

**Open**

# **Cabinet**

**6pm**  
**Tuesday, 22nd December 2015**  
**Council Chamber**  
**Wyre Forest House**  
**Finepoint Way**  
**Kidderminster**



## **Cabinet**

### **The Cabinet Members and their responsibilities:-**

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

### **Scrutiny of Decisions of the Cabinet**

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

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

*The deadline for "calling in" Cabinet decisions is 5pm on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016.*

Councillors wishing to "call in" a decision on this agenda should contact Lynette Cadwallader, Committee Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster. Telephone: 01562 732729 or email [lynette.cadwallader@wyreforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:lynette.cadwallader@wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

### **Urgent Key Decisions**

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

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

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

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

Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's constitution for full details.

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

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

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

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

### **For further information**

If you have any queries about this Agenda or require any details of background papers, further documents or information you should contact Lynette Cadwallader, Committee Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF. Telephone: 01562 732729 or email [lynette.cadwallader@wyreforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:lynette.cadwallader@wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

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

### **WEBCASTING NOTICE**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wyre Forest District Council

Cabinet

Tuesday, 22nd December 2015

Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster

Part 1

Open to the press and public

<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interests by Members</b>  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.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes</b>  To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on the 10th November 2015.	6
<b>4.</b>	<b>CALL INS</b> a verbal update will be given on any decisions which have been "called in" since the last meeting of the Cabinet.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Items Requiring Urgent Attention</b>  To consider any item which, in the opinion of the Chairman requires consideration at the meeting as a matter of urgency.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Public Participation</b>  In accordance with the Council's Scheme for Public Speaking at Meetings of Full Council/Cabinet, to allow members of the public to present petitions, ask questions, or make statements, details of which have been received by 12 noon on 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2015 (See front cover for contact details).	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Leader of the Council</b>	
<b>7.1</b>	<b>Leader's Announcements</b>	

<b>8.</b>		
<b>8.1</b>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i><b>Councillor J-P Campion</b></i></p> <p><b>Local Plan Review – Issues and Options Consultation Responses</b></p> <p>To consider a report from the Planning Policy Manager which informs Cabinet of the level and scope of the responses received in relation to the public consultation undertaken on the Local Plan Review Issues and Options Consultation. To also consider the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015.</p>	9

<b>9.</b>		
<b>9.1</b>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i><b>Councillor N Desmond</b></i></p> <p><b>Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016-19</b></p> <p>To consider a report from the Chief Financial Officer to provide the Cabinet with financial information in order to make proposals for the Budget Strategy for the period 2016-19.</p>	23

<b>10.</b>		
<b>10.1</b>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i><b>Councillor Sally Chambers</b></i></p> <p><b>Community Safety and Safeguarding Duties</b></p> <p>To consider a report from the Community Development Officer to advise Members of the Council's responsibilities regarding the Worcestershire Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2015-17 and its duties as specified in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, regarding preventing violent extremism.</p>	47

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

Part 2  
Not open to the Press and Public

<b>13.</b>	<b>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.</b>	
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**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
CABINET**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER  
TUESDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 2015 (6.00 PM)**

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**Present:**

Councillors: M J Hart (Chairman), J-P Campion, S J Chambers, N J Desmond, S E Fearn and I Hardiman.

**Observers:**

Councillors: G W Ballinger, H E Dyke, T A Muir and F M Oborski.

**CAB.35 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**CAB.36 Declarations of Interests by Members**

No declarations of interest were made.

**CAB.37 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 16th September 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**CAB.38 Call Ins**

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

**CAB39. Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

**CAB.40 Leader's Announcements**

The Leader of the Council advised that this was the first Cabinet meeting since former District Councillor Jim Parish sadly passed away, and passed on colleagues' condolences to his family.

**CAB.41 Review of Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

A report was considered from the Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Manager, which provided information to the Cabinet following the recent consultation to make changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2016/17.

The Cabinet Member for Transformation and Change led Members through the report and advised that the recommendations comply with the original principles of the scheme that was set up in 2013. Wyre Forest District Council carried out a public consultation on whether to change the minimum payment percentage and the capital savings threshold, whether to make proposed technical changes and whether the Hardship Fund should be kept.

It was emphasised that the increase would only affect working age individuals. The majority of those who responded to the consultation agreed with the changes.

The Leader of the Council advised that the consultation responses had been considered at length by the Cabinet and every response had been given due regard. He added that the submission to the consultation from the Children's Society had been read comprehensively and was noted.

Councillor Fran Oborski arrived at the meeting at 18.22 pm

**Decision: RECOMMEND to Council that from 1 April 2016:**

- 1 The exceptional hardship fund is retained to support claimants who are unable to pay their council tax liability due to financial hardship;**
- 2 The technical changes outlined in paragraph 3.4 of the report to Cabinet are adopted in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme;**
- 3 The capital limit be reduced from £16,000 to £12,000;**
- 4 The minimum payment required by all working age claimants be increased to 20%, on the basis that the Council is not minded to review the level of contribution again for the period before 2019-20.**

**CAB.42 Write off of Amounts Outstanding**

A report was considered from the Chief Financial Officer to consider the writing off of debts that cannot be collected.

The Cabinet Member for Resources took members through the report and advised that whilst every effort had been made by the Authority to pursue the outstanding debts, there was no alternative but to write them off.

Following a Member question regarding the write off of amounts outstanding for National Non-Domestic Rates Business Rates over the last 4 years, the Chief Financial Officer agreed to circulate the information to Members.

The Leader of the Council echoed that the Authority has a rigorous regime to ensure that debts are paid, and whilst it is regrettable to write off any debts, some companies were simply not in a position to pay.

**Decision:**

**The total of £149,224.81, as detailed in the Appendix to the report to Cabinet, be written off.**

**CAB.43 Future Arrangements for HR Support**

A report was considered from the Chief Executive which sought approval for the Human Resources service to be provided in house from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016, following expiry of the current service level agreement.

The Cabinet Member for Resources informed Members of the proposed changes to the Human Resources provision, when the contract with Worcestershire County Council ceases on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. He advised that all options have been carefully explored and the most viable option was to bring HR support in house.

**Decision:**

**The Human Resources service be provided in-house from 1 April 2016, following expiry of the current service level agreement.**

**CAB.44 Exclusion of Press and Public**

**Decision: "Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of "exempt information" as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.**

**CAB.45 Sale of Land in Stourport on Severn**

A report was considered from the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place to agree the part disposal of a site.

**Decision:**

**Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Regeneration, authority to agree terms for part disposal of an area of land as referred to in the confidential report to Cabinet for a capital receipt that will be made available for the Evergreen Investment Fund.**

The meeting closed at 18.51 pm.



**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> DECEMBER 2015**

**Local Plan Review**  
**Issues and Options Consultation Responses**

<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Councillor J P Campion, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	Planning Policy Manager
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Rebecca Brown x 2195
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	Appendix 1 – Consultation Statement Appendix 2 – Responses summary Table Appendix 3 – Table of Consultation Responses (reference copies are available in the Members' room)

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the level and scope of the responses received in relation to the public consultation undertaken on the Local Plan Review Issues and Options Consultation.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet's approval for the publication of the consultation responses on the District Council's website.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

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

- 2.1 To note the consultation responses received to the Issues and Options Paper and that these should be taken into account appropriately when considering the development of the Local Plan Review preferred options.
- 2.2 To approve the Local Plan Review Issues and Options Consultation Statement at Appendix 1 for publication on the District Council's website, with delegated authority to the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place to make any final changes to the formatting prior to publication.
- 2.3 To note that the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place will arrange for the Table of Consultation Responses at Appendix 3 to be published on the website.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Issues and Options Consultation paper was considered at Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in July where it was approved for a 6 week consultation period commencing on 1st September 2015.
- 3.2 The Consultation Paper represents the first phase in the review of the District's Local Plan. The aim of this consultation was to seek views on the issues we should be developing policies on and to put forward potential options for a future development and growth strategy. It provided the opportunity for local residents, businesses, key stakeholders and Duty to Co-operate partners to submit further evidence or options which haven't yet been considered.
- 3.3 Consultation  
The six week consultation period was undertaken in accordance with the requirements set out in the Council's Adopted Statement of Community Involvement. A detailed consultation statement is attached at Appendix 1 which provides further information on the consultation measures employed. This included four manned roadshows, a live twitter debate and a presentation to the Parish Forum.

**4. KEY ISSUES**

**4.1 Scope of Consultation Responses Received**

The consultation generated a high response rate of 1631 comments in total. Appendices 1 and 2 set out a general summary of the comments received in relation to each section of the document. Due to its length, Appendix 3 - a printed copy of all the responses received, is available to view in the Member's room. Appendix 3 also sets out initial Officer responses to the comments received.

- 4.2 Responses were received from local residents, key stakeholders, Duty to Co-operate partners and private sector/landowner interests. Generally the document was well received due to its identification of potential growth options to encourage open debate about the District's future development strategy.
- 4.3 There is continued support (particularly amongst local residents) for brownfield regeneration of the main towns and retention of the Green Belt. However, private sector representatives have raised concerns over the viability and deliverability of brownfield sites and also that the Local Plan should be capable of meeting the District's housing needs in full.
- 4.4 Response to growth options  
Chapter 6 set out 7 potential broad options for accommodating future growth within the District. The responses received to these will be of particular note to the Cabinet and for helping to inform the preferred options development. These are summarised below:

**Option 1 (Brownfield regeneration which focuses on the main towns of Kidderminster and Stourport)** – there was general support for the focus on brownfield regeneration. However, the development industry has concerns over deliverability and considers that all allocations should be comprehensively reviewed.

There should be a continued emphasis on the main towns but a mix of brownfield and greenfield sites should be allocated.

**Option 2 (Brownfield regeneration focussed on the main towns and expansion of Kidderminster to the North East via a sustainable urban extension)** – There was some support for this option. It is felt that the focus here should be on the former Lea Castle Hospital site. There is great concern over the impact of increased traffic on Hurcott Lane and the SSSI. Private Sector interests feel that the Area of Development Restraint (ADR) sites should also be prioritised although local residents are concerned over the loss of Green Belt land.

**Option 3 (Brownfield regeneration focussed on the main towns and expansion of Kidderminster to the South East via a sustainable urban extension)** – Many objections have been received to this option from local residents on the Spennells Housing Estate. They have particular concerns over the impact on the open countryside and on the transport network of the housing estate. They consider there will be adverse impact on recreational opportunities and that infrastructure requirements will be significant. However, there is a level of support from the development industry for this option.

**Option 4 (Brownfield Regeneration Focus for Stourport)** – There is widespread support for the brownfield regeneration of Stourport, with many people stating that there are enough sites available. However, private sector interests have put forward land at Areley Kings for consideration which isn't in the Green Belt. Developer interests have concerns over the deliverability of the Stourport Relief Road and associated potential restrictions on new development coming forward.

**Option 5 (Allocate some development to Bewdley through an amendment to the town's settlement boundary to accommodate new development)** – Whilst many local residents wish to see only modest development in and around Bewdley, concerns have been raised over low housing completions for the town and the need to address local housing needs. There are many concerns over traffic impacts on the Welch Gate Air Quality Management Area. A number of land owners have put forward sites and they consider that the settlement boundary needs to be redrawn to provide some new development opportunities for the town during the plan period.

**Option 6 (Allocate more development to the villages and settlements within the District's Rural East)** – There is not much enthusiasm for allocating development to villages in the east of the District. However some people feel that modest growth could be allocated to the larger villages. Some respondents feel that more should be made of transport links via Blakedown Rail Station. The main concern is that new development should be proportionate to the size of the villages.

**Option 7 (Allocate more development to the villages and settlements within the District's Rural West)** – Whilst a number of sites have been put forward by landowners to the west of the District, many respondents (both residents and private sector interests) feel that this option is the most unsustainable strategy because of poor access to local services and increased trip generation. Small amounts of infill development could come forward in response to local housing need.

- 4.5 The Local Plans Review Panel considered the responses in detail at its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> November. Overview and Scrutiny Committee also considered them alongside the Panel's comments and recommendations at its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> December. A verbal update can be provided at the meeting.

4.6 Developing the Preferred Options

Officers have commissioned work on the evidence base to help inform the Local Plan Review. Consultants have been appointed to progress the Objective Assessment of Housing Need, the Employment Land Review and the Retail Needs and Commercial Leisure Study. The final reports will be received in January 2016. Officers are also progressing the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) with Independent Panel Meetings taking place to discuss site deliverability issues. Sustainability Appraisal will also be undertaken on potential sites and draft policies.

