

Open

Council

Agenda

6pm
Wednesday, 29th July 2015
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster



Council

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COUNCIL MEETING

21st July 2015

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

PRESS AND PUBLIC

Dear Member

YOU ARE INVITED to attend a meeting of the Wyre Forest District Council to be held **at 6.00p.m. on Wednesday 29th July 2015**, in the Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster.

The Agenda for the meeting is enclosed.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Miller
Chief Executive

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

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

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

Please see the Members’ Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of 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.

(A) TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COUNCIL

The Council

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

(B) MATTERS RESERVED TO THE COUNCIL

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

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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.

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Wyre Forest District Council

Council

Wednesday, 29th July 2015

Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster

Part 1

Open to the press and public

Agenda item	Subject	Page Number
1.	Prayers To be read by Rev. Father Christopher Greaney from the Roman Catholic Parish of St. Wulstan and St. Thomas of Canterbury, Stourport and Holy Family, Bewdley.	
2.	Apologies for Absence	
3.	Declarations of Interests by Members In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's) and / or Other Disclosable Interests (ODI's) in the following agenda items and indicate the action that they will be taking when the item is considered. Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's Constitution for full details.	
4.	Minutes To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 th May 2015.	10
5.	Public Participation In accordance with the Council's scheme for public speaking at meetings of Council, to allow members of the public to present petitions, ask questions, or make statements, details of which have been received by 12 noon on Monday 20 th July 2015 <i>If you wish to speak on an urgent matter that has arisen since the deadline and you could not reasonably have known about it at the time, you should register your interest in speaking no later than 9am on the day of the meeting of Council. In the case of a request to speak on an urgent matter, the Solicitor to the Council will rule on whether or not the matter is urgent and that ruling will be final.</i>	
6.	Questions Four questions have been submitted in accordance with Standing Order A5 by Members of the Council.	17

	<i>In the case of an urgent matter that has arisen since the deadline above, and could not have been reasonably known at that time, it must be delivered in writing to the Solicitor to the Council no later than 9am on the day of Council.</i>	
7.	Chairman's Communications To note the engagements of the Chairman of the Council since the Council's last meeting.	18
8.	Leader of the Council Announcements To receive announcements from the Leader of the Council.	
9.	<p>Motions Submitted under Standing Orders</p> <p>One motion has been received in accordance with Standing Orders (Section 7, 4.1).</p> <p>1. Motion from Councillor J A Shaw, Labour Group</p> <p>Individual Electoral Registration</p> <p><i>Council notes</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>the Electoral Commission's finding, in its report into the transition to Individual Electoral Registration, that 1.9m of the current entries on electoral registers are only being retained under the transitional arrangements. This represents 4% of all register entries, which are at risk of being removed from the final registers.</i> 2) <i>that, should these 1.9m individuals be lost, they will add significantly to the Electoral Commission's estimate of 7.5m who are "not correctly registered".</i> 3) <i>that the Government has made an Order which would end the transitional arrangements twelve months earlier than initially planned, to be reflected in the composition of the registers of December 2015, rather than December 2016.</i> 4) <i>that the Electoral Commission has cautioned against such a move, because it believes that the result will be a greater number of the 1.9m losing their vote than if the original timetable was retained.</i> <p><i>Council believes</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5) <i>that a further damaging consequence would be on the redrawing of Parliamentary boundaries, planned for the earlier part of this Parliament, which would be more inaccurate if based on the 2015 registers.</i> <p><i>Council congratulates</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6) <i>Wyre Forest's Electoral Registration team, which has increased the number of individuals on the 2015 register to 78,833, an increase of 567 over 2014, and is likely to lose</i> 	

	<p><i>only 269, (0.3%), if the transitional period is curtailed.</i></p> <p><i>However Council is concerned about any reduction in the number of individuals eligible to vote and, therefore, urges</i></p> <p>7) <i>Government to heed the view of the expert body in this field, the Electoral Commission, by withdrawing its Order.</i></p>	
10.	<p>Urgent Motions submitted under Standing Orders</p> <p>To consider motions in the order they have been received which, by reason of special circumstances, should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Standing Orders (Section 7, 4.1 (vii)).</p>	
11.	<p>Community Governance Review - Kidderminster</p> <p>To consider a report from the Chief Executive which invites Council to agree next steps in the community governance review following conclusion of the consultation.</p>	19
12.	<p>Community Governance Review - Stourport-on-Severn</p> <p>To consider a report from the Chief Executive which invites Council to agree a response to a request from Stourport-on-Severn Town Council for a community governance review.</p>	42
13.	<p>Review of the May and June 2015 Elections and the Local Advisory Poll</p> <p>To consider a report from the (Acting) Returning Officer for the General Parliamentary Election, Returning Officer for the Local Elections and Counting Officer for the Local Advisory Poll which provides information on the Elections held on 7th May 2015 and 9th June 2015 and the Local Advisory Poll held on 7th May 2015.</p>	50
14.	<p>Corporate Governance</p> <p>To consider a report from the Solicitor to the Council which invites Council to approve the revised political balance, following the elections on 9th June 2015.</p>	74
15.	<p>Policy and Budget Framework</p> <p>Matters which require a Decision by Council.</p> <p>Recommendations from Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Compulsory Purchase powers to acquire land and property in Kidderminster <p>Please note that the reports and associated documents, referred to above, have been circulated electronically to Members. Public inspection copies are available on request. Please refer to the front cover for contact details.</p>	78

16.	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.	
17.	<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 the paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act”.</p>	

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

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

COUNCIL

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

27TH MAY 2015 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: C Rogers (Chairman), A T Hingley (Vice-Chairman), S Arnold, J Aston, J Baker, G W Ballinger, R Bishop, J-P Campion, S J Chambers, S J M Clee, J R Desmond, N J Desmond, H E Dyke, S E Fearn, J Greener, I Hardiman, M J Hart, N Knowles, D Little, T A Muir, F M Oborski, J Phillips, M Rayner, J D Smith, S J Williams and G C Yarranton.

C.1 Prayers

Prayers were said by Pastor Rob Palmer from Franche Community Church.

C.2 Election of Chairman

Councillor C Rogers was nominated as Chairman. This was moved by Councillor M J Hart and seconded by I Hardiman.

Decision: Councillor C Rogers be elected as Chairman of Wyre Forest District Council for the ensuing municipal year.

C.3 Chairman – Investiture and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

After being invested with his Chain of Office, Councillor C Rogers made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman.

C.4 Chairman's Response

The Chairman thanked Members for the great honour to be chosen as Chairman and he would do his very best with the trust placed in him.

C.5 Retiring Chairman

The retiring chairman was thanked by Councillor M Hart for his hard work over the past 12 months. He had been a chairman for the third time and had represented the Council well. He had conducted his role impeccably and he would be a hard act to follow.

C.6 Retiring Chairman – Presentation of Badges

The retiring chairman was presented with a Past Chairman's badge. Councillor S J Williams thanked Council for all the support he had received during his year of office and thanked his Vice Chairman for his help and wished him good luck in his year ahead. He also thanked Ian Miller, Caroline Newlands, Karen Walsh, Rhiannon Foxall and Sue Saunders for their support. He informed Members that he had raised £2,476 for his charities – The Museum of Carpet and Help for Heros. Lastly, he thanked his wife for her help as his consort and hoped that they had been good ambassadors for the district.

C.7 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Councillor M J Hart nominated Councillor A Hingley as Vice-Chairman and this was seconded by Councillor I Hardiman.

Decision: Councillor A Hingley be elected as Vice-Chairman of Wyre Forest District Council for the ensuing municipal year.

C.8 Vice-Chairman – Investiture and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

After being invested with her Badge of Office, Councillor A Hingley made her Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Vice-Chairman.

C.9 Vice Chairman's Response

Councillor A Hingley thanked Council for her appointment and informed Members that she would do her best to support the Chairman.

Councillor F M Oborski thanked Councillor S J Williams for his superb year and congratulated the new chairman and vice chairman.

C.10 Appointment of Leader of the Council

A report was considered on the arrangements for the appointment of a Leader of the Council. A motion was moved by Councillor J-P Champion and seconded by Councillor I Hardiman to appoint Councillor M J Hart as Leader of the Council for the next four years.

Councillor J-P Champion reported that the role of Leader was a real honour in leading the Council often in difficult circumstances. Councillor Hart showed leadership and had stepped up to the challenge in the last 12 months. Councillor I Hardiman stated that Councillor Hart had ably supported Councillor J-P Champion as his deputy for several years. Councillor Hart had all the necessary leadership, management skills and political wisdom to be Leader of the Council.

Councillor M J Hart thanked the proposer and seconder for their kind comments and for placing their faith in him. It was a great honour to be appointed as Leader. He stated that the Council were in a different place to

Agenda Item No. 4

where they were in 2014 in that the public had spoken through the ballot boxes. He proposed to continue to provide good quality affordable housing and efficient public services for the residents that councillors served. There were many challenges going forward but he wanted to work with all the opposition parties and had already spoken to Group Leaders to seek their agreement on the political structure package for Council. He pointed out that the chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee would not be undertaken by a Conservative member. He paid tribute to those Members who had not been re-elected and those that had retired, including Mike Kelly and Pauline Hayward who had served their residents for decades and other Councillors like Chris Nicholls who had served the Council for a long time. He informed Council that he had appointed his new cabinet members and that he looked forward to working with everyone.

Decision: Councillor M J Hart be appointed as Leader of the Council for the next four years.

C.10 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Dyke, R E Gregory, S Harrington and J A Hart.

C.11 Declarations of Interests by Members

There were no declarations of interests.

C.12 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 25th February 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C.13 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

C.14 Questions

Two questions had been submitted in accordance with Standing Order A5 by a Member of the Council.

Question from Councillor N Knowles to the Leader of the Council

Given the closure of several polling stations that occurred for the 7th May elections, and the subsequent queuing at those left open, will the administration re-consider their decision regarding their closure programme, and undertake a brief review with the intention of re-opening them.

Answer from the Leader of the Council

Let me set the record straight, it wasn't the administration's decision to close polling stations, the administration don't have that power, it was a

Agenda Item No. 4

democratic vote at Council that took the decision. In terms of the substantive part of your question, yes there will be a review. The Returning Officer every year conducts a review in the normal way and of course there will be a session for agents and political parties to meet with the Returning Officer and his team on 8th July 2015 at Wyre Forest House and there will be an opportunity to raise those issues then. There were of course some queues at polling stations but there were not queues at many polling stations, out of the 40 plus stations that we have, I saw queues at a couple but most ran smoothly. It is important that we don't make a knee jerk reaction and assume, from the fact that Council decided to close a few polling stations that's why there were queues. It was a general election, district election, some parish elections plus the local advisory poll, we need to gather all of the information and evidence and review the matter but certainly no knee jerk reactions on the part of this Council.

Supplementary Question from Councillor N Knowles

We don't believe everything in the Kidderminster Shuttle every week but we do believe some of the weeks and their coverage of the polling station situation on general election day was quite revealing. I do think this was a political decision to close so many polling stations particularly in working class areas, where it was difficult for people to vote but I wonder if the Leader of the Council would agree that from reports we've had and I appreciate the comments about the review in July but it did seem there were long queues at several polling stations and the worse aspect was that people were denied the right to vote because they saw the queue but wonder if you would like to comment on the queues at some polling stations that were reported in the press and elsewhere and the fact that many people failed to cast their vote.

Supplementary Answer from the Leader of the Council

Thank you for your question, I'm delighted so many people went to vote because they went to vote Conservative as is clearly demonstrated in this chamber and let me place on record that absolutely no member of Wyre Forest who was on the electoral register was denied the right to vote. That is an exceptionally unfortunate statement that you've made because I know and you raise the Kidderminster Shuttle to show the front page and I have no control over what the Shuttle print. I remember when Doctor Taylor for example returned as Member of Parliament that was plastered on the front page and if you lend me the paper, perhaps I could show members of this chamber what was on page 3 where it reports 21 out of 30 seats were won by the Conservative Group. The Returning Officer was at that polling station at Trinity Methodist church between 9.00pm to 9.30pm and had walked the length and breadth of the queue and took postal votes from people that were queuing and reassured each and every one of those members of public that they would vote. And in fact it was the coalition government that changed the legislation last year that said provided you are in a queue to vote you can vote so we have not disenfranchised anybody and most certainly we have not closed any polling stations deliberately in working class areas because this party and this side of the chamber serve all citizens of this council not just working class ones.

Question from Councillor N Knowles to the Leader of the Council

Would the administration commit to investigating the possibility of introducing a computerised system of vote counting as apparently happens in some other places whilst at the same time congratulating our staff for their sterling performance on the 7th and 8th May.

Answer from the Leader of the Council

In short yes, happy that we don't rule anything out. In banks for example we have counting machines that can count the number of bank notes, but of course there are caveats to it, firstly funding costly equipment and we'd have to make sure you've got funding to be able to invest in this type of machinery but would also need to cope with different size of ballot papers. On one of the district wards Lickhill had only 5 candidates but Stour & Wilden town council ward had 17 candidates, therefore you need to factor all things into that. It's easy to envisage a counting machine for verifying but you would still need to do it manually to ensure candidates are allocated to the right pile in order for you to count them, but I wouldn't wish to rule it out but will investigate.

Supplementary Answer from Councillor N Knowles

Will you investigate with a view to bringing at an early date the decision back to this Council probably with a recommendation to seek funding from government to fund the new situation.

Supplementary Answer from the Leader of the Council

No, not go as far as that but will look at it and if there is any further information, will bring it back to full council in due course.

C.15 Chairman's Communications

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

The Chairman announced that his consort for the year ahead would be Annie Ball and that his chosen charity was Midlands Air Ambulance and he would be announcing various functions soon.

C.16 Political and Constitutional Structures 2015/2016

Council received a report from the Solicitor to the Council on the proposed political and constitutional structures for 2015/2016.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and referred Members to the updated paper on the political structure at appendix 1 which referred to the new cabinet members and the committee chairman and vice chairman appointments at appendix 2. Councillor H E Dyke was proposed as chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, a role she had held

previously with dignity and fairness.

Members were referred to the updated paper on outside bodies and were informed that there was only one name proposed for each role. He pointed out that the word scrutiny should not be included in the title of Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee. There were some amendments to the constitution which were shown at appendix 5 with the revised political balance at appendix 6. Some of the committees had been reduced in size.

Decision:

- 1. The proposed Political Management Structure for 2015/2016 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report to Council be approved.**
- 2. The Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees as contained in Appendix 2 of the report to Council be approved.**
- 3. The Municipal Calendar as set out in Appendix 3 of the report to Council be adopted.**
- 4. The appointments to outside bodies as set out in Appendix 4 of the report to Council be agreed.**
- 5. The revisions to the Constitution as set out in Appendix 5 of the report to Council be agreed.**
- 6. The revised chart of political balance as set out in Appendix 6 of the report to Council be approved.**
- 7. The Solicitor to the Council be authorised to settle any outstanding details relating to the political structures and to make changes as necessary to the Council's Constitution to give effect to the Council's decisions and any other revisions necessary to reflect needs or circumstances.**

C.17 Members' Annual Activity Reports and Attendance 2014/2015

Council received the schedule of Members' Annual Reports which gave details of activities in their role as District Councillors for the 2013/2014 municipal year and received a record of attendance.

