Landscape Character Appraisal	Agree. Add in 3rd bullet point 'WCC Landscape Character Assessment

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
Control					Supplementary Guidance'
WCC- Env.Policy & Strategic Planning	DDG31	Comment	Para. 2.10	Please see suggested revisions in italics: The built, natural <i>and historic</i> environment informs the landscape character and is an important asset...	Suggestion is noted and included
WCC- Env.Policy & Strategic Planning	DDG32	Comment	Para. 2.11	Suggest additional wording: Development responding to landscape character should: enhance and strengthen the setting and character ...	Suggested amendment noted and included
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG64	Comment	Para. 2.12	Will BfL be used for all development - extensions, minor?	BfL is only applicable to large residential schemes (10+ dwellings)
WCC- Env.Policy & Strategic Planning	DDG33	Comment	Para. 2.13	Under section on 'Creating a place', suggest additional wording for 2nd bullet point. • Working with the site and its context - Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing buildings, <i>heritage assets</i> , site orientation and microclimates?	Suggested wording is noted and included

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG65	Comment	Para. 2.16	Amend wording as follows: “The layout of residential streets should mean that high speeds are impossible to achieve and traffic calming should not be needed. lower vehicle speeds without the need for traffic calming.”	Amend 1st sentence to “The layout of residential streets should lower vehicle speeds without the need for traffic calming.”
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG66	Comment	Page 43 Table .1	Move to appendices	Comment is noted but officers consider that table should remain in the chapter rather than being moved to an appendix. Additional column relating to NPPG to be added.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG67	Comment	Assessment of Site & Context	Needs clarification - D&A Statements now only relevant to Major apps	Noted. The chapter relates to large-scale schemes only.
WCC- Env.Policy & Strategic Planning	DDG34	Comment	Para. 3.4	Suggested amendments as follows: Heritage Assets – Buildings, structures and archaeology all give clues to how a place has evolved. These may be statutory listed assets or assets of local value. It is important that these are considered as part of any development, or the impacts of development <i>to the setting of heritage assets</i> are taken into account if these assets adjoin the development site. <i>Worcestershire Historic Environment Record, historic maps and plans provide essential data sets that inform</i>	Suggested amendments noted but it is considered too detailed for this guidance. Reference to Worcestershire Historic Environment Record added at end of bullet point.

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
				<i>appropriate and proportionate site investigations that in turn aid the interpretation of the places and establish significance of heritage assets and their setting and highlight issues and options that should inform design.</i>	
WCC- Env.Policy & Strategic Planning	DDG35	Comment	Para. 3.5	Suggested amendments to para.3.5: Landscape setting – The quality and character of the landscape setting including trees, hedgerows, green spaces, natural, <i>prehistoric or historic features</i> , which could influence the <i>development of habitat to support enhancements for biodiversity</i> , the <i>setting of heritage assets</i> or layout of the scheme.	Suggested additional wording is noted and included
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG69	Comment	Para. 3.5	Need to clarify where landscape analysis plan has come from – Is there an example for Wyre Forest?	If possible, an example from a Wyre Forest planning application will be used.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG68	Comment	Para. 3.5	Bullet point 1 - needs reference to Worcestershire County Landscape Character Assessment	Agreed. Add in 'Please refer to Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/4788/landscape_character_assessment_supplementary_guidance

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG70	Comment	Para. 3.9	Improve layout of diagrams and labelling/context explanation	Agree. Layout and labelling will be improved in liaison with officers from WFDC - Dev. Control.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG71	Comment	Para. 3.10	These diagrams need introductory paragraphs. Refer to Highways Design Guide (WCC) pages 12 -15 and use clear labelling	Noted. The current guidance from WCC on highway design can be found in the LTP3 Highways Design Guide. However, this guidance is in the process of being reviewed.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG72	Comment	Para. 3.11	Remove wording “may be ineffective and not consider the opportunities for the site fully.” Insert “still has its place within <u>some</u> developments”	Amend sentence to read as '...a single parking solution may be ineffective. A variety of solutions is often the most successful approach. As the design agenda has evolved there has been a move away from courtyard parking: however, this still has its place within some developments.'
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG73	Comment	Para. 3.12	Amend wording at end of Para.: “WFDC - Dev. Control Practice Note <u>s</u> 15 “Approach for Major Applications” at www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning-practice-notes-and-advice-leaflets.aspx ”	Final sentence - only refer to WFDC - Dev. Control Practice Notes - remove specific reference.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG74	Comment	Para. 3.13	Amend wording “A checklist of what documentation needs to be submitted with a planning application is contained within <u>the</u> Appendix 1 of WFDC - Dev. Control Practice	Amend final sentence to read: 'A checklist of what documentation needs to be submitted with a planning application is contained

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
				Notes 17 – Guidance for Developers Submitting Major Planning Applications and is available to download from the website as set out at 3.12.”	within the WFDC - Dev. Control Practice Notes.'
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG75	Comment	Para. 3.14	Include requirement for Heritage Statement	Amend final sentence to read ' All Listed Building applications also require one together with a Heritage Statement.'
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG76	Comment	Para. 3.16	Delete last 2 sentences – not enforceable “Wyre Forest DC would encourage applicants and developers to exceed the current building regulations at time of application / development and to meet with best practice approaches wherever possible. Further information regarding sustainable design and construction can be found online at the BREEAM website: www.breeam.org/filelibrary/BREEAM%20and%20Planning/Good_Practice_Guidance_-_Sustainable_Design_and_Construction.pdf ”	Delete final 2 sentences of Para. 3.16 from 'Wyre Forest DC would encourage ...'
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG77	Comment	Para. 3.17	Amend at Kingswinford, Dudley to <u>neighbouring authority</u> .	Amend opening sentence 'The new vicarage at a neighbouring authority ...'
WFDC - Dev.	DDG78	Comment	Para. 3.18	Where in Kidderminster? Remove “This has yet to be implemented” as planning	Amend to read ' Planning permission was also granted for a similar

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
Control				permission has expired.	scheme for a replacement rectory for St. Georges Kidderminster as shown below.'
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG79	Comment	Para. 4.1	Remove wording referencing extensions – they are dealt with in the next chapter “areas where infilling takes place and where extensions to existing dwellings are proposed .”	Amend opening sentence to read ' The District Council has an important role to play in influencing essential elements of housing design in new residential areas and in older residential areas where infilling takes place.'
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG80	Comment	Para. 4.4	Photos - Include a panorama of streetscene instead	Change photograph to a panorama of a streetscene in liaison with officers from WFDC - Dev. Control.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG81	Comment	Para.4.6	Small scale developments define as 1-9 homes.	Amend opening sentence to read as ' Small scale developments (1 - 9 homes) ...'
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG83	Comment	Para.4.8	Amend: Repair / Completion – New development sometimes works to repair <u>improves or repairs</u> the townscape	Repair / Completion -New development sometimes improves or repairs the townscape...'
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG82	Comment	Para.4.8	Use examples of local development. Also first diagram is not example of good design.	Sketch drawings will be replaced with local examples if possible.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG84	Comment	Para.4.10	How does this layer plan fit in? No context and not referenced anywhere else	Agree with comment. Diagram will be removed as it does not add to understanding.

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG85	Comment	Para.4.16	Move para 4.16 to after para 2.17 makes more sense there	Agree. Move paragraphs 4.16-4.18 to end of chapter 2.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG86	Comment	Para.4.16	Bullet point Red - Does the applicant grade their own scheme?	Yes, the applicant grades the scheme before officers then assesses their submission to see if they agree with the grading in answer to the 12 key questions.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG87	Comment	Para.5.3	1st bullet point - Refer to 45 degree advice note	Bullet point i - add in reference to advice note on website
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG129	Comment	Para.5.4	Bullet Point 8 - suggest re-wording: "The use of flat roofs has the potential to have a significant impact on the aesthetics of a development. As such proposals incorporating flat roofs will be assessed by their merits"	Noted and included
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG88	Comment	Para.5.5	Remove link to website? "Additional good practice guidance is available on the District Council's website at http://www.wyre-forestdc.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning-practice-notes-and-advice-leaflets.aspx "	Remove specific link to website as guidance notes are to be updated.
WFDC - Dev.	DDG89	Comment	Para.5.7	Use different photo - completed development and make reference to good	Use photo of good local example referencing setback and matching

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
Control				set back	materials.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG90	Comment	Para.5.9	Extending Listed Buildings remove section from Design SPD and leave to advice leaflet.	Remove section as duplicates advice leaflet.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG91	Comment	Character & Identity	Is this chapter necessary? CP11 and SAL.UP7. If so does it relate to 10+ houses or 1-9? Para 6.1 “a proposal must <u>should</u> improve...”Para 6.4 refers to Appendix 3 – no maps. Photos at 6.6 - Use residential examples for Wyre Forest if possible and show layout	<p>Disagree that this chapter is not required. The Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness Policies provide the basics. The SPD adds in more detail reflecting the local area. This chapter is applicable to all types of development.</p> <p>At Para. 6.1 5th sentence, amend to read ' Where the context is weak, a proposal should improve the quality of an area.'</p> <p>Para. 6.4 - Maps will be added at Appendix 3.</p> <p>Para. 6.6 - if possible, local examples will be used.</p> <p>Add in paragraph referring to local building stone as per comments from Worcestershire County Council.</p>

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG92	Comment	Landscape Design	Is this section necessary? Separate SPD/ Appendix – Divided into Minor, Major, Other?	Comments are noted. This chapter will be slimmed down and moved to earlier in the document as it refers to all types of major developments.
Wyre Forest District Council	DDG54	Comment	Para.7.3	Suggest use of a different photograph.	Noted and agreed.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG93	Comment	Para.7.3	Does this apply to all schemes or where appropriate?	Para. 7.3 will apply to large residential schemes where appropriate.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG94	Comment	Design of Space for Play	Refer to S106 requirements for LEAPS/Neaps/ off site etc	Add in reference to planning obligations SPD before bullet points.
WCC- Env.Policy & Strategic Planning	DDG30	Comment	Water Management	<p>We welcome and support the references throughout the document to the role of the water environment in informing and creating a sense of place.</p> <p>With regard to SuDS policy and legislation we would advise the LPA to be mindful of the draft National SuDS Standards and accompanying guidance which are likely to form part of the NPPF technical guidance.</p> <p>We welcome the references to the role of</p>	Comments are noted

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
				Water Sensitive Urban Design and SuDs as part of a multifunctional and holistic approach to surface water management.	
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG95	Comment	Water Management	Water Management – consider slimming down to bits which most relevant. Use SUDs examples from our District.	Agree that section needs to be slimmed down. If possible a local example of a SUDs scheme will be used.
Environment Agency	DDG41	Comment	Para.7.7	Groundwater should also be identified in considering and managing all parts of the water cycle. Most of the eastern half of the district is underlain by Permo-Triassic sandstones which are classed as Principal Aquifers as large volumes of water can easily be drawn from them via boreholes or wells. They are regionally important for public water supply but are highly vulnerable to surface contamination. Source Protection Zones have been modelled to protect specific sensitive locations such as the public water supply boreholes.	Comments are noted. Further reference will be made to importance of groundwater to public water supply in eastern part of district
Environment Agency	DDG42	Comment	Para.7.10	We note that the North Worcestershire Water Management Team has been referred to in identifying roles and responsibilities in relation to flood risk. Watercourses classed as 'Main Rivers' fall under the remit of the Environment Agency and this could be detailed within this Para.	Add in additional text. 'Please note that main rivers fall under the remit of the Environment Agency.'

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
Environment Agency	DDG43	Comment	Para.7.11	<p>The district contains a significant rural area. In addition to managing flood risk, the use of SuDS can help to meet objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) i.e. help to deliver the aim of waterbody 'good status' by 2027.</p> <p>Advice on rural SuDS can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/291508/sch_o0612buwh-e-e.pdf</p>	Noted. A cross reference to advice on rural SuDS will be added to the final SPD.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG96	Comment	Para.7.14	Third bullet point – do we want to dissuade from open plan estates?	Comment noted.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG97	Comment	Microclimate	Is the section on microclimate necessary?	Officers consider that it is vital to consider microclimatic conditions when designing a development as building orientation can effect energy consumption and future use of external spaces.
Wyre Forest District Council	DDG55	Comment	Para.7.15	Pleased to see mention of heat island effect.	Noted
Wyre Forest District Council	DDG56	Comment	Incorporating Biodiversity into	Pleased to see mention of green roofs and walls	Noted.

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
			Developments		
WCC- Env.Policy & Strategic Planning	DDG36	Comment	Para.7.25	<p>Suggested additional text as follows:</p> <p>Wyre Forest District is dominated by three main watercourses: the River Severn, the River Stour and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal which follows the valley of the Stour. There is also a very large network of streams and pools. <i>Many of these features are heritage assets, being built or modified to perform particular functions.</i> The Hoo Brook, Blakedown Brook and Dowles Brook all have national significance for biodiversity. Many of the key regeneration sites are situated alongside these waterways and it is important that developments are designed with the 'blue' infrastructure at the heart of any proposals.</p>	Suggested amendments are noted
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG98	Comment	Para.7.25	<p>Special Consideration Around Canals and Rivers – Can't we just rely on Local Plan policies?</p>	<p>This section builds upon policy CP15: Regenerating the Waterways. The canal, rivers, streams and pools are key to the district's local distinctiveness and officers consider that specific design principles should be set out in the SPD.</p>

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
Canal & River Trust	DDG28	Comment	Para.7.26	We welcome the inclusion of our previously suggested design principles which provide a good starting point and raise a number of questions when reviewing development proposals. It is important to consider views both from the towpath and the water at boat level. When considering new buildings, we are supportive of buildings which enhance the historic environment. Also need to consider siting, orientation, massing, scale, materials and setback. Boundary treatments should be given careful consideration. Highways and parking are often sited adjacent to waterways but need appropriate screening. Access from developments to the canal should be convenient, comfortable, attractive and safe. Bridges should integrate well into surroundings and minimise impact on canal corridor.	Comments are noted. Further detail will be included in final SPD.
WCC- Env.Policy & Strategic Planning	DDG37	Comment	Para.7.26	Suggest additional design principal relating to canals: • <i>consideration of associated heritage assets</i>	Suggestion is noted.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG99	Comment	Para.7.27	Suggests use of a different photograph of planting.	Noted and agreed.