- 4.7 The technical evidence base, Sustainability Appraisal and consultation responses will be used to help shape the preferred options for the District's future development strategy. A public consultation will take place on this stage of the Plan Review during summer 2016.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The cost of undertaking the Issues and Options Public Consultation was met from the existing Planning Policy budget. The Planning Policy team will be leading on all work associated with the Local Plan Review and this will continue to be met from within existing budget

**6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out specific matters to which the Local Planning Authority must have regard when preparing a Local Plan. Regulations 8 and 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 prescribe the form and content of Local Plans.
- 6.2 The arrangements for the Issues and Options Consultation undertaken and the reporting of the responses received are consistent with the Council's Adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

**7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken to inform the production of the Issues and Options Consultation Paper. This was reported to Cabinet in July.

**8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 It is now essential to continue with the Preferred Options Development to be consistent with the timescales set out in the Revised Local Development Scheme. This will help to ensure that the District continues to have an up to date plan in place to guide future development.

**9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 A significant number of responses have been received to the Issues and Options Consultation Paper. Alongside the technical evidence base, the responses will be used to help shape the Preferred Options which will be subject to public consultation during summer 2016.

**10. CONSULTEES**

- 10.1 Local Plans Review Panel (20<sup>th</sup> November, 2015)  
10.2 Overview and Scrutiny Committee (3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2015)

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Issues and Options Consultation Paper (September 2015)  
Local Plans Review Panel Agenda Items – 20<sup>th</sup> November 2015  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda Item – 3rd December 2015

## Appendix 1

### Wyre Forest District Local Plan Review Issues and Options Consultation Summary

Following the Council's approval of the Local Plan Review Issues and Options Paper in July 2015 the documents listed below were produced:

- Local Plan Review Issues and Options Paper
- A5 booklet promoting the Local Plan Review and its consultation
- General Comments Form
- A4 posters promoting the Local Plan Review and its consultation
- Exhibition material for the drop-in-sessions

#### **Consultation:**

The consultation period for the Issues and Options Paper ran from 1<sup>st</sup> September until 16<sup>th</sup> October 2015. During this time the consultation was promoted in the following ways:

#### **• Letters**

In September 2015, a total of 782 letters and emails were sent out to Statutory Consultees, Hard to Reach Groups and various organisations and individuals who had expressed an interest in the Local Plan.

#### **• Drop-in Sessions**

During September the Planning Policy Team held a number of drop-in sessions in the District's three main towns. This gave consultees and members of the public the opportunity to learn more about the Local Plan and to discuss the consultation papers with officers. Documents were made available to view and to loan. The table below sets out attendance figures for the exhibitions.

Venue	Date	No. Visitors
Stourport on Severn Carnival	Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	3
Bewdley Farmers Market	Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	62
Weavers Wharf, Kidderminster	Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	54
Kidderminster Market	Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	59

#### **• Social Media**

As part of the consultation a live question and answer session was held via Twitter on Thursday 17th September at 6pm. Questions were also posted on the Council's Facebook page encouraging public debate and comment. The following feedback was received via social media:

Question	Responses
Where should we build new development in and around Kidderminster?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The empty premises should be used first.</li> <li>- On the big ugly white building in the town centre.</li> <li>- Why not build more housing in the centre of town? There are enough empty buildings and it would bring some life into the place.</li> <li>- The town centre is completely lifeless after 5 apart from the weekend and that's just people out getting drunk. When you go into places where people live in the town centre you tend to get more options than just pubs and clubs. One of my main problems with the town centre is that it just feels so dead and I think more housing in the town centre could really bring a bit more life to</li> </ul>

# **Appendix 1** **Wyre Forest District Local Plan Review Issues and Options** **Consultation Summary**

	<p>the place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Another plus point to it would be that people living and working in the town centre itself would take a bit of strain off the creaking transport system.</li> </ul>
Where should we build new development in and around Stourport-on-Severn?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Well, it's a no-brainer for me really ... I'd like to see WFDC following through their promise of redeveloping the former Lloyds Garage site in Bridge Street, to a model that was originally put in place to enhance tourism for Stourport. If this isn't to be the case, (and we've been waiting five-long years for any action)</li> <li>- Hear hear. That development would make the town!</li> <li>- If life were fair, we could plan our future housing development needs to be sited in Malvern!!</li> <li>- What ever we think it all ends up in Kidderminster</li> <li>- We need more to bring more visitors back. Something other than charity shops, take aways / fast food</li> <li>- Nowhere, until you've sorted out the relief road that the town needs so desperately..! Gridlock on a regular basis may mean nothing if you don't live here, but it makes getting around very difficult - and decreases the quality of the town centre. Look at Bewdley to see what a difference a by-pass makes to a town.</li> <li>- Concerned that the Council will not take account of the responses.</li> <li>- By the way ...the new road across the sugar beet site will bring all the traffic THROUGH Stourport</li> </ul>
Providing Quality Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need to ensure that they are all built accessible.</li> </ul>

## • **Mini Displays**

Documents, leaflets and comment forms were available in the Wyre Forest Customer Services Centre, Kidderminster Town Hall and in the libraries of Stourport-on-Severn, Kidderminster and Bewdley.

## • **Website**

All documents, leaflets and comment forms were made available to view and download on the District Council's web-site. Respondents were also able to submit responses via the Council's online consultation portal Objective.

## • **Posters**

Posters were distributed for display to a wide range of places across the District. These included:

- Wyre Forest Customer Service Centre, Kidderminster

## Appendix 1 Wyre Forest District Local Plan Review Issues and Options Consultation Summary

- Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley libraries
- Worcestershire County Council mobile library
- All of the District Post Offices
- Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley supermarkets
- Local rural stores
- Local garden centres and farm shops

The posters highlighted the consultation event and the times and locations of the drop in sessions.

### • Leaflets

During August 2015 a leaflet promoting the Local Plan Issues and Options Paper consultation was distributed to households in the District by way of an insert in the Kidderminster Shuttle. The leaflets were distributed as follows:

- 31,782 leaflets dispatched with the free Kidderminster Shuttle
- 14,635 leaflets sent to householders within the District that do not receive the Kidderminster Shuttle

### • Presentations

The Planning Policy Team gave a presentation to the District's Parish Forum on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2015. A presentation was also given to the Big Local DY10 community group on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

### Response Summary

The District Council has received 1,631 responses from 123 respondents, including key stakeholders such as Natural England, the Environment Agency, Historic England and Highways England, as well as from many local residents and land owners.

Of the 1,631 responses made 74% were submitted by email, 22% were submitted online via the consultation portal and 4% were submitted by letter. A breakdown of the sections that respondents commented on is provided in the table below.

Subject Area of Local Plan Review Paper	Number of Respondents	Number of Comments	Number of Comments s %
General Comments to the overall document	10	10	0.6%
Section 1: Introduction	40	50	3.1%
Section 2: Wyre Forest District Today	38	100	6.1%
Section 3: Vision and Objectives	36	70	4.3%
Section 4: Cross Boundary Relationships	30	33	2.0%
Section 5: Key Local Plan Approaches	43	95	5.8%
Section 6: What Level of Growth is Needed and What Broad Options Can be Pursued?	79	230	14.1%
Section 7: Providing Quality Homes	56	344	21.1%
Section 8: Providing Employment Opportunities and Retail Services	36	142	8.7%



**Appendix 1**  
**Wyre Forest District Local Plan Review Issues and Options**  
**Consultation Summary**

Section 9: Safeguarding Character and Local Distinctiveness	43	175	10.7%
Section 10: A Well Served District	53	267	16.4%
Section 11: Tackling Climate Change and its Impacts	32	114	7.0%
Appendices	1	1	0.1%
<b>Total</b>		1631	100

**APPENDIX 2: Issues and Options Consultation Responses Summary Table**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Summary</b>
1 – Introduction	60	General support for the evidence base requirements as set out. However, many private sector interests have commented that a Green Belt Boundary Review is required as part of the evidence base to inform the Plan Review. Worcestershire County Council also raised the requirement for a Health Impact Assessment. Some comments were received relating to concerns over the tight timescale for the Plan Review and some agents thought it could be necessary to extend the plan period until 2036 in case there is a delay to the plan review.
2 – Wyre Forest District Today	100	There was general agreement with the issues raised that affect our District. Specific comments relate to very poor public transport and high levels of traffic congestion with poor strategic transport infrastructure. It is strongly felt that these issues need to be addressed to encourage further investment in the District. Many local residents raised the importance of protecting the Green Belt and concerns over increased recreational pressures on the countryside. A number of comments were received regarding the future role of the Severn Valley Railway and the part it could play in improving passenger transport. Finally some comments were received from landowners regarding concerns that the document fails to address the relationship between the Green Belt, brownfield land availability, housing completions and employment opportunities.
3 – Vision and Objectives	70	There was generally wide spread support for the vision and objectives. Particular comments were received from the development industry to state that more emphasis should be placed on meeting the District's housing needs and that a pro-growth agenda should be pursued. The vision should look beyond just brownfield redevelopment. There was support for maintaining a vibrant network of neighbourhood and local centres. Finally, Worcestershire County Council felt that there should be more reference to public health issues within the objectives.
4 – Cross Boundary Relationships	33	Generally there was a high level of support received for the issues identified. Of particular relevance is the response received from Birmingham City Council regarding the City's housing need and the potential for Wyre Forest District to meet some of this if an export option is to be pursued. Other issues raised by key stakeholders include: the need to look at Green Infrastructure strategically, the potential to focus new development around strategic transport infrastructure and the progression of a strategic Green Belt Boundary Review.
5 – Key Local Plan Approaches	95	Most comments were received from land owner interests and the development industry.

APPENDIX 2: Issues and Options Consultation Responses Summary Table

Section	Number of Responses	Summary
		Generally they feel that all existing allocations should be reviewed in terms of their deliverability. Greenfield sites will be required to meet housing needs and to maintain a supply of suitable, deliverable and viable housing land. They consider that the Local Plan Review should include an honest and open debate on the deliverability of brownfield sites. There is widespread support for the strategic character area approach as identified on the map. A number of comments were received with regard to CIL and there is widespread concern over viability issues and a preference for S106 contributions.
6 – What level of growth is needed and what broad options can be pursued?	230	<p><b>Option 1 (Brownfield regeneration which focuses on the main towns of Kidderminster and Stourport)</b> – there is general support for the focus on brownfield regeneration. However, the development industry has concerns over deliverability and feels that all allocations should be comprehensively reviewed. There should be a continued emphasis on the main towns but a mix of brownfield and greenfield sites should be allocated.</p> <p><b>Option 2 (Brownfield regeneration focussed on the main towns and expansion of Kidderminster to the North East via a sustainable urban extension)</b> – There is some support for a Sustainable Urban Extension to the north east of Kidderminster. It is felt that the focus here should be on the former Lea Castle Hospital site. There is great concern over the impact of traffic on Hurcott Lane and the SSSI. Private sector interests consider that the Area of Development Restraint (ADR) sites should also be prioritised although there is concern over the loss of Green Belt land.</p> <p><b>Option 3 (Brownfield regeneration focussed on the main towns and expansion of Kidderminster to the South East via a sustainable urban extension)</b> – Many objections were received from local residents on the Spennells Housing Estate. There are particular concerns over the impact on the open countryside and on the transport network of the Spennells housing estate. Residents consider there will be adverse impacts on recreational opportunities and large infrastructure requirements. However, there was some support from the development industry for this option.</p> <p><b>Option 4 (Brownfield Regeneration Focus for Stourport)</b> – There is widespread support for the brownfield regeneration of Stourport, with many people stating that there are still enough sites available. However, private sector interests have put forward land at Areley Kings for consideration which isn't in the greenbelt. There are concerns from the development industry over the deliverability of the Stourport Relief Road and restrictions on new development.</p>