Decision: The reports and attendance be noted.

C.18 Annual Reports for the Municipal Year 2014/2015

Council received the Annual reports from the Leader of the Council, the Chairman of both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Ethics and Standards Committee.

In response to a Member query, it was confirmed that the co-opted

Agenda Item No. 4

members would continue on the Ethics & Standards Committee. The meeting had met once in the last municipal year and it was stated that the allowance payable was in line with the Independent Remuneration Panel which was accepted by Council. It was also confirmed that there would be representatives from Bewdley Town Council and Stourport-on-Severn Town Council on the Local Plans Review Panel.

Decision: The Annual Reports for the Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Ethics and Standards Committee be noted.

C.19 Leader of the Council Announcement

The Leader of the Council announcements were tabled at the meeting and he referred Members to it.

Decision: The information be noted.

C.20 Honorary Alderman Appointment Procedure

Council received a report from the Leader of the Council which asked for approval of the updated appointment procedure for conferring the title of Honorary Alderman.

Members were advised that the report was not an opportunity to nominate names for honorary aldermen but to agree the protocol for going forward. It was confirmed that a special meeting would need to take place for appointing an honorary alderman but this would be held prior to a Council meeting.

Decision: The updated Appointment Procedure for Honorary Alderman as set out in Appendix 1 of the report to Council be approved.

The meeting ended at 18.56 p.m.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
29TH JULY 2015
QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL

1. Question from Councillor N Knowles to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

Cabinet decision to raise central car park fees in Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley will raise £67,000 by increasing fees from 70p to £1 for a 30 minute stay and an hour's fee will be increased from £1.20 to £1.50. Does the Cabinet Member agree with David Cameron that market towns should have a free-parking policy?

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

The decision to close Cookley Ward at Kidderminster Hospital was taken without public consultation in a manner that raises questions about the democratic and civic process in matters relating to the NHS. Would the Leader agree with me that we must have provision for elderly and very ill patients in a hospital ward and that The Grange and A Block GP Unit are integral parts of our NHS care for the elderly and sick?

3. Question from Councillor J A Shaw to the Leader of the Council

Noting the proposed date for the introduction of a Combined Authority for the West Midlands is 1st April 2016 and that Redditch Borough Council has authorised its Leader and Chief Executive to continue investigation into the possibility of becoming part of that Authority, what is the current policy of Wyre Forest District Council on this issue?

4. Question from Councillor J A Shaw to the Leader of the Council

Noting that Cornwall has been awarded a "devolution deal" by Government and that the Leader of Worcestershire County Council has been in similar discussions with Government, albeit at an earlier stage, what is the current position of WFDC on this issue?

Chairman's List of Functions – 2015/16

MAY 2015

- 28th Kidderminster Mayor Making
- 30th Official Opening of Manor Farm Park
- 31st Rock 'n' Roll Party in the Park

JUNE 2015

- 6th Bewdley Carnival
- 14th Worcester Mayors Civic Service
- 16th The League of Friends of Kidderminster Hospital AGM*
- 22nd Armed Forces Day, British Legion
- 23rd Visit by Duke of Kent
- 24th Starting Up Ceremony – Leisure Centre
- 28th Bewdley Mayor's Civic Sunday

JULY 2015

- 3rd Silence for Victims of Tunisian Attack
- 4th Wyre Forest Symphony Orchestra
- 4th Worcs Provincial Grand Lodge Annual Charity Evening*
- 8th The Young Citizenship Celebration
- 10th Worcestershire Association of Carers AGM
- 11th Three Roses Care Home
- 17th Mayor of Worcester Inaugural Banquet
- 18th Mayor of Bewdley, A Mid Summer Nights Dream
- 24th Mayor of Stourport Civic Reception

* denotes attendance by Vice Chairman

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**COUNCIL MEETING****29TH JULY 2015****Community Governance Review – Kidderminster**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor M J Hart, The Leader of the Council
DIRECTOR:	Ian Miller, Chief Executive
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ian Miller, Chief Executive ian.miller@wyreforestdc.gov.uk Ext 2700 Caroline Newlands, Solicitor to the Council Caroline.newlands@wyreforestdc.gov.uk Ext 2715
APPENDICES:	Appendix A – draft reorganisation order Appendix B – map of proposed parish and wards for Kidderminster

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree the next steps in this community governance review following conclusion of the consultation.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to:

- 2.1 **DECIDE** that, following the consultation, the recommendations of the community governance review should be the creation of the parish of Kidderminster and of a parish council for Kidderminster (paragraph 4.2);
- 2.2 **DECIDE** that the name of the new council shall be “Kidderminster Parish Council” (paragraph 4.4);
- 2.3 **NOTE** that the District Council cannot confer the title of “Town Council” as, under legislation, that is a matter to be resolved by the new council (paragraphs 3.4 and 4.4);
- 2.4 **DECIDE** the electoral arrangements for the new parish council set out in paragraph 4.7 below;
- 2.5 **AGREE** the terms of the draft reorganisation order in Appendix A for consultation, including the anticipated precept, proposed transfer of assets, rights and liabilities and transitional arrangements (paragraphs 4.8 to 4.25 below);
- 2.6 **AGREE** the proposed transfer of the freehold of the Town Hall to the new council, with a lease back of the building to the District Council;

- 2.7 **Subject to a formal request from the Kidderminster Educational Foundation, AGREE the proposed transfer of the property, rights and liabilities vested in the Kidderminster Educational Foundation to the new council;**
- 2.8 **AUTHORISE the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Solicitor to the Council, to take all steps consequential on the decisions above about the outcome of the review, including consultation on the draft reorganisation order and publicising the outcome of the review.**

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 On 26 March 2014, the Council agreed to conduct a community governance review of Kidderminster under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Terms of reference for the review were agreed on 10 December 2014 and the review commenced on 1 February 2015. The consultation arrangements agreed by Council included a local advisory poll which was held in Kidderminster on 7 May 2015 under section 116 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 3.2 The votes cast in the local advisory poll in response to the question "Should Kidderminster have a Town Council?" were counted at the Town Hall on 11 May 2015 and the results were as follows:

Table 1: results of local advisory poll

"Should Kidderminster have a Town Council?"	
18,264 (79.1%)	YES
4,668 (20.2%)	NO
154 (0.7%)	Rejected ballot papers
Turnout 53.3%	

- 3.3 In addition a small number of consultation responses was received from individuals and organisations. They are summarised here:

Summary of Local Advisory Poll Consultation Feedback

3 responses from members of the public - don't see the need for a Town Council

- Concerned about additional cost
- Current arrangements are satisfactory and work
- No need for additional layer of local government

3 responses from members of the public asking questions about what a Town Council would do / cost

- Confused about the consultation given this matter was consulted on previously
- Concerned about paying extra for something which is not needed or wanted
- Wish to make an informed decision on 7 May 2015 at the poll

Stourport-on-Severn Town Council and Bewdley Town Council – support creation of Town Council for Kidderminster

- Would be essential to have if there was a local government reorganisation
- Having an active governing body for Kidderminster residents would help to better engage local people and foster community involvement in the Town

Bewdley Town Council – has no comment on what the proposed boundaries of individual wards should be

Kidderminster Charter Trustees, Kidderminster Civic Society, Kidderminster/Husum Twinning Association and the Kidderminster and District Youth Trust - support the creation of Town Council

Worcestershire County Council - no comments at this stage of the consultation process

- 3.4 Under section 87 of the 2007 Act, a community governance review must make recommendations as to what new parish or parishes (if any) should be constituted in the area under review. If the review results in a recommendation to create a parish, the review must also make recommendations about the name of the new parish; as to whether or not the new parish should have a parish council; and as to whether or not the new parish should have one of the alternative styles. Under section 89, the review must also make recommendations as to what electoral arrangements should apply to any new parish council. (“Alternative styles” are explained in paragraph 4.3 below. It is not open to the Council to create a town council for Kidderminster by name i.e. “Kidderminster Town Council”. The adoption of such a name would be a matter for the new parish council to resolve, if one is created. This report therefore refers throughout to “the parish council” or “the new council” even though it is considered inevitable that any parish council for Kidderminster would choose to call itself a town council.)
- 3.5 The Council gives effect to its decisions through a reorganisation order under section 86 of the 2007 Act. The order-making powers are widely drawn and allow, among other things, power to include such incidental, consequential, transitional or supplementary provision as may appear to the Council to be necessary or proper for the purposes of, or in consequence of, or for giving full effect to, the order; and power to make provision with respect to the transfer and management or custody of property (whether real or personal), with respect to the transfer of functions, property, rights and liabilities, and for the transfer of staff.
- 3.6 In respect of electoral arrangements, section 95 of the 2007 Act requires the Council to consider certain questions. The principal council must consider the following questions when deciding whether to recommend that a parish should, or should not, be divided into wards for the purpose of electing councillors. Those questions are—
- a) whether the number, or distribution, of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient
 - b) whether it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the council

- 3.7 If the Council decides to recommend that the parish should be divided into wards, it must have regard to the following factors when considering –
- a) the size and boundaries of the wards, and
 - b) the number of councillors to be elected for each ward.

Those factors are –

- a) the number of local government electors for the parish;
 - b) any change in the number, or distribution, of the local government electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts;
 - c) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are, and will remain, easily identifiable;
 - d) any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.
- 3.8 Section 96 of the 2007 Act requires the Council to publicise the outcome of the community governance review and the reasons for the decision, and to draw them to the attention of interested persons.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 This report deals in turn with the recommendations that the Council has to make arising from the community governance review and other issues which it needs to decide and will be reflected in the draft reorganisation order.

Whether to create a parish of Kidderminster and whether to create a parish council for Kidderminster

- 4.2 The Council has to have regard to the results of the consultation but is not bound to follow them. Other organisations, including town councils, have either supported the creation of a parish council for Kidderminster or have offered no comments. A few written responses from members of the public opposed or raised questions about the creation of a parish council. When weighed against the overwhelming results of the local advisory poll – both in terms of the number of electors who took part and the very large majority in favour of the question – the Council would be at significant risk of challenge if it chose not give greatest weight to the views expressed in the local advisory poll. The Council is therefore invited to **recommend** that:
- a) a new parish should be constituted for Kidderminster consisting of the District Council wards of Aggborough & Spennells, Blakebrook & Habberley South, Broadwaters, Foley Park & Hoobrook, Franche & Habberley North and Offmore & Comberton;
 - b) a parish council should be constituted for the parish of Kidderminster.
- A map of the proposed parish is in Appendix B.

Name of the parish council

4.3 Sections 9 to 16A of the Local Government Act 1972 make provision about the “alternative styles” of councils. Instead of “Parish”, there is a choice to use one of the alternative styles, namely:

- Village
- Community
- Neighbourhood

4.4 None of the alternative styles is considered appropriate. The Council is invited to **recommend** that the name of the new parish council shall be “Kidderminster Parish Council”. As stated in paragraph 3.4, it would fall to the new council to resolve, under section 245(6) of the 1972 Act, to have the status of a town and to adopt the name of town council.

Electoral arrangements

4.5 Whatever number of councillors is selected, it is apparent that the number and distribution of the local government electors for Kidderminster would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient. Kidderminster is simply too large to be constituted as a single ward. It is also desirable that areas of Kidderminster should be separately represented on the council. This would most simply be arranged by adopting the 6 new wards in Kidderminster that have recently been created for Wyre Forest District Council following the review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. They offer good electoral equality and represent clearly defined communities and areas within the town. Recognition of the wards will be strengthened by using the same ward arrangements for both councils.

Table 2: district council wards in Kidderminster

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Aggborough & Spennells	3	7,125	2,375	-4%
Blakebrook & Habberley South	3	7,388	2,463	-1%
Broadwaters	3	7,589	2,530	2%
Foley Park & Hoobrook	3	7,824	2,608	5%
Franche & Habberley North	3	7,990	2,663	7%
Offmore & Comberton	3	7,619	2,540	2%

4.6 The next question to consider is the number of councillors for the new council. The legal requirement is that a parish council must have a minimum of 5 members; there

is no upper limit in law. Research conducted in 1992 suggested almost all parish councils serving over 20,000 people had between 13 and 31 councillors. Locally, Stourport has 18 councillors, and Bewdley has 13. It is felt that the new council would be too small if there were only one or two councillors for each ward, as this would result in a council of only 6 or 12 members. Conversely, it is not considered that the number of councillors needs to be significantly larger than other towns in the district. Again for consistency and to assist electors in being familiar with electoral arrangements, the proposal is that there should be 3 members elected for each ward, producing a total of 18 councillors.

- 4.7 The Council is invited to **recommend** that the new parish council should have 18 councillors, with the six wards being identical to the Wyre Forest District Council wards in Kidderminster and each ward returning three councillors. Elections would be held in May 2016 and every four years thereafter.

Initial precept and budget for the new council

- 4.8 Regulation 3(2) of the Local Government Finance (New Parishes) (England) Regulations 2008 No 626 requires the Council to anticipate a precept from the new parish council for 2016-17. The amount must be stated in the reorganisation order. Regulation 4 requires this to be a special item i.e. it will be charged only on council tax payers in Kidderminster. Regulation 3(4) also obliges WFDC to state in the reorganisation order the budget requirement for the town council for 2016-17 (this will be the same figure as the precept). It further provides that, in calculating its budget requirement for that year, the town council cannot calculate an amount that is greater than the amount stated in the reorganisation order.
- 4.9 Regulation 5 then provides that the new council must issue its precept by the beginning of October 2016, in this case. There is nothing to prevent it doing so earlier, once it has been elected. While in theory the new council could choose to set a budget requirement and issue a precept for 2016-17 at a lower level than the figure set out in the reorganisation order, it would be highly unlikely to do so – council tax bills will already have been issued. Issuing a lower precept would trigger rebilling which would cost the new council a significant sum, as WFDC would be able to recover the cost of rebilling. If the precept turns out to be more than the new council needs in 2016-17, it can retain any surplus for its reserves.
- 4.10 Because an entirely new parish council is being created where none currently exists, the regime of council tax referenda for “excessive” increases in council tax does not apply. Therefore, as legislation presently stands, there is no risk to the District Council that a referendum will be triggered as a result of its decision on the anticipated precept. The new council may find itself subject to those rules in 2017 onwards if the Government extends it to larger town and parish councils.
- 4.11 The tax base for Kidderminster in 2015-16 is 16,040. Housing growth and other factors that affect the tax base are estimated to take the tax base to 16,360 for 2016-17 – the actual figure will not be known until after the reorganisation order is made. As will be apparent from the proposals for transfer of assets etc. set out below, the new council will have a substantial set of responsibilities that will result in a scale of activity that is akin to Stourport-on-Severn Town Council and Bewdley Town Council. The council tax at Band D for those councils in 2015-16 is £27.12 in Stourport and £25.71 in Bewdley. Their decisions about council tax for 2016-17 will

not be known before the reorganisation order is made. It would be appropriate for the new council for Kidderminster to have an equivalent level of resourcing and it is therefore proposed to base the anticipated precept on a Band D council tax of £27. This provides an anticipated precept of £441,720. It was made clear to local electors in the supporting information for the local advisory poll that town and parish councils elsewhere in Wyre Forest have higher council taxes than the Charter Trustees; and what the impact of a Band B council tax of about £20 in Kidderminster would mean compared to the current position. (Band B is the average property in Kidderminster. A council tax of £27 at Band D would be £21 at Band B.)