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
Environment Agency	DDG44	Comment	Para.7.28	<p>Development alongside rivers and streams': should open up culverted watercourses, where practicable. In terms of the species mentioned, a reference should be made to providing habitat for water vole.</p> <p>For the last bullet point, including undeveloped buffers helps to reduce disturbance to watercourse corridors in protecting habitat/ecology and the species referred to. Buffers also provide a suitable easement for access to undertake flood risk maintenance and / or improvement works, when required. With this in mind, an additional point should be added to this section to highlight that development should provide ongoing access and maintenance to any watercourses within or adjacent to the site.</p> <p>Developers could refer to The River Restoration Centre 'Manual of River Restoration Techniques' which provides further advice and a number of case studies on river restoration projects, available via: http://www.therrc.co.uk/rrc_manual.php</p>	<p>Comments are noted. Add in additional reference to water vole in 3rd bullet point. Insert additional bullet point at start - 'Should open up culverted watercourses, where practicable'. Final bullet point - add in -' ... wetland species and help to reduce disturbance to watercourse corridors in protecting habitats/ecology. Buffers also provide a suitable easement for access to undertake flood risk maintenance and / or improvement works, when required.'</p> <p>Add in bullet point: 'provide ongoing access and maintenance to any watercourses within or adjacent to the site.'</p> <p>Additional sentence: Developers could refer to The River Restoration Centre 'Manual of River Restoration Techniques' which provides further advice and a number of case studies on river restoration projects, available via: http://www.therrc.co.uk/rrc_manual.p hp</p>

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG100	Comment	Design for Privacy	Design for privacy consider re-wording. WFDC - Dev. Control happy to discuss in further detail. Para 8.2 bullet point 1 – 31m should be 25m?	Noted. Officers to discuss how to take this section forward.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG101	Comment	Safety & Security	Safety and Security – duplication? Para 8.4 – Design and Access Statements for Major Applications only	Comments are noted. The types of applications requiring Design and Access Statements are mentioned at para.3.14. Although Appendix 2 lists the attributes for Secured By Design, it is worth setting them out in more detail
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG102	Comment	Para.8.9	4 th bullet point - would we refuse on this basis?	Noted. Officers to discuss this.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG103	Comment	Para.8.10	Internal layouts – can we require this? Remove	Agree. This section will be rewritten. Reference will need to be made to the nationally described space standard issued by DCLG in March 2015. This will be implemented through the planning system. It can only be applied where there is a local plan policy based on evidenced local need and where the viability of the development is not compromised.

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG104	Comment	Private Garden Space	Private garden space – too prescriptive.	Noted. Remove this section.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG105	Comment	External Storage, Refuse & Recycling	Sections on External Storage and Access for All - Remove	Comments are noted. Remove sections.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG106	Comment	Shop Front Design Guidance	Does this apply to historic areas only? Does it replace Shop Front Design SPG?	Comments are noted. This guidance applies to all areas and does not replace the existing Shop Front Design SPG
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG107	Comment	Para.9.8	Is there a % perforated?	Details of suggested shutter perforation will be discussed with officers
WCC- Env.Policy & Strategic Planning	DDG38	Support	Rural Development	We commend Wyre Forest District Council for referencing and empowering use of the guidance!	Support is noted.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG108	Comment	Rural Development	Rural Development - need to reference WCC Landscape Character Assessment Image of barn conversion needs updating	Noted. Paragraph on Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment will be added.

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
					<p>'Landscape character is an important factor that is considered in the assessment of a planning application. At a national level English Nature have divided up the landscape into National Character Areas. In Worcestershire, these are further divided up into smaller Regional Character Areas and then into Landscape Descriptive Units which are determined by analysing maps of geology, topography, soils, tree cover, land use and settlement patterns. Landscape Types are generic and can be found anywhere in the country where the same combinations of physical and cultural landscapes occur. An application for residential development should show that the key characteristics of the Landscape Type have been considered in the siting, design, scale and layout of any proposed change. Further details of the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment can be found at http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20014/planning/1006/landscape_character_assessment/5</p>

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG109	Comment	Examples of High Quality Employment Development	Use photos of employment development examples in Wyre Forest	Agreed. Photographs of Amada and Beakbane will be used in the final SPD.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG110	Comment	Appendix 1	BFL 12 Matrix needs amendments - further discussion with WFDC - Dev. Control Notes - quantify large scale housing (i.e. 10+ housing)	Officers will discuss with Development Management colleagues how the proforma should be used to assess large scale housing schemes. Amend title to BfL12. Quantify 'large-scale housing' (10+ dwellings). Update link to latest edition of BfL12 (January 2015) http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/nowledge-resources/guide/building-life-12-third-edition Amend final table for Wyre Forest Response by deleting scores and just referring to the traffic light system.
Wyre Forest District Council	DDG53	Comment	Appendix 2	Requirement for an Arboricultural Impact Assessment in accordance with BS5837:2012 needs highlighting under the section on Design and Access Statements.	This requirement for an Arboricultural Impact Assessment will be included within the planning application validation checklist to be set out as part of the final document.
Wyre Forest	DDG57	Comment	Appendix 2	With reference to the need for a maintenance plan for soft landscaping, there	BS8545 will be highlighted under the Design and Access Statements

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
District Council				needs to be a designated time for the establishment of trees as per BS8545 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape.	specification.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG111	Comment	Appendix 2	D&A Statements for major applications only	This is stated in the text at Para. 3.14 but will also be added in at the appendix for clarification.
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG112	Comment	Appendix 3	Character studies - include maps and layouts with wording to provide context	Agree that this would be helpful. Extract street maps to illustrate the different character types will be included together with photographs from the district.
Environment Agency	DDG45	Comment	Appendix 4	We welcome the reference to contaminated land in considering the suitability of infiltration SuDS and to the requirement for the number of treatment stages to be informed by the uses proposed on site e.g. road/car parks may need more treatment. The developer would need to demonstrate that, where infiltration SuDS are intended to be used the risk to controlled waters (ground and surface waters) has been adequately assessed. In addition, the use of infiltration SuDS would need to be considered carefully for sites located within SPZ1 of public water supplies.	Comments noted. Further details will be added to the appendix.

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
				Moving from SPZ 3 the outermost, to SPZ1 (closet to the borehole) we impose greater restrictions on activities and discharges (such as surface water and foul water drainage) to protect the abstraction.	
Environment Agency	DDG46	Comment	Appendix 4	<p>The flood risk Sequential Approach in the layout and design of the proposed development should only be used after the Sequential Test has been passed. We normally advise that finished floor levels are set at least 600mm above the relevant 1% (1 in 100 years) plus climate change flood level. In demonstrating that there is no increase in flood risk, there should be no impact on flood flow routes and floodplain storage. Any flood storage compensation would need to be provided on a 'level for level, volume for volume' basis. Developers should seek opportunities to reduce the overall level of flood risk in the area (flood risk betterment).</p> <p>In designing for safe development, we would recommend adding an additional Para. within this section to cover safe access and egress for occupiers (especially important where 'more vulnerable' users or overnight accommodation is proposed). For 'more vulnerable' and 'highly vulnerable'</p>	<p>At end of 1st Para. add 'The flood risk Sequential Approach should only be used after the Sequential Test has been passed.'</p> <p>At 2nd Para. after 1st sentence add in 'The Environment Agency normally advise that finished floor levels are set at least 600mm above the relevant 1% (1 in 100 year) plus climate change flood level.'</p> <p>At end of 2nd Para. add: ' In demonstrating that there is no increase in flood risk, there should be no impact on flood flow routes and floodplain storage. Any flood storage compensation would need to be provided on a 'level for level, volume for volume' basis. Developers should seek opportunities to reduce the overall level of flood risk in the area</p>

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
				<p>development (as classified in Table 2 of the flood risk section of the National Planning Practice Guidance), the developer should demonstrate (within a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)) that the development has safe pedestrian access above the 1% river flood level plus climate change. Pedestrian access should preferably remain flood free in a 1% river flood event plus climate change. However, in cases where this may not be achievable, the FRA may demonstrate that pedestrian access is acceptable based on an appropriate assessment of 'hazard risk' including water depth, velocity and distance to higher ground (above the 1% river flood level plus climate change). See http://www.hydres.co.uk/tools/FD2320%20TR2%20Final%20Jan%2006.pdf).</p> <p>For 'less vulnerable' development e.g. office, retail, the FRA should consider safe access above the 1% river flood level plus climate change. Consideration of an appropriate flood evacuation management plan (see below) in consultation with Emergency</p>	<p>(flood risk betterment).'</p> <p>Add new Para. : 'For 'more vulnerable' and 'highly vulnerable' development (as classified in Table 2 of the flood risk section of the National Planning Practice Guidance), the developer should demonstrate (within a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)) that the development has safe pedestrian access above the 1% river flood level plus climate change. Pedestrian access should preferably remain flood free in a 1% river flood event plus climate change. However, in cases where this may not be achievable, the FRA may demonstrate that pedestrian access is acceptable based on an appropriate assessment of 'hazard risk' including water depth, velocity and distance to higher ground (above the 1% river flood level plus climate change). See http://www.hydres.co.uk/tools/FD2320%20TR2%20Final%20Jan%2006.pdf).</p> <p>For 'less vulnerable' development</p>

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
				<p>Planners would be required.</p> <p>Flood level data(where available) to assist the Flood Risk Assessment and Flood Management Plan, including modelled levels for the: 5% event (functional floodplain), 1% event, 1% event with climate change, 0.1 % event, may be obtained from the Environment Agency's Customer Services team on telephone 03708 506506; shwgenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk</p>	<p>e.g. office, retail, the FRA should consider safe access above the 1% river flood level plus climate change.</p>
Environment Agency	DDG47	Comment	Appendix 4	<p>Measures to manage residual risk - a. contributions should be for both new and existing publically funded Flood Alleviation Schemes (FAS). Also recommend developer contributions (£1000 per dwelling) are made towards flood warning systems where a development depends on this service.</p> <p>c. & d. Part 3 (Guidance) of the CLG document titled 'Improving the Flood Performance of New Buildings: Flood Resilient Construction' provides further guidance on flood resilient design and construction, available via: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flood-resilient-construction-of-new-buildings</p>	<p>a. add in '(both new and existing)'</p> <p>d. add in 'Part 3 (Guidance) of the CLG document titled 'Improving the Flood Performance of New Buildings: Flood Resilient Construction' provides further guidance on flood resilient design and construction, available via: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flood-resilient-construction-of-new-buildings</p> <p>e. add in 'where a development benefits from a FAS, evacuation plans must consider residual risk from a breach or overtopping. The</p>

Respondent	Response No.	Type of Response	Part of Document	Response Summary	Officer Response
				The Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment contains hazard ratings for breach and overtopping scenarios for the Kidderminster FAS and Bewdley FAS.	Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment contains hazard ratings for breach and overtopping scenarios for the Kidderminster FAS and Bewdley FAS.'
Environment Agency	DDG48	Comment	Appendix 4	Recommend additional point to cover responsibilities of 'riparian landowners', those who own land / property adjacent to river, stream or ditch including maintenance of watercourse and banks. See guidance document 'Living on the Edge' https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/riverside-ownership-rights-and-responsibilities	Add additional point h. 'Those owning land or property adjacent to a river, stream or ditch may also have additional responsibilities for maintenance of the watercourse or banks. See guidance document 'Living on the Edge' https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/riverside-ownership-rights-and-responsibilities '
WFDC - Dev. Control	DDG113	Comment	Appendix 5	Remove – can't require this.	Appendix will be removed.

1 Introduction and Purpose	2
Consultation	2
Sustainability Appraisal	2
Good Design	2
Document Structure	3
2 Overarching Vision and Design Objectives for the Wyre Forest District	4
Introduction	4
Objective One - Securing High Quality Design	4
Objective Two - Creating & Reinforcing Local Distinctiveness	5
Objective Three - Protecting & Establishing Landscape Character	5
3 Local Character and Identity	7
Introduction	7
Building Stone	8
Landscape Design	8
Landscape Quality in Residential Developments	8
Design of Space for Play	9
Planting	9
Water Management	10
Microclimate	11
Incorporating Biodiversity into Developments	11
Urban Design Principles for Town Centres	13
Design Principles for Rural Development	16
Design Principles for Commercial Development	18
Design Principles for Residential Development	18
4 The Design Process	22
Introduction	22
Applying for Planning Permission	23
Building for Life	24
National Standards	25
Appendix 1 – Building for Life 12 Matrix	27
Appendix 2 - Character Studies of Different Eras of Housing	30
Appendix 3 - Detailed Guidance on Water Management Issues for Applicants	33

1 Introduction and Purpose

1.1 The aim of this Supplementary Planning Document is to provide detailed advice on Wyre Forest District Council's expectations for the delivery of high quality development. The SPD will clearly set out how the District Council's design policies should be interpreted. This will provide certainty and clarity for those bringing forward development within the District. The SPD does not set new policy; it provides detailed guidance for implementing the design policies set out within the District's existing Development Plan. The SPD is a material consideration for anyone submitting a planning application.

1.2 The Wyre Forest District is a considerably diverse area with particularly distinctive characteristics and heritage assets. It is especially important to aim for high quality design in any future development to both complement and enhance this local distinctiveness and create a high quality environment.

Consultation

1.3 The District Council undertook an 'early engagement' consultation between 23rd January and 21st February 2014 to allow key stakeholders and other interested parties to influence and shape the content of the SPD. A draft version of the SPD was made available for consultation between 31st October and 12th December 2014. The representations received have informed the development of the SPD.