APPENDIX 2: Issues and Options Consultation Responses Summary Table

Section	Number of Responses	Summary
		<p><b>Option 5 (Allocate some development to Bewdley through an amendment to the town's settlement boundary to accommodate new development)</b> – Whilst many local residents wish to see only modest development in and around Bewdley, concerns have been raised over low housing completion rates for the town and the need to address local housing needs. There are many concerns over traffic impacts on the Welch Gate Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). A number of land owners have put forward sites for consideration and it is felt by them that the settlement boundary needs to be redrawn to provide some new development opportunities for the town.</p> <p><b>Option 6 (Allocate more development to the villages and settlements within the District's Rural East)</b> – There is not much enthusiasm for allocating development to villages in the east of the District. However some people feel that modest growth could be allocated to the larger villages. Some respondents consider that more should be made of transport links via Blakedown Rail Station. The main concern is that new development should be proportionate to the size of the villages.</p> <p><b>Option 7 (Allocate more development to the villages and settlements within the District's Rural West)</b> – Whilst a number of sites have been put forward by landowners to the west of the District, many respondents, both residents and private sector interests, feel that this option is the most unsustainable strategy because of poor access to local services and increased trip generation. A number of responses supported small amounts of infill development which could come forward in response to local housing need.</p>
7 – Providing Quality Homes	344	<p>This topic generated much debate with little clear cut option choices to take forward but most agreed that the final housing mix policy will need to reflect latest evidence. Many developers consider that existing allocations shouldn't be taken forward and Greenfield sites should be allocated instead. The current housing density policy has little support. Affordable housing issues are likely to be complicated by recent changes to Government policy. Respondents consider that further research needs to be done on specialist housing provision requirements. The issue of gypsy site provision provoked much debate and gave no clear cut answers as to the best way forward.</p>
8 – Providing Employment Opportunities and Retail Services	142	<p>General support for considering alternative uses on employment sites that are unlikely to come forward for development within the plan period and support for small start up units within the District. A mixture of support for concentrating either on existing tourism or promoting new tourism with many ideas for new attractions put forward.</p>

APPENDIX 2: Issues and Options Consultation Responses Summary Table

Section	Number of Responses	Summary
		Overwhelming support for the redevelopment of part of the primary shopping area of Kidderminster for alternative uses including residential, with Weavers Wharf and the area that will be redeveloped around Crown House becoming the main retail area.
9 – Safeguarding Character and Local Distinctiveness	175	<p>There was overall support for protection of the landscape but many people are mistakenly under the impression that Green Belt is a landscape protection tool. There is general support for existing chalet and horsiculture policies, but also some backing for small-scale farm diversification schemes to allow some tourist accommodation. The Woodland Trust has suggested that a separate Trees and Woodlands policy should be considered. The Green Infrastructure policy may need strengthening to not only protect assets but enhance them and re-link them into the wider network.</p> <p>Historic Environment – there is general agreement that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) cannot be relied on to give adequate protection, especially as regards non-designated assets. There is full support for the inclusion of a local distinctiveness policy.</p>
10 – A Well Served District	267	<p>This topic has mixed views on many of the questions but some questions have strong support for one particular option. Sustainable transport - many support all three options with the majority feeling that a contribution from developers towards sustainable transport is required. Many support improved parking facilities at Blakedown station to encourage rail transport and a number have suggested the possibility of Severn Valley Railway being used as a commuter train. There is support for encouraging other modes of transport but ensuring sufficient parking, as well as safeguarding the entire length of the proposed Stourport-on-Severn relief road. There is also support for reinstating the A449 to a two lane dual road. There are mixed views regarding the Horsefair and Welchgate Air Quality Management Area's with no overall preferred option.</p>
11 – Tackling Climate Change and its Impacts	114	<p>There is much debate around issues of flood risk and whether we should still allow redevelopment of sites in the floodplain. There are suggestions that the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) and trees would be beneficial to alleviating flood risk. There are conflicting views on water efficiency and renewable energy. Worcestershire County Council comments that the need for a waste management facility near Kidderminster should be factored into employment land allocations. Any potential mineral workings will also need to be cross checked with potential Local Plan allocations.</p>

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**  
**TUESDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER 2015**

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015**

**Local Plan Review: Issues and Options Consultation Responses**

The Committee received a report which informed Members of the level and scope of responses received in relation to the public consultation undertaken on the Local Plan Review Issues and Options Consultation, which ran for a six week period from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015.

**Recommend to Cabinet:**

**The consultation responses as set out at Appendices 1 and 3 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be approved for publication on the District Council's website to help inform the development of the Local Plan Review Preferred Options**

**Background papers:**

Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015

<http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/meetings/com193.htm#mt7616>

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL****CABINET**  
**22<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER 2015****Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016-19**

<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Councillor N J Desmond
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	Chief Financial Officer
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Tracey Southall, Ext 2100 tracey.southall@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
Appendix 1 Appendix 2 Appendix 3 Appendix 4 – Part 1 Appendix 4 – Part 2 Appendix 4 – Part 3 Appendix 5 Appendix 6	Base Budget Projections 2016-19 Variance Analysis Cabinet Proposals Part 1 – Fees and Charges for Noting Part 2 – Fees and Charges - Cabinet Part 3 – Fees and Charges - Council Risk Management Analysis Capital Programme 2015-16 onwards  <i>The appendices to this report have been circulated electronically and a public inspection copy is available on request. (See front cover for details.)</i>

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 In accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules and in line with the Wyre Forest Forward programme, to provide the Cabinet with financial information in order to make proposals for the Budget Strategy for the period 2016-19.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Cabinet is asked to **NOTE**:

- 2.1 The fees and charges as set out in Appendix 4 – Part 1.
- 2.2 The savings currently assumed within this report of up to £250,000 pa as a result of the partnership working with the new Kidderminster Town Council from 2016-17. This will be confirmed within the February budget report.

The Cabinet is asked to **APPROVE**:-

- 2.3 The fees and charges as set out in Appendix 4 – Part 2.

The Cabinet is asked to **ENDORSE** and **RECOMMEND** to the Cabinet Financial Strategy Advisory Panel for scrutiny:

**2.4 The Council's updated Medium Term Financial Strategy;**

**2.4.1 Cabinet Proposals – taking into account the impact on the Council's Capital and Revenue Budgets for 2016-19 (Appendix 3) including;**

- a) Approval of £500,000 capital funding to act as match funding towards the delivery of the reintroduction of traffic into Worcester Street as part of the Council's commitment to the regeneration of Kidderminster Town Centre. This will represent a significant step forward in realising the redevelopment of the wider Eastern Gateway as well as continuing the Council's strategy of attracting external investment into the regeneration of the town centre. This is the next phase of the Council's commitment to revitalising Kidderminster Town Centre by investing additional funding to accelerate the improvements to Worcester Street; opening it up to one-way traffic from Coventry Street and providing on street parking, thus improving the profile of this part of the town and increasing footfall. This builds on the Council's delivery of £2m of public realm improvements to Vicar Street, High Street and Exchange Street. This significant investment will support the Council's vision for the future of Worcester Street.
- b) The creation of a single Localism Fund of £50k to continue the good work done so far with Parish and Town Councils and extend it to other organisations. There will continue to be flexibility around grant funding from this new fund to facilitate more clarity and easier access where appropriate, to pump prime the work of Parish Councils and Community Groups where it complements work and priorities of this Council and benefits local residents.
- c) Approval for the Community Leadership Fund for 2016-17 of £33k.

**2.4.2 The level of net expenditure and resultant Council Tax for 2016-19 as per paragraph 8.2;**

**2.4.3 The fees and charges in line with this strategy and the impact on the Council's Revenue Budget for 2016-19, as shown in Part 3 of Appendix 4;**

**2.4.4 The Base Capital Programme and Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewals Schedule as set out in Appendix 6, Appendices A and B;**

**2.4.5 The variations to the Capital Programme and Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewal Schedule in accordance with the Council's Budget Process.**

**3. THE ROLE OF THE CABINET FINANCIAL STRATEGY ADVISORY PANEL**

- 3.1 The cross-party Cabinet Financial Strategy Advisory Panel was established in August 2014 and has been continued to assist with this year's budget process. The work of the panel will inform the Cabinet's proposed strategy for the meetings on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 and 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016.



- 3.2 The first meeting of the Panel on the 23th November set out the Challenging Financial Landscape and updated our base financial position; it also included a Business Rates Briefing. The main focus of the second meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016 will be Alternative Budget Proposals and the final meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> January will cover final Cabinet proposals. The process feeds into key decisions about the shape of the strategy to be approved by full Council in February 2016, when the council tax will also be set.

#### 4. **CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW OF THE FUTURE**

- 4.1 The most significant issue facing the Council remains its financial position. Its net revenue budget will have reduced from £16.4m in 2009-10 to £11.47m in 2017-18 based upon current plans. This represents a fall of around 30% in absolute terms, and more in real terms. The Council has continued to protect key front-line services despite significant reductions in government grant. It is streamlining services as part of the Wyre Forest Forward Programme. The approved budget proposals go a considerable way towards closing the gap between what we are spending and our income. Alongside this work, the Council is overseeing its most significant capital investment programme in many years, including the new leisure centre, for which construction is well under-way, as well as major injections of finance in its key priority of securing the economic prosperity of the district. The Spending Review (SR) has set the scene for another challenging budget cycle for 2016-19.

#### **Government funding and controls over council expenditure**

- 4.2 Significant funding challenges will continue for local government throughout this Parliament. The Government has ring-fenced the NHS, international development, defence and parts of education, meaning departments such as Communities and Local Government face significant reductions. Each unprotected department was asked to come up with savings plans of between 25% and 40% of their budget as part of the Summer Budget announced in early July 2015 launching the Chancellor's spending review with a call for £20bn reductions to Whitehall budgets. The outcome has been announced in the Autumn Statement on 25 November. Total funding for local government is expected to fall as follows:

**Table 4.2 Local Government Funding amounts as per SR15**

	2015/16 £bn	2016/17 £bn	2017/18 £bn	2018/19 £bn	2019/20 £bn
DCLG Local Government DEL	11.5	9.6	7.4	6.1	5.4
DCLG Local Government DEL % change		-16.5%	-22.9%	-17.6%	-11.5%
Locally Financed Expenditure	28.8	29.0	31.5	33.6	35.1
Locally Financed Expenditure % change		0.7%	8.6%	6.7%	4.5%

**Figure 4.2 Local Government Funding amounts as per SR15**

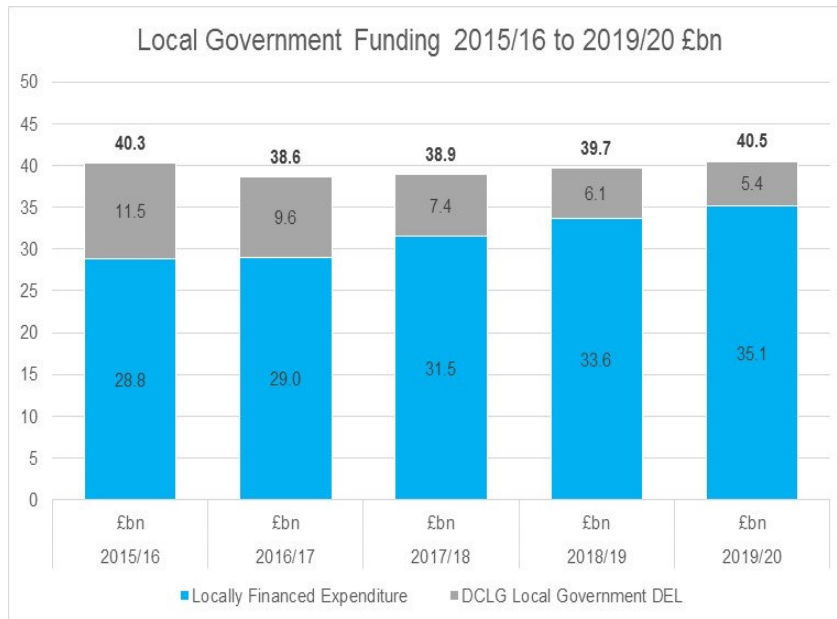


Table 4.2 shows:

- A reduction in funding of £6.1bn in local government Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) over the period. This equates to a 53% reduction in funding. The SR report shows the “Cumulative real growth” for this change as -56% (i.e. including the impact of forecast inflation).
- Total funding increases from £40.3bn to £40.5bn.
- In order to put the 53% funding into perspective, it is necessary to consider this in the context of current Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) levels (i.e. including the business rates element). For 2015/16, total funding from SFA is £22.2bn. Therefore, a reduction of £6.1bn over the Spending Review period would represent a reduction of 27.5%. For the three years of the Financial Strategy the equivalent reduction is £5.4bn or 25%.

Some main points of highlight within the Spending Review overall are:

- A target budget surplus of £10.1bn by 2019/20;
- Reductions to tax credits will no longer be introduced;
- The plans in SR2015 will deliver reductions to government spending as proportion of GDP from 45% in 2010 to 36.5% by the end of SR2015;
- 12bn of savings to government departments

4.3 In line with all Councils, the position for Wyre Forest District Council is not yet known and there is a significant amount of further detail required before firm conclusions can be drawn, particularly since this Spending Review contains so many proposals for fundamental change that impact on local government. More details will emerge in the draft local government settlement for 2016-17 which is expected to be released before Christmas. The 27.5% reduction in Government grant for councils over the coming 4 years takes into account forecast business rates growth and is the average position: the reduction is expected to be greater

for district councils because of the protection being given to social services authorities.