- 4.12 It is important to stress that, whatever amount for the anticipated precept is included in the reorganisation order, it is impossible to guarantee that the impact on individual council tax bills will be precisely the same as assumed above. This is because the actual tax base for 2016-17 will be used in calculating council tax bills and it could differ from the estimate given in paragraph 4.11. While the estimate will be reviewed before the reorganisation order is made to take account of the latest information about housing completions and other relevant factors, there remains a possibility that the actual tax base will differ marginally from the estimate; and that therefore the actual amount of council tax to be paid by households could differ slightly from the figures shown above. For example, if the anticipated precept was £441,720 but the tax base for 2016-17 remained unchanged from 2015-16 at 16,040, the council tax to be paid by a Band D household would be £27.54 rather than £27. Any variance from the assumed figures would be marginal.
- 4.13 The Council is invited to **decide**, as the basis for consultation, that the anticipated precept and budget requirement for 2016-17 should be set at £441,720. The final decision will be taken in the autumn in approving the reorganisation order.

Transfer of assets, rights and liabilities to the new council

- 4.14 The concept of transferring assets, rights and liabilities to the new council would be fully in accordance with the Council's stance on localism. There is a range of implications and consequences that need to be considered, and these are explored below.
- 4.15 Firstly, there are some assets, rights and liabilities that would be transferred by operation of legislation:
- a) under regulation 9 of the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 No 625, land held or used in Kidderminster for the purposes of the Allotments Acts 1908 to 1950 will be automatically transferred from the District Council to the new council. Thus the **allotments** do not need to feature in the reorganisation order (although the order needs to specify the "order date" for the purposes of regulation 2, which would be 1 April 2016). The allotments are already managed and operated by local groups, and their rights and liabilities would not be affected by the transfer;
 - b) regulation 15 of the 2008 Regulations would transfer all **property, rights and liabilities of the Charter Trustees** to the new council, and the reorganisation order therefore needs to make no provision for them.

- 4.16 The creation of the new council for Kidderminster provides an opportunity to enhance local control and responsibility for local assets and services, giving a voice for the town and scope within the new council's overall budget to support activities and initiatives beyond those undertaken by existing organisations. Against this backdrop, an important principle should be that the arrangements for transfers should support a sustainable and measured transition, including cost sharing and other joint arrangements with the District Council. The position in respect of other assets, rights and liabilities has been reviewed and the arrangements for transfers are set out below. While the District Council will wish to ensure sustainability, the transfer process provides the opportunity for it to secure significant reductions in what it presently spends on what is transferred and that some or all of the related costs would therefore be borne by the new council. Nevertheless it is inevitable that the District Council will continue to have to make a financial contribution for many years, as it will not be realistic to expect the new council to meet all the costs of operation and maintenance from its precept. It is always open to the District Council to transfer further assets and/or operational responsibilities to the new council at some future date through a process of agreement, as has happened for example with the Civic Centre and Civic Hall at Stourport-on-Severn and the toilets at Upper Arley.
- 4.17 The assets, rights and liabilities which are proposed for transfer in the reorganisation order are as follows and, with one exception, are covered by article 12 of the draft order:

The Town Hall

The Town Hall was built by the former Borough of Kidderminster. It is the natural seat of a town council and should be the focus of its civic pride. However the building is far larger than it is likely to need for its own functions. Indeed most of the building is used by the District Council for its own purposes, including the customer service centre (hub), IT server room and events and cultural activities particularly in the Music Room, Corn Exchange and King Charles' Room. Thus, for simplicity in drafting of the order, it is proposed to transfer the freehold of the building to the new council but with a lease on the whole building granted back to the District Council. The transfer would include the Rowland Hill statue which is part of the same land registration as the Town Hall. The proposed approach is to assist the new council at the outset as it assumes its responsibilities and allow it to work together with the District Council to determine the operational arrangements in the longer term. The District Council will need to reduce its financial contribution to the running costs of the Town Hall, and the new council will have the ability to contribute substantially to its running costs. Detailed discussions on exactly how the management of the Town Hall is undertaken will need to be considered. Detailed agreements would therefore be entered with the new council under section 99 of the 2007 Act for such issues as surrendering parts of the lease so that the new council had sole ownership and usage of parts of the building (such as the Mayor's Parlour), usage by the new council of other parts of the building and an agreed basis for sharing operational costs, including a contribution by the new council towards the programme of events and cultural activities organised by the District Council;

Land adjacent to St Mary's Church

This is between the church and ring road, where the Angel of Peace, Richard Baxter statue and Kidderminster war memorial and nearby gardens are situated. The transfer would include the statues and memorials but would exclude the area of the surface car park operated by the District Council;

Market Street toilets This transfer would not include the area of the surface car park operated by the District Council;

Self-standing statues and memorials

These comprise the Worcester Road clock and horse statue in The Horsefair;

Miscellaneous assets

These comprise street furniture at a number of locations e.g. benches, boundary signs for Kidderminster, bus shelters by Town Hall, poles and holders used for display of floral displays. For simplicity of drafting of the order, the list will be a separate document sealed and deposited as mentioned in article 2 of the draft order;

The property, rights and liabilities of the Kidderminster Educational Foundation (registered charity number 527537)

This proposal is subject to a formal request from the Kidderminster Educational Foundation for the property, rights and liabilities to be transferred to the new council. The trust was originally created by the Borough of Kidderminster on 31 July 1973 out of moneys from the former arts and science college in Kidderminster. The District Council has been the trustee since April 1974 and has disbursed funds from the trust's income to support a number of activities across Wyre Forest. Transferring ownership of the assets of, and responsibility for managing and operating, the trust to the new council would not affect the charitable purposes of the trust i.e. it would still be available to support activity across Wyre Forest, not just in Kidderminster;

Christmas lights

The rights and liabilities of the District Council under the contract entered for a period of 3 years with Gala Lights Ltd commencing on 22 June 2015. This is for provision of Christmas lights, and means that the new council will meet the cost of providing Christmas lights for the town from 2016 onwards, in line with equivalent arrangements in Bewdley and Stourport;

Officers of the Charter Trustees

Article 13(1) makes provision for the transfer of the officers of the Charter Trustees to the new council on their then existing terms and conditions, with effect from the dissolution of the Trustees on 9 May 2016.

4.18 It is also proposed to ensure that the new council in future has devolved control over a number of items of revenue expenditure, enabling consistency with arrangements in the other towns:

- **provision of hanging baskets/flower beds in the town centre.** The Charter Trustees already make a financial contribution towards them. As noted above, the physical assets used for the floral displays would be transferred such as poles and baskets;
- operation of the **Kidderminster lengthsman's scheme;**
- **maintenance of St Mary's Churchyard.**

Development of a long-term funding and service agreement

4.19 This will not form part of the reorganisation order. A number of detailed matters will need to be addressed through an **agreement or agreements under section 99 of the 2007 Act**. Section 99 provides for public bodies affected by a reorganisation

order to make agreements with respect to respect to any property, income, rights, liabilities and expenses and any financial relations between parties to the agreement. The Council needs to protect its fiduciary position and rights – for example to ensure that the Council receives a share of any receipt in the (perhaps unlikely) event that the new council decides to dispose of transferred land or buildings for development ; and that the Council continues to enjoy rights of usage e.g. for arts, sporting and other events or for elections in the Town Hall and/or retention of income streams e.g. advertising rights involving some of these assets under the planned contract for sponsorship. The agreement needs to cater for the possibility that the District Council might cease to use as much space at the Town Hall as it does at present, and that its financial contribution would reduce as a result. There would also be implications for practical operation of assets and facilities: the new council is not going to be in a position fully to have considered such matters or to make alternative arrangements before the proposed date of transfer.

- 4.20 It is thus proposed to develop a **long-term funding and service agreement** under section 99 of the 2007 Act which would seek to give a higher degree of operational and financial certainty to the District Council and the new council of, say, 2 or 3 years but with the ability to adjust the precise level of financial transactions in the light of experience. The alternative would be to endeavour to settle all these matters before the reorganisation order is made or the new council is elected. That has potential risks if, despite historic and current records, the estimates of cost and activity turn out to be wrong. The intention is that the long-term funding and service agreement between the two councils would be finalised between December 2015 and March 2016. In respect of the District Council, it would fall to the Cabinet to enter any such agreement.
- 4.21 The suggestion of a long-term funding and service agreement provides the opportunity for the District Council to negotiate further such arrangements with the new council in future periods. It would also buy ample time for the new council to consider what it wished to do for the future. Any staffing consequences would have to be considered at the time in accordance with employment law, including the TUPE Regulations.

Transitional arrangements and other matters

- 4.22 Article 1(5) of the draft reorganisation order provides for the parish and new council to be created on 1 December 2015. Article 14 then makes transitional arrangements about the membership of the new council between 1 December 2015 and 9 May 2016 when the councillors elected in next year's elections would take office. Article 14 provides that the new council would, temporarily, consist of the serving district councillors for wards in Kidderminster; and that meetings of the new council during that period would be chaired by the Mayor of Kidderminster or, in her absence, by one of those councillors chosen at the meeting by those present. It further provides for meetings of the new council during that period, and the annual meeting of the new council in 2016, to be convened by the Chief Executive of the District Council. Such provision is necessary because the new council would not be guaranteed to have any officers of its own during that period and proper arrangements for its administration, in accordance with the legislation governing local authority meetings, need to be put in place. In particular, even if the new council decides to proceed swiftly with recruitment of a clerk, at the time when the reorganisation order is made there can be no

guarantee that the recruitment process will have been successful and that there will be a clerk in post in time for the annual meeting in 2016.

4.23 There are many issues that the new council will need to address between December and April, to ensure that the councillors who are elected next year can move swiftly to assume their responsibilities. They include:

- Procedural and civic: adopting standing orders etc. Resolution on adopting the status of a town and to be called a town council;
- Financial: developing a detailed plan for the budget for 2016-17; agreeing the initial long-term funding and service agreement with the District Council (see paragraphs 4.19 to 4.21 above); agreeing banking arrangements; adopting financial regulations etc.
- Staffing: considering and potentially agreeing proposed staffing structure; agreeing job description for clerk; potentially to commence recruitment process so that new council is in position to make appointment swiftly after elections or even to make the appointment before May 2016;
- Other issues E.g. adoption of relevant policies (personnel, health & safety etc), drafting or approval of other key documents (e.g. draft “town/corporate” plan), decisions on membership of associations etc.

4.24 The new council would be a separate legal entity from the District Council. As far as possible it would be administered by District Council staff with the Chief Executive acting as clerk and Solicitor to the Council as deputy clerk (until any permanent appointment was made). However the new council would need its own legal advice and financial support as it would not be appropriate for it to rely upon legal and financial advice from District Council staff. Cost-effective arrangements will be put in place for this. A formal request will be made to the Charter Trustees for funding that they might make available to assist, with the intention of recovering any balance of costs retrospectively from the new council in 2016-17, when it will have significant resources at its disposal.

4.25 Article 10 of the draft reorganisation order provides for the annual meeting of the new council in 2016 to be held no later than 14 days after the councillors elected in May 2016 take office i.e. no later than 23 May 2016. In accordance with regulation 15(2)(b) of the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor elected by the Charter Trustees cease to hold office on the day that the new councillors take office. There will thus be no Mayor in office between 9 May 2016 and whenever the annual meeting of the new council is held.

Timetable

4.26 The current planning assumptions are set out in Table 3.

Table 3: proposed timetable

Action	Dates
Full Council considers responses to consultation including local advisory poll	29 July 2015
Full Council considers and approves publication of	29 July 2015

Action	Dates
draft proposals for reorganisation order including electoral arrangements etc.	
Consultation on draft proposals for reorganisation order	31 July – 17 September 2015
Approval of reorganisation order by full Council	30 September 2015
Effective date of order (proposed)	1 December 2015
Parish and new parish council created. Existing district councillors for Kidderminster serve as members of the new council	1 December 2015
New council and WFDC enter various agreements e.g. long-term funding and service agreement under section 99 of the 2007 Act	December 2015 – March 2016
Vesting date for transfer of assets	1 April 2016
Elections to Kidderminster Town Council	5 May 2016
Charter Trustees cease to exist New councillors take office District councillors for Kidderminster cease to serve on the new council (if not elected as members of the new council)	9 May 2016
Long-term funding and service agreement in place. New Council has time to decide what arrangements it wishes to make for the future, including possibility of fresh long-term agreement with WFDC/creation of shared services	2016 -2018 (for agreement)

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 An earmarked reserve of £45k has been created by the Council, to meet the cost of conducting the community governance review, of which the main costs so far relate to the local advisory poll. The next stages of the review will involve further costs to the Council, although it is difficult to quantify them all accurately at present. The main impact will be on officer time, and this can be absorbed within existing budgets. It is not proposed to engage in expensive methods of public consultation on the reorganisation order. Consultation with the public and other interested parties will be promoted on the Council's website, through social media channels and press releases.
- 5.2 The costs of administering the new council between December 2015 and March 2016, in particular provision of independent legal and financial advice, might be up to £20k. A formal request will be made to the Charter Trustees for funding that they might make available to assist, with the intention of recovering any balance of costs retrospectively from the new council in 2016-17, when it will have significant resources at its disposal.
- 5.3 The establishment of the new council and the transfer of assets and service responsibilities to it support the Council's approach towards localism, empowering and devolving responsibility to local organisations. A consequence is that it should allow the District Council to reduce its expenditure by an estimated £250k a year

initially, subject to the agreements to be entered under section 99 of the 2007 Act, with potential to reduce support further in later years. The precise arrangements and therefore any financial impact on various front-line and support services provided by the Council will be determined as part of the long-term funding and service agreement. Further work needs to be done on the best structure for the new arrangements to ensure the most advantageous position in respect of VAT, for both councils.

- 5.4 The higher level of council tax in Kidderminster would result in higher bills for all households that are liable to pay, as set out in paragraph 4.11. This impact of creating a council for Kidderminster was drawn clearly to the attention of electors in the supporting material for the local advisory poll, and nearly 80% of electors who took part in the poll can be said to have supported the increased bills. There are nearly 3,300 households of working age that receive support under the council reduction scheme. The Council is consulting on options to change the contribution that they make from 10% to a higher amount, including an option of 20%. Almost 2,000 of these households are in Band A with a further 1,000 in Band B. Thus the additional amount of council tax that the vast majority of these households would have to pay as a result of creation of the new council might range from about £2 a year to about £4 a year. This is not considered to be a significant impact and should not, in its own right, contribute to administrative costs of collection and enforcement.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 sets out the powers associated with community governance reviews and provides the power for the Council to take decisions regarding matters arising from the review. Relevant provisions of the 2007 Act and other legislation have been mentioned throughout this report. The Council is required by Section 100(4) to have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State relating to community governance reviews.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 There is a wide range of risks associated with the creation of the new council and its successful initial operation. These include risks for the new council and for the District Council. They will be mitigated by careful planning, including early creation of the new council in December 2015, and the proposed consultation on the reorganisation order to test support for its proposals and understanding of its impact. The proposed long-term funding and service agreement would mitigate a range of risks related to continuity of service delivery as well as protecting the rights and interests of the District Council.
- 8.2 The Council continues to ensure that the review accords with the legislation and guidance given by the Secretary of State and Boundary Commission, including its completion within the statutory timescales.