Sustainability Appraisal

1.4 The EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive requires certain plans, policies and programmes which are likely to have significant environmental effects to undergo a formal environmental assessment. Additionally, European Directive 92/43/EEC Conservation of Natural Habitats, Wild Fauna and Flora requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to be undertaken for plans to establish whether or not the plan, alone or in combination with other plans policies or programmes, is likely to have significant effects on the qualifying features of a European site or sites. Section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to be carried out on a plan. However, section 180(5) (d) of the Planning Act 2008 removes the requirement for SA on SPDs. Therefore SEA, HRA and SA are only needed where an SPD is likely to have significant effects.

1.5 The District Council undertook extensive Sustainability Appraisal on the Adopted Core Strategy, the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan. This SPD does not set any new policy. It only provides detailed guidance on existing policies in these documents. Therefore, it can be concluded that SEA, HRA and SA are not needed for this SPD.

Good Design

1.6 Good design is considered to be essential for sustainable development and it is recognised as a key contributor to community health, economic value, social well-being and inclusion, as well as environmental quality. Good design is needed to create places where people want to live, work and visit. Design is important everywhere, not only in maintaining places which are attractive, but also in revitalising and regenerating places. Good design is not just about individual buildings, but also about how places work as well as look.

1.7 This Supplementary Planning Document should be considered alongside National Planning Practice Guidance (www.planningguidance.planning.portal.gov.uk). Applicants are encouraged to refer to this guidance when considering their proposals for new development. Although it does not set out to repeat national guidance, it is important to emphasise the issues that the NPPG (para. 006) considers are paramount to good design:

- local character (including landscape setting)
- safe, connected and efficient streets
- a network of green spaces and public places
- crime prevention
- security measures
- access and inclusion
- efficient use of natural resources
- cohesive and vibrant neighbourhoods

1.8 The NPPG places great emphasis on promoting local character and this is reflected within this SPD which includes an overarching vision for the design of new development within our area.

Document Structure

1.9 The first part sets out the overarching vision and design objectives which together form a comprehensive approach to delivering development in the District. These support the policies contained within the Development Plan.

1.10 The next section considers local character and identity, both of the built environment and the natural environment. Landscape design is considered along with water management and biodiversity, paying particular attention to the rivers and canal network. Design principles for the town centres, rural areas and commercial development are also outlined in this section. This chapter then considers residential developments, from small infill developments through to large estates as well as householder extensions.

1.11 The final section considers the design process and the different stages required in order to secure planning approval starting with pre-application advice, leading onto design review for larger schemes to actual submission of the planning application. The District Council endorses the use of Building for Life 12 for major residential developments and developers will be expected to familiarise themselves with its principles.

Overarching Vision and Design Objectives for the Wyre Forest District

Introduction

2.1 These design objectives set the tone for new development within Wyre Forest. They should be viewed as interlocking objectives, which together form a comprehensive approach to delivering development within the Wyre Forest area and respond to the unique opportunities and landscape that the district offers.

2.2 They support policies set out in the District Council's Local Plan documents. Wyre Forest District Council has an overall vision to protect, improve and enhance the built and natural environment in order to provide an accessible, attractive, enjoyable and healthy place to be. The quality of the district's environment is one of its most valuable assets and includes a rich built heritage, diverse and sensitive habitats and attractive landscapes.

2.3 A key priority for the district is the protection and enhancement of our natural and built environment by safeguarding and enhancing the quality of the environment through appropriate conservation, control of development and attention to design and also by retaining the local character and distinctiveness of the district's landscapes and settlements. Achieving this will mean attractive well designed buildings, spaces and neighbourhoods, with the overall character of the landscape being protected and new development being well designed, locally distinctive, energy efficient and environmentally sensitive.

2.4 The local plan sets out the vision for how the district will be by 2026 where there will be three thriving riverside towns with their own distinctive identities; rivers and the canal and other green/blue infrastructure will be valued links for both wildlife and people connecting the town centres with the surrounding countryside; natural habitats and historic landscapes will offer a range of outdoor interests for education and sustainable tourism; the risk of flooding has been reduced due to a programme of floodplain management, softer landscaping and extensive use of SUDs; Kidderminster benefits from extensive brownfield regeneration with an attractive town centre with urban greenspace; Stourport-on-Severn riverside and the historic canal basins have been fully restored and attract high visitor numbers; Bewdley's flourishing riverside environment offers many opportunities for visitors; the district's landscape character is conserved and enhanced with historic farm buildings repaired and restored and the urban areas have bus priority measures and there's an extensive cycle network.

Objective One - Securing High Quality Design

2.5 Relevant policy framework:

- Core Strategy: CP11 – Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness, CP13 – Providing a Green Infrastructure Network, CP15 – Regenerating the Waterways
- Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan: SAL.UP7 - Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness, SAL.UP8 - Design of Extensions, SAL.UP9 - Landscaping and Boundary Treatment
- Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan: KCA.UP1 - Urban Design Key Principles; KCA.UP2 - Public Realm

2.6 High quality design is inherent in creating great places to live work and play. Design quality contributes to how people perceive places and their enjoyment of the place. Truly sustainable places will be developed with high quality design at their heart; all development types have

competing social economic and environmental considerations, whether this is attracting new businesses, building new neighbourhoods, or regenerating the canal infrastructure, ensuring high quality design will mean the development has the best chance of success.

2.7 High quality development should:

- be reflected through an understanding of the local context
- create well connected places that are easy to move around
- be visually attractive
- create safe and accessible development
- enhance the neighbourhood or surroundings
- be fit for purpose
- be sustainable

Objective Two - Creating & Reinforcing Local Distinctiveness

2.8 Relevant policy framework:

- Core Strategy: CP11 – Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness, CP15 – Regenerating the waterways, CP13 - Providing a Green Infrastructure Network
- Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan: SAL.UP7 - Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness, SAL.UP3 - Providing a Green Infrastructure Network, SAL.UP6 - Safeguarding the Historic Environment, SAL.UP9 - Landscaping and Boundary Treatment

2.9 Areas will have an existing character that is determined by the qualities of the existing buildings and landscape. Where this is strong, new development should respond to the existing qualities and ensure that the proposal presents a positive addition to the streetscape or landscape. Where the existing context is weak or negative, it is important that new development seizes the opportunity to improve the quality of the area.

2.10 Development responding to local distinctiveness should:

- respect the existing qualities of the place that are positive, and look to address those that are perceived as negative
- value the heritage and culture of the local area
- respond to the immediate and wider context
- contribute to creating a sense of place for the local area

Objective Three - Protecting & Establishing Landscape Character

2.11 Relevant policy framework:

- Core Strategy: CP12 – Landscape Character, CP13 – Providing a Green Infrastructure Network, CP14 – Providing Opportunities for Local Biodiversity and Geodiversity, CP15 – Regenerating the Waterways
- Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan: SAL.UP3 – Providing a Green Infrastructure Network, SAL.UP5 – Providing Opportunities for Safeguarding Local Biodiversity and Geodiversity, SAL.UP9 - Landscaping and Boundary Treatment

Overarching Vision and Design Objectives for the Wyre Forest District

- Worcestershire County Council Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance

2.12 The built, historic and natural environment informs the landscape character and is an important asset; the qualities of the place as defined through the landscape character help define the sense of place. The setting of the District provides an important backdrop to development. The ease of access to the countryside is a unique asset and ensuring such an opportunity is used to its potential is essential to maintaining and promoting active and healthy lifestyles.

2.13 Development responding to landscape character should:

- enhance and strengthen the setting and character through new development and landscape gain
- not undermine the quality of the landscape

Introduction

3.1 Character and local distinctiveness are important qualities for any development in retaining and creating places with identity. Design details embedded in existing buildings and spaces can present subtle cues to new development. New development should respond to the local context. Where this is positive, the character of the place should be reflected in the design; consideration should be given to density, scale and form, and also to the detailing, such as considering proportion and pattern of fenestration, materials and the landscape. Where the context is weak, a proposal should improve the quality of the area. This could be through use of higher quality materials, different building forms or making new connections, to create a more distinctive and identifiable place. Opportunities should be used to remove inappropriate developments or features to help improve an area's quality. Responding to context is not just about the confines of the site; it is about considering the wider area.

3.2 The heritage of an area brings with it challenges. Proposals need to respond to the setting of heritage assets, whether specific or area based. This can include statutory assets such as conservation areas, listed buildings and archaeological designations, but also locally important assets. The heritage of the area can help inform new development, but this does not mean a literal interpretation through pastiche development for example. There are 17 Conservation Areas within the district, one covers much of Bewdley town centre, 4 in Stourport-on-Severn, 4 in Kidderminster, 7 in rural settlements and a linear one covering the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. Character Appraisals for these Conservation Areas are available on the website.

3.3 Topography creates opportunities and constraints, enabling views or creating difficult gradients. Development proposals should clearly give understanding to how topography is dealt with, responding creatively and positively to the issues presented. It should be used to enhance local distinctiveness.

3.4 New development should be used to positively reinforce townscape and character and to ensure a sense of enclosure and a continuity of enclosure are created. The height and massing of a building should be informed by the character, function and width of the streets they are sited within. A broad range of residential 'character types' are identifiable within the District. These are listed at Appendix 2. These character sheets are there for the benefit of the designer to help their understanding of character and to inform creative design. These are only for guidance purposes. They are not intended to prescribe exact approaches. It is also important, where applicable, to refer to the relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisal. In areas covered by a Neighbourhood Plan, this should also be taken into account.

3.5 The component parts to built character are summarised as follows:

- Street proportion – Height and width of a street in section – this creates the sense of enclosure and character to the street
- Building Form – This includes storey heights and the type of development, such as terraced, detached or apartment
- Plot Width – This is the width of the building plot within the street. The building frontage may extend across only a proportion of the full plot width if the property is detached
- Building Line Set Back – The distance the building is set back from the back of pavement within the building plot; a terraced property may not have a set back if opening straight onto the street.

- **Front Elevation Composition**– The proportion and arrangement of the street facing frontage, including size, shape and pattern of fenestration, eaves heights and details such as bay windows.
- **Roof Composition** – The proportion and form of the roof, referring to details such as pitch, ridge, hipped or gable end.
- **Materials** – The construction materials for the walls and roofs; this can include colour, type, textures and finishes.
- **Boundary** – Typical construction details, such as walls, railings or hedging, at the front boundary with the pavement edge, demarcating the public and private realms.
- **Landscape** – The size and arrangement of a typical front garden space, for example paved or grassed
- **Parking** – the typical arrangements for private parking, this can include on-street, or private off-street drives.

Building Stone

3.6 In many parts of the district, sandstone is a prominent feature with deep cuttings and even small dwellings cut into the rock. This is especially prevalent in the north of the district around Wolverley. Sandstone is used in churches, barns, some dwellings and for boundary walls. Other examples where sandstone is used is as a plinth, for coping and for dressings. The predominant building material in historic buildings is red brick with clay tiles for roofs. It is possible that "Local Distinctiveness" will be compromised by a lack of local sources of building stone to build new and repair existing vernacular and listed features and buildings which incorporate local stone. Details on potential sources for building stone can be found at www.buildingstones.org.uk. The emerging Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan contains proposals to encourage local sources of building stone. The District Council will encourage the salvage, collection, storage and resale of local stone produced during redevelopment and rebuilding to allow its reuse in the local area. The Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy (2012) also encourages the recycling and reuse of resources and is available to view on the Worcestershire County Council website.

Landscape Design

3.7 The quality of a place is expressed by both the buildings and its spaces. A poor quality private and public realm can impact negatively on a higher quality building.

3.8 The landscaping should be specific to the place, and recognise the context, picking up on existing materials for example. High quality approaches should be used wherever possible, focusing on detail, such as front boundaries, delineating streets, marking out parking bays etc. Public spaces should always be well enclosed with development that provides good opportunities for natural surveillance to ensure safety at all times of day. The setting of landscape features should inform the design and the character of the landscape and be captured in the design.

Landscape Quality in Residential Developments

3.9 Where appropriate, larger residential developments should have open space as a dominant feature and should:

- Appeal to a wide range of users
- Relate to the surrounding character of the area
- Link into a wider network of green spaces
- Form a focal point for residents
- Be safe, attractive and easily accessible for all physical abilities
- Not be designed as an addition but integrated into the design from the beginning
- Integrate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems to include landscape features such as ponds and swales to enrich the landscape and enhance biodiversity and ecology through wetland habitats. (see paragraph 3.17)
- Survey and retain existing landscape features of value including trees, hedges, woodland, ditches, ponds, grassland and verges. Retaining these features helps to enhance new development in a cost effective way, creating a sense of place
- Use existing water features and canals as part of the design, enhancing them to encourage leisure use and improve access (see paragraph 3.26) for further guidance from the Canal & River Trust)
- Car parks should not be central to a design. Pocket parks can be fitted into the smallest spaces, breaking up car parking schemes and other vast expanses of hard surfaces.
- Ensure a clear definition between public and private spaces

Design of Space for Play

3.10 New development proposals should make suitable provision for both formal and informal play spaces as set out in the Planning Obligations SPD. Size should be based on the expected child population of the local area. Where practicable, play spaces should embrace the concept of natural play, using formal and informal elements and be designed in context with the existing landscape character. Well designed play spaces should:

- Use the existing landscape to release additional play potential, making use of natural elements
- Allow for children to shape and manipulate their environment (sand and water play, den making etc.)
- Be safe and fit for purpose
- Be well located and overlooked by houses or shops etc
- Encourage imaginative and free play alongside equipped play spaces
- Provide scope for a child to develop and be accessible to both disabled and able bodied children
- Allow children of different ages and abilities to play together
- Include elements of managed risk and challenge
- Encourage access to and engagement with nature and develop healthy lifestyles
- Provide a buffer zone between play spaces and residential dwellings
- Provide seating for parents and carers
- Consider future maintenance

Planting

3.11 Planting is an important part of any new development, providing structure, enhancing aesthetics and providing ecological benefit. Good planting design considers the following:

- Provide visual interest and create a safe and attractive living environment
- Create a sense of place

- Can be used to frame views
- Provide shade from the sun and shield exposed sites from the wind
- Create green networks and enhance and create habitats, supporting biodiversity
- Provide visual screening or use as a sound barrier
- Create a sense of cohesion within the space
- Help new developments to blend into the existing landscape
- Planting should be suitable for the environment and location it is being used in
- Native and naturalised trees and shrubs should generally be specified where possible
- Consideration should be given to future management and maintenance (see BS8545)
- Existing trees and hedges should be retained where possible

Water Management

3.12 Water is central to the identity of the district with the 3 main towns all located along rivers or canals. The town centres have a history of flooding from the Rivers Severn and Stour and flood alleviation measures have been put in place for Kidderminster and Bewdley. Many locations in the district have been affected by surface water issues and flooding from smaller watercourses. In the past, development has led to an increase in surface water run-off which contributes to flooding when the sewers and watercourses are unable to cope in times of extreme rainfall. Water is often seen as a risk rather than an opportunity. However, when imaginatively and innovatively integrated into the built environment, water creates attractive places for people to live, work and play as demonstrated by recent development.