4.4 Other key elements of the Autumn Statement so far as it relates to local government were:

- Central government intend for local government to be able to spend the same level by the end of this Parliament in cash terms as it does today – therefore a real terms reduction;
- **A social care council tax ‘precept’** of 2% will allow councils responsible for delivering adult social care such as Worcestershire County Council to raise up to £2 billion a year by 2019-20. Local authorities will be given this additional 2% flexibility on their current council tax referendum threshold to be used entirely for adult social care. This is a new power for relevant councils to increase council tax to specifically pay towards social care in their areas;
- **An extra £1.5bn for the Better Care Fund** by the end of the Parliament – more information needed to understand the impact of this;
- Continuation of **New Homes Bonus** but with a reduced share for district councils. A very early estimate based on the limited information available so far used for this report is 35% instead of 80%, for 4 not the current 6 years. The financial strategy adopted in February 2015 had assumed that New Homes Bonus would not continue beyond the General Election and therefore, despite the changes to the scheme, the result is a positive contribution to the Council’s funding position. The government will consult on these proposed reforms to the **New Homes Bonus**, including means of sharpening the incentive to reward communities for additional homes as part of the provisional Settlement in December. This will include a preferred option for savings of at least £800m for social care funding. It will further consult on reducing the length of payments from 6 years to 4 years.
- An end to Uniform **Business Rates**; introduction of 100% retention of business rates for local government and phasing out of RSG as well as introduction of new responsibilities;
- The extension of **Small Business Rate Relief** to continue for another year – this is good news for local businesses and for our Business Rates Accounts;
- “Local authorities running education to become a thing of the past, delivering £600m savings to Education Services Grant”;
- Plans to build an additional 400,000 affordable homes by the end of the decade.
- An apprenticeship levy will be introduced in April 2017 at a rate of 0.5% of an employer’s paybill, to deliver 3 million apprenticeship starts by 2020. This is estimated to cost this Council around £30k pa from 2017/18.
- Over £500 million by 2019-20 for the Disabled Facilities Grant to fund up to 85,000 housing adaptations pa. More detail on this proposal is needed to fully understand the impact of this change;
- **Homelessness** - increased funding of £10m available to invest in innovative ways of preventing and reducing homelessness. More detail on this proposal is needed to fully gauge the impact;
- Restrictions on **shared ownership** to be removed and planning system reformed to deliver more homes;
- **Real-terms protection for the police budget.**

Some further interesting points were included:

- Proposal to reform services and make them more efficient, a package of new flexibilities will be introduced to encourage local authorities to **release surplus assets**. Local authorities will be able to spend 100% of their fixed asset receipts investing in making services more efficient (local authorities currently hold £225 billion in assets). This suggests we could use capital receipts to fund the revenue costs of service reform provision however there will be detail around this that will almost certainly impose conditions.
- Like other unprotected areas of spending, local government will need to make a contribution to fiscal consolidation to ensure that the country is able to live within its means. **The main grant to local government will be phased out; this currently represents less than a quarter of local government total resources**. Other sources of income such as council tax and business rates are forecast to grow in cash terms by £6.3 billion by 2019-20, based on the OBR's forecast for local authority self-financed expenditure. Forecasts included show that taking this into account, overall local government spending is forecast to be higher in cash terms by 2019-20 than in 2015-16, a real terms reduction of 1.7% per year. However the assumed 3.1% a year real terms growth in council tax and business rates is far greater than has actually happened in recent years so this will be a real challenge for small districts like Wyre Forest and puts increased emphasis on locally raised income from Council Tax and external income streams.

Devolution:

- The Local Growth Fund, created following the Heseltine Review, will place money under the direct control of business-led Local Enterprise Partnerships. The government confirms it will deliver its commitment to a £12 billion Local Growth Fund between 2015/16 and 2020/21.
- The government is to create 26 new Enterprise Zones, including expanding 8 Zones on the current programme.
- In addition, a wide range of regional specific schemes are outlined in detail.

Information yet to be announced:

- No information was provided on continuation (or not) of the regime of referenda for "excessive" council tax increases or on new allocations of council tax freeze grant for councils that choose to freeze or reduce their council tax in 2016-17. This does not affect past allocations which are locked into the revenue settlement.

## Business rates

- 4.5 In early October plans to allow councils to keep 100% of business rates were announced at the Conservative Party conference. This change will not take effect until 2020 and will involve significant redesign of the local government finance system. The Chancellor announced that, as a result, core revenue support grant would be phased out, the uniform rate would be "scrapped" (although see below) and certain unspecified additional responsibilities would be transferred to local government. The proposal does not involve transferring responsibility for setting the poundage, except that all councils would be able to reduce rates (a power

they already have) and elected Mayors would be able to increase the poundage by up to 2p but only for infrastructure projects and only with the support of business leaders through the local enterprise partnership. The proposal means that it will be even more important for Wyre Forest to invest in activities that support economic growth (as this ultimately translates into business rates). However it is accompanied by the increased risk that it and other councils will not be able to shield local communities if there are future significant reductions in business rate income, whether because of closures, economic downturn or successful appeals against valuations – the council will not be able to increase the poundage to make good the impact of any loss of business rates income.

- 4.6 The nature of this risk has already been exposed by the experience of the Worcestershire business rates pool in 2014-15. It was unable to protect the member Councils including Wyre Forest against the severe impact of the GP Surgery appeals. This resulted in a lower contribution to General Reserves of circa £260k from the 2014-15 accounts, which represents a reduction of around £290k as a direct result of business rate appeals compared to the pre-audit reported saving of £550k for this year.
- 4.7 The ongoing annual reduction in Business Rates payable by GP surgeries as a result of these appeals, most of which relates to the 2010 rating list, is £133,000 a year for this Council. This has reduced Business Rates funding for the 2015-16 budget and onwards, subject to the overall Pool position. The Southern Worcestershire local authorities of Malvern Hills, Wychavon and Worcester City have been hit much harder than Wyre Forest since they have also had to pay out for such appeals going back to the 2005 rating list in 2014-15.
- 4.8 Members received a detailed Strong Leader Cabinet Report in Mid October 2015 setting out a review of the operation of the Worcestershire Business Rates Pool for 2013-14 and 2014-15, given that Malvern Hills District Council have decided to withdraw from the Pool for 2016-17 in order to access the Government safety net.
- 4.9 The report outlined that, at that point in time, being part of a revised Worcestershire Pool for business rates in 2016-17, excluding Malvern Hills DC, seemed to be in the Council's best interests. In line with the delegation to the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources, the final decision was to join the new revised Worcestershire Business Rates Pool; an application was made to DCLG and we have received formal confirmation of approval.

### **The Context in Wyre Forest**

- 4.10 Following the whole council elections in May 2015 and the reduction in size of the council from 42 to 33 members the Council continues with the two approved Corporate Plan priorities:
  - **Support you to contribute to a successful local economy.**
  - **Support you to live in clean, green and safe communities.**
- 4.11 The Council continues to respond positively to austerity and has an excellent track record in delivering savings, with almost £5m achieved from 2010 to 2015. This proactive approach to service delivery within a reduced funding envelope



must clearly continue over the term of this budget strategy and beyond. The Council's approach to aligning its expenditure with income over time has successfully used three main levers:

- a) Making the Council as efficient as it can be in its structures and external and internal processes. This is driven through the Wyre Forest Forward transformation programme, supported by work to ensure that services are on line and digital by default and by the ICT strategy;
- b) Implementing alternative delivery structures where this represents best value. Examples include the shared services that have been implemented since 2010 and the Council's strong track record in localism, transferring responsibility for assets and services to local organisations, including town and parish councils;
- c) Growing its income. For example, the depot has increased its external income forecast by circa £250,000 since 2013/14, while over £160k a year of income has been generated from tenancies and ICT support charges at Wyre Forest House.

- 4.12 The Council is progressing well with the Wyre Forest Forward programme of savings. Already around 93% of the target savings have been achieved for 2015-16 and over £2.12m or 89.1% have been achieved against the target of £2.374m in 2018-19. This has been helped greatly by the savings from the new leisure centre and the good news on the rentals for Wyre Forest House. However, each efficiency saving found reduces the potential for efficiencies in future years. Many councils are being forced to look for savings from service reductions. Wyre Forest continues to deal with funding reductions by efficiencies and income generation wherever possible with service reductions a last resort.
- 4.13 While the Council is performing well with ambitious savings plans to bridge the gap between reducing funding and the cost of services, it will become increasingly challenging to maintain the pace of change. The creation of the new Town Council for Kidderminster and other proactive transformation work streams will provide some mitigation of risk during the next budget cycle and help ensure continuity of a sustainable budget.
- 4.14 The Council continues to use systems thinking in order to drive change to how it delivers services. There is focus on the customer and meeting their needs in the most effective way possible, driving down cost by simplifying processes and reducing waste. The approved purposes of Wyre Forest District Council are set out in the chart that can be viewed on the following link to our website:  
[http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/media/144533/Outcomes\\_Diagram.pdf](http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/media/144533/Outcomes_Diagram.pdf)
- 4.15 Even in priority areas, it has been recognised that services should not continue to be organised and funded without challenge, as all areas need to make a contribution to making our financial situation sustainable through growing income, transformation and reviews to reduce waste. Adopting only two priorities has allowed the Council wider scope for seeking savings from other areas of activity, the Council will find it difficult to remain financially sustainable if extensive areas are categorised as a priority and shielded from change or reductions.
- 4.16 There will be opportunities for more shared services in the future, and we should actively seek opportunities for Wyre Forest District Council to host them in line with our strengths. We will continue to consider opportunities in the future, subject to each business case for change and alignment with our transformation

programme. There is not a dogmatic approach that seeks externalisation or shared services, as has been seen with the recent decision to bring the HR function in house from April 2016 when the current service level agreement with the County Council comes to an end.

4.17 The Council is not joining the proposed West Midlands Combined Authority at this time as a non-constituent member. The devolution deal for the West Midlands was announced in November and includes some elements that might be relevant to the footprint of three local enterprise partnerships, which would therefore include North Worcestershire. However it remains to be seen what impact this would have on economic development and regeneration or other aspects relevant to the financial strategy. In respect of Worcestershire, devolution proposals accompanied by a public services leaders' board are due to be submitted and discussed with Government Ministers in January. Some of the proposals for public service reform could have various implications for Wyre Forest in terms of committing the Council, as part of the Worcestershire public services family, to examine different ways of working. Examples include:

- a pioneering service delivery model focused around a single vehicle comprised of resource from multiple organisations, working to coordinate the public sector approach to moving individuals and families from dependency to independence. The pilot goes live in Redditch in January 2016 with the expectation of roll out across the county towards the end of 2016/early 2017;
- to consider working towards ensuring all principal authorities in Worcestershire that are not already members of the Place Partnership commission and procure estates services through the partnership by late 2016/early 2017. This could affect as a minimum activities such as facilities management and property surveyors.

4.18 The Council continues to take positive steps with the objective of empowering parish councils and local groups to deliver more services. The Council will continue to support this local devolution to increase the pace of change to help preserve services. Good progress continues to be made and the creation of a town council for Kidderminster presents excellent opportunities for joint working, now and in future. The detail of financial savings together with revised service arrangements for this Council as a result of this new partnership is not yet finalised. At this stage a saving of up to £250,000 a year from 2016-17 has been assumed within the Strategy. This will be confirmed in the February reports.

4.19 The challenge for budgets over the next 5 years will continue to be how to maintain our services as far as possible within the shrinking funding envelope. In line with steps taken over the last few years, there is therefore an increased impetus for growing the Council's income:

- a) growing business rates income in line with government forecasts so the local economy can benefit from the funding we are able to retain under the changing regime;
- b) growing council tax income by supporting housing growth, including through the review of the local development plan;

- c) increasing fees and charges where possible ahead of inflation. This ensures that users of services contribute more to support those services than council tax payers as a whole;
- d) continuing the Council's commercial income from a variety of sources such as ticket sales and events, rents, work undertaken for other organisations and private households, advertising and sponsorship. External income generation to supplement other funding is a cornerstone of our financial strategy. The success of the Income Generation Group has helped the Wyre Forest Forward Transformation programme and must be maintained in the future.