- 8.3 As the District Council would still be providing funding for various activities in Kidderminster as it does in other areas (such as for cultural and artistic events), it is not believed that there would be sustainable complaints about double taxation.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The issues raised in this report mark a significant step in the advancement of localism in Wyre Forest and in the future governance of Kidderminster, its principal town. The Council is invited to make recommendations on the outcome of the community governance review of Kidderminster and to agree the proposals to be included for consultation in the draft reorganisation order.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Cabinet.
10.2 Corporate Leadership Team.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Part 4, Chapter 3
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/part/4/chapter/3>
(This legislation has been amended by the 2009 Act.)
- 11.2 Department for Communities and Local Government and The Local Government Boundary Commission for England – Guidance on Community Governance Reviews.
http://www.lgbce.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/10387/community-governance-review-guidance.pdf
- 11.3 Relevant secondary legislation
The Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 No 625
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/625/contents/made>
The Local Government Finance (New Parishes) (England) Regulations 2008 No 626
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/626/contents/made>
- 11.4 Supporting information for the local advisory poll
<http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/kidderminsterpoll>

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

The Kidderminster (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2015

Made - - - - day month year

Coming into force in accordance with article 1(2)

Wyre Forest District Council (“the council”) in accordance with section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“the 2007 Act”) has undertaken a community governance review and made recommendations dated 29th July 2015:

The council has decided to give effect to those recommendations and, in accordance with section 93 of the 2007 Act, has consulted with the local government electors and other interested persons and has had regard to the need to secure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community and is effective and convenient:

The council, in accordance with section 100 of the 2007 Act, has had regard to guidance issued under that section:

The council makes the following Order in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 86, 98(3), 98(4), 98(6) and 240(10) of the 2007 Act.

Citation and commencement

1. (1) This Order may be cited as the Kidderminster (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2015.
- (2) Subject to paragraphs (3), (4) and (5) below, this Order comes into force on 1st April 2016.
- (3) Articles 8 and 9 shall come into force on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2016.
- (4) For the purposes of
 - (a) this article,
 - (b) article 5 and
 - (c) proceedings preliminary or relating to the elections of parish councillors for the parish of Kidderminster, to be held on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2016,
 this Order shall come into force on the day after that on which it is made.
- (5) Articles 4, 6 and 14 shall come into force on 1st December 2015.

Interpretation

2. In this Order—

“district” means the district of Wyre Forest;

“existing” means existing on the date this Order is made;

“map” means the map marked “Map referred to in the Kidderminster (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2015 and deposited in accordance with section 96(4) of the 2007 Act: and any reference to a numbered sheet is a reference to the sheet of the map which bears that number;

“miscellaneous assets list” shall mean the document marked “Miscellaneous Assets List” referred to in the Kidderminster (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2015, a sealed copy of which is deposited at the principal offices of Wyre Forest District Council;

“new parish” means the parish constituted by article 4;

“ordinary day of election of councillors” has the meaning given by section 37 of the Representation of the People Act 1983; and

“registration officer” means an officer appointed for the purpose of, and in accordance with, section 8 of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

Effect of Order

3. This Order has effect subject to any agreement under section 99 (agreements about incidental matters) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 relevant to any provision of this Order.

Constitution of a new parish

4. (1) A new parish, comprising the area outlined with a blue line on the map, shall be constituted within the district.
(2) The name of the new parish shall be Kidderminster.

Calculation of budget requirement

5. For the purposes of regulation 3 of the Local Government Finance (New Parishes) (England) Regulations 2008 there is specified in relation to the parish of Kidderminster the sum of £441,720.

Parish council for the parish of Kidderminster

6. (1) There shall be a parish council for the parish of Kidderminster.
(2) The name of that council shall be “Kidderminster Parish Council”.

Elections for the parish of Kidderminster Parish elections

7. Elections of all parish councillors for the parish of Kidderminster shall be held simultaneously on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2016.
8. The number of councillors to be elected for the parish of Kidderminster shall be 18.

Wards of the parish of Kidderminster and numbers of parish councillors

9. (1) The parish of Kidderminster shall be divided into 6 wards which shall be named as set out in column (1) of Schedule 1.
(2) The number of councillors to be elected for each ward shall be the number specified in respect of the ward in column (3) of that Schedule.

Annual Meeting of Parish Council

10. The annual meeting of the new parish council in 2016 shall be convened by the Chief Executive of Wyre Forest District Council. The meeting shall take place no later than 14 days after the day on which the councillors elected to the new parish council take office.

Electoral register

11. The registration officer for the district shall make such rearrangement of, or adaptation of, the register of local government electors as may be necessary for the purposes of, and in consequence of, this Order.

Transfer of property, rights and liabilities

12. The land, property, rights and liabilities described in Schedules 2, 3, & 4 shall transfer from Wyre Forest District Council to Kidderminster Parish Council on the date specified in column (2) of those Schedules.

Charter Trustees of the Town of Kidderminster

13. (1) Any officers appointed by the charter trustees for the proper discharge of their functions who hold office immediately before the date of dissolution of the charter trustees (“the date of dissolution”) shall by virtue of this Order be transferred on the date of dissolution and on the same terms and conditions of appointment to the employment of the parish council.

(2) Any powers to appoint local officers of dignity exercisable by the charter trustees immediately before the date of dissolution shall be exercisable by the parish council.

(3) Any functions which would have been exercisable in relation to the account of the charter trustees or, as the case may be, their responsible financial officer if the charter trustees had not been dissolved shall on and after the date of dissolution be exercisable by the parish council or, as the case may be, the parish council’s responsible financial officer.

Transitional provision

14. (1) Until the councillors elected to the council of the new parish of Kidderminster at the elections to be held on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2016 come into office, the new parish shall be represented by those persons who immediately before 1st April 2016 are the elected councillors for the district wards of Aggborough & Spennells, Blakebrook & Habberley South, Broadwaters, Foley Park & Hoobrook, Franche & Habberley North and Offimore & Comberton.

(2) Until the annual meeting of the new parish council in 2016, the meetings of the new parish council shall be chaired by the Mayor of Kidderminster or, in her absence, by one of the elected councillors holding office by virtue of paragraph (1) of this article chosen at the meeting by those present.

(3) Until the annual meeting of the new parish council in 2016, meetings of the new parish council shall be convened by the Chief Executive of Wyre Forest District Council.

Order date

15. 1st April 2016 is the order date for the purposes of the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008.

Sealed with the seal of the council on the *xx day of xx month XX year*

Signature
Title of signatory

SCHEDULE 1

WARDS OF THE PARISH OF KIDDERMINSTER

KIDDERMINSTER AND AREAS OF WARDS AND NUMBERS OF COUNCILLORS

<i>Column (1)</i>	<i>Column (2)</i>	<i>Column (3)</i>
<i>Name of Ward</i>	<i>Area of the Ward</i>	<i>Number of Councillors</i>
Aggborough & Spennells	Whole of the Ward as shown on the Map	3
Blakebrook & Habberley South	Whole of the Ward as shown on the Map	3
Broadwaters	Whole of the Ward as shown on the Map	3
Foley Park & Hoobrook	Whole of the Ward as shown on the Map	3
Franche & Habberley North	Whole of the Ward as shown on the Map	3
Offmore & Comberton	Whole of the Ward as shown on the Map	3

SCHEDULE 2

LAND AND PROPERTY TO BE TRANSFERRED

<i>Column (1)</i>	<i>Column (2)</i>
<i>Land and property to be transferred</i>	<i>Date</i>
Kidderminster Town Hall, Vicar Street, Kidderminster, DY10 1DB (Land Registry WR103284) including Rowland Hill Statue, and subject to a 99 year lease to Wyre Forest District Council.	1 st April 2016
Market Street Car Park and Public Conveniences, Market Street, Kidderminster, DY10 1LX (Land Registry WR119453), <u>excepting</u> the areas comprising the Market Street Surface Car Park as shown in Schedule 4 to the Wyre Forest District Council (Off Street Car Parking Places) Order 2015 No.3.	1 st April 2016
Land Adjacent to St. Mary's Church, Kidderminster, DY10 2JN (Land Registry WR105980) including the Angel of Peace Statue, the War Memorial, and the Baxter Statue, but <u>excepting</u> the areas comprising the St. Mary's Surface Car Park as shown in Schedule 4 to the Wyre Forest District Council (Off Street Car Parking Places) Order 2015 No.3.	1 st April 2016
The property, rights and liabilities vested in the Kidderminster Educational Foundation (registered charity number 527537).	1 st April 2016

Article number

SCHEDULE 3

HISTORICAL AND CEREMONIAL PROPERTY TO BE TRANSFERRED

<i>Column (1)</i>	<i>Column (2)</i>
<i>Historic and ceremonial property to be transferred</i>	<i>Date</i>
description	Date
To be Agreed	

SCHEDULE 4

*MISCELLANEOUS ASSETS AND OTHER
MATTERS TO BE TRANSFERRED*

<i>Column (1)</i>	<i>Column (2)</i>
<i>Other matters to be transferred</i>	<i>Date</i>
description	date
Clock at Worcester Street, Kidderminster, DY10 1EN (Not Land)	1 st April 2016
Horse Statue, Horsefair, Kidderminster, DY10 2EW. (Not Land)	1 st April 2016
Christmas Illuminations - Contract between Gala Lights Ltd and Wyre Forest District Council Dated 22 June 2015.	1 st April 2016

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order gives effect to recommendations made by Wyre Forest District Council for the new parish of Kidderminster, the creation of a council for the parish of Kidderminster the dissolution of the council for the parish of the parish of Kidderminster

The parish of Kidderminster will be created with effect from 1 December 2015. The electoral arrangements apply in respect of parish elections to be held on and after the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2016.

Article 7 provides for parish elections in the parish of Kidderminster in 2016, and then to continue according to the established system of parish elections every four years.

Article 8 specifies the numbers of parish councillors for the new parish of Kidderminster.

Article 9 and the map establishes the names and areas of the wards of the new parish of Kidderminster and the numbers of councillors for each ward.

Article 11 obliges the Electoral Registration Officer to make any necessary amendments to the electoral register to reflect the new electoral arrangements.

The map defined in article 2 shows the new wards of the parish of Kidderminster. It is available, at all reasonable times, at the offices of Wyre Forest District Council.

Article 12 contains details of land, property, rights and liabilities described in the Schedules that shall transfer from Wyre Forest District Council to Kidderminster Parish Council on the date specified in those Schedules.

Under Regulation 9 of the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils)(England) Regulations 2008, Land held or used in Kidderminster for the purposes of the Allotments Act 1908-1950 will be automatically transferred from Wyre Forest District Council to Kidderminster Parish Council. The allotments to be transferred are detailed below:

Salisbury Drive, Habberley, Kidderminster DY11 6EY - (Land Registry WR104131)

Wilton Avenue, Franche, Kidderminster DY11 5PT – (Land Registry WR106413)

Dowles Road, Kidderminster DY11 7NU (known as Rifle Range Allotments) – (Land Registry WR106358)

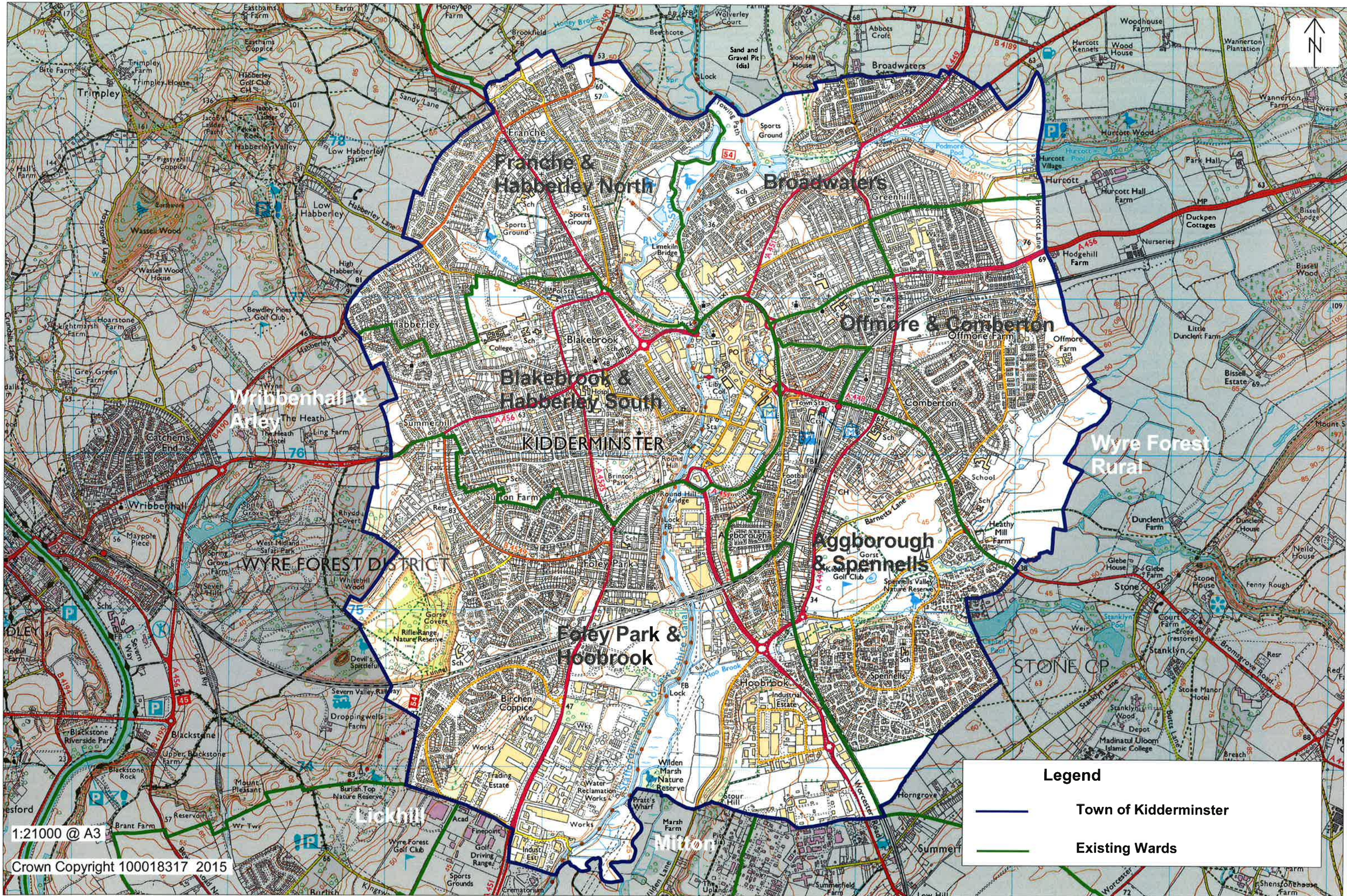
Aggborough Crescent, Aggborough, Kidderminster DY10 1LQ – (Land Registry WR106035)

Offmore Lane, Kidderminster DY10 3BN (also known as Chester Road Allotments) – (Land Registry WR106398)

Dunclent Crescent, Kidderminster DY10 3EE (also known as Comberton Allotments) – (Land Registry WR106696)

Goldthorn Road, Kidderminster DY11 7JN (also known as Railway Bridge Allotments) - (Land Registry WR106036)

Greatfield Road, Kidderminster DY11 6PH – (Land Registry WR106393)



WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**COUNCIL MEETING****29TH JULY 2015****Community Governance Review – Stourport-on-Severn**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor M J Hart, The Leader of the Council
DIRECTOR:	Ian Miller, Chief Executive
CONTACT OFFICER:	Alison Braithwaite Ext 2781 Alison.braithwaite@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix A – Extract from minutes of Stourport-on-Severn Town Council, 3 February 2015

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree the response to a request from Stourport-on-Severn Town Council for a community governance review.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to:

- 2.1 **DECIDE in principle to conduct a community governance review of Stourport-on-Severn, commencing in the latter part of 2016;**
- 2.2 **DETERMINE the terms of reference and timetable for the review nearer the time of the review.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 3 February 2015, Stourport-on-Severn Town Council resolved to request a community governance review of the town under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (Appendix A). The review would address anomalies that it perceives in the distribution of seats to the various wards that make up the Town Council. The background to the request is that the allocation of seats for the Town Council wards was changed as part of the work done by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on the electoral review of Wyre Forest District Council. This Council did not comment on the Boundary Commission's work in respect of the Town Council, as that was a matter of interest to the Town Council.
- 3.2 Table 1 shows the historic ward arrangements as well as how the Boundary Commission's proposals for the number of councillors in each town council ward changed between its draft recommendations (which was the last chance for the Town Council to comment) and its final recommendations. There was no change in the proposed town ward boundaries between the draft and final recommendations.