3.13 Most of the eastern half of the district is underlain by Permo-Triassic sandstones which are classed as Principal Aquifers as large volumes of water can easily be drawn up from them via boreholes or wells. Much of the public water supply comes from these but they are also highly vulnerable to surface contamination. Source Protection Zones have been modelled by the Environment Agency to protect these boreholes.

3.14 Water Sensitive Urban Design integrates water cycle management with the built environment through planning and urban design. Soft planted, green drainage schemes cost less than conventional methods whilst increasing property values and providing multiple benefits, for example, increased biodiversity, better air and water quality, improved public health and enhanced land values. Further information is available at the following link http://www.ciria.org/Resources/Free_publications/Water_sensitive_urban_design_in_the_UK_-_Ideas_book.aspx

3.15 In Wyre Forest, the North Worcestershire Water Management Team has been set up to deal with flooding, drainage, ordinary watercourses and surface water issues. It should be noted that the main rivers still fall under the remit of the Environment Agency. Core Strategy policy CP02: Water Management helps to ensure that new development has regard to all aspects of the water cycle within the district. Using a Water Management Statement will help to ensure that all relevant aspects of flood risk and water management will be covered when applying for planning permission. Appendix 3 provides detailed guidance on water management issues for applicants.

3.16 Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs) help to control the flow rate of surface run-off, protect/enhance water quality, create new wildlife habitats among watercourses and promote natural groundwater recharge. Further guidance on SUDs is available in the NPPG. In areas at risk of flooding, new development should only be considered appropriate if priority

has been given to the use of SUDs. All major development should provide SUDs unless it can be shown to be inappropriate. Details of the different SUDs techniques can be found at www.susdrain.org. In addition to managing flood risk, SUDs can also help to meet the objectives of the Water Framework Directive by helping local rivers and streams to achieve 'good' status by 2027.

3.17 The implementation of SUDs has widespread benefits for both people and wildlife in terms of their contribution to green infrastructure. Further information can be found at www.rspb.org.uk/Images/SuDS_report_final_tcm9-338064.pdf. This issue is further explored under biodiversity (see paragraphs 3.20 -3.24).

Microclimate

3.18 It is essential to assess the microclimatic conditions of a site and its surroundings. There needs to be enough, but not too much warmth and light, shade, cooling breeze and shelter. Buildings and urban space can be designed to reduce harmful wind effects and contribute to successful well-used external spaces. Building orientation affects how much light is let in for passive solar gain and can help reduce overheating of the interior. Main openings are best facing south, kitchens better facing east, living rooms to south and west and bedrooms often better facing north. Maximising solar gain, can reduce the need for artificial lighting and thus reduce carbon use. South or west facing roofs allow for electricity generation via photo-voltaic panels.

3.19 Public spaces should have direct sun for a significant proportion of the day to encourage maximum usage. Shade should be provided in streets, spaces and focal points that receive direct exposure to midday and afternoon sun. Trees are one of most effective ways of improving microclimate. They moderate temperature extremes and reduce heat island effects, provide shade whilst letting light through and provide shelter from the wind. They also improve air quality, provide habitat, reduce pollution and can be a potential fuel source.

Incorporating Biodiversity into Developments

3.20 There are a number of local plan policies regarding green infrastructure and biodiversity, including CP13, CP14, and SAL.UP5. With a large number of green spaces within the District there is the potential to provide a comprehensive linked network. The District's rivers and canals in particular can help with these links. A large number of potential development sites are situated along the waterways and it is vital that the opportunity to improve biodiversity is maximised for the benefit of both wildlife and people. Wyre Forest also has significant areas of acidic heathlands which are becoming increasingly fragmented. Any development which could help to reconnect these important habitats through sustainable landscaping would be beneficial.

3.21 If possible, green infrastructure should be incorporated into all new development as it has a number of benefits including allowing both animal and plant species to move around and counteracting flooding and temperature extremes. Access to nature can have health benefits and improve quality of life. Further information is available at http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/GI-signposting_tcm6-11961.Pdf and <http://www.topa.org.uk/pages/planning-for-a-healthy-environment-good-practice-for-green-infrastructure-and-biodiversity.html>

3.22 There are also opportunities to retrofit green infrastructure using green roofs and roof gardens, green walls to provide insulation or shading, new tree planting and by managing highway verges to enhance biodiversity. It is also important to consider air quality, ground and surface water and soil protection when designs are drawn up. The impact of lighting on biodiversity should also be considered. Where lighting is required for safety reasons in areas of high wildlife value such as along rivers and canals, it is possible to minimise light spillage onto the adjoining watercourses.

Biodiversity Features in the Landscape

3.23 SUDs (see paragraphs 3.16 - 3.17) provide opportunities to form new wildlife corridors and can be planted with native species as well as allowing natural colonisation. Rain gardens are landscaped areas placed next to impermeable surfaces such as roofs, roads and car parks for the purpose of storing and absorbing run-off during rainfall. They often take the form of planted depressions in the ground. Plants should be hardy to withstand sudden downpours. They can also act as traffic calming measures and provide attractive landscaped areas for wildlife. See guidance at <http://www.landscapeinstitute.co.uk/policy/GreenInfrastructure.php>

Special Consideration Around Canals and Rivers

3.24 Wyre Forest District is dominated by three main watercourses: the River Severn, the River Stour and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal which follows the valley of the Stour. There is also a very large network of streams and pools. Many of these features are also heritage assets, being built or modified to perform particular functions. The Hoo Brook, Blakedown Brook and Dowles Brook all have national significance for biodiversity. Many of the key regeneration sites are situated alongside these waterways and it is important that developments are designed with the 'blue' infrastructure at the heart of any proposals. Design principles relating to canals include:

- individual waterways and water spaces should be viewed as part of wider network
- water is a space and leisure/commercial resource in its own right.
- need to consider development views both towards the water and also from the water
- tow path should be integral part of public realm
- siting, configuration and orientation of buildings must optimise views of water with natural surveillance and encourage and improve access to/from and along water
- waterside development needs to be considered holistically with opportunities for water-based development, use and enhancement
- improve site appearance from both tow path and from water itself and enhance environmental quality of waterway corridor
- appropriate boundary treatment and access issues may be different for tow path side and offside of waterway
- biodiversity improvements could include hedge planting, linear orchards, provision of bird/bat boxes and wildflower verges
- new buildings should enhance the historic environment with siting, orientation, massing, scale, materials and setback considered carefully
- highways and parking need appropriate screening when sited adjacent to waterways
- access from new development to the waterway should be convenient, attractive and safe
- new bridges should integrate well into the surroundings and have minimal impact on the environment

Further information is available at <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/planning-and-design>

3.25 Development alongside rivers and streams should:

- Open up culverted watercourses where practicable
- Create and retain shallow open river banks
- Include features that shield the river corridor from the effects of light and other disturbance
- Provide features for aquatic and riparian animals such as fish, otter and water vole
- Provide special niches for species such as kingfisher and bats
- Be designed and constructed in such a manner as to pose a minimal risk to the river from contaminated or silt-laden run-off
- Include an ecological management plan to control riparian invasive weeds
- Include undeveloped buffers that can support appropriate wetland species and help to reduce disturbance to watercourse corridors in protecting habitats/ecology. Buffers also provide a suitable easement for access to undertake flood risk maintenance and/or improvement works when required
- Provide ongoing access and maintenance to any watercourses within or adjacent to the site

Further information is available at http://www.therrc.co.uk/rrc_manual.php

Special Consideration Near Acid Heathlands

3.26 The Wyre Forest District contains several areas of acid heathland which is not found anywhere else in Worcestershire. Development proposals in the vicinity of acid heathlands should:

- Conserve existing acidic heathland plants and animals
- Include native acidic plants in both the landscaping and on the buildings
- Ensure that any new acidic habitats are continuous with adjacent existing habitat
- Include features for reptiles and invertebrates in the landscaping
- Include an ecological management plan to ensure the sustainability of the newly created acidic grassland habitats

Urban Design Principles for Town Centres

3.27 The District's town centres in order of size are Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley. Kidderminster is the strategic town for the District, and the other urban areas are designated as market towns. The town centres are key to the success of the District, creating a hub of activity and a focus for commerce, retail, culture and leisure, providing for residents and workers alike. Strong urban design principles will assist in retaining the vitality and vibrancy in these areas. Further information relating to Kidderminster town centre can be found in the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan and the Churchfields Masterplan. Specific guidance for Stourport-on-Severn can be found in the Public Realm Design Guide, the Bridge Street Basins Link Development Brief and in the Severn Road Development Brief. These documents are available to view on the planning policy pages of the website.

High Quality Public Realm

3.28 Key principles for the creation of a high quality public realm in the town centres include the following:

- The street hierarchy should be understood whereby the importance and function of differing streets is prioritised in terms of the physical treatment.
- Reduce impact of physical barriers created by main streets, using public realm to support movement; pedestrian movement should be prioritised over the movement of vehicles.
- Create safe, well-enclosed public realm that creates ease of movement at street level.
- Create a network of high quality spaces within the town centre, providing a variety of functions, such as leafy shaded areas, multi-use spaces or tree lined streets.
- Support the use of space through the use of high quality attractive materials and the provision of street furniture; however, street clutter must be avoided.
- Ensure space has uses which support activity and high levels of surveillance throughout all times of day, to give an appropriate level of security. Isolated, disconnected or poorly maintained spaces will not be successful.
- A programme of maintenance should be proposed as part of any works to ensure longevity of any improvements.



Artist's impression of how the new Exchange Square outside Kidderminster Town Hall could look

Creating Legible and Active Connections

3.29 The layout of streets and how they connect into the wider area needs to be given much thought in the design:

- Prioritise street users; pedestrians and cyclists, access for mobility impaired, and access to public transport should be considered as a priority. Further consideration needs to be given to ensure commercial access and servicing can be achieved. Design key junctions to ensure ease of movement and reduce the impacts of traffic.
- Strengthen linkages and connections for pedestrians around the centre creating clear circuits around the centres.
- Ensure way finding is considered, through the creation of attractive landmarks and appropriate signage, particularly at prominent sites.
- Connect the activities and services within the centre to surrounding neighbourhoods, providing easy links to and from shops, public transport and other focuses for activity.
- Create pedestrian routes that are safe and feel welcoming.
- Create linkages out of centres, connecting into green infrastructure and waterways.

Active Street Edges

3.30 Active street edges will ensure places are inviting to users:

- Keep building lines and frontages to the street strong with variety and detail providing interest.
- Ensure the definition of public and private space through the use of appropriate and quality boundary treatments, using hard or soft materials.
- Where uses bound the street, these should be maximised in their potential for passive surveillance; the design of the frontage should respond to this.

Vitality and Vibrancy

3.31 It is important to design development which will be used throughout the day and the evening to encourage more people into town centres outside normal working hours:

- Support a mix of uses across the town centre, appropriate to creating a centre that remains active after the traditional 9 am to 5.30 pm opening hours.
- Support clustering of activities to retain an active and healthy early evening economy, looking to retain families and workers within the centre, and attract a rising residential population to support activity in the centre after traditional opening hours.
- Development should consider further adaptability and future potential uses, to ensure longevity of the proposed development and minimising vacancy potential.



Artist's impression of new public space to be created at the Bullring in the centre of Kidderminster.

Shop Front Design Guidance

3.32 High quality design plays an important role in the viability and vitality of shopping areas. Shop fronts should be designed to be compatible with both the individual building and the general street scene. Planning permission is required for any new or replacement shop fronts and any other alteration which affects the external appearance of the building. Conservation area consent may also be required in the case of major works. Ensuring shop fronts are well maintained will be crucial to improving the design quality across the District.

3.33 Contemporary designs can be appropriate where these are well executed; these will generally comprise predominantly glazed frontages with simple signage. When refurbishing historic shop fronts, try to incorporate any original features. The scale and proportion of existing

buildings should be respected. Materials should be durable and of high quality. Signage should be sympathetic to the existing building and context. Security shutters should be mounted within the interior of the shop frontage, and wherever possible be designed into the shop front from the initial concept. These should be perforated or lattice grilles to improve feelings of safety on the street outside of daylight hours through activity and interest.

3.34 For further guidance specific to historic areas, please refer to 'Shop Front Design Guidance for the Historic Environment' available on our website.