The significant savings from Wyre Forest House of circa £500kpa and income of around £160kpa from tenancies from a local accountancy firm and Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) are helping to protect front-line services. A further tenancy has recently being secured for the former Cabinet Office and the marketing of our assets will continue to provide new income streams to reduce costs of services.

- 4.20 Another innovative example of Council's approach is the Evergreen Fund initiative by Council, which was approved in July 2014. It will provide a sustainable source of funding for future investments in approved projects. The fund, which currently stands at £310k and is projected to increase by £910k in the next 12 months, will help the Council to realise the regenerative benefits of some of its vacant and underused assets by investing capital receipts in commercial projects and other developments to secure long term revenue returns. The fund will shortly be of sufficient size to consider worthwhile investments. Each business case will be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to decision by the Cabinet.
- 4.21 Even with increased income, there is still a gap, albeit a smaller one, between expenditure and income. Therefore, the Council will continue on the trajectory towards becoming a leaner organisation.

## **5. KEY ISSUES - BASE POSITION, PRESSURES AND ASSUMPTIONS**

- 5.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is the forecast base budget position for the period 2016-17 to 2018-19. The Capital Programme together with the details to support the related recommendations in this report is contained in Appendix 6.
- 5.2 The Base Budget shown at Appendix 1 includes the financial implications of all previously approved Cabinet Proposals which reduced costs in areas such as the Wyre Forest Forward Programme. New Cabinet Proposals are considered within this report at Section 7 and Appendix 3.
- 5.3 Inflation has been included in the Base Budget for 2016-19 onwards as follows:

**Table 5.3 Inflation Assumptions**

<b>Inflation Assumptions</b>	<b>2016-17 %</b>	<b>2017-18 %</b>	<b>2018-19 %</b>
Pay (local agreement for first two years)	0.50	0.50	1.00
Living Wage Posts	2.78	2.78	2.78



Business rates (to be confirmed in due course)	0	1.0	1.0
Other contractual commitments	included at actual	included at actual	included at actual

- 5.4 No other inflation has been included in the estimates for the financial strategy.
- 5.5 The Base Budget takes account of the current position in relation to the forecast level of interest that the Council can expect to receive. It is expected that the current base rate of 0.5% will remain in place until the Summer 2016. The current assumptions that have been used within the Base Budget are as follows:
- Expected returns in 2016-17 based on investment returns of 0.75%;
  - Expected returns in 2017-18 based on investment returns of 1.00%;
  - Expected returns in 2018-19 based on investment returns of 1.25%.
- 5.6 Summary of other main assumptions
- Government funding – reductions as set out in Section 6.
  - A freeze in Council tax for 2016-17 and 2017-18 followed by increases of just under 2% for 2018-19 and beyond.
  - £134k/year for increased National Insurance contributions from 2016.
  - Fees & charges 5% minimum increase a year but note proposal for generating additional external income that may change some of these assumptions for items such as Garden Waste and Trade Waste and to recommend new fees and charges for services previously either not provided or provided at no cost. An important exception to this is for hackney carriages for which no increase is recommended for the third year due to the statutory requirement that this service is breakeven in terms of cost recovery.
  - The construction of the new Leisure Centre is progressing to programme with the commencement date for the opening of the new leisure centre on target for July 2016. The Council has generated annual savings towards the Wyre Forest Forward savings target of well over the projection of £390,000 pa. This is due to favourable borrowing rates achieved so far of on average £20,000 per million loan taken so up to around £200,000 pa additional savings compared to the base business case.
  - Savings from partnership working with the new Kidderminster Town Council of up to £250,000 pa from 2016-17.
  - There is a further Pensions Fund triennial revaluation in 2017 and, based on early information received; it is highly likely that the actuary will increase the cost of the employer's deficit contributions to maintain the fund at a reasonable level. To recognise this, an additional £150,000 has been included in 2017-18 and £200,000 in 2018-19.
  - An increase of 913 Band D equivalent properties or a healthy 2.87% has been assumed in the 2016-17 Council Tax Base. The increase is made up of new homes constructed and coming into occupation and also reductions in exemptions, discounts and benefit claimants that all contribute to a higher chargeable Council Tax Base for the district. The increase of 2.87% is around that achieved for the previous year.
  - A Collection Fund surplus of £75k has been assumed for both 2015-16 and 2016-17. £50,000 has been assumed for 2017-18.

- 5.7 In terms of external Prudential Borrowing, the Council will enter into further external borrowing in 2016-17. This will continue over the medium and longer term and an average interest rate of 4% rising to 5% has been assumed within the base budget to fund the cost of this.
- 5.8 In addition to the position on investment returns the Base Budget position also assumes the continued return of the two remaining Council's Icelandic investments. To date out of the £9m original investments the Council has received £8.17m. Further dividend payments are expected throughout the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and it is hoped that this matter can be closed in the next few years.
- 5.9 In 2015-16, the County Council passported its local welfare support funding to district councils. Our share was £105k. In addition to this, the County Council further committed to providing a total allocation from their own budgets of £0.4 million for 2015-16 as long as the allocation is matched by district councils. This Council's share of the funding was £84k match funded in total, for the greater part by our renewed funding of the homelessness budget from our own resources rather than use of the previously passported monies. The funding is currently being used to assist people in financial crisis. These new funding arrangements with the County Council will mitigate what would otherwise have been a significant impact in terms of services for these individuals and our running costs. Based on expenditure so far it is hoped the 2015-16 funding will last a further two years.
- 5.10 It has been necessary to reschedule savings targets as part of the revised budget process as some have been more challenging and resource intensive to deliver within existing capacity. The savings shortfall of £51,380 for Wyre Forest Forward Savings and £88,450 for Cabinet Proposals in 2015-16 add pressure to the new Medium Term Financial Strategy. However, this shortfall in savings has been matched in 2015-16 by other reductions, including reduced and deferred borrowing costs due to slippage in Capital schemes. The rescheduled generic savings for future years are shown below; the table that follows shows the breakdown and proposed use of reserves before Cabinet Proposals in the revised budget to illustrate the scale of the financial gap the Council needs to address:

**Wyre Forest Forward Savings to be achieved in revised budget**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>	
2015-16	-	<i>Note savings not achieved have been rescheduled in the revised budget</i>
2016-17	£261,020	
2017-18	£234,430	
2018-19	£257,890	

**Table 5.10 Financial Gap**

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
	£	£	£	£
Financial Gap				
Wyre Forest Forward Savings not yet achieved*	£51,380	£102,030	£60,700	£84,430
Cabinet Savings from 2014-17 Financial Strategy not yet achieved*	£88,450	£158,990	£173,730	£173,460
<b>SUB- Total</b>	<b>£139,830</b>	<b>£261,020</b>	<b>£234,430</b>	<b>£257,890</b>
Use of reserves from Proposed 2016-19 Strategy	£401,410	(£233,230)	£336,120	£887,060
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£541,240</b>	<b>£27,790</b>	<b>£570,550</b>	<b>£1,144,950</b>
* The 2015/16 savings have been rescheduled into future years in the revised budget				

- 5.11 To create capacity to support the pace and scale of change the Corporate Leadership Team has previously allocated £50k from the Transformation Fund to meet the cost of additional resource required to meet the ambitious income generation targets. The Transformation Fund has been topped up by £150k as part of the last budget process and currently stands at £254k taking into account all known commitments.
- 5.12 However there is confidence that the savings target that needs to be achieved for both Wyre Forest Forward and Cabinet Proposals over the next three years to close the funding gap and to avoid drawing on reserves is around £1.7m.
- 5.13 The introduction of the local council tax reduction scheme has generally been smooth. We charged a minimum of 8.5% in 2013, rising to 10% in 2014 of council tax to people of working age. The impact on collection rates so far has been modest. Following extensive consultation Council on the 9<sup>th</sup> December approved increasing the minimum charge from to 20% in line with other local schemes across Worcestershire. The saving to this Council from this change is estimated at around £60k. WCC has agreed in principle to pay a contribution of £75k a year towards additional Hardship and other costs as a consequence of moving to the new scheme from 1 April 2016. These changes have been reflected in the Budget Strategy. The demographics of the district, including rising pensioners who are protected and number of working age unemployed, albeit that this is on a downward trend, represent pressures on our Local Scheme.
- 5.14 Worcestershire County Council has committed to a transformation programme including moving to a commissioning authority and is running a raft of “Future Fit” projects. It has significant target savings to achieve against each of these projects and is consulting with district councils in respect of initiatives that may impact on the district as follows:
- **Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS)** – the withdrawal of the Trading Standards service by the County Council from April 2016 represents a risk to the ongoing sustainability of this Shared Service due to the reduced capacity for the recovery of fixed overheads. To mitigate this, the County have agreed to pay a contribution to the Shared Service in compensation. It is expected that this will cover the first two years giving an opportunity for review of the overall position in the meantime.

- **Strategic Housing – Homelessness-** Worcestershire County Council has confirmed it will allocate £300k to the District Councils for homeless services for the next 3 years. This funding will be held by Worcester City Council on behalf of the 6 Districts with responsibility for the commissioning and monitoring of this service delegated to the Strategic Housing Partnership. The distribution of the £300k between the Districts will be done relative to service need so it is anticipated this Council may receive more than an equal share.

The District Council cannot afford to bridge any funding gaps. The impact upon our budget can only be determined once the County Council have made final budget decisions that impact on services this council provides.

### The local development plan

- 5.15 If the Council does not plan for further significant growth in population in the medium to long-term, there is a significant risk of losing resources over time as Wyre Forest's population declines relative to the population of England. Significant growth could be delivered only through the next review of the local development framework which is planned for adoption in 2017, so it is therefore highly unlikely to contribute anything significant in the 2016-19 period.
- 5.16 The Council is committed to 4,000 new dwellings in the period to 2026. WFDC's funding position is "safe" so long as the Council delivers housing growth in line with or faster than the English average.

Census	1991	2001	2011
Wyre Forest	95,000	97,000	98,000
Percentage change **	-	+2.3%	+1.1%
Worcestershire	510,000	542,000	566,000
Percentage change **	-	+6.4%	+4.4%
England	47,875,000	49,451,000	53,013,000
Percentage change **	-	+3.3%	+7.2%

\*\* compared to previous census

- 5.17 Population will always be a major driver of any Government funding that is provided. The 4,000 dwellings in the local development framework for the period to 2026 would imply an increase of about 9,000 residents. This is a rate of growth over the next 12 years that would roughly match what Worcestershire and England achieved over the previous 20 years. However, the probability is that this Council's long-term population growth will continue to lag behind others, unless a changed policy on approach is adopted. The latest 2012 population projections show that population is projected to grow in Wyre Forest from 98,100 in 2012 to 101,200 by 2031. This is an increase of 3.2%. Worcestershire is projected to grow by 6.9% and England by 12.9% over the same period.
- 5.18 Significant growth can continue to help with our income and tax base in the long-term. The Council will have to provide some additional services (e.g. refuse collection) but many others are not elastic in response to population (e.g. museum, economic development, town centre, street cleaning). More people living locally would mean greater competition and demand for some services and provide greater opportunities for external income generation than might otherwise have been the case.

**6. FUNDING: LOCAL AUTHORITY REVENUE FINANCE SETTLEMENT FOR 2016-17, BUSINESS RATES AND NEW HOMES BONUS**

- 6.1 The Local Government Settlement is still to be announced, following the Chancellor's "Autumn" Statement on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015 that contained the following information impacting directly on the funding assumptions included in this report:
- A reform of the New Homes Bonus System of funding with a much reduced share for district councils payable for 4 rather than the current 6 years. Current projections include a 35% share for 4 years from 2016-17;
  - Introduction of an apprenticeship levy of 0.5% of payroll costs less a £15k allowance;
  - An end to uniform Business Rates; introduction of 100% retention of business rates and phasing out of Revenue Support Grant as well as introduction of new responsibilities.
- 6.2 However, only broad details were included within the Autumn Statement and further information is needed before the impact can be fully assessed. The provisional funding figures for the Council are expected to be released on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015 with information on funding for 2016-17 and figures for 2017-18. The consultation on the New Homes Bonus proposals should be included with the December Provisional Settlement. What is certain is that Public sector funding reductions look to continue until 2020, with increasing reliance on local raised income including Council Tax and the funding outlook for local government, districts in particular, continues to be challenging.
- 6.3 Table 6.3.1 below identifies the estimated position in relation to the Government Grant and Business Rates. The figures show grant income relating to revenue support grant, retained business rates and previous Council Tax freeze grant. It also includes Homelessness prevention grants (only assumed for 2014-15 and 2015-16). The further table in 6.3.2 shows just Revenue Support grant. These are best estimates and will change when more about future funding is known. There is a risk is that these reductions will be more severe and we will not achieve the growth in business rates to offset this loss. This would reduce balances significantly and will be kept under review. The table in 6.6 shows the value of the retained business rates separately for further information.