Table 1: Wards in Stourport-on-Severn and Boundary Commission's proposals for number of councillors for each town council ward

Ward	Historic position	Draft recommendations, April 2014	Final recommendations, October 2014
Areley Kings East	3	3	3
Areley Kings West	3	2	2
Central	3	2	2
Lickhill	3	3	3
North	3	4	2
Stour & Wilden	3	4	6
Stourport-on-Severn	18	18	18

- 3.3 On 18 June 2014 the Town Council responded to the draft recommendations and raised no objections to the proposals for the distribution of seats between the town council wards. The Town Council and local electors were not given any chance to comment on the final recommendations.
- 3.4 Before the ordinary elections on 7 May, the Town Council had six wards, each returning 3 members. It was to be expected that the Boundary Commission would revise the ward boundaries and level of representation as a result of the changes to district ward boundaries in Stourport. Indeed the Boundary Commission's review provided the opportunity to address some of the imbalances that existed in representation on the Town Council. Prior to 7 May, Areley Kings West had just over 2100 voters and returned 3 councillors, while Stour & Wilden had just over 3300 voters but the same number of town councillors.
- 3.5 For reasons that are not apparent, the Boundary Commission's final recommendations for the Town Council involve the following pattern of representation (using the estimates of electorate in 2019 that were provided by the District Council).

Table 2: analysis of final recommendations of Boundary Commission

Ward	Number of electors (2019 estimate)	Number of councillors	Electors for each councillor (rounded)
Areley Kings East	2641	3	880
Areley Kings West	2145	2	1073
Central	2643	2	1322
Lickhill	2431	3	810
North	3252	2	1626
Stour & Wilden	4348	6	725
Stourport-on-Severn	17460	18	970

- 3.6 No electoral review is likely to lead to precise electoral equality. That is the case with the District Council's wards, although all of them lie within 10% variance of electoral equality. This is because, in conducting reviews of district councils (for example),

there is “the need to secure that the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of members of the district council to be elected is, as nearly as possible, the same in every electoral area of the council”. It is a quirk of the legislation but the Local Government Boundary Commission is not required by Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 to secure such equality for parish councils.

- 3.7 The new electoral arrangements were given effect by the Wyre Forest (Electoral Changes) Order 2015 No.70. They were used for the ordinary elections to the Town Council on 7 May and the delayed election to Areley Kings East ward held on 9 June. Even if the District Council agrees to conduct a community governance review and the result of the review was to change the electoral arrangements for the Town Council, the changes would not be able to take effect until May 2019 when the next ordinary elections for the Town Council will be held.
- 3.8 This Council is not obliged to conduct a community governance review under the 2007 Act. There has been no petition signed by 10% of the electors in Stourport, which would automatically trigger a review. However the Council has a discretionary power to conduct a review under section 82 of the 2007 Act at any time, whether or not a petition has been received.
- 3.9 In a case such as Stourport where a parish council exists, under section 88 of the 2007 Act, any review must make one of the following recommendations
- a) recommendations that the parish should not be abolished and that its area should not be altered;
 - b) recommendations that the area of the parish should be altered;
 - c) recommendations that the parish should be abolished.

The review must also make recommendations:

- a) as to whether or not the name of the parish should be changed;
 - b) as to whether or not the parish should continue to have a council.
- 3.10 Thus a community governance review cannot look solely at the electoral arrangements of the Town Council. Wider questions of community governance can be raised by people and organisations responding to the review. It is possible for the terms of reference for a review to signal that the District Council believes the Town Council to provide a valued level of community governance for Stourport, and that it believes there should continue to be a Town Council. However that does not prevent responses to the review (for example) calling for the abolition of the Town Council, or suggesting that its area should be split between two or more new parish councils. Issues could also be raised about the number of councillors, rather than simply their distribution between wards. This Council would be obliged to consider all representations in reaching conclusions about what to do following consultation.
- 3.11 Under section 90 of the 2007 Act, if a community governance review makes recommendations that a parish should continue to have a parish council, the review must also make recommendations as to what changes (if any) should be made to the electoral arrangements for that council. This is not an unfettered power because of the recent review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Under section 86 of the 2007 Act, the Council cannot include any provision to change

electoral arrangements that were made or altered during the preceding five years by an order under section 59 of the 2009 Act, unless the Local Government Boundary Commission agrees to that provision.

- 3.12 There would be significant risk of wasted effort if the Council agreed to commence a community governance review without first having established the Local Government Boundary Commission's likely position. Officers have therefore consulted the Boundary Commission on a contingent basis to explore whether or not the Commission would be likely to give its agreement to changes to the number of town councillors to be returned by each ward in 2019, if that was what the District Council decided to propose as part of the community governance review.
- 3.13 Boundary Commission officials have replied as follows: "in principle, the Commission would be willing to entertain a request from your Council to grant consent to the making of a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order for Stourport-on-Severn in order to address the broad consideration you describe [i.e. the variation of councillors between wards]. The matters which the Commission would consider would relate to the particular aspects of proposed changes to community governance and any evidence which the Council may provide relating to community support for its proposals". Boundary Commission officials have correctly stressed that, at this time, no undertaking can be given on behalf of the Commission, that consent will necessarily be granted upon receipt of a request as the Commission has to reach a view on a specific proposal.
- 3.14 Before commencing any review, the Council is required to prepare and publish terms of reference under which the review is to be undertaken and the area under review.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Following the Town Council's request, the Council needs to decide whether or not to undertake a community governance review for Stourport-on-Severn under section 82 of the 2007 Act. While there are clear anomalies in representation between the town council wards as set out in Table 2 in paragraph 3.3, this issue cannot be addressed in isolation. A review would have to look at the community governance of the town more widely; and, if the review recommended retention of the town council, then changes could be made to the number of councillors and allocation of councillors to the various wards. No complaints have been received from members of the public about the level of representation for the various wards in the town.
- 4.2 The Town Council's electoral arrangements have been reviewed only recently by the independent public body that deals with local government electoral boundaries; and the cost of conducting a review would fall on the District Council. However there are clear anomalies in the level of representation between the different wards in the town, which will not be addressed by housing growth before the next elections in 2019. Moreover there was no opportunity afforded to the Town Council or local electors to comment on the balance of representation in the Boundary Commission's final recommendations. This report therefore recommends that a community governance review should be undertaken. If the Council agrees with this recommendation, it must prepare and publish terms of reference for the review and the area of the review.
- 4.3 There is insufficient capacity to commence a review at this time, not least because of the need to progress decisions arising from the community governance review in

Kidderminster, which are the subject of a separate report on tonight’s agenda. In any case, any changes to electoral arrangements in Stourport that arose from a review could not take effect until May 2019. Thus this report recommends that Council agrees in principle to undertake a community governance review of Stourport-on-Severn, commencing in the latter part of 2016; and determines the terms of reference and timetable for the review at its meeting nearer the time.

- 4.4 Agreeing to conduct a review does not commit this Council to implementing any changes. It is a consultative process and the Council will have regard to responses received as part of the review in reaching decisions on what (if any) action to take. Final recommendations following the review will therefore be submitted to full Council for approval.
- 4.5 An indicative timetable is set out below and will be refined for the Council’s agreement in July 2016.

Action	Timetable	Dates
Report to Council to approve the Terms of Reference.		Summer 2016
Commencement of review, publication of Terms of Reference		Latter part of 2016
Introductory Stage – Invite initial submissions.	3 months	
Consideration of consultation response by full Council and approval of draft proposals (if any).		End 2016/early 2017
(If required) Consultation on draft proposals	3 months	Spring 2017
Obtain Boundary Commission’s formal consent to changes to proposed electoral arrangements		Spring 2017
Approval of order by Council (assuming LGBCE’s consent obtained)		Summer 2017
Proposed effective date of Order; next ordinary elections for Stourport-on-Severn Town Council		May 2019

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Conducting the community governance review will involve modest financial cost to the Council, mainly of officer time, and any such additional costs can be absorbed within existing budgets. Any costs associated with a community governance review would fall to the District Council and there is no provision in the 2007 Act for them to be recovered from the Town Council. The Council will work with the Town Council if it wishes to undertake more extensive promotional and consultation arrangements. However the District Council would not engage in expensive methods of public consultation, such as the local advisory poll that has recently been held for Kidderminster. Consultation with the public would be promoted on the Council’s website, through social media channels and press releases.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 sets out the powers associated with community governance reviews and provides the power for the Council to take decisions regarding matters arising from any review. Relevant provisions have been mentioned throughout this report. The Council is required by Section 100(4) of the 2007 Act have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State relating to community governance reviews.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An initial screening has been undertaken and no potential adverse impact on protected characteristics has been identified. In carrying out the review, the Council will be required to engage with local communities to address their needs and ensure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community. The review would give the opportunity to address anomalies in representation on the Town Council which might affect how the identities and interests of the community are reflected in the governance arrangements.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 Risks will be mitigated by ensuring that the review accords with the legislation and guidance given by the Secretary of State and Boundary Commission. This will include ensuring that the review is carried out within the statutory timescales and that the terms of reference are appropriate. There remains a risk of the Commission not agreeing to changes to electoral arrangements, but the initial “without commitment” response in paragraph 3.12 is felt to provide sufficient assurance at present.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Council is invited to decide in principle to conduct a community governance review of Stourport-on-Severn in the latter part of 2016; and to determine the terms of reference and timetable for the review nearer the time of the review.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Leader of the Council
10.2 Corporate Leadership Team

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Part 4, Chapter 3

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/part/4/chapter/3>

(This legislation has been amended by the 2009 Act.)

- 11.2 Department for Communities and Local Government and The Local Government Boundary Commission for England – Guidance on Community Governance Reviews.

http://www.lgbce.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/10387/community-governance-review-guidance.pdf

99. **ELECTORAL REVIEW OF WYRE FOREST – MINUTE NO. 66/12/2014**

Consideration was given to previously circulated correspondence received from the Office of the Local MP about the recent Electoral Review of Wyre Forest by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Extensive debate on this matter focussed on the decision of the Commission for representation by 6 Town Council Members for Stour and Wilden Ward, compared to the 4 Member representation for the Ward included in the Commission's draft recommendations. The reason for this increase in representation could not be deduced.

Also, in the Commission's draft recommendations for North Ward the projected electorate for 2019 was stated to be 2,662, represented by 4 Town Councillors. In the final decision the projected electorate for 2019 was stated to be 3,252, with representation reduced to 2 Town Councillors. The reason for a 22% projected increase in electorate, coupled to a 50% reduction in Town Council representation, was not understood.

The rationale behind the Commission's findings and final decision was not clear and did not seem to find explanation in the Commission's final decision report. The view of Members was that the Commission's final decision did not have proper regard to the need to ensure that community governance in the review areas mentioned above reflected the identities and interests of the communities in the area, and was neither effective nor convenient. For the foregoing reasons it was RESOLVED that the District Council be requested to conduct during the autumn of 2015 a Community Governance Review on the basis of the observations expressed above, under the provisions of the Local Government And Public Involvement In Health Act 2007, with a view to such a Review itself examining the Commission's Review and proposing any amendments considered appropriate and desirable.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

29TH JULY 2015

Review of the May and June 2015 Elections and the Local Advisory Poll

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor N J Desmond
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	The (Acting) Returning Officer for the General Parliamentary Election, Returning Officer for the Local Elections and Counting Officer for the Local Advisory Poll
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ian Miller Ext. 2700 ian.miller@wyreforsetdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 – Turnout and costs for each polling station for Elections in May and June 2015 and Local Advisory Poll in May Appendix 2 – queues at Trinity Methodist Church – review by the Returning Officer

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a report on the General Parliamentary Election and elections to Wyre Forest District Council, Stourport-on-Severn Town Council and Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council held on 7 May 2015 and 9 June 2015. The results of the Local Advisory Poll held in Kidderminster on 7 May 2015 are also included.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **The Council is asked to NOTE the report.**
- 2.2 **The Council is asked to AGREE to carry out a polling district and polling place review for the parish of Kidderminster Foreign only, as set out in paragraphs 4.7 to 4.9.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following the publication of the Local Government Boundary Commission's final recommendations for Wyre Forest in October 2014, the new electoral boundaries came into force for the elections held on Thursday 7 May 2015. 33 seats were due to be contested on 7 May, but it was necessary to countermand the election for one ward because of the death of a candidate which meant that elections were held for 11 wards with a total of 30 seats. Also held on 7 May were the General Parliamentary election for the Wyre Forest Constituency; elections for Stourport Town Council (5 parish wards with a total of 15 seats, with one ward's election being countermanded); and elections for the Cookley ward of Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council (1 parish ward with a total of 7 seats). The parish elections for Broome, Churchill and

Blakedown and the Wolverley ward of Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council were uncontested.

3.2 The two countermanded elections for Areley Kings & Riverside ward (3 seats) and Areley Kings East parish ward (3 seats) were held on Tuesday 9 June 2015.