Design Principles for Rural Development

3.35 The rural character of the District is a key attribute that should be considered, with about 85% of the district's area being classed as rural. The rural areas contain a network of villages and settlements each with their own distinct character and identity. Building on earlier sections, this character should be enhanced through any development and not undermined. Appropriate development to support local needs that is in accordance with current policy should be respectful of the context; it should reinforce the character and its location, design and visible appearance within the wider landscape. Under policy DS01 of the adopted Core Strategy, there are limited opportunities for development in the rural settlements and development in the open countryside will be closely controlled to safeguard the integrity of the Green Belt and landscape character. The Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan also contains a section on rural development with specific policies on reuse/adaptation of rural buildings, chalets and equestrian development. The Chaddesley Corbett Neighbourhood Plan (2014) has specific policies to ensure any development is sensitively designed and maintains and enhances both the built and natural environment. New design should respond positively to local character. Policies CC8-10 set out design principles. The Neighbourhood Plan is available to view on the Council's website.

3.36 Under Paragraph 55 of the NPPF, local planning authorities should avoid isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances - requirement for rural worker to live on site, viable use of a heritage asset or enabling development to secure its future, reuse of redundant building which would enhance its setting and finally a dwelling of exceptional quality or innovative nature. This final clause may potentially offer exemption from planning constraints if a dwelling is 'architecturally outstanding'. In order to satisfy this clause, a dwelling must be truly outstanding or innovative, help to raise design standards more generally in rural areas, reflect highest architectural standards and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the area. Any proposal submitted under this clause of paragraph 55 would be expected to go down the route of Design Review with the Council's partner MADE. Applicants will be expected to meet any costs of this process in full.

3.37 Potential development may include affordable housing provision, community facilities and services, or contribute to the rural economy in terms of traditional employment sectors or farm diversification as appropriate. Within this, there will be individual design challenges. Where appropriate development is sought within the Green Belt, the reuse or replacement of existing buildings will be supported as a priority providing an adverse impact on the integrity of the landscape does not result. Equestrian activity and horiculture are prominent and growing uses. Any necessary infrastructure and development to support this will need to be balanced with the potential impact on the landscape and character.

3.38 Within villages the following design principles are appropriate:

- Demonstrate a positive response to context, based on a site analysis, and responding to height, scale, building lines and materials in particular.
- The proposed development should be respectful of existing densities.
- The proposed street network should respect or enhance existing provision, ensuring ease of movement.
- Uses sited adjacent to each other should be respectful of privacy and amenity, and provide adequate car parking. These should seek to reflect existing development patterns.
- Elevations should be respectful of existing character and detailing.
- Landscaping should be appropriate to the context, proposals for addressing topography and boundaries should be reflective of the existing character; this could include set backs /front to front distances.

3.39 Landscape character is an important factor that is considered in the assessment of a planning application. At a national level, English Nature have divided up the landscape into National Character Areas. Wyre Forest District falls within the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau - the central catchment of the Rivers Severn and lower Stour. Within Worcestershire, these are further divided up into Regional Character Areas, with Wyre Forest District falling into Kinver Sandlands (land to east of River Severn) and the Wyre Forest Plateau to the west. These areas are then further divided into Landscape Character Types which are determined by analysing maps of geology, topography, soils, tree cover, land use and settlement patterns. Landscape Types are generic and can be found anywhere in the country where the same combinations of physical and cultural landscapes occur. An application for residential development should show that the key characteristics of the Landscape Type have been considered in the siting, design, scale and layout of any proposed change. There are 6 Character Types represented within the district. These are set out within the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment SPD (available on the County website) and can be summarised as follows:

- Timbered Plateau Farmlands - hedged fields, scattered farms, woods and wooded valleys
- Sandstone Estatelands - open rolling landscapes with large arable fields often enclosed by thorn hedges
- Estate Farmland - ordered agricultural landscape of medium / large size fields, small plantations and ornamental trees of large country houses
- Principal Wooded Hills - wooded landscape with steeply undulating topography
- Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings - intimate densely settled landscape with wayside cottages and smallholdings, dense hedges with hedgerow trees
- Wooded Forest - only found in Worcestershire within the Wyre Forest itself

3.40 The district contains a large number of historic farmsteads. Any proposals for development affecting them will be expected to follow the Worcestershire Farmstead Assessment Framework (available at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/archaeology/farmsteadsguidance). The document is based around a number of key considerations:

- The landscape context –including boundaries and habitat potential.
- The whole site – form, scale and siting of buildings.
- The extent of historic change to the whole site and its landscape context, including where traditional buildings and farmyards have been lost or replaced – informing opportunities regarding buildings & spaces.
- The architectural patterning – styles, materials and details and potential siting of new buildings.

Design Principles for Commercial Development

3.41 This section refers predominantly to larger scale commercial developments, where a development site is subject to a number of functions. This could be office space, workshops, storage, manufacturing, distribution or retail. Whilst the end use may differ, there are a number of design challenges that can drive this development type; these include the need for large floor areas, provision of substantial car parking, a cost effective build and the free standing nature of such buildings.

3.42 Commercial development design should:

- Demonstrate a positive response to context, based on a site analysis, and responding to height, scale, building lines and materials in particular.
- Respond to the existing streetscene and creating a positive urban structure where the building contributes to creating strong frontage and interaction with the street.
- Respond to the human scale of the street, buildings should create depth and visual interest within the streetscene, with elements broken down where appropriate.
- Use robust and appropriate materials that will withstand the test of time.
- Entrances and primary frontages should address the street and be subject to the highest standards of design to support the creation of an attractive and active streetscene.
- Plant and machinery associated with the building should be discretely accommodated on the site and be integral to the architecture.
- Signage and branding should be appropriate to the scale of the development, be well considered as part of the development design and well related to the frontage and entrance/access.
- Activity generating uses should be located on the principal frontages, adjacent to public spaces or streets wherever possible.
- Inward looking developments should be avoided; buildings should be outward facing towards existing streets and spaces.
- Landscape should be designed to be appropriate to the site; the scheme should provide a coherent and unified structure for the site.
- Appropriate boundary treatments should be proposed with regard to the context.
- SUDs drainage should be incorporated (See paragraph 3.17)
- Parking should not dominate developments; this should be carefully integrated where required to ensure frontages are not dominated by car parking.
- Service areas should be located away from primary frontages.
- Security should be carefully considered to ensure a balance between physical protection and the maximised opportunities for natural surveillance.

Design Principles for Residential Development

3.43 The District Council has an important role to play in influencing essential elements of housing design in new residential areas, in older established areas where infilling takes place and where extensions to existing dwellings are proposed.

3.44 Housing development will be designed to meet the overarching design objectives. The creation of a successful housing scheme is the sum of a number of parts, from creating the right connections, successful streets and a housing layout that supports amenity for residents with both privacy and public spaces to create cohesion. However, the homes themselves are often the subject of debate with much criticism levelled at 'standard house types'.

Small Scale Developments

3.45 Small scale developments (1 - 9 homes) are predominantly driven by the context and character of their surroundings. The design should respond to the context, creating better places and making a positive addition to how the place functions wherever possible. The design should fit into or help establish the place.

3.46 The Council would expect new development proposals to consider the following:

- **Infill** – if the site is part of an existing street, how will the proposal fit in with the existing scale, density, building line, eaves and ridge heights, and elevational detailing of both the immediate properties and the wider surroundings? A proposal could respond through architecture which replicates existing architecture or be innovative and creative but must respond to the parameters set by the context.
- **Repair / Completion** – New development sometimes improves or repairs the townscape, creating a positive place where previously this had been undermined by poor quality development, or where a site has remained vacant for some time. The addition of development, whether buildings and/or landscaping can work to create and connect places.
- **Creating** – Small scale developments are sometimes hidden away, such as a small infill site accessed from an existing connection that has limited frontage. In such cases, the creation of its own character may be appropriate, responding to the site constraints; for example, the creation of a small courtyard development.

Large Scale Developments

3.47 Large scale developments (10+ homes) offer the opportunity to create new neighbourhoods with character. A strong urban design framework will help to set a clear vision for the scheme based around a series of layers including movement, buildings, landscape and land uses.

3.48 An initial analysis of how the site connects to the surrounding area will set out the structure for the site, illustrating a clear street hierarchy, and where site access is to be taken from the existing network. The creation of a structure will start to help define development plots. Connections to the site and within it will need to be considered together with the existing street hierarchy in the area. Proposals should aim to build on existing views and landmarks or perhaps create new ones. The layout should encourage natural surveillance at all times of day.

3.49 The next stage is to set out the various development blocks, demonstrating how the edges will be dealt with, along with any relationships with existing buildings or spaces. Important views / aspects or corners will also need to be indicated where appropriate. Thought needs to be given to density, scale, height and massing of the buildings, materials to be used and impact on any heritage assets in the vicinity. The next stage is to identify the locations of landscape treatments proposed, key areas of public space, SUDs, and areas of tree planting. Developers will need to consider the landscape setting, existing topography, microclimate and local materials. Finally, development blocks should be shown with the type and mix of development, indications of height, density and how the uses will interact with public space.

3.50 Large scale residential developments will be assessed against Building for Life 12 principles (see 4.12).

Design Principles for Residential Extensions

3.51 A range of extensions and alterations are permitted by Schedule 2, Part 1 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) without the need for express planning consent. A list of these is available to view and download at www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/commonprojects/extensions. The advice provided in this guide aims to minimise the impact of any extension or alteration on the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of neighbouring properties and to ensure the development appears appropriate to both the host property and to the streetscene and the character of the area. These principles should, ideally, be applied to all extensions regardless of whether or not planning permission is required.

3.52 Whether planning permission is required or not, it may be necessary to gain approval under Building Regulations in order to ensure that any development is structurally sound and accords with the requirements of the relevant Building Acts legislation.

3.53 Local Plan policies require that any extensions should have no serious adverse effect on the amenity of neighbouring residents or occupiers. (Refer to policies SAL.UP7,UP8 and UP9). Extensions should enhance a dwelling and contribute to its character. They should be sympathetic to the original building and be visually subservient. To help address this, extensions should:

- Respect the existing character of the area and the appearance of the streetscene by avoiding a harmful terracing effect and other incongruous additions.
- Maintain original frontage rhythms by stepping back slightly from the original building line. Typically, a first floor side extension should be set back 0.75m from the front elevation of the original building.
- Ensure that ridge heights are lower than the original building. Eaves heights should not exceed those of the original building.
- Ensure that the “front face width” of extensions is based on the original proportions of the house to be extended. As a general rule extensions to the side should have a maximum width of 4/7ths of the original front face width.
- Any projections should not detract from an established building line at the front of the property.
- Distinctive landscape elements such as trees should not be compromised.
- The use of flat roofs has the potential to have a significant impact on the aesthetics of a development. As such, proposals incorporating flat roofs will be assessed on their merits.
- Dormers should be finished with pitched roofs and be positioned away from the edges of the roof.
- In order to preserve the privacy enjoyed by the occupants of neighbouring dwellings, the positions of windows and the inclusion of features such as balconies should be carefully considered.
- To preserve the levels of light and outlook enjoyed by the occupants of neighbouring properties, the 45° code guidelines would normally be applied.
- Outbuildings should not unduly diminish the amenity space around the property and should not prejudice the outlook from neighbouring properties.

3.54 Additional good practice guidance is available on the District Council’s website.

3.55 The materials used in an extension should match or be sympathetic to the existing dwelling in terms of type, colour and texture. Changes in appearance as a result of weathering should be taken into account when selecting bricks and tiles. It may be worth considering re-using roof tiles from the rear of properties for the front of extensions.

3.56 In addition to respecting general proportions, the detailed design of the windows and surrounds is also an important consideration. The style of the windows, materials, glazing pattern, sill and lintel treatments of the existing windows should be taken into account when designing a new extension. Such details must be indicated on application plans.

3.57 Buildings often have distinctive architectural features which contribute to their special character and these can be used to good effect to help match the design of the extension with the original. It is worth considering whether the property to be extended has any decorative features (door architraves, decorated lintels, sills and eaves detail) which could be incorporated into the design of the extension. However, it is recommended that unnecessary or ornamental decorations which can appear too fussy are avoided. Attention to details such as the correct siting of rainwater pipes and correct fascia depth and alignment is also very important. Whenever possible, soil vent pipes should be concealed within walls.