**Table 6.3.1 Government Support including Business Rates**

Year	Government Support including Business Rates	Decrease	
		£	%
(*estimated)	£		
2014-15	5,212,490		
2015-16	4,565,560	646,930	12.41
2016-17*	4,135,800	429,760	9.41
2017-18*	3,873,280	262,520	6.35
2018-19*	3,719,110	154,170	3.98

**Table 6.3.2 Revenue Support Grant Funding Predictions**

Year	Revenue Support Grant	Decrease	
(*estimated)	£	£	%
2014-15	2,912,210		
2015-16	2,019,010	893,200	30.67
2016-17*	1,514,260	504,750	25.00
2017-18*	1,174,260	340,000	22.45
2018-19*	964,260	210,000	17.88

- 6.4 The Council has estimated the income which it expects to receive from New Homes Bonus and this has been built into the base budget. For estimates past 2015-16, 35% instead of the current 80% has been assumed based on the limited information available so far, for 4 not the current 6 years. The financial strategy adopted in February 2015 had assumed that New Homes Bonus would not continue beyond the General Election and therefore, despite the changes to the scheme, the result should hopefully be a positive contribution to the Council's funding position. This will be confirmed when more information is received. The latest projections are shown in Table 6.4 below:

**Table 6.4 - Current Projections of New Homes Bonus**

	2015/16 Total Budget	2016/17 Total Budget	2017/18 Total Budget	2018/19 Total Budget
NHB YEAR 1 2011/12 PAID UNTIL 2016/17	258,420	258,420	0	0
NHB YEAR 2 2012/13 PAID UNTIL 2017/18	233,930	233,930	233,930	0
NHB YEAR 3 2013/14 PAID UNTIL 2018/19	261,060	261,060	261,060	261,060
NHB YEAR 4 2014/15 PAID UNTIL 2019/20	501,210	501,210	501,210	501,210
NHB YEAR 5 2015/16 PAID UNTIL 2020/21	429,990	429,990	429,990	429,990
NHB YEAR 6 2016/17 PAID UNTIL 2019/20	0	230,000	230,000	230,000
NHB YEAR 7 2017/18 PAID UNTIL 2020/21	0	0	180,000	180,000
NHB YEAR 8 2018/19 PAID UNTIL 2021/22	0	0	0	180,000
	1,684,610	1,914,610	1,836,190	1,782,260
LESS PREVIOUS BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS	1,684,610	1,684,610	1,426,190	1,192,260
INCREASED NHB INCOME	0	230,000	410,000	590,000
TOTAL INCREASE IN NHB BASED ON CURRENT PROJECTIONS				1,230,000

- 6.5 The new arrangements could pose a serious challenge to future financial sustainability for this and many other councils as the Council uses the bonus to fund its revenue activities, including important work on economic regeneration and development. This change is even more significant given the transition to the new funding model where business rates growth is of increased importance. The lower percentage for a shorter timeframe will represent a financial challenge as the existing New Homes Bonus payments start to fall out.
- 6.6 Business Rate projections based on the Worcestershire pooling agreement are shown in the table below. These take into account the Council's share of forecast growth from major redevelopments, appeals, reliefs, economic regeneration work; forecast increases in the multiplier for inflation and other Business Rates market intelligence. These estimates may require updating following completion of the



statutory 2016-17 estimates for the DCLG in January 2016 and notification of the 2016-17 multiplier.

**Table 6.6- Value of Retained Business Rates**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Value of Retained Business Rates</b>	<b>(Increase)/Decrease</b>	
(*estimated)	£	£	%
2013-14	2,435,303		
2014-15	2,300,280	135,023	5.54
2015-16*	2,546,550	(246,270)	(10.71)
2016-17*	2,621,540	(74,990)	(2.94)
2017-18*	2,699,020	(77,480)	(2.96)
2018-19*	2,754,850	(55,830)	(2.07)

- £82k was also received from the Worcestershire Pool Risk Reserve in 2013-14

## **7. CABINET PROPOSALS**

- 7.1 This report presents the Cabinet's proposed spending plans for the next three years.

### **Council tax**

Inflation as measured by CPI is running below zero at present (-0.1%, in the latest available figures for October 2015). It is not expected to rise significantly by the time that the Council sets council tax for 2016-17 at the end of February. In line with the political commitment to keep increases below inflation over the medium term, it is proposed that the Wyre Forest element of council tax will be frozen for 2016-17 and 2017-18 followed by a rise by 1.94% a year. This freeze reflects current extremely low levels of inflation and supports all households in Wyre Forest, including those in Kidderminster which will face higher bills in 2016 because of the creation of the Town Council. It also recognises the impact on household budgets of welfare initiatives, including the changes to Wyre Forest's council tax reduction scheme which take effect in April.

### **Spending proposals**

- 7.2 The Cabinet Proposals are once again few in number this year, building on previously approved proposals for transforming the Council and focus on regeneration that should grow business rates reducing the funding gap. They include three areas of limited growth as attached at Appendix 3. The Cabinet has considered changes to:

- Approval of £500,000 capital funding to act as match funding towards the delivery of the reintroduction of traffic into Worcester Street as part of the Council's commitment to the regeneration of Kidderminster Town Centre. This will represent a significant step forward in realising the redevelopment of the wider Eastern Gateway as well as continuing the Council's strategy of attracting external investment into the regeneration of the town centre. This is the next phase of the Council's commitment to revitalising Kidderminster Town Centre by investing additional funding to accelerate the improvements to Worcester Street; opening it up to one-way traffic from Coventry Street and providing on street parking, thus improving

the profile of this part of the town and increasing footfall. This builds on the Council's delivery of £2m of public realm improvements to Vicar Street, High Street and Exchange Street. This significant investment will support the Council's vision for the future of Worcester Street;

- Agree the creation of a single Localism Fund of £50k to continue the good work done so far with Parish and Town Councils and extend it to other organisations. There will continue to be flexibility around grant funding from this new fund to facilitate more clarity and easier access where appropriate, to pump prime the work of Parish Councils and community Groups where it complements work and priorities of this Council and benefits local residents;
- Approval for the Community Leadership Fund for 2016-17 (£33k/year), following the review of the effectiveness of this funding.

7.3 Details of Cabinet Proposals are attached in Appendix 3. The following table demonstrates the forecast position for the Council when all of the Cabinet Proposals are incorporated into the Base Budget. The Council is forecast to hold a balance of £1.168m at the end of 2018-19 (see reserves table in 8.2):

**Table 7.3 – Forecast Financial Position including Cabinet Proposals**

	Revised 2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	2018/19 £
Net Expenditure on Services (per Appendix 1)	13,260,000	12,743,000	13,029,410	13,452,500
Kidderminster Town Council		(250,000)	(250,000)	(250,000)
Total Net Expenditure on Services (per Appendix 1)	<b>13,260,000</b>	<b>12,493,000</b>	<b>12,779,410</b>	<b>13,202,500</b>
<b>Less</b>				
Cabinet Proposals identified in Appendix 3	0	120,000	37,000	37,000
Net Expenditure	13,260,000	12,613,000	12,816,410	13,239,500
Contribution (from)/to Reserves	(401,410)	233,230	(336,120)	(887,060)
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>12,858,590</b>	<b>12,846,230</b>	<b>12,480,290</b>	<b>12,352,440</b>
<b>Less</b>				
Revenue Support Grant	2,019,010	1,514,260	1,174,260	964,260
Business Rates	2,546,550	2,621,540	2,699,020	2,754,850
New Homes Bonus	1,684,610	1,684,610	1,426,190	1,192,260
Projected New Homes Bonus (2016-17 onwards)	0	230,000	410,000	590,000
Collection Fund Surplus	75,100	75,000	50,000	0
Council Tax Income	6,533,320	6,720,820	6,720,820	6,851,070
WFDC Council Tax @ 1.94% increase 2018/19 onwards	<b>205.36</b>	<b>205.36</b>	<b>205.36</b>	<b>209.34</b>

7.4 The Cabinet proposals identified in Appendix 3 build on the savings identified within all previous Financial Strategies with three growth items for funding for the regeneration of Worcester Street, a new single Localism Fund and continuation of the Community Leadership Fund.

## **8. WORKING BALANCES, RESERVES AND PROVISIONS**

8.1 The Council has adopted the general principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance on Local Authority Reserves and Balances.



- 8.2 The following Reserves are available to assist the Council in meeting General Fund Expenditure 2016-19 as part of the Financial Strategy.

**Table 8.2 - New Reserves table after all Cabinet Proposals**

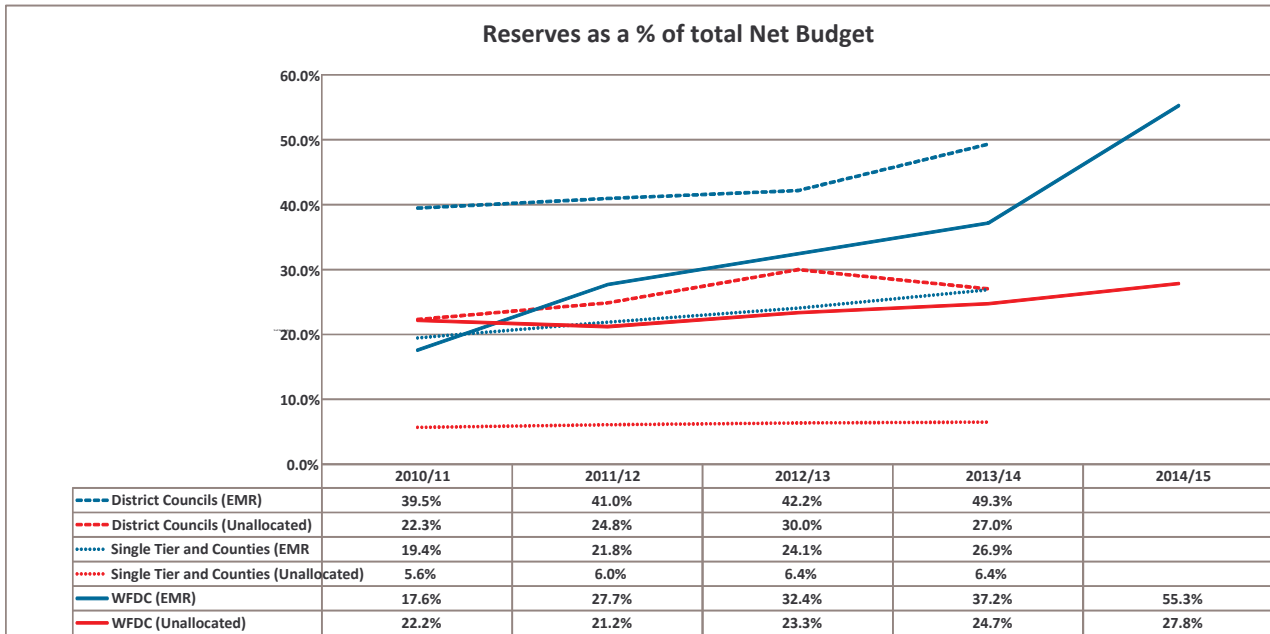
<b>Reserves Statement</b>	<b>2015-16 £'000</b>	<b>2016-17 £'000</b>	<b>2017-18 £'000</b>	<b>2018-19 £'000</b>
Reserves as at 1st April	2,559	2,158	2,391	2,055
Contribution (from)/to Reserves	(401)	233	(336)	(887)
Reserves as at 31st March	2,158	2,391	2,055	1,168

- 8.3 In addition the Council holds a working balance of £1m.
- 8.4 The Council also currently holds earmarked reserves of £6.729m (as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015). It should be noted that the Council has commitments against such earmarked reserves and it includes a Business Rates Deficit Reserve of £1.8m previously held as a provision.
- 8.5 The following graph shows that both our general unallocated reserves (including the working balance) and our levels of earmarked reserves are a relatively small percentage of our annual net revenue budget. It also shows that our reserve levels are falling below those held by other district councils.