3.3 The overall turnout for each of the elections held on 7 May 2015 was as follows:

- General Parliamentary 64%
- District Council 63.9%
- Stourport Town Council 66.2%
- Cookley parish ward 70.7%

The turnout for the countermanded elections held on 9 June 2015 was:

- Areley Kings & Riverside (District) 27.0%
- Areley Kings East (Parish) 25.9%.

- The turnout for the Local Advisory Poll was 53.3%.

3.4 For comparison purposes a breakdown of the overall turnout figures for the different polls against the previous comparable election is set out in Table 1.

Table 1

Turnout %	2010	2015	% Difference in Turnout
General Parliamentary England	65.5%	65.8%	↑ 0.3%
Wyre Forest Consistency	66%	64%	↓ 2%

Turnout %	2010	2015*	% Difference in Turnout
Wyre Forest District Council	65.6%	63.9%	↓ 1.7%

Turnout %	2011	2015*	% Difference in Turnout
Stourport Town Council	38.5%	66.2%	Not comparable due to 2011 having no General Parliamentary election

Turnout %	2011	2015	% Difference in Turnout
Cookley Parish Ward	Uncontested	70.7%	Not comparable due to being uncontested in 2011

*The figures do not include the countermanded elections held on 9 June 2015 as they would be distorted due to the much lower turnout as a result of the elections not being held on the same day as the General Parliamentary election.

3.5 The comparable figures in Table 1 show that across the Wyre Forest turnout was down by 2%. The changes in ward boundaries, polling districts and polling places mean that a direct comparison of turnout on a ward basis is not possible. However, an analysis of the new polling stations arising from the change of ward boundaries is set out in section 4 of this report.

3.6 Turnout figures and the cost per vote at each polling station for the various elections in May and June 2015 are set out in **Appendix 1**. Except for those polling stations where there was only one election being held, the costs at the vast majority of polling stations were shared between two or three different elections. The costs at polling stations in Kidderminster also had some of their costs shared with the Local Advisory Poll. The average cost per vote cast at a polling station for the three different elections in May 2015 was as follows:

- General Parliamentary £0.35
- District £0.35
- Parish £0.27

The equivalent figures for the countermanded elections in June 2015 were:

- District £1.75
- Parish £0.95
- The cost per vote cast in the Local Advisory Poll was £0.24.

3.7 The number of postal votes issued for the elections in May/June 2015 exceeded the number issued for previous comparable elections, as set out in Table 2.

Table 2

Postal Vote Stage	General Parliamentary Election		Wyre Forest District		Stourport Town Council	
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2011	2015
Number of Postal Votes issued	10,768	11,951	9,761	10,934	2,080	2,307
Number of Postal Votes Returned	9,049 (84%)	10,081 (84.3%)	8,215 (84.1%)	9,355 (85.5%)	1,532 (73.6%)	1,993 (86.3%)
Postal Votes accepted as valid and counted	8,893 (82.5%)	9,922 (83%)	8,074 (82.7%)	9,207 (84.2%)	1,502 (72.2%)	1,964 (85.1%)
Increase in postal votes as valid and counted since last election	+1,029 ↑ 0.5%		+1,133 ↑ 1.5%		↑ 12.9% (Not comparable due to 2011 having no General Parliamentary election)	

- 3.8 The number of postal votes issued for the Local Advisory Poll was 6,344. 4,983 (78.5%) were returned and the number accepted as valid and counted was 4,890 (77%).
- 3.9 The trend of postal voters being far more likely to cast their vote than people voting in person has become well established. Therefore, while other measures to encourage participation will continue, the most effective is likely to be encouraging more people to register for a postal vote.
- 3.10 By law, Electoral Registration Officers must write to postal voters whose ballot papers were not included in the count because their personal identifiers on the postal vote statement could not be verified and to explain the reasons why e.g. wrong date of birth or signature that didn't match. A total of 218 letters have been issued together with a personal identifier refresher form, to help the electors ensure that their postal vote will be counted in future.

4. ANALYSIS OF IMPACT OF THE POLLING PLACES REVIEW 2014

- 4.1 Full Council agreed a number of changes to polling places in December 2014 and they were first used at the May elections. From the perspective of electoral administration, all the new polling places offered good facilities in the guise of large rooms, with good or excellent access for disabled people and (in most cases) car parking arrangements that were at least as good as many other polling stations in Wyre Forest. There is no proposal to alter any of the polling places selected by Council in December 2014 although there may need to be a review in one or two other cases where, in the longer term, buildings will cease to be available as a result of redevelopment plans. If it is necessary to conduct a review before the May 2016 elections, proposals will be brought to Council later in the year for consultation.
- 4.2 Table 3 provides a high level summary of the percentage turnout at polling stations for the General Parliamentary Election in 2010 and 2015 respectively. Despite there being 28 fewer polling stations for the elections in 2015, this did not have a significant effect on the highest percentage turnout rate at a polling station (down 1%) and supported a higher overall turnout for the least used polling station (up by 9.6% compared to 2010).

Table 3

General Parliamentary Election Year	Number of Polling Stations used for Election	Highest % turnout at Polling Station(s)	Lowest % turnout at Polling Station	Overall % of votes cast from total of polling station electorate
2010	63	77% Churchill Village Hall Broome Village Hall Pound Green & Button Oak Village Hall	34% The Y Centre	64%

2015	35	76.% Blakedown Parish Rooms	43.6% Holy Innocents Community Hall (Station FPH-1) The FPH-2 part of this station had a turnout of 60.3%	61%
Total % Difference for 2015 elections	↓ 28	↓ 1%	↑ 9.6%	↓ 3%

4.3 Table 4 provides an analysis of the turnout at the 8 new polling places selected by Council in December 2014. As detailed in paragraph 3.5 the changes in ward boundaries, polling districts and polling places mean that a direct comparison of turnout is not possible. Table 4 provides figures that have been aligned, as far as is possible, against the polling stations used for the same polling districts in 2010. However, some of the polling districts are now split following the ward boundary changes. Therefore, the figures shown in table 4 about approximate percentage electorate turnout cannot be used as a direct comparison. However, they suggest that the variance from 2010 ranges from +2% to -4%. Compared to the overall reduction in turnout of -2% across Wyre Forest between 2010 and 2015, none of these variances is believed to be statistically significant.

Table 4

New Polling Station 2015	Polling District(s) 2015	% Turnout of Polling Station Electorate 2015	Polling Stations used in 2010 covering the same polling district areas	Average % Turnout of Polling Stations Electorate 2010	Approx % Difference of turnout for 2015
St Georges Hall, Bewdley	BR-BE BR-BR BR-UAP	70.6%	St Georges Community Hall (BE-A, BE-C) Pound Green & Button Oak Community Hall (BE-E)	69%	↑ 1.6%
Far Forest Society Pavilion	BR-RO	69.7%	Rock Village Hall (RO-A,RO-C) Far Forest Village Hall (RO-B)	70%	↓ 0.3%
Stourport Workmen's Club	AKR-SC	63.8%	Scout Headquarters (LI/A*), St Wulstans Community Centre (MI/A*), Stourport Primary School Tan Lane (MI/D*)	64.6%	↓ 0.8%

Gainsborough House Hotel	BHS-4 BHS-5	56.9%	Youth House (GR/B) St Johns CE Primary School (HA/A2 & HA/C) Habberley Church Hall (HA/B2)	55%	↑ 1.9%
Trinity Methodist Church	BR-1 BR-2	45.7%	St Marys CE Primary School (BR/A) Sure Start Centre (BR/D) Cairndhu Drive (Mobile) GR/A1*	49.5%	↓ 3.8%
¹ Kidderminster Sea Scout Hut	FPH-4	62.5%	Kidderminster Harriers (AGA/A* & GR/E*)	65%	↓ 2.5%
St Wulstans Community Centre	MI-SSW	57.7%	St Wulstans Community Centre (MI/A*) Old Rose & Crown (Mobile) (MI/B) Wilden Village Hall (MI/C)	60%	↓ 2.3%
Stourport High School & Vlth Form Centre	MI-SN2	55.6%	Church Hall – Baptist Church (LI/C) Stourport Youth Centre (LI/D*)	57%	↓ 1.4%

*indicates a split polling district for 2015

- 4.4 As part of the polling places consultation, particular concern was expressed regarding the proposal no longer to use the Walshes Community Centre for the previous AK-B electorate. This change was agreed by Council on 10 December 2014. Table 5 sets out an additional analysis to disaggregate the previous AK-B electorate from the AKR – AKE electorate for the Parliamentary Elections in May 2015, to see if there was any effect on turnout by changing the polling station to Areley Kings Village Hall.

Table 5

Polling Station	Polling District	Total Electorate	Postal Vote Electorate	Polling Station Electorate	Number of Votes Cast at Polling Station from Polling Station Electorate
Walshes Community Centre (2010)	AK/B	1,974	208	1,766	(935 votes) 52.9%
Areley Kings Village Hall (2015)	The AK/B element of the new AKR-AKE	2,173	259	1,914	(948 votes) 49.5%

% Total difference for 2015 elections	↑ 199 electors	↑ 51 electors	↑ 148 electors	↑ 13 votes ↓ 3.4%
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4.5 The analysis above shows that more electors from the old AK/B polling district voted at their new polling station Areley Kings Village Hall in May 2015 than those who voted at the Walshes Community Centre in May 2010. Due to the growth in the electorate between 2010 and 2015, the overall percentage of votes cast at Areley Kings Village Hall is slightly lower. However, there was faster growth in the number of postal voters in this area, up by nearly a quarter, when the total number of electors had increased by only 10%. Given that postal voters are more likely to vote, the overall turnout for this area will not have reduced by the percentage shown for those voting in person. The change lies within the range of variances experienced across the district, and the analysis shows that the change of polling station has not had any significant effect on turnout rate for the previous AK/B electorate.

Feedback From The Debriefing Meeting

4.6 A ‘wash up’ de-brief meeting for agents and candidates was held on 8 July to discuss the preparation and delivery of the May and June 2015 elections. Common themes emerging from the feedback from agents and candidates included:

- a) The polling places and polling districts review had an effect for some electors with regard to distance to travel, parking problems and queues. Some of those present asked that the Council should review polling places again with a view to re-opening those that had been closed.
- b) There was a specific impact on voters living at the far end of Northwood Lane, Bewdley because they are in Kidderminster Foreign Parish and there is no short direct road route for them to reach the polling place at Shatterford.
- c) A small number of voters in Offmore & Comberton found that they voted at different polling stations from the historic position. This is the result of more accurate mapping of the polling district boundaries, and in effect corrects an error that had persisted for many years.
- d) Polling Station and Count Staff need to have the ability and skills set for ensuring the efficient administration of the processes they are required to carry out. This was perceived as having had an impact on queues at some polling stations. The training provided should include practical tests so the procedures and skills required can be practiced.
- e) Ensuring the layout of polling stations has logical flows and maximises the use of the space available. Larger signage is needed at double polling stations directing the electorate to the relevant desk. Where voter numbers demand it, to use more double polling stations in the future as these worked very well.
- f) Need to be mindful of the building works at Heronswood Primary School which are still likely to be ongoing for the elections in May 2016 and the uncertainty as to whether Offmore Community Centre will be available in the future. The relevant planning will start in autumn 2015 regarding these matters.

- g) The length of time taken for the verification and counts. Consideration to be given to using technology which will count ballot papers, although the cost of such technology needs to be established to see whether it would be cost effective. Also when using the grass skirt method in the future to take out block votes for any party (i.e. where the only votes cast are for one party, regardless of whether it is fielding one, two or three candidates) – this would help to quicken the process.
- h) The helpfulness of the elections staff when queries were raised and the efficiency of dealing with issues on polling day.

Kidderminster Foreign – proposed review of polling districts and polling places

- 4.7 In respect of the point about properties in Northwood Lane, Bewdley mentioned in paragraph 4.6(b), this report proposes that a polling district and polling place review should be undertaken only for Kidderminster Foreign (the current WA-KF polling district). Nearly 300 voters live along Northwood Lane but are within Kidderminster Foreign parish. Their allocated polling station is now at Shatterford which, for electors living at Hill Farm at the far end of Northwood Lane, represents a round trip of almost 15 miles. They have to pass their former polling station at Wribbenhall parish rooms en route.
- 4.8 The consultation paper during last year’s review of polling districts and polling places did not identify the significant impact on this group of electors. Interestingly, local councillors, the parish council and other respondents did not raise concern about the matter. Shatterford is considered to be an appropriate location for voters from the remainder of Kidderminster Foreign (Trimpley, Low Habberley etc), as it is as easy for them to reach as Wribbenhall used to be; and this helps to make the polling place at Shatterford more sustainable and cost effective.
- 4.9 The review would be undertaken under section 18C(5) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 which allows the Council to carry out at any time a review of a particular polling place or polling district. The review would consult on recreating a polling district similar to the former WR-B polling district (which confusingly used to be known as “Bewdley Wribbenhall No. 2”) and designating the Wribbenhall parish rooms as the polling place for that district. If Council agrees the recommendation to conduct this review, a consultation document will be issued with a view to reporting back to Council at its meeting in December, so that any revised arrangements can be agreed and put in place in good time before the May 2016 elections.

Queues At Polling Stations

- 4.10 Everyone who wanted to vote at a polling station in Wyre Forest on 7 May was able to vote, and no one was turned away.
- 4.11 However, queues were reported at a number of polling stations in urban areas at various times during the day. A total of 8 additional poll clerks were deployed to 5 different stations in order to provide further capacity. Given that there is one electoral register for each polling station, any situation where more than a handful of voters arrive in quick succession to each other will lead to queues as each voter has to be dealt with individually. This is more likely to happen in a General Election when a higher proportion of people vote. (Even if there was a polling station at the corner of

every street, voters at any such polling station would experience queues if, say, 10 or 15 people turned up in a short period of time.)