Design Principles for Effective Parking Solutions

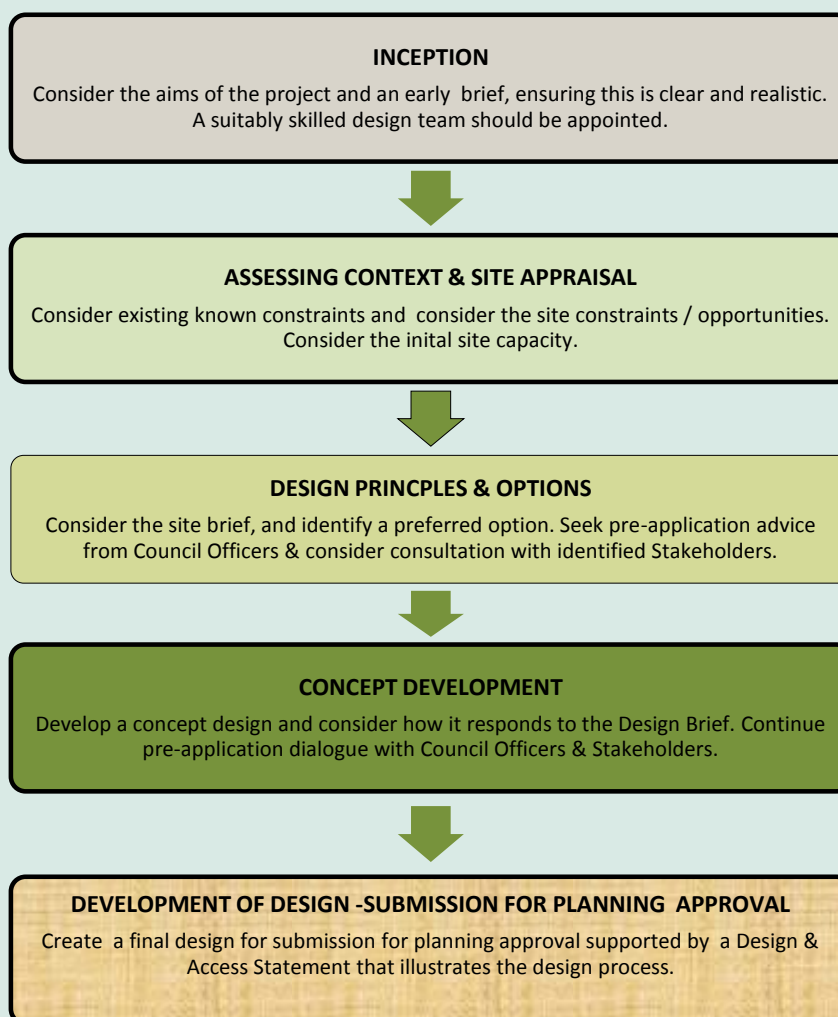
3.58 On any development a single parking solution may be ineffective and often a variety of solutions is the most successful approach. As the design agenda has evolved there has been a move away from courtyard parking; however this still has its place within some developments. The solution should be most appropriate to the context and the challenges and opportunities it presents:

- In-curtilage spaces – A popular solution with house builders. However, to maximise densities these are frequently provided at the front of properties, which requires careful design to ensure landscaping is incorporated to minimise impact on the streetscene. The number of spaces needs to be minimised in this arrangement to ensure that they do not dominate the streetscene.
- Parking Courtyard – where a strong frontage needs to be implemented, or access to properties is limited, a rear parking courtyard may be a preferable solution to enable safe access to properties. The location and boundaries of these needs careful design, to ensure natural surveillance and that these are not undermined by people parking informally on-street instead.
- On-street Spaces – these generally work best when these are in marked bays, with landscaping treatment, to lessen the visual impact within the streetscene. The design and provision needs to work with a cross site strategy to ensure sufficient provision is provided.

Introduction

4.1 The delivery of high quality design and development is reliant on an effective design process. This moves from the initial concepts and assessment, through to the final construction and delivery following the granting of planning permission. The planning system is an integral part of this process, and WFDC are clear that the highest design standards and robust design process will be required to secure planning approval.

4.2 The design process involves a number of different assessment stages including an analysis of the site and its context, existing buildings in the vicinity, the landscape around the site and movement both within and from/to the site. The NPPG promotes the use of appropriate planning processes and tools to help achieve good design recognising that the promotion of good design should be sought at **all** stages of the planning process from policy formulation to pre-application discussions right through to the use of planning conditions and agreements. The following section sets out the District Council's approach to securing good design at all stages of development. Applicants and developers should use this chapter as a framework for compiling a planning submission and for entering into pre-application discussions with the District Council.



Applying for Planning Permission

Stage 1 - Pre-Application Discussions and Advice

4.3 Pre-application discussions are an opportunity to discuss the design policies, requirements and parameters that will be applied to a site. Discussions allow the local authority to explain the design issues they consider to be most important and the developer can explain their objectives and aspirations for the site. It is easier to inform and influence a design early on in the process than make revisions at a more advanced stage, especially for major developments. The District Council welcomes pre-application discussions for all types and scales of development. Guidance on what is required at the pre-application stage can be found in the Council's 'Charging for Permitted Development & pre-application Advice' Guidance Note on the website.

4.4 As set out earlier in the document, the Development Plan documents contain a number of policies with a design focus. There are also several other planning documents of relevance including those mentioned at paragraph 3.29. In addition to the key principles on shop front design set out in the previous chapter at 3.34-3.35, more detail can be found in the Shop Front Design Guide for the Historic Environment. The Chaddesley Corbett Neighbourhood Plan also sets out design policy for the parish.

4.5 The District Council has produced a number of advice leaflets (all are available on the website) including the impact of extensions on daylight to neighbouring properties - 'the 45° Code', good practice for building domestic extensions - 'A Guide to House Extensions', making provision for disabled users of developments - 'Inclusive Environments' and a guide to developing sustainable drainage systems - 'A Planning Guide to Sustainable Drainage Systems'.

Stage 2 - Design Review

4.6 The District Council encourages the use of a design review prior to submission of a formal application. Schemes that have been through the design review process, and have developed positively in response to recommendations from the design review panel, are less likely to be refused planning permission on the grounds of poor design. The District Council will have regard to the recommendations of the design review panel in determining any subsequent planning application.

4.7 Design Review is relevant for all types and scales of development. Smaller or householder schemes may only require an informal review with the input of a Development Control Officer for example, whereas larger schemes or those on more sensitive sites will require the advice and expertise of other colleagues. The District Council's 'A guide to the 'joined-up' approach to planning - A Guide to the Development Team Approach' sets out how the expertise of relevant professional will be engaged at the design review stage.

4.8 The District Council has formed a partnership with MADE for the purposes of design review. Applicants are likely to be asked to enter into a formal design review process with MADE where, in the opinion of the District Council, any major scheme is likely to have a significant impact either due to its scale, location or nature of the development proposed. The applicant would be expected to meet the costs associated with the MADE design review process.

4.9 The District Council endorses the approach to producing well-designed homes and neighbourhoods as set out in the Building for Life 12 document. Developers should familiarise themselves with the principles at the pre-application stage as this will be used to assess the quality of design in relation to all large residential schemes. Further details are set out below.

Stage 3 - Application Submission

4.10 Different types of information will be required to accompany a planning application depending on the scale and nature of the development proposed. As a general rule, the larger and more sensitive the proposed development is, the more supplementary information will be required. The District Council has produced a Validation Checklist which sets out the types of information required according to the size and type of development proposed. This is available to view on the website. Details of when a full Design and Access Statement is required are also included on the Validation Checklist.

4.11 Any decision taken by the District Council will take into account the design objectives set out in this document and the development plan. If a planning application is refused, a clear explanation will be given.

Building for Life

4.12 Building for Life 12 (BfL12) is the industry standard for the design of new housing developments. It was launched in September 2012 by CABE at the Design Council, Homebuilders Federation and Design for Homes. This nationally recognised standard will be considered by Wyre Forest District Council to inform decision making. The document is aimed at all involved within the development process and is a tool that can be used to assist in design discussions during the preparation of a planning application. The process aims to create a development that is the best possible design for the local conditions. Developers, in conjunction with the District Council, should use the BfL12 traffic light system to assess the design merits of a scheme. A matrix based on the BfL questions can be found at Appendix 1. This is to be completed by the developer in the first instance and then assessed by the District Council to give an overall picture of the 'design' merits of a scheme. This will then form the basis of structured discussions between the two parties. The Building for Life 12 document (January 2015 edition) can be found online at: <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/knowledge-resources/guide/building-life-12-third-edition>

4.13 BfL12 is strongly aligned to the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Policy Guidance and local planning policies. The following table sets out how this is applied:

Table .1

Building for Life 12 section	BfL12 section sub heading	NPPF paragraph reference	NPPG Design section paragraph reference	Core Strategy or Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan policy reference
	Integration into the Neighbourhood			
1	Connections	9, 41, 61, 75	7,8,9,22	CP11, SAL.CC1
2	Facilities & Services	38, 58, 70, 73	9,13,17	CP07
3	Public Transport	9, 17, 35	12	CP03, CP11
4	Meeting Local Housing Requirements	9, 47, 50	14,17	CP05

Building for Life 12 section	BfL12section sub heading	NPPF paragraph reference	NPPG Design section paragraph reference	Core Strategy or Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan policy reference
	Creating a Place			
5	Character	17, 56, 58, 60, 64	7,20	SAL.UP7
6	Working with the Site and its Context	9, 10, 17, 31, 51, 58, 59, 118	7,20,21,26	CP01, CP11, CP12, CP13, CP14, SAL.UP7
7	Creating well-defined Streets and Spaces	58	24	CP11, SAL.UP7
8	Easy to Find your Way Around	58	22	CP11
	Street and Home			
9	Streets for All	35, 58, 69	8,18,42	SAL.CC1, SAL.UP7, SAL.UP9
10	Car Parking	39, 58	40	SAL.CC2, SAL.UP7
11	Public and Private Spaces	57, 58, 69	9,18,24	SAL.UP7
12	External Storage and Amenity Space	58	40	CP01
	Overarching Paragraph 63 in NPPF promotes innovation to raise the standard of design so is applicable to all Questions.			

4.14 Assessment in line with BfL uses the traffic light system:

- Green - the question has been addressed.
- Red – need to change aspects of proposal.
- Amber - clear evidence of local constraints prevent the proposal from achieving a green.

4.15 BfL 12 is a process which will allow all the parties involved in the development process to be clear as to what needs to be done to achieve as many green lights as possible within the specific site conditions, minimise ambers and avoid reds. Through pre-application discussions, any ambers and reds identified should be considered early on to allow a suitable design solution to be found where possible. Applicants need to evidence their application to how it performs against each question, justifying their chosen outcome. (See matrix at Appendix 1) Further information can be found at: www.builtforlifehomes.org/go/about.

National Standards

4.16 In March 2015 the Government announced a new simplified approach to housing standards covering access, water efficiency, internal space, security and waste storage in new dwellings. There will be optional building regulations requirements for access and water efficiency which will be higher than the minimum national standard (see Building Regulations circular 01/2015), a nationally prescribed space standard will be implemented through the planning system, a new security standard will be introduced via building regulations and there will be clearer statutory building regulation guidance on waste storage to ensure it is properly considered

in new housing development. Further details can be found in the NPPG under Housing - Optional Technical Standards. Policy to support the new space standards will be considered as part of the Local Plan Review.

BfL 12 DESIGN DISCUSSION PROFORMA	APPLICANT RESPONSE		WYRE FOREST RESPONSE	
	Colour	Evidence	Number	Comments
Integrating into the neighbourhood				
1. Connections Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones whilst also respecting existing buildings and land uses along the boundaries of the development site?				
2. Facilities and services Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes?				
3. Public Transport Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?				
4. Meeting local housing requirements. Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?				
Creating a place				
5. Character Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?				
6. Working with the site and its context Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates?				
7. Creating well defined streets and spaces Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well?				

Appendix 1 – Building for Life 12 Matrix

BfL 12 DESIGN DISCUSSION PROFORMA	APPLICANT RESPONSE		WYRE FOREST RESPONSE	
	Colour	Evidence	Number	Comments
8. Easy to find your way around Is the scheme designed to make it easy to find your way around?				
Street & Home				
9. Streets for all Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?				
10. Car Parking Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?				
11. Public and private spaces Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to be attractive, well managed and safe?				
12. External Storage and amenity space Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling as well as vehicles and cycles?				

Notes:

This proforma should be completed and submitted by the applicant in support of large scale housing development. BfL 12 guidance should be referred to for each question to ensure that the applicant fully understands the sub questions and recommendations. This guidance can be found at: <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/knowledge-resources/guide/building-life-12-third-edition>

The applicant should carefully consider the traffic light system and how their scheme responds to each question; evidence should be robust and clear.

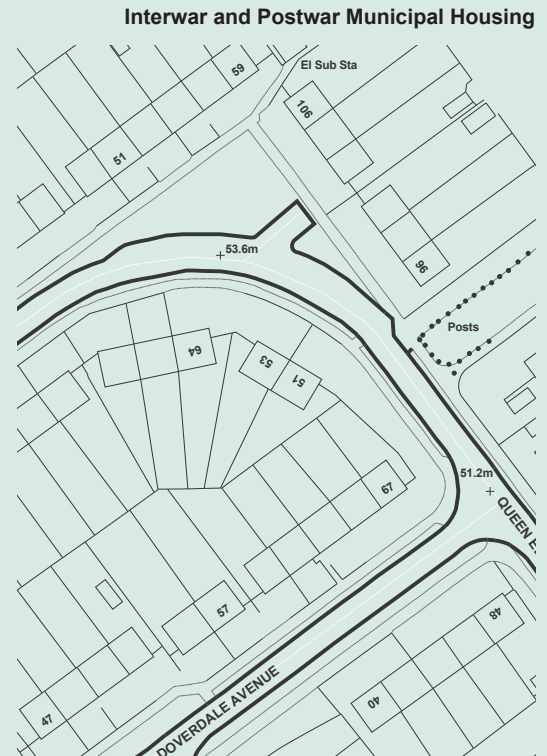
Wyre Forest expects the proforma to provide the basis for discussions with the applicant to ensure that any issues are identified early on in the scheme development, and that these are understood by all parties.

APPLICANT RESPONSE	RED	Question not addressed and it is recognised that aspects of proposal need to be changed
	AMBER	Question not addressed but clear evidence of local constraints on the scheme that prevent it from achieving a green is provided
	GREEN	Question fully addressed ; evidence is provided to demonstrate how
WYRE FOREST RESPONSE	RED	Question not addressed; a redesign of identified aspects of proposal is needed
	AMBER	Question cannot be addressed; applicant provides mitigating evidence & justification
	GREEN	Question addressed; evidence successfully provided

Appendix 2 - Character Studies of Different Eras of Housing

Interwar and Postwar Municipal Housing

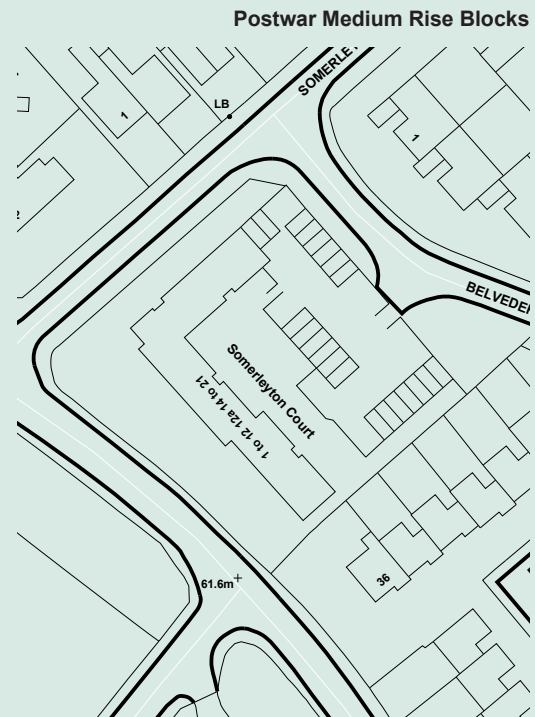
- Street Structure: Curvilinear streets, with frontage to public space.
- House Types: Predominantly semi detached or terraces of 2 storeys. Bungalows and Maisonettes more typical of post war period.
- Building Line / Street Width: Typically up to 7m and incorporating grass verges
- Materials: Pebbledash or orange brick
- Detailing: Largely featureless, some with quoin brick detailing, porches and transom windows.
- Boundary Treatment: Low hedge or open plan in post war period.
- Parking: Predominantly on street or hard standing to front garden.