The anomalies in accounting for the current Business Rates Retention System is causing a spike in the latest year's earmarked reserves due to increased reserves for appeals, which we have been obliged to allocate at the external auditor's request. We should be mindful that these EMRs are for specific purposes and will be almost certainly be required. In the extremely unlikely event that they were all imprudently, released for revenue expenditure they would not cover even 6 months' expenditure.

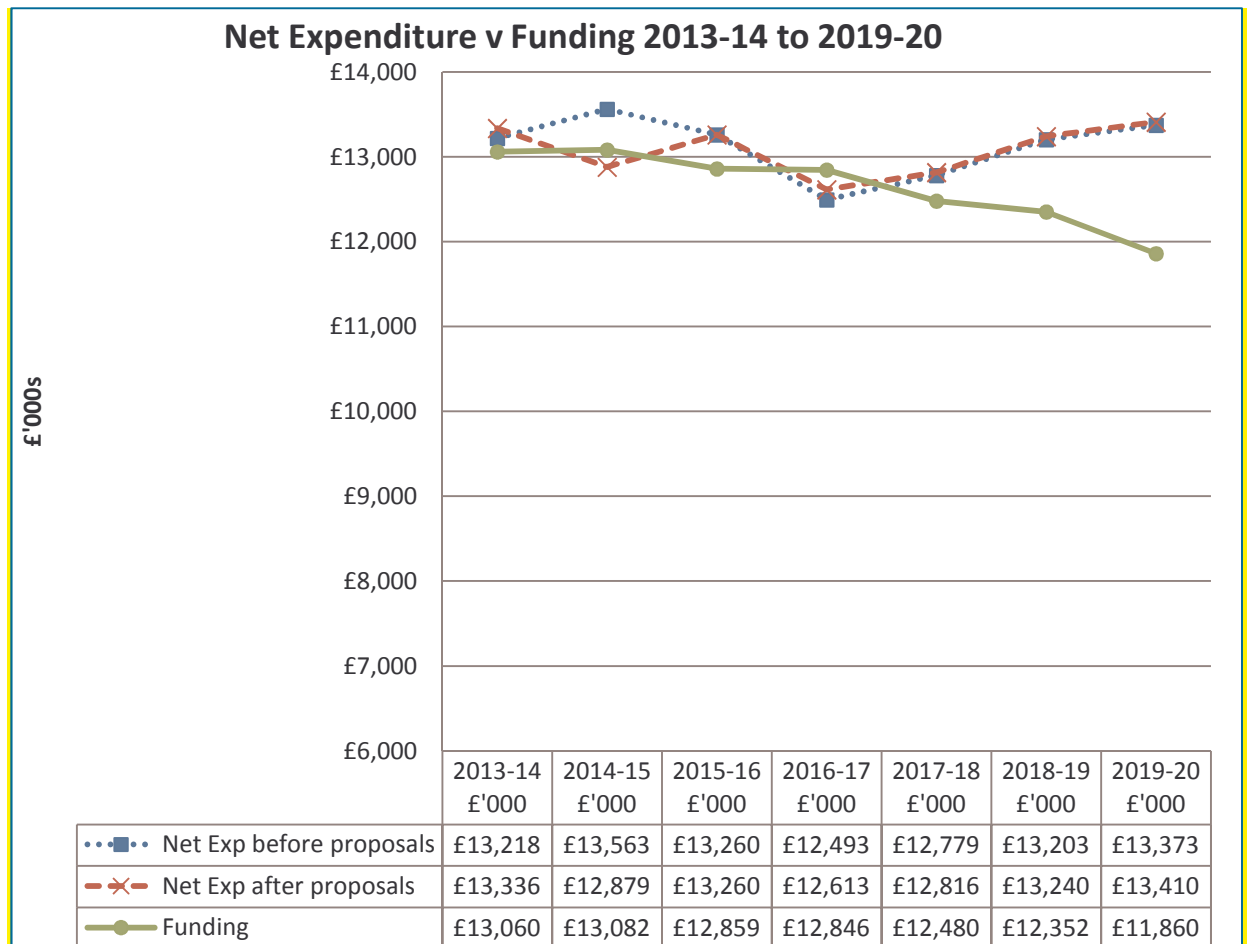
This analysis, together with the diminishing reserves shown in the table in 8.2, means this Council has extremely limited capacity to draw further on reserves to meet extra costs/further funding reductions. Indeed, with increased financial risk there is pressure to hold larger reserves to mitigate the impact of potential service reductions.

**Figure 8.5 Graph to show Reserves as a Percentage of Net Budget Actuals**



8.6 The following graph shows the net expenditure against available funding (excluding reserves) and illustrates the increasing funding gap as the years progress.

**Figure 8.6 Graph to show Net Expenditure compared to Funding 2013-14 to 2019-20**



## 9. **CAPITALISATION OF REVENUE EXPENDITURE**

9.1 The Chief Financial Officer will apply any unallocated Capital Receipts to fund suitable expenditure at year end in consultation with the Chief Executive in accordance with delegated authority.

9.2 No applications have been made for capitalisation directions for 2015-16.

## 10. **FINANCE STRATEGY**

10.1 The Council needs a Medium Term Finance Strategy to maintain a sound financial structure for the future.

10.2 The Key Objectives are proposed as follows:

- To reduce expenditure to a sustainable level.
- A balanced budget within resources available identified into the medium term.
- To manage the Council's assets in order to achieve maximum efficiency.
- To manage the Council's investments efficiently and effectively to maximise interest generation, whilst protecting principal.
- To make realistic provisions for inflation, pensions, committed growth and legislative requirements whilst securing the Council's financial position.
- To set aside any available balances, initially to be used primarily for "one-offs"

(e.g. investment, service or corporate growth) and/or depending on the amount of balances, used in a phased manner beyond one year to avoid fluctuations in the level of the Council Tax.

- To ensure the early recognition of emerging issues associated with assessment of risk and appropriate management of the budget process in relation to the assessment of the degree of risk.
- To direct available financial resources in line with approved service priorities and reallocate from low/nil priority areas in line with Council Policy to maximise achievement of approved Key Commitments.
- The Council should aim to keep its Council Tax to a maximum increase of just below 2% to avoid the risk of triggering a referendum.
- Maximise external income generation opportunities.

## **11. BUDGET CONSULTATION STRATEGY**

- 11.1 Following the presentation of this year's Financial Strategy, to Cabinet in December 2015 there will be external and internal consultation through an online questionnaire on the Council's website and specific distribution to interested parties, including staff and unions, Parish and Town Councils and partners such as Community Housing Group and other housing associations.

## **12. POWERS TO LIMIT EXCESSIVE INCREASE IN COUNCIL TAX AND REFERENDUMS**

- 12.1 The Localism Act abolished the ability for central government to cap the level of Council Tax increase that a local authority can charge. However, to replace these powers government have introduced a 'local tax lock'.
- 12.2 These powers allow local people a vote to stop council tax going up if their local authority increases Council Tax by more than an amount specified by government. For this report it has been assumed that any council tax increases in 2018-19 above 2% would trigger a referendum. If the local electorate votes against that increase, the local authority will have to revert to a council tax level that is compliant. This means the Council must keep our increases to just below the 2% threshold.

## **13. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT (EIA)**

- 13.1 Where the Cabinet Proposals represent significant changes to service delivery, an EIA on the protected groups has been undertaken.

## **14. BUDGET RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 14.1 Achieving financial sustainability is the most significant risk facing the Council. The work done by the Cabinet Financial Strategic Advisory Panel provided a range of recommendations for the Cabinet to consider in making its recommendations on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

14.2 The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 require Local Authorities to fully consider and manage Risk as part of the Budget process. Attached at Appendix 5 is an analysis of the significant financial risks which are affecting the Council.

14.3 All local authorities are required to formalise their approach to risk management and evidence it more directly as part of the budgetary process. This requirement has arisen as a result of:-

- a. *Regulation 3 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 state that:*  
“A relevant authority must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives; ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective and includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.”

In addition Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 also state that:

“The financial control systems determined must include measures to ensure that risk is appropriately managed”.

- b. *Prudential Framework:-*  
The assessment of affordability of financial plans requires a judgement about risk. Prudential Indicators are the monitoring tool to assess performance and risk.

- c. *CIPFA Guidance on Reserves and Balances:-*  
Highlights the need to consider risks facing the authority; the risks posed by the continuing austerity measures place pressure on the Council to hold higher levels of reserves to ensure ongoing sustainability.

14.4 The base budget makes no allowance for headroom for additional investment in priorities. In summary, other pressures not yet known and/or not taken into account at this stage are:

- Redundancy costs of further staffing reductions.
- Any additional reductions in other government grants or impact of significant changes to the Business Rates Retention system.
- Potential nationalisation of land charge searches in 2016 or 2017. Might affect some or all of income stream of £157k pa.
- Future impact of welfare reforms including rising number of pensioners.
- Pressure to hold higher reserves because of higher risks/decreased funding.
- Future impact of Bromsgrove Street redevelopment on car park income.
- Any future implications of the potential depot relocation.
- The impending pension fund triennial revaluation in 2017 – over and above the additional £350k contributions included within this Strategy.
- Worcestershire Regulatory Services – no additional costs have been allowed in year 3 potentially arising as a result of the withdrawal of Worcestershire County Council Trading Standards service from the Shared Service.

**15. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2003**

- 15.1 Local al Government Act 2003 (Sections 25-29) places duties on Local Authorities on how they set and monitor budgets.
- 15.2 Sections 25-27 require the Section 151 Officer to report on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of its proposed financial reserves. This will be reported to Council on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016.
- 15.3 Section 28 places a statutory duty on an authority to review its budget from time to time during the year. If the Budget Monitoring Report shows that there has been deterioration in the Authority's financial position, the authority must take such action as it concludes necessary. The Council currently reviews the Budget on a quarterly basis, with CLT/Cabinet receiving monthly budget monitoring reports, and this practice will continue.

**16. CONSULTEES**

- 16.1 Corporate Leadership Team
- 16.2 Cabinet

**17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 17.1 Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015
- 17.2 Cabinet Report on the Fees and Charges 2015-16 onwards
- 17.3 Agendas and Minutes of the Cabinet Financial Strategy Advisory Panel
- 17.4 Strong Leader Report on Business Rates Pooling 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and related Decision 28<sup>th</sup> October 2015

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**CABINET**  
**22<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER 2015**

**Community Safety and Safeguarding Duties**

<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Councillor Sally Chambers, Cabinet Member for Health, Well-Being and Housing
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	Director of Community Wellbeing and Environment
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Lesley Fox, Ext. 2976 <a href="mailto:Lesley.Fox@wyreforestdc.gov.uk">Lesley.Fox@wyreforestdc.gov.uk</a> Kathryn Washington, Ext. 2956 <a href="mailto:Kathryn.Washington@wyreforestdc.gov.uk">Kathryn.Washington@wyreforestdc.gov.uk</a>
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	Appendix One Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2017

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise Members of the Council's responsibilities regarding the Worcestershire Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2015-17 and its duties as specified in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, regarding preventing violent extremism.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**Cabinet is asked to DECIDE that:**

- 2.1 The Worcestershire Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and Action Plan 2015-17 is endorsed.**
- 2.2 Mandatory safeguarding training for all Members and staff is implemented in accordance with paragraph 4.6 of the report.**
- 2.3 The duties specified in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 are noted.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Local Government Association states that Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is not limited to any particular geographical, ethnic or social background and all councils should assume that CSE is happening in their area and take proactive action to prevent it.
- 3.2 The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act received Royal Assent on 12 February 2015. The Act created a general duty on a range of organisations, which includes Wyre Forest District Council, to prevent people being drawn into terrorism.

#### 4. **CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION STRATEGY**

4.1 In Worcestershire, the main response to CSE has been led through the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) and individual agencies have also acted according to their service responsibilities. The Worcestershire Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2015-17, which incorporates a multi agency action plan, is attached at Appendix One.

4.2 CSE is defined in the Strategy as:

*'The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.'*

*Child sexual exploitation can occur through use of technology without the child's immediate recognition, for example the persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones with no immediate payment or gain. In all cases those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.'*

4.3 By endorsing the Strategy, the Council supports and accepts the four points set out in Louise Casey's report 'Reflections on CSE' (March 2015) as its own principles. These are set out in full in Section 5 of the Strategy for consideration by Members and in summary are:

- CSE is child abuse
- CSE is a crime
- The victims of CSE are children
- CSE is squarely a community safety issue
- The failure is not in the existence of CSE but in not recognising it and taking appropriate action

4.4 To date, the evidence suggests that CSE exists in Worcestershire on a relatively small and generally individualised scale and reportedly there is no evidence of a link to gangs, organised crime or any specific minority ethnic group.