- 4.12 A number of complaints were received from voters who experienced queues longer than they had expected or been used to in recent elections. The vast majority of these complaints (22 out of 30) related to the polling station at Trinity Methodist Church in Broadwaters. Each complaint has received a response, including apologies from the Returning Officer about the wait that they faced. The Returning Officer reiterates those apologies in this report.
- 4.13 Some voters at Trinity Methodist Church had to wait longer than was desirable. Based on their own accounts, some people had to wait up to an hour or even an hour and a half. It is also apparent that a number of voters chose not to wait although there is no reliable, independent evidence about how many did so. There is no way of establishing how anyone who chose not to wait would have voted, and it would be inappropriate therefore to speculate on whether or not those electors' decisions not to wait had an impact on the outcome of the election.
- 4.14 What can be stated with confidence is the number of votes which were actually cast. The difference between the 3rd and 4th placed candidates in the district council election for this ward was 3 votes. On 8 May, because of the closeness of the result, there was a full recount of the votes relating to the 3rd and 4th placed candidates. The Returning Officer is confident that the number of votes cast for those candidates has been accurately established, and this was accepted by the candidates and agents at the time.
- 4.15 Appendix 2 gives a fuller analysis of the situation that developed at that polling station, the steps taken to deal with it and the result of the Returning Officer's review into the principal causes. For future general elections the Returning Officer would propose to allocate additional staffing at some polling stations where significant queues were experienced, in order to avoid any repeat of what electors experienced in 2015.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The minor costs of conducting a polling district and polling place review for Kidderminster Foreign parish can be absorbed within existing budgets. No further financial implications arise from this report. The financial accounts for the different elections held in May and June 2015 are currently being compiled so the appropriate recharges can be made for the Parliamentary General and Parish Elections. The share of the costs for the District Council's elections, and the cost of the Local Advisory Poll, are met by the Council from budgets and reserves allocated for those purposes.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The relevant provisions for the polling district and polling place review have been mentioned above. This report has no further specific legal or policy implications. The legislative framework for implementing the General Parliamentary and Local Elections as well as electoral registration can be viewed at <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk>.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The proposed polling district and polling place review of Kidderminster Foreign would ensure that relevant voters have access to more convenient locations than present arrangements. There are no other equalities implications arising from this report All elections and electoral registration activity has due regard to the public sector equality duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 All elections and electoral registration work is supported by robust risk management plans to ensure contingency arrangements are in place for meeting electoral legislation at all times.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Council is invited to note this review of the elections and local advisory poll, and that appropriate actions will be put in hand to seek to minimise queues at future general elections; and to agree that a polling district and polling place review should be undertaken for Kidderminster Foreign parish.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Cabinet Member for Resources.
10.2 Corporate Leadership Team.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Recommendations for the Electoral Review of the District in October 2014
http://www.lgbce.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/23508/Wyre-Forest-alternative-FINAL-report-POST-EDITOR-2014-10-08.pdf
- 11.2 Polling places review report in December 2014
http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/docs/doc49668_20141210_council_agenda.pdf
- 11.3 A breakdown of the full results for each of the elections held on 7 May and 9 June 2015 can be found at
<http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/the-council/elections-and-voting/election-results.aspx>

APPENDIX 1

General Parliamentary Election Analysis – 7 May 2015

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Station No	Polling Place	Polling District(s)	Total Electorate	Polling Station Electorate (column 1 – postal votes)	Number of Votes Cast at Polling Station	Percentage of Votes Cast at Polling Station from Polling Station Electorate	Polling Station Cost (shared, unless marked with an *)	Staff Costs for Polling Station (shared, unless marked with an *)	Cost of Polling Station per elector (columns 5+6 / 2)	Cost Per Vote @ Polling Station (columns 5+6 / 3)
1	Kidderminster Harriers Social Club	AS-1 AS-2	3,084	2,561	1,555	60.71%	£33.30	£342.20	£0.15	£0.24
2	Heronwood Primary School, Kidderminster	AS-3	2,030	1,751	1,104	63.04%	£53.33	£268.39	£0.18	£0.29
3	Heronwood Primary School, Kidderminster	AS-3	1,695	1,444	967	66.96%	£53.33	£268.39	£0.22	£0.33
4	Areley Kings Village Hall	AKR-AKE	2,543	2,222	1,188	53.46%	£97.50*	£536.76*	£0.28	£0.53
5	Areley Kings Village Hall	AKR-AKW	2,124	1,800	1,265	70.27%	£48.75	£268.39	£0.18	£0.25
6	Stourport Workmen's Club, Lickhill Road	AKR-SC	1,966	1,643	1,049	63.84%	£125.00	£268.39	£0.24	£0.37
7	St Georges Hall, Bewdley	BR-BEBR-B RBR-UAP	2,708	2,235	1,578	70.60%	£250.00	£351.20	£0.27	£0.38
8	St Annes CE Primary School, Bewdley	BR-BW	2,199	1,813	1,306	72.03%	£50.00	£268.39	£0.17	£0.24
9	Far Forest Society Pavilion, Rock	BR-RO	2,030	1,670	1,164	69.70%	£50.00	£268.39	£0.19	£0.27
10	Evangelical Church, Greatfield Road	BHS-1 BHS-2 BHS-3	3,643	3,157	1,548	49.03%	£83.33	£342.20	£0.13	£0.27
11	Gainsborough House Hotel, Kidderminster	BHS-4 BHS-5	3,176	2,555	1,454	56.90%	£66.66	£342.20	£0.16	£0.28

12	Trinity Methodist Church, Kidderminster	BR-1 BR-2	4,151	3,631	1,658	45.66%	£105.00	£416.01	£0.14	£0.31
13	St. Oswald's Church Centre, Kidderminster	BR-3	2,465	2,151	1,242	57.74%	£75.00	£342.20	£0.19	£0.33
14	Holy Innocents Church Hall, Kidderminster	FPH-1	2,346	2,021	881	43.59%	£121.50	£416.01	£0.26	£0.61
15	Holy Innocents Church Hall, Kidderminster	FPH-2	1,727	1,438	867	60.29%	£121.50	£416.01	£0.37	£0.62
16	St Peters Church Hall, Kidderminster	FPH-3	1,574	1,402	658	46.93%	£83.33	£268.39	£0.25	£0.53
17	1 st Kidderminster Sea Scout Hut, Kidderminster	FPH-4	1,361	1,136	710	62.50%	£166.66	£268.39	£0.38	£0.61
18	Franch Community Church, Kidderminster	FHN-1	1,751	1,526	948	62.12%	£83.33	£268.39	£0.23	£0.37
19	St Barnabas Community Hall, Kidderminster	FHN-2	1,321	1,101	758	68.84%	£50.00	£268.39	£0.29	£0.42
20	Kidderminster Carolians Rugby Football Club, Kidderminster	FHN-3	2,481	2,003	1,173	58.56%	£30.00	£342.20	£0.18	£0.32
21	Kidderminster Carolians Rugby Football Club, Kidderminster	FHN-3	2,222	1,893	1,186	62.65%	£30.00	£342.20	£0.20	£0.31
22	Scout Headquarters, Lickhill Road, Stourport	LI-SL	2,218	1,900	1,240	65.26%	£75.00	£228.15	£0.16	£0.24
23	St Wulstans Community Centre, Vale Road, Stourport	MI-SSW	3,313	2,818	1,626	57.70%	£60.00	£277.36	£0.12	£0.21

24	10:32 @ Half Crown Wood, Stourport Primary School	MI-SN1	2,247	1,918	1,197	62.40%	£53.33	£228.15	£0.15	£0.24
25	Stourport High School & Vlth Form Centre	MI-SN2	1,870	1,665	926	55.61%	£95.66	£178.94	£0.16	£0.30
26	St Chads Church Hall, Kidderminster	OFC-1	2,356	2,049	1,132	55.24%	£28.33	£268.39	£0.14	£0.26
27	St Chads Church Hall, Kidderminster	OFC-2	1,179	1,034	549	53.09%	£28.33	£268.39	£0.29	£0.54
28	Offmore Community Centre, Kidderminster	OFC-3	2,765	2,394	1,543	64.45%	£15.60	£268.39	£0.12	£0.18
29	Offmore Community Centre, Kidderminster	OFC-4	1,246	1,041	672	64.55%	£15.60	£268.39	£0.27	£0.42
30	Wribbenhall Parish Rooms, Bewdley	WA-BW	3,350	2,794	1,865	66.75%	£50.00	£342.17	£0.14	£0.21
31	Shatterford Village Hall, Upper Arley	WA-KF WA-UAS WA-UAV	1,082	857	552	64.41%	£25.00	£194.58	£0.26	£0.40
32	Wolverley Memorial Hall	WFR-WO	1,808	1,483	1,069	72.08%	£60.50	£268.39	£0.22	£0.30
33	Cookley Village Hall	WFR-CO	2,003	1,677	1,145	68.27%	£100.00	£178.94	£0.17	£0.24
34	Blakedown Parish Rooms, Blakedown	WFR-BD WFR-BM WFR-CH	1,626	1,368	1,042	76.16%	£132.50	£342.20	£0.35	£0.45
35	Chaddesley Corbett Village Hall	WFR-CC WFR-RH WFR-ST	1,747	1,377	994	72.18%	£250.00	£268.39	£0.38	£0.52

TOTAL 77,407 65,528 39,811 60.7%

*Costs are not shared as the Polling Station administered only the Parliamentary Election due to the countermanded Areley Kings & Riverside District and Areley Kings East Parish elections

GENERAL PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION	Cost per Elector	Cost Per Vote @ Polling Station
Average Cost Cost per Elector going to Polling Station (PV not included)	£0.22	£0.35

District Election Analysis – 7 May 2015

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Station No	Polling Place	Polling District(s)	Total Electorate	Polling Station Electorate (column 1 – postal votes)	Number of Votes Cast at Polling Station	Percentage of Votes Cast at Polling Station from Polling Station Electorate	Polling Station Cost (shared, unless marked with an *)	Staff Costs for Polling Station (shared, unless marked with an *)	Cost of Polling Station per elector (columns 5+6 / 2)	Cost Per Vote @ Polling Station (columns 5+6 / 3)
1	Kidderminster Harriers Social Club	AS-1 AS-2	3,184	2,657	1,569	59.05%	£33.30	£342.17	£0.14	£0.24
2	Heronswood Primary School, Kidderminster	AS-3	2,052	1,769	1,112	62.86%	£53.33	£268.37	£0.18	£0.28
3	Heronswood Primary School, Kidderminster	AS-3	1,699	1,448	970	66.98%	£53.33	£268.37	£0.22	£0.33
7	St Georges Hall, Bewdley	BR-BEBR- BRBR-UAP	2,713	2,246	1,587	70.65%	£250.00	£351.20	£0.27	£0.38
8	St Annes CE Primary School, Bewdley	BR-BW	2,208	1,823	1,311	71.91%	£50.00	£268.39	£0.17	£0.24
9	Far Forest Society Pavilion, Rock	BR-RO	2,041	1,682	1,171	69.61%	£50.00	£268.39	£0.19	£0.27
10	Evangelical Church, Greatfield Road, Kidderminster	BHS-1 BHS-2 BHS-3	3,738	3,246	1,560	48.05%	£83.33	£342.20	£0.13	£0.27

11	Gainsborough House Hotel, Kidderminster	BHS-4 BHS-5	3,219	2,595	1,463	56.37%	£66.66	£342.20	£0.16	£0.28
12	Trinity Methodist Church, Kidderminster	BR-1 BR-2	4,241	3,714	1,676	45.12%	£105.00	£415.97	£0.14	£0.31
13	St. Oswald's Church Centre, Kidderminster	BR-3	2,504	2,182	1,241	56.87%	£75.00	£342.17	£0.19	£0.34
14	Holy Innocents Community Hall, Kidderminster	FPH-1	2,394	2,060	887	43.05%	£121.50	£415.97	£0.26	£0.60
15	Holy Innocents, Kidderminster	FPH-2	1,745	1,455	871	59.86%	£121.50	£415.97	£0.37	£0.61
16	St Peters Church Hall, Kidderminster	FPH-3	1,609	1,434	661	46.09%	£83.33	£268.37	£0.24	£0.53
17	1 st Kidderminster Sea Scout Hut, Kidderminster	FPH-4	1,398	1,170	715	61.11%	£166.66	£268.37	£0.37	£0.61
18	Franche Community Church, Kidderminster	FHN-1	1,765	1,541	951	61.71%	£83.33	£268.37	£0.23	£0.37
19	St Barnabas Community Hall, Kidderminster	FHN-2	1,327	1,107	760	68.65%	£50.00	£268.37	£0.29	£0.42
20	Kidderminster Carolians Rugby Football Club, Kidderminster	FHN-3	2,505	2,021	1,178	58.28%	£30.00	£342.17	£0.18	£0.31
21	Kidderminster Carolians Rugby Football Club, Kidderminster	FHN-3	2,226	1,903	1,187	62.37%	£30.00	£342.17	£0.19	£0.31

22	Scout Headquarters, Lickhill Road, Stourport	LI-SL	2,222	1,905	1,246	65.40%	£75.00	£228.11	£0.16	£0.24
23	St Wulstans Community Centre, Vale Road, Stourport	MI-SSW	3,344	2,854	1,627	57.00%	£60.00	£277.31	£0.12	£0.21
24	10:32 @ Half Crown Wood, Stourport Primary School	MI-SN1	2,252	1,925	1,198	62.23%	£53.33	£228.11	£0.15	£0.23
25	Stourport High School & V1th Form Centre	MI-SN2	1,883	1,679	926	55.15%	£95.66	£178.90	£0.16	£0.30
26	St Chads Church Hall, Kidderminster	OFC-1	2,430	2,114	1,136	53.73%	£28.33	£268.37	£0.14	£0.26
27	St Chads Church Hall, Kidderminster	OFC-2	1,206	1,061	553	52.12%	£28.33	£268.37	£0.28	£0.54
28	Offmore Community Centre, Kidderminster	OFC-3	2,797	2,427	1,559	64.23%	£15.60	£268.37	£0.12	£0.18
29	Offmore Community Centre, Kidderminster	OFC-4	1,269	1,060	673	63.49%	£15.60	£268.37	£0.27	£0.42
30	Wribbenhall Parish Rooms, Bewdley	WA-BW	3,357	2,803	1,865	66.53%	£50.00	£342.17	£0.14	£0.21
31	Shatterford Village Hall, Upper Arley	WA-KF WA-UAS WA-UAV	1,089	868	554	63.82%	£25.00	£194.57	£0.25	£0.39
32	Wolverley Memorial Hall	WFR-WO	1,814	1,490	1,071	71.8%	£60.50	£268.37	£0.22	£0.30
33	Cookley Village Hall	WFR-CO	2,008	1,686	1,146	67.97%	£100.00	£178.91	£0.16	£0.24
34	Blakedown Parish Rooms, Blakedown	WFR-BD WFR-BM WFR-CH	1,626	1,372	1,042	75.94%	£132.50	£342.17	£0.35	£0.45
35	Chaddesley Corbett Village Hall	WFR-CC WFR-RH WFR-ST	1,747	1,381	992	71.83%	£250.00	£268.37	£0.38	£0.52

TOTAL 71,612 60,678 36,458 60%

DISTRICT ELECTION	Cost per Elector	Cost Per Vote @ Polling Station
Average Cost Cost per Elector going to Polling Station (PV not included)	£0.22	£0.35

Countermanded District Election Analysis – 9 June 2015

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Station No	Polling Place	Polling District(s)	Total Electorate	Polling Station Electorate (column 1 – postal votes)	Number of Votes Cast at Polling Station	Percentage of Votes Cast at Polling Station from Polling Station Electorate	Polling Station Cost (shared, unless marked with an *)	Staff Costs for Polling Station (shared, unless marked with an *)	Cost of Polling Station per elector (columns 5+6 / 2)	Cost Per Vote @ Polling Station (columns 5+6 / 3)
1	Areley Kings Village Hall	AKR-AKE	2,577	2,250	412	18.3%	£48.75	£342.17	£0.17	£0.95
2	Areley Kings Village Hall	AKR-AKW	2,141	1,830	422	23%	£97.50*	536.74*	£0.35	£1.50
6	Stourport Workmen's Club, Lickhill Road	AKR-SC	1,974	1,654	277	16.7%	£250.00*	£536.74*	£0.47	£2.84
Total			6,692	5,734	1,111	19.3%				

COUNTERMANDED DISTRICT ELECTION	Cost per Elector	Cost Per Vote @ Polling Station
Average Cost Cost per Elector going to Polling Station (PV not included)	£0.33	£1.75