Appendix 2 - Character Studies of Different Eras of Housing

Postwar High and Medium Rise Blocks

- Street Structure: Single access from street
- House Types: Up to 12 storey apartment buildings
- Building Line / Street Width: Setback ranges from no-set back to 18m for larger buildings
- Materials: Brick with flat roofs
- Detailing: Largely featureless with picture windows
- Boundary Treatment: Open plan, or low wall
- Parking: Courtyard car parking within landscaped setting.



Later Twentieth Century

- Street Structure: A range of infill developments connecting into existing street structure, or larger extension estates predominantly based around cul-de-sac structure
- House Types: Infill predominantly town houses of 2 – 3 storeys; larger estates predominantly 2 storey detached properties, with lesser numbers of semi detached/terraced houses.
- Building Line / Street Width: Setback creates relatively enclosed streets, around 3.5 - 5.5m. Larger homes set within more generous plots with greater setback.
- Materials: Plain red / orange / yellow bricks
- Detailing: Decorative window frames, bays, gable and porches, predominantly drawing from Georgian/ Tudor eras. Larger detached properties exhibit greater range, including Scandinavian styles.
- Boundary Treatment: Open plan or landscaped with hedge/wall.
- Parking: Parking courts / integral garage for infill; or drive and garage to side.



Appendix 3 - Detailed Guidance on Water Management Issues for Applicants

Assessing Off-Site Impacts

When water draining from a site leaves the development, the water may flow through a variety of watercourses or surface water sewers before reaching its destination in the River Stour or Severn. The rate and quality of flow can therefore easily affect locations downstream. For this reason a drainage strategy must take a catchment based approach

and consider the route and impacts of flows after they leave a development site. Two examples of how this could affect a drainage strategy would be:

- if the post-site flow route takes water into a wildlife site then the water quality of the discharge will be particularly important.
- if the post-site flow route takes water past properties that would be expected to flood if flow rates increased then the determination of appropriate discharge rates will be essential.

Site drainage is a key part of flood risk management and must be clearly discussed within a site specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). It is therefore strongly encouraged that a site drainage strategy gets developed alongside the FRA and forms an integral part of the planning application. Ground conditions must be understood at an early stage and, in order to reduce abortive work on the developer's part, preferably before drainage designs are commenced. The presence of land contamination may influence whether infiltration is appropriate and therefore dictate the most appropriate discharge method. Subject to contamination results, soakage tests will be required to determine the scope for infiltration on site. The results of the tests must accompany the planning application.

Loss of permeable (porous) ground as part of development could increase surface runoff flow rates and potentially increase the flood risk. The council requires under Policy CP02 that new developments will incorporate appropriate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS). The philosophy behind SUDS is to mimic natural drainage processes, remove pollutants and manage flood risk at source. SUDS components work in several ways: they can infiltrate (soak) into the ground, convey (flow) into a watercourse (or if necessary a sewer), they can also provide storage on site and attenuate (slow down) the flows of water. In most case a combination of components is required to provide the best results. There are a wide range of sustainable drainage components available, each using slightly different techniques to manage water. It is likely therefore that there will be a technique and component suitable for each site. Examples of SUDS are green roofs, soakaways, permeable pavings, filter strips, rain gardens, swales, detention basins and wetlands.

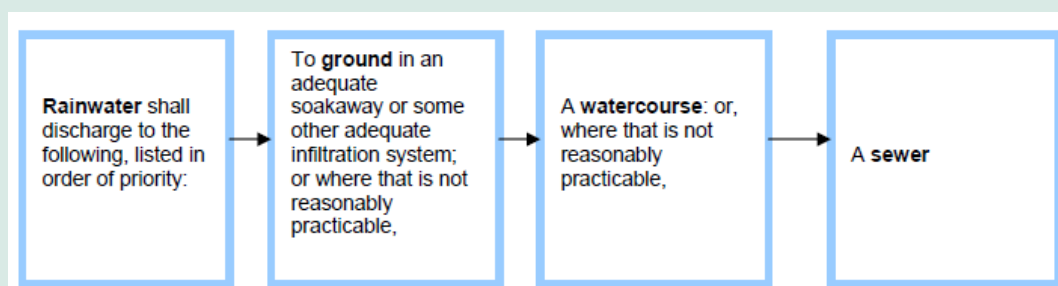
In the absence of National Standards developers within the district are being encouraged to work with the following design principles:

- a. The number of treatment stages within a drainage system must be appropriate to the uses on site and the receiving water body.
- b. The full range of SUDS techniques must be considered for all sites with the most appropriate technique(s) taken forward.
- c. All drainage strategies must demonstrate flow paths and exceedance routes, mimic natural drainage paths and include appropriate mitigation measures. An exceedance route is a flow route that water will take over land when the capacity of a drainage system is exceeded.
- d. Allowances for climate change must be factored into designs.

Appendix 3 - Detailed Guidance on Water Management Issues for Applicants

- e. There should be appropriate storage incorporated within the drainage system to allow for rain events up to a 1% annual probability (1 in 100) and an allowance for climate change.
- f. Where applicable, previously culverted watercourses should be opened up to create more natural drainage and reduce the likelihood of bottlenecks/blockages that can occur and cause flooding in localised areas
- g. The ease of maintenance is an essential part of the design of sustainable drainage system
- h. As well as managing water quantity and quality, SUDS can and should enhance the wider environment by providing opportunities for a net gain in biodiversity and delivering public amenity. However it must be remembered that the primary function of SUDS is to effectively drain an area.

Drainage strategies must demonstrate adequate consideration of each stage of the Building Regulations rainwater drainage hierarchy (see figure) before moving to the next discharge option. New surface water connections to the combined or foul systems will not be permitted.



Mitigation Measures

It is important to minimise flood risk by applying a sequential approach *within* the site design, steering the most vulnerable uses towards the lowest risk parts of the site, and the least vulnerable uses, such as amenity spaces, towards the highest risk parts of the site. This approach should take into account flood risk from all sources. Low lying ground can be designed to maximise benefits by providing flood conveyance and storage as well as recreation, amenity and environmental purposes.

Where it is not possible to avoid flood risk or minimise it through site layout, raising floor levels above the flood level is a possible option to manage flood risk to new developments. Any proposals to modify ground levels will need to demonstrate in the FRA that there is no increase in flood risk to the development itself or to any existing property in any location. Where land on site is raised above the level of the floodplain to protect properties, compensatory land must be returned to the floodplain.

Residual risks are those remaining after the sequential approach has been applied to the layout of the different site uses and after specific measures have been taken to control the flood risk. At this stage management measures are no longer about reducing the risk, but about planning for flooding. Management of the residual risk must therefore be the very last stage of designing and planning a site, where all options for removing and reducing risk have already been addressed.

Different types of measures to manage residual risk include:

- a. developer contributions towards publically funded flood alleviation schemes

Appendix 3 - Detailed Guidance on Water Management Issues for Applicants

- b. designing sustainable drainage systems so that storm events which exceed the design standard are properly planned for and the exceedance routes are known and appropriate
- c. incorporating flood resistance measures into building design. Flood resistance stops water from entering a building and can be referred to as dry proofing. Measures include doorway flood barriers and airbrick covers.
- d. incorporating flood resilience measures into building design. Flood resilient construction accepts that water will enter the building but thorough careful design minimises the damage to allow the re-occupancy of the building as soon as possible. Measures include water resistant fixtures and materials for floors and walls and the siting of sockets, cables and electric appliances at higher than normal levels.
- e. flood warning and evacuation plans. It can be checked with the Environment Agency whether their flood warning scheme that prompt telephone calls and SMS text messages to registered individuals covers the development site. Evacuation plans must include dry vehicular access and egress routes wherever possible.

Overview of responsibilities of developers

Those proposing development in areas of flood risk are responsible for:

- a. demonstrating that the proposed development is consistent with national and local planning policy
- b. undertaking sufficient and early consultation with the flood risk consultees
- c. providing a site specific FRA and a drainage strategy, as part of the planning process
- d. demonstrating that the development is safe for its proposed lifetime without increasing the flood risk elsewhere, by incorporating appropriate flood management measures, including the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems.
- e. demonstrating that the deterioration of the water environment gets prevented
- f. ensuring that any necessary flood risk management measures are sufficiently funded to ensure that the site can be developed and occupied safely throughout its proposed lifetime
- g. identifying opportunities to not only reduce flood risk, but also enhance biodiversity and amenity
- h. Owners of land or property adjacent to a river, stream or ditch may also have additional responsibilities for maintenance. (Further guidance is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/riverside-ownership-rights-and-responsibilities>)

Detailed guidance notes for householders and developers can be accessed at the following link.

<http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/community-wellbeing-and-environment/emergencies/land-drainage-and-flooding/consent-for-works.aspx>

+Validation Checklist

The following table sets out what information is required when submitting a planning application. Failure to submit any of the information which is a national requirement will result in your application being made invalid.

Applicants are encouraged to consider the information set out in the local requirement early on in the application process to avoid delay and to make approval of your application easier.

	Additional Information
NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS	
Application Form (including Ownership Certificates) Required for ALL types of application	Application forms can be downloaded from the Planning Portal website
Application Fee Required for ALL types of application	The fee required can be calculated using the Planning Portal fee calculator . A printable fee sheet is available on the District Council's website
Location Plan Required for ALL types of application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a typical scale of 1:1250 or 1:2500 (Scale must be annotated on the plan) on paper no larger than A3 size • Site must be outlined in red (A blue line should be drawn around any other land owned by the applicant, close to or adjoining the application site) • Show the direction of North
Design and Access Statement Required for; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development which is major development (10 or more dwellings or where the floor space to be built is 1,000 square metres or more or where the site area is 1 hectare or more) • Where any part of the development is in a Conservation Area and the development consists of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the provision of one or more dwelling houses; or b) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space created by the development is 100 square metres or more • Applications for Listed Building Consent 	Further guidance on producing a Design and Access Statement is contained in ' Practice Note No.18 Guidance for Producing Design and Access Statements ' and ' A guide to understanding and writing access statements '

LOCAL REQUIREMENTS	
Plans and Drawings Required for ALL types of application involving operational development	As relevant, the plans should accord with the following; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevation drawings (existing and proposed) at either 1:100 or 1:50 scale • Floorplans (existing and proposed) showing internal furniture layouts • Streetscene drawings • Levels (existing and proposed)
Affordable Housing Brief Where affordable housing is proposed.	As a minimum; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and location of affordable units • Tenure of each affordable unit • Internal dimensions of each affordable unit • Details of partner Registered Provider
Air Quality Assessment Required for; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications which have the capacity to impact on declared Air Quality Management Areas. • Developments likely to significantly materially affect air quality or be affected by air pollution levels running close to the national objectives. 	Worcestershire Regulatory Services should be contacted to determine if an assessment will be necessary and the level of detail required. Email wrsenquiries@worcestersregservices.gov.uk
Block/Site Plan Required for ALL types of application involving operational development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a scale of 1:500 or 1:200 (the scale must be annotated on the plan) • Show the direction of North • Show the development in relation to adjoining properties
Building for Life (12) Checklist Required for all applications where ten or more dwellings are proposed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BfL matrix at Appendix ** should be completed by the applicant to accompany the planning application.
Consultation Supporting Statement Required for all major and sensitive planning applications	More information is set out in the District Council's Statement of Community Involvement.
Contamination Assessment Required on sites of known or suspected contamination or developments vulnerable to the effects of contamination (housing, schools, hospitals)	Email wrsenquiries@worcestersregservices.gov.uk
Ecological Survey/Biodiversity Statement Required where the development is likely to affect an area, feature or species of National, Regional or Local importance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 Ecological Survey and any required additional surveys • A mitigation plan • Biodiversity enhancement plan/strategy

Flood Risk Assessment All developments including change of use where a site covers an area up to or in excess of 1 hectare in Flood Zone 1, and for all development in Flood Zones 2 and 3	Further guidance available at https://www.gov.uk/flood-risk-assessment-for-planning-applications
Heritage Statement All applications likely to affect a statutory or non statutory heritage asset and all applications within a Conservation Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This can form part of the Design and Access Statement or can be provided as a separate document
Legal Agreement (S106) Required where the development would meet the thresholds set out in the Planning Obligations SPD or where an agreement under Section 106 of the TCP (1990) is considered necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicitors details • Proof of Title
Noise Impact Assessment Required where the proposed development is likely to generate increased levels of noise or for developments likely to be sensitive to existing noise levels in their immediate vicinity	Email wrsenquiries@worcsregservices.gov.uk https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/noise-policy-statement-for-england-npse
Impact Assessment Required for any retail, leisure or office development which would result in an increase in floorspace of 280sq.m or more outside of the Town Centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of impact on any committed and planned investment in the immediate locality or those likely to be affected by the development • The impact on Town Centre vitality and viability
Lighting Strategy All applications involving the introduction of new lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site plan showing the location of each light • Details of columns (as appropriate) • Lighting specification (including LUX levels) • Light spill plan showing the impact of the proposed lighting on all adjacent development • Any light spill mitigation
Structural Survey For ALL barn conversions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing condition of the building • Full details of proposed operational development to be carried out and plans to show such works • Construction method statement including cross-sections where applicable
Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mailto:enquiries@nwwm.org.uk • To be updated in accordance with emerging guidance
Transport Assessment and Travel Plan Will be required for all applications which exceed the thresholds	http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20007/travel_and_roads/284/transport_guidance_for_developers

identified by Worcestershire County Council	
Tree Survey All applications where the proposal involves works which may affect any trees on or off the site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tree Survey in accordance with BS5837:2012 (Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations). This will need to include a plan showing the accurately plotted location of the trees affected by the proposed development, a true representation of the crown spread and the colour coding of each tree in line with BS 5837:2012 (Table 1 – Page 9). The survey should also include a written report including the details about each tree surveyed in accordance with Section 4.4.2 of BS 5837:2012.
Ventilation/Extraction Details Required for developments which require the installation of extraction or ventilation equipment	For commercial kitchen development reference should be made to DEFRA document https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-the-control-of-odour-and-noise-from-commercial-kitchen-exhaust
Viability Assessment All applications where development cannot provide the full range of S106 requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant should provide a statement confirming that they will meet the costs of an independent assessment.