The WSCB has undertaken a great deal of work to develop the pathway for CSE referrals. The pathway is unique in that it allows for non-child specific concerns to be logged with the Access Centre e.g. concerns about a commercial premise.

4.5 The Strategy and Action Plan has been developed by the WSCB and there are four overarching priorities against which key target areas for action have been identified:

1. Prevention and Education
2. Recognition and Identification
3. Intervention and Support
4. Pursue and Disrupt

4.6 As with any safeguarding matter, the Council has a duty to contribute to preventing and responding to CSE. To help fulfil this duty, the following work is being undertaken/proposed:



1. District Council officer representation at the WSCB, the CSE Strategy Group and the CSE Panel (representation is via nominated Chief Executive and district safeguarding lead).
2. The Council's lead professional for CSE has been identified as the Community Development Manager with the Community Safety and Partnerships Officer as deputy lead.
3. Training on identifying low level non-child specific concerns and training on CSE and use of the Worcestershire Screening Tool to be provided to identified teams within the Council.
4. To introduce mandatory safeguarding training for Members, for which attendance will score against each Member's annual record of attendance. This will take the form of a dedicated training session as part of the Members' Forum programme. Furthermore, Licensing Committee Members are to receive additional training in respect of their role in safeguarding against CSE in determining licences.
5. The Council's Safeguarding Policy has been updated to include CSE.
6. CSE raising awareness to all staff via internal communications, including team briefs and posters and support provided to the WSCB publicity campaigns.
7. Through the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership and Wyre Forest Community Safety Tasking Group, to receive CSE intelligence and implement a partnership response to identified 'hot spots'.
8. The annual Community Safety Partnership Plan has been updated to incorporate CSE responsibilities.
9. To support Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) in undertaking a CSE awareness raising campaign with licensed premises via the Wyre Forest Community Safety Tasking Group.
10. To assist the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership in developing and implementing CSE guidance for bed and breakfast providers, hostels and HMO licensing.

**5. COUNTER TERRORISM AND SECURITY ACT 2015**

- 5.1 The Counter Terrorism and Security Act was passed on 16 February 2015. Section 26 of the Act came into force on 1 July 2015 and places a duty on certain 'specified authorities', which includes local authorities, schools, universities, health, police, prisons and probation. 'Prevent', which aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, is now a statutory duty, this is known as the Prevent Duty.
- 5.2 The Government's Prevent strategy, published in 2011, is part of the UK's overall counter-terrorism strategy - CONTEST. The 2011 Prevent Strategy aims to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It has three specific strategic objectives:
  - Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it.

- Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support.
- Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address.

5.3 Extremism is defined in the Government's Prevent Strategy as 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs'.

5.4 Specified duties for local authorities are to:

- Coordinate Prevent using multi-agency groups
- Assess risk of residents being drawn into terrorism using Counter Terrorism Local Profiles
- Develop an action plan to reduce the risk
- Train staff to recognise radicalisation and extremism
- Refer vulnerable people to Channel
- Establish responsible booking policy for public venues
- Refrain from working with extremist organisations

5.5 Countywide multi agency arrangements are in place to co-ordinate Prevent activities; this is through the Prevent Strategy Group. This is a sub group of the Worcestershire Safer Communities Board and is chaired by an officer from Worcestershire County Council. Wyre Forest District Council is represented on this group by the Community Safety and Partnerships Officer.

5.6 With regards to Channel, all local authorities support a combined panel; this is also chaired by an officer from Worcestershire County Council. Channel is a multi-agency approach to identify and provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism. Referrals can be made by any agency by emailing the Police's Prevent Team at [prevent@warwickshireandwestmercia.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@warwickshireandwestmercia.pnn.police.uk). The process involves a preliminary Assessment process, which looks at three vulnerability indicators: **engagement** with a group, cause or ideology, **intent** to cause harm and the **capability** to cause harm. The Panel then considers solutions or interventions to divert and support.

5.7 In November 2015, all local authorities were invited by the Home Office to apply for up to £10,000 from the Local Authority Prevent Duty Implementation grant stream. The funding can only be used to fulfil the local authority's Prevent duty responsibilities and will be paid in arrears at the end of the financial year. All Worcestershire local authorities have applied for the funding and the Chief Executives have agreed to pool this funding and for the Prevent Strategy Group to consider initiatives for expenditure.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The Council's contributions to the CSE Strategy and the Prevent Duty will be met from existing budgets and the Local Authority Prevent Duty Implementation grant stream.

**7. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There is a duty on local authorities under Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 to make arrangements to promote co-operation to improve the wellbeing of all children in the authority's area.
- 7.2 A range of individual organisations and professionals working with children and families have specific statutory duties to promote the welfare of children and ensure they are protected from harm. In addition, Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on District Councils that provide children's and other types of services including housing, sport, culture and leisure services, licensing authorities and youth services.
- 7.3 Safeguarding people is everyone's responsibility and as a District Council we have a duty to ensure that all children and young people are safeguarded from all types of harm and this clearly includes CSE.
- 7.4 In respect of the role of Worcestershire Regulatory Services and in particular around licensed premises and taxi licensing, the Strategy has been presented to a meeting of their Joint Committee.
- 7.5 Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on certain bodies, including local authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

**8. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 An initial screening has not identified any adverse impact on the protected characteristics, and a full assessment is not therefore required.

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 9.1 Safeguarding and the Prevent Duty are statutory responsibilities of the Council. If the local authority fails to implement the Prevent Duty, the Home Secretary can invoke Section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999 to direct tasks and action plans to deliver Prevent.

**10. CONCLUSION**

- 10.1 Endorsement of the CSE Strategy and the proposed proactive contribution by the Council, as detailed in the report, will enable the Council to achieve its statutory duties in respect of safeguarding.
- 10.2 The noting of the Prevent Duty and the contribution by the Council, as detailed in the report, will enable the Council to fulfil its statutory duties as specified in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

**11. CONSULTEES**

- 11.1 Corporate Leadership Team
- 11.2 Finance Manager
- 11.3 Principal Solicitor

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1 Children Act 2004
- 12.2 Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015

# **Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2015 - 2017**

**Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board's  
strategic commitment to tackle child sexual  
exploitation**



**April 2015**

**Building upon the effective work undertaken in developing and delivering the CSE Pathway, WSCB is committed to further developing knowledge of the prevalence of Child Sexual Exploitation across the county and building a robust strategic framework to tackle the problem and keep children safe. This strategy sets out how multi-agency partners will continually be encouraged to work together pro-actively to safeguard children and young people at risk.**

## Foreword

This strategy sets out the commitment of Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) to undertake all actions possible to tackle child sexual exploitation (CSE), and to safeguard children and young people experiencing and/or at risk of this form of child abuse. WSCB acknowledges that this is a very complex and challenging area of our work and that it is only possible to tackle CSE through a co-ordinated multi-agency approach, where victims/potential victims are identified and safeguarded and perpetrators are disrupted and prosecuted.

This strategy has been written to support, and be supported by, the West Mercia Child Protection Procedures and the Worcestershire Thresholds Guidance. When practitioners become aware of children who are affected by, or at risk of, sexual exploitation they have a duty to comply with the West Mercia Child Protection Procedures, with specific regard for section 7.2 which relates specifically to the process to be followed in Worcestershire:

[http://westmerciaconsortium.proceduresonline.com/chapters/g\\_step\\_by\\_step\\_respond\\_cse.html](http://westmerciaconsortium.proceduresonline.com/chapters/g_step_by_step_respond_cse.html)

The strategy outlines WSCB's strategic principles as the basis for its approach in tackling CSE. It also states its key priorities under the four main headings of Prevention and Education; Recognition and Identification; Intervention and Support; and Pursue and Disrupt. An action plan to deliver the key target areas for each of those priorities is included, and the delivery of this will be closely monitored and reported to WSCB. All partners own and take responsibility for the effectiveness of its outcomes and will measure the difference it makes in tackling CSE in Worcestershire

Diana Fulbrook  
Independent Chair  
Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board

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## **1. Introduction**

In line with national guidance, HM Government (2009) Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation, Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board seeks to develop locally a prevention, protection and investigation strategy to

- identify those at risk of being sexually exploited
- take action to safeguard and promote the welfare of particular children and young people who are being, or may be, sexually exploited, and
- Take action against those intent on abusing and exploiting children and young people in this way.

This document should be read in conjunction with HM Government (2009) Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation, HM Government (2015) Working Together to Safeguard Children, WSCB (2009) Safeguarding Children Who May Have Been Trafficked, and West Mercia Joint Runaway and Missing From Home and Care Protocol (Revised 2015).

## **2. Definition**

### *Child Sexual Exploitation Definition*

The National Working Group on Child Sexual Exploitation has developed the following definition which is utilised in UK government guidance and policy, including the Department for Education 2009, and is the definition of CSE that Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board have adopted:

'The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through use of technology without the child's immediate recognition, for example the persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones with no immediate payment or gain. In all cases those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.'

*The National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People (2008)*

## **3. National Context**

"The Government deplores the sexual exploitation of children, and will not tolerate failure at any level to prevent harm....."



"Tackling child sexual exploitation must be a shared effort. Government can lead the national response. Local authorities, police, children's and health services have a statutory duty to work together to identify and stamp it out in their area."

*"Dealing with Child Sexual Exploitation" (2015)*

(Appendix 1)

The recently revised Working Together March 2015 states that *"LSCBs should conduct regular assessments on the effectiveness of Board partners' responses to child sexual exploitation and include in the [Annual] report information on the outcome of these assessments. This should include an analysis of how the LSCB partners have used their data to promote service improvement for vulnerable children and families, including in respect of sexual abuse. The report should also include appropriate data on children missing from care, and how the LSCB is addressing the issue."*

*(Working Together 2015 Chapter 3 para 18)*

#### **4. Local Context**

In Worcestershire the main response to CSE has been led through the Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) although individual agencies have also acted according to their own drivers.

WSCB launched the Child Sexual Exploitation Pathway in August 2013. This sets out a clear pathway for referrals and response to child specific concerns with operational oversight delivered through a monthly multi-agency panel.

Targeted training of staff to raise awareness and to ensure understanding of the pathway and procedures has also taken place. WSCB also makes available an e-learning module for all agencies. The WSCB Missing Children, CSE and Trafficking Group has responsibility for the strategic oversight of child sexual exploitation and produced its first CSE Report for the Board in November 2014

WSCB is required to both be assured and to provide assurance that large scale and organised CSE is not present in Worcestershire and that the mechanisms are in place to identify, support and protect potential victims from further harm. A great deal of work has been undertaken to develop the pathway for CSE referrals and whilst the numbers of identified victims is relatively low (as opposed to the numbers of children and young people about whom there have been concerns), we do not, however, know what we do not know as the identification of actual victims is not easy. Taking a broader view, it is clear that the focus of co-ordinated multi-agency activity has been predominantly on protection and that prevention and the pursuit of perpetrator activities are both also in need of development. This strategy therefore focuses on how WSCB progresses this work with partner agencies.

*Child sexual exploitation is not exclusive to any single community, race or religion.  
There is no culture in which sexual abuse is not a serious crime*

*(HM Government, 2015:4)*

WSCB is committed to raising awareness of child sexual exploitation locally. As such the WSCB Missing Children, CSE and Trafficking Group is working to incorporate a national and regionally accepted dataset within performance management data to capture and collate the existing CSE picture in Worcestershire. To date, the evidence suggests that CSE exists in Worcestershire on a relatively small and generally individualised scale, with no evidence of a link to gangs, organised crime or any specific minority ethnic group. There is also no indication that disclosures or reporting have been ignored as was the case in Rotherham.

## 5. Strategic Principles

This strategy fully supports and accepts as our own principles the four points set out in Louise Casey's report 'Reflections on Child Sexual Exploitation' (March 2015), these being:

That **CSE is child abuse and is a crime**, and our efforts need to be directed towards perpetrators in order to detect, prevent and disrupt that abuse at the earliest stages as well as the prosecution of individual perpetrators to ensure that they face the full force of the criminal justice system for their crimes. These are not mutually exclusive activities.

That **the victims are children**, however they present themselves. They cannot consent to their abuse, all the more given that grooming itself removes any real sense of self determination from these children. There should be no scenarios in which victims are viewed as young women or as making choices.

Thirdly that **CSE is squarely a community safety issue** and local government working with police and others need to make use of community safety tactics and action to keep children safe. The regulatory and enforcement functions of the local authority are