Parish Election Analysis – 7 May 2015

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Station No	Polling Place	Polling District(s)	Total Electorate	Polling Station Electorate (column 1 – postal votes)	Number of Votes Cast at Polling Station	Percentage of Votes Cast at Polling Station from Polling Station Electorate	Polling Station Cost (shared, unless marked with an *)	Staff Costs for Polling Station (shared, unless marked with an *)	Cost of Polling Station per elector (columns 5+6 / 2)	Cost Per Vote @ Polling Station (columns 5+6 / 3)
5	Areley Kings Village Hall	AKR-AKW	2,134	1,811	1269	70.07%	£48.75	£268.37	£0.17	£0.25
6	Stourport Workmen's Club, Lickhill Road	AKR-SC	1,973	1,652	1,053	63.74	£125.00	£268.37	£0.24	£0.37
22	Scout Headquarters, Stourport	LI-SL	2,222	1,905	1,246	65.40%	£75.00	£228.11	£0.16	£0.24
23	St Wulstans Community Centre, Vale Road, Stourport	MI-SSW	3,344	2,854	1,628	57.04%	£60.00	£277.31	£0.12	£0.21
24	10:32 @ Half Crown Wood, Stourport Primary School	MI-SN1	2,252	1,925	1,098	57.03%	£53.33	£228.11	£0.15	£0.26

25	Stourport High School & Vlth Form Centre	MI-SN2	1,883	1,679	926	55.15%	£95.66	£178.91	£0.16	£0.29
33	Cookley Village Hall	WFR-CO	2,008	1,686	1,146	67.97%	£100.00	£178.91	£0.16	£0.24
TOTAL			15,816	13,512	8,366	61.9%				

PARISH ELECTION	Cost per Elector	Cost Per Vote @ Polling Station
Average Cost Cost per Elector going to Polling Station (PV not included)	£0.16	£0.27

Countermanded Parish Election Analysis – 9 June 2015

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Station No	Polling Place	Polling District(s)	Total Electorate	Polling Station Electorate (column 1 – postal votes)	Number of Votes Cast at Polling Station	Percentage of Votes Cast at Polling Station from Polling Station Electorate	Polling Station Cost (shared, unless marked with an *)	Staff Costs for Polling Station (shared, unless marked with an *)	Cost of Polling Station per elector (columns 5+6 / 2)	Cost Per Vote @ Polling Station (columns 5+6 / 3)
1	Areley Kings Village Hall	AKR-AKE	2,577	2,250	412	18.3	£48.75	£342.17	£0.17	£0.95

COUNTERMANDED PARISH ELECTION	Cost per Elector	Cost Per Vote @ Polling Station
Average Cost Cost per Elector going to Polling Station (PV not included)	£0.17	£0.95

Local Advisory Poll Analysis – 7 May 2015

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Station No	Polling Place	Polling District(s)	Total Electorate	Polling Station Electorate (column 1 – postal votes)	Number of Votes Cast at Polling Station	Percentage of Votes Cast at Polling Station from Polling Station Electorate	Polling Station Cost (shared, unless marked with an *)	Staff Costs for Polling Station (shared, unless marked with an *)	Cost of Polling Station per elector (columns 5+6 / 2)	Cost Per Vote @ Polling Station (columns 5+6 / 3)
1	Kidderminster Harriers Social Club	AS-1 AS-2	3,184	2,657	1,312	49.37%	£33.30	£147.60	£0.06	£0.14
2	Heronswood Primary School, Kidderminster	AS-3	2,052	1,769	937	52.96%	£53.33	£147.60	£0.11	£0.21
3	Heronswood Primary School, Kidderminster	AS-3	1,699	1,448	832	57.45%	£53.33	£147.60	£0.13	£0.24
10	Evangelical Church, Greatfield Road, Kidderminster	BHS-1 BHS-2 BHS-3	3,738	3,246	1,548	47.68%	£83.33	£147.60	£0.07	£0.15
11	Gainsborough House Hotel, Kidderminster	BHS-4 BHS-5	3,219	2,595	1,461	56.30%	£66.66	£147.60	£0.08	£0.15
12	Trinity Methodist Church, Kidderminster	BR-1 BR-2	4,241	3,714	1,246	33.54%	£105.00	£147.60	£0.06	£0.20
13	St. Oswald's Church Centre, Kidderminster	BR-3	2,504	2,182	1,201	55.04%	£75.00	£147.60	£0.10	£0.18
14	Holy Innocents Community Hall, Kidderminster	FPH-1	2,394	2,060	888	43.10%	£121.50	£147.60	£0.13	£0.30
15	Holy Innocents Community Hall, Kidderminster	FPH-2	1,745	1,455	866	59.51%	£121.50	£147.60	£0.18	£0.31
16	St Peters Church Hall, Kidderminster	FPH-3	1,609	1,434	432	30.12%	£83.33	£147.60	£0.16	£0.53
17	1 st Kidderminster Sea Scout Hut, Kidderminster	FPH-4	1,398	1,170	583	49.82%	£166.66	£147.60	£0.27	£0.54
18	Franch Community Church, Kidderminster	FHN-1	1,765	1,541	811	52.62%	£83.33	£147.60	£0.15	£0.28

19	St Barnabas Community Hall, Kidderminster	FHN-2	1,327	1,107	760	68.65%	£50.00	£147.60	£0.18	£0.26
20	Kidderminster Carolians Rugby Football Club, Kidderminster	FHN-3	2,505	2,021	729	36.07%	£30.00	£147.60	£0.08	£0.24
21	Kidderminster Carolians Rugby Football Club, Kidderminster	FHN-3	2,226	1,903	979	51.44%	£30.00	£147.60	£0.09	£0.18
26	St Chads Church Hall, Kidderminster	OFC-1	2,430	2,114	1,129	53.40%	£28.33	£147.60	£0.08	£0.15
27	St Chads Church Hall, Kidderminster	OFC-2	1,206	1,061	553	52.12%	£28.33	£147.60	£0.16	£0.32
28	Offmore Community Centre, Kidderminster	OFC-3	2,797	2,427	1,503	61.92%	£15.60	£147.60	£0.06	£0.10
29	Offmore Community Centre, Kidderminster	OFC-4	1,269	1,060	673	63.49%	£15.60	£147.60	£0.15	£0.24
TOTAL			43,308	39,964	18,443	51.21%				

LOCAL ADVISORY POLL	Cost per Elector	Cost Per Vote @ Polling Station
Average Cost Cost per Elector going to Polling Station (PV not included)	£0.12	£0.24

APPENDIX 2

QUEUES AT TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH – REVIEW BY THE RETURNING OFFICER

1. The changes in ward boundaries and polling stations mean that a direct comparison of turnout between the 2010 and 2015 General Elections is not possible. Across Wyre Forest, turnout was down by 2% on average and the figures for Broadwaters are consistent with that: the position inevitably varies around the average.
2. There were no reported queues at Trinity Methodist Church until 7pm. At this point, another poll clerk was deployed. I received further reports about queues from party representatives at about 7.45pm. I personally spoke to the presiding officer and he confirmed that he had no need for extra staff at that time.
3. I decided to visit Trinity Methodist Church en route to the count centre, and arrived at about 8.50pm. I estimate that the queue at that point was over 100 people and people were continuing to arrive. This was unusual in my experience of voting patterns in Wyre Forest over the last 5 years. I always visit a number of polling stations en route to the count centre and, normally, see few or no voters at this time of the evening. I certainly do not recall any significant number of voters at this time in the evening in the 2010 general election. I remained at the station until 9.30pm and personally reassured voters in the queue that they would be able to vote if they continued waiting.
4. As the queue was showing no signs of diminishing, and it was already apparent that the voters in the queue would not be dealt with by 10pm, I decided at that point to deploy a further 3 poll clerks from the count centre, to split the register in half and, in effect, to create a double polling station. These arrangements were in place by about 9.45pm at the latest. The polling station inspector was also asked to return to the station to provide further assistance, to ensure that the revised arrangements had been put in place successfully and to ensure that voters in the queue continued to be reassured that they would be able to vote if they waited.
5. The polling station inspector reported that approximately 120 voters had been brought inside the polling station when the doors were shut at 10pm. Subsequently it was reported that the last voter had been issued with voting papers at 10.52pm. The last ballot papers would have been issued considerably later than this if I had not decided to open a second polling station at this location.
6. In my view there were at least 2 factors relevant to the situation that developed:

People changed their behaviour in terms of when they cast their votes

7. This is hypothesis and not based on hard evidence. The Council's decisions to change the pattern of polling places meant that some people would find themselves further away from a polling station than in previous elections. If it had been convenient for them to vote on their way to or from work previously, this might not have been the case in respect of the new location. For some electors, this may have led to a decision to vote in the evening e.g. after having dinner, they made a special trip rather than voting en route to or from work.

8. This hypothesis seems to be borne out by the fact that significant queues were first reported from 7pm onwards at Trinity Methodist Church; and from my personal observation of the number of people continuing to arrive around and after 9pm.
9. While it is on a prominent site adjacent to the ring road, the Church can be accessed only by going down a side road. It does not lie directly on any vehicular commuting route that would be used by large numbers of voters.
10. A few contacts from voters revealed that they had visited on more than one occasion. The timings of their visits are not stated but it is apparent therefore that, having been put off by the queue at an earlier time, they returned at a later time and perhaps found an even longer queue. It is possible that, if they had stayed on the first occasion, they would have been able to vote more quickly. However, the point is that, by going away and returning, some electors would have added to the length of the queue later in the evening.

A mismatch in mapping and electoral register data

11. This was confirmed only after the election although the position first became apparent when I visited the polling station late on the evening of 7 May. A number of voters told me that they used to vote at St Oswald's Church Centre (the other polling station serving the Broadwaters Ward) and could not understand why they had been asked to travel further afield to Trinity Methodist Church. In broad terms, the electors who should have been allocated to Trinity Methodist Church were those who had previously voted at the Salvation Army Centre and St George's Social Club. In addition there were some voters who used to vote at the St John's Ambulance Station and had also been allocated to Trinity Methodist Church.
12. The map in the consultation paper for the polling places review had shown an area made up of the following streets
 - Batham Road
 - Harriers Green
 - Highfield Road
 - Hurcott Road
 - James Road
 - Turton Street
 - Vine Street

as part of BR-2 polling district. This was an historical error in the electoral map, which has since been traced back in previous maps of polling districts to at least 2007 and which came to light only as result of the events of 7 May. Despite what was shown on the map, this area had been part of the former BR-C polling district and historically had been allocated to (and electors had voted at) the St Oswald's Church Centre.

13. During the preparation of the proposals for the polling district review with a cross-party group of members (which included two of the then councillors for Broadwaters) and in the subsequent consultation process and debate at Council, no one commented on what was shown on in the map. It seems not to have been noticed by the political parties or local ward councillors.
14. Following the decisions taken by Council in December 2014, the member of staff who deals with geographical data had faithfully implemented what was shown on the map

i.e. the area described in paragraph 12 which had 848 electors (of whom 88 were postal voters) was allocated to BR-2 polling district when, based on the numbers used in the polling places review, it should have been part of the BR-3 polling district. The member of staff is not a member of the elections team and therefore would not have been aware of any inconsistency between what was shown on the map and the elector numbers that underlay the polling places review.

15. However, this mismatch should have been apparent when the detailed planning arrangements were made for organisation and staffing of polling stations. The number of electors on the registers for BR-2 and BR-3 should have triggered either identification of the mismatch and corrective action; or, given the number of electors on the BR-2 register, the provision of two polling stations at Trinity Methodist Church.
16. Now that the mismatch has been identified, it has been corrected. The electors who should have been in BR-3 polling district have been allocated to it on the electoral system and will vote at the St Oswald's Church Centre in future elections.
17. It is thus apparent that one of the factors contributing to the queues on 7 May was that 409 of the 760 electors from this area voted at Trinity Methodist Church instead of the intended polling station location at St Oswald's Church Centre.
18. As a result of this mismatch having come to light, the electorate numbers for all other polling districts and wards have been checked and are consistent with the electorate numbers within the polling places review report.
19. Having reviewed the arrangements, I am satisfied that the Trinity Methodist Church is an excellent building for use in elections, offering generous space and ample on site car parking. If the number of electors allocated to the polling station had been in line with the Council's decisions on the polling districts and polling places review, I am satisfied that it is unlikely there would have been excessive queues at this location on 7 May. Indeed it can be stated confidently that there is not expected to be any such issue arising in local elections based on past levels of turnout.
20. However, for future general elections I would propose to allocate additional staffing at some polling stations where significant queues were experienced in order to avoid any repeat of what electors experienced in 2015.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
29TH JULY 2015

Corporate Governance

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor M J Hart, The Leader of the Council
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Solicitor to the Council
CONTACT OFFICER:	Caroline Newlands, Ext. 2738 caroline.newlands@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 – Revised Political Balance

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

2. RECOMMENDATION

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

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

3. BACKGROUND

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

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The balance of the Council has changed since the last meeting on 29th May 2015 following the Areley Kings & Riverside Elections held on 9th June 2015.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The change in political balance is considered to be acceptable and in line with legislative requirements.

10. CONSULTEES

10.1 Corporate Leadership Team.

10.2 Leader of the Council.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Agenda Item No. 14
Appendix 1

		Conservative		Labour		Independent Community and Health Concern		Independent & Liberal Group			UKIP	Total
No. of Cllrs.			23		3		2		4		1	33
Percentage			69.70%		9.09%		6.06%		12.12%		3.03%	100.00%
Executive Cttees		Membership										
Appts & Appeals	5	4	3.48	0	0.45	0	0.30	1	0.61	0	0.15	5
Audit cttee	6	4	4.18	1	0.55	0	0.36	1	0.73	0	0.18	6
Ethics & standards *	6	4	4.18	1	0.55	0	0.36	1	0.73	0	0.18	6
Scrutiny												
Scrutiny Committee	10	7	6.97	1	0.91	1	0.61	1	1.21	0	0.30	10
Regulatory												
Planning	12	8	8.36	1	1.09	1	0.73	2	1.45	0	0.36	12
Lic & Env	12	8	8.36	1	1.09	1	0.73	2	1.45	0	0.36	12
Total	51	35	35.55	5	4.64	3	3.09	8	6.18	0	1.55	51
Percentage		68.63%		9.80%		5.88%		15.69%		0.00%		100.00%
Difference between % No. of Cllrs. And % Number of Seats		-1.07%		0.71%		-0.18%		3.57%		-3.03%		

* the table shows only district councillor members

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

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
29TH JULY 2015

POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK
MATTERS WHICH REQUIRE A DECISION BY COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET – 14TH JULY 2015

Purpose of Report

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

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL	CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE
<p>Regeneration of Kidderminster Western Gateway Use of Compulsory Purchase Powers</p> <p>Recommend to Council:</p> <p>The Capital Programme be amended to include the acquisition of properties that are the subject of the CPO, while recognising that there will be no cost to the Council as a result of the indemnity agreement and “back-to-back” agreement as set out in the report to Cabinet dated 14th July 2015.</p>	<p>Councillor J-P Campion</p>