Equality Impact Assessment- Screening

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment is to ensure the Council:

- does not discriminate in the way it provides services and employment
- fulfils its duties as set out by the Equality Act 2010
- where possible, it does all it can to promote equality and good relations between different groups

Name of service / policy / project being assessed	Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document	Is this a new or existing service / policy / project?	Revision of existing.
Directorate	Economic Prosperity and Place		
Officers responsible for: a) Service / policy / project b) Completing EIA	a) Rebecca Brown b) Rebecca Brown		
Date	June 2015		
What is the purpose and expected outcomes?	To provide detailed guidance on the implementation of the District's planning policies relating to design and local distinctiveness		
Will there be any affect on other council procedures or strategies e.g. Corporate Plan or the <u>council's workforce</u> ?	No		
Are there any statutory requirements or implications?	Yes, the SPD has been prepared in accordance with the relevant regulations set out within The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.		
Are there any other organisations / bodies involved?	A number of bodies and individuals have been consulted on the preparation ad content of the SPD.		
Who are the main customer groups / stakeholders affected?	Developers, applicants, Members of the Public, businesses		
What information / statistics / evidence are you using?	National and local planning policy and guidance. Information from consultation and critical friend review from MADE.		

What impact does the service / policy / project have on the nine protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 – for definitions, please see overleaf.

1. Age	Positive <u>Evidence:</u> The SPD helps to promote inclusive new developments that are future proofed.	
2. Disability	Positive <u>Evidence:</u> The SPD helps to promote inclusive new developments that are accessible.	
3. Gender Reassignment	N/A	
4. Marriage and Civil Partnership	N/A	
5. Pregnancy and Maternity	N/A	
6. Race	Positive Evidence: The SPD helps to promote inclusive and safe new developments	
7. Religion or belief	Positive Evidence: The SPD helps to promote inclusive and safe new developments	
8. Sex	Positive: Evidence: The SPD helps to promote inclusive new developments	
9. Sexual orientation	Positive Evidence: The SPD helps to promote inclusive new developments	
Other e.g. Deprivation, health inequalities, urban/rural divide, community safety.	N/A	
Conclusion Overall the SPD will help to improve inclusivity and accessibility in new development proposals. It encourages ownership of public realm and local distinctiveness to provide quality environments for our residents, businesses and visitors.		Is a full assessment required? NO
Signed: Rebecca Brown		Date 22/05/15
Agreed		Date
A full EIA is required if the initial screening has identified the service / policy / project is going to have the potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community or the council's workforce.		

Prior to the Equality Act 2010, there were 3 separate public sector equality duties covering race, disability and gender. The Equality Act 2010 replaced these with a new single equality duty covering the following protected characteristics:

Protected characteristics: definitions

Age - where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

Disability - a person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment - The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

Marriage and civil partnership - marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.

Pregnancy and maternity - pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race - It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief - religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism).

Sex - a man or a woman.

Sexual orientation - whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Cabinet
Tuesday 23rd June 2015**

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Thursday 4th June 2015**

Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document – Adoption

The Committee considered a report which updated Members on the responses received to the Draft Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation, and presented the final version of the SPD for formal adoption.

Recommend to Cabinet:

That the Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document as attached at Appendix 2 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny, be formally adopted.

Background papers:

Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Thursday 4th June 2015
<http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/meetings/com193.htm#mt7526>

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
23rd June 2015

Extensions to Leases at Coppice Industrial Estate

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor J-P Champion
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Director of Economic Prosperity and Place
CONTACT OFFICER:	Mike Parker, Ext. 2500 mike.parker@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES	Appendix 1 – Plan plots on industrial estate

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree to extend a number of leases on the Council owned Coppice Industrial Estate, Kidderminster in support of the Council's priority to enable growth in the local economy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is asked to DECIDE:

- 2.1 To extend the leases of those tenants on the Coppice Industrial Estate indicating a desire to do so and to place the premiums in the Evergreen Investment Fund;
- 2.2 To delegate to the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place, in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council, the authority to undertake all necessary legal and financial negotiations and administration required to complete the lease extensions
- 2.3 To delegate to the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place, in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council, the authority to continue to negotiate with those tenants not currently wishing to extend their leases and, if they wish to proceed at some future date, the authority to complete the necessary legal and financial negotiations and administration to complete them.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 2011 a Strong Leader decision agreed an approach for the renewal of leases at both The Coppice Industrial Estate and The Firs Industrial Estate. It was agreed at The Coppice Industrial Estate that there should be a minimum of 75% of the tenants on the estate in collective agreement to renew their leases

to ensure that the Council did not impair the long term ability to develop or sell the estate through a pepper potting of different lengths of lease.

- 3.2 Initially over 75% of the tenants advised that they wished to go ahead and extend their lease so the Council proceeded to engage with them. However, over the course of time whilst some tenants have continued to proceed, some have not and the Council now has only 45% of the tenants proceeding, rather than the 75%. This leaves some tenants on the estate with business plans dependent on the proposed lease extension who are experiencing difficulties obtaining finance or selling their business with less than 50 years remaining on the leases with the added uncertainty that the Council might not proceed now that the 75% threshold is not met.
- 3.3 The Council has made a commitment to support and enable the local economy to grow; this has been actively demonstrated over a number of years through its ReWyre programme of regeneration activities as well as actions and direct investment brought about through the State of the Area debates. The Council is also committed to using its own assets to drive growth and one such approach is through enabling tenants on its own industrial estates to flourish and grow. The Council recognises the importance of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) as the 'engine room' for growth and by extending the leases on the Coppice Industrial Estate will further enhance their competitiveness and longevity.
- 3.4 In the light of the above the Council now needs to consider the issues and decide whether to proceed with the lease extensions of those tenants wishing to do so.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Advice received from Bruton Knowles in 2011 was to retain and not sell any of the ground lease interests to the tenants. This could ultimately reduce the capital value and impact upon any saleability prospects of the entire freehold ground lease investment if it were to be disposed of as a whole rather than on a piecemeal basis; or any long term redevelopment prospects for the site at the expiry of the ground leases.
- 4.2 Bruton Knowles also advised that if the Council agreed to extend the leases for a further number of years then all ground leases should ideally maintain co-terminous lease expiry dates, again for the reasons of preserving the capital value and saleability of the entire property investment if it were to be disposed of. This is what lies behind the previous decision to proceed if 75% of the tenants wished to extend their leases.
- 4.3 The local economy and the interests of the tenants on the estate have moved on since 2011 and in parallel the priorities for the Council have developed too. One of the Council's key corporate priorities is 'support you to contribute to a successful local economy'. Clearly the Council's policy stance is affecting the

ability of some of the tenants on the Coppice Industrial Estate to contribute to future growth of the economy because of the limited period left on their lease. The Council is in a position to assist by agreeing to extend their leases.

- 4.4 The Bruton Knowles advice from 2011 remains valid and the Council must consider the potential consequences if it decides to proceed. On balance at present there are no proposals to dispose of the entire estate so the potential impairment is theoretical rather than actual. In fact currently all the leases on the estate are due to come to an end over a period ranging from 2063 to 2073; by extending the leases of those that wish to proceed would coordinate 11 of the leases to expire in 2123, leaving only 2 (4 plots) expiring in 2070/71. It would be feasible for the Council to seek to let these plots or extend them at an appropriate time to coincide with the 2123 date and continue to protect its asset going forward.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Based on the 45% of tenants who have confirmed they wish to proceed with the lease extension the receipt from the premiums that the Council would receive is estimated at £31,000 which could rise to £93,000 depending on the outcome of current negotiations with another tenant.
- 5.2 The receipt from these premiums is revenue and it is now proposed that it be set aside in an Earmarked Reserve for the Evergreen Investment Fund to support the development of businesses cases for future investment. This would support the progression of capital schemes where the Council may, for example require external advice to assist with business case development.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal or policy implications arising as a result of this proposal.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 There are no issues arising as a result of this proposal that require an Assessment to be undertaken.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 If a decision is taken to treat each application on an individual basis rather than approach it on a whole estate basis, there is a risk that transactions in respect of part only of the estate will impact on the overall values of the estate in a negative way and/or will leave the Council with empty units on the expiry of leases, pending other leases expiring or disposing of the Council's freehold interest.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 While having regard to the advice provided to the Council in 2011, it is recommended that the Cabinet proceeds to extend those leases of tenants who

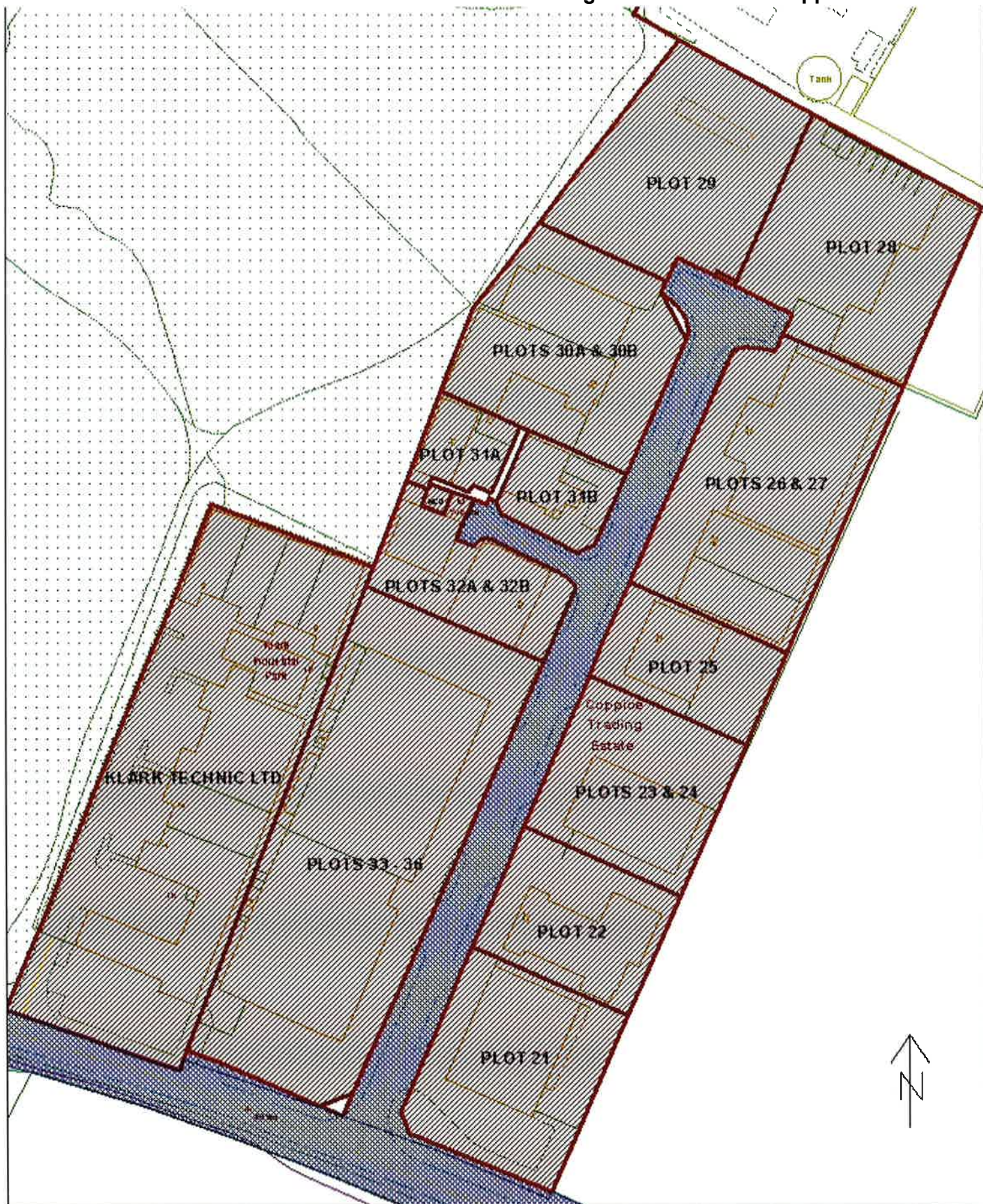
wish to extend them in order to assist them to run their businesses successfully.

10. CONSULTEES

10.1 Corporate Leadership Team

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Strong Leader Decision on Firs, Oldington & Coppice Industrial Estates and Hoobrook Trading Estate, Kidderminster 19th July 2011



Wyre Forest District Council
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster
DY11 7WF

Coppice Trading Estate
Stourport Road
Kidderminster

SO8173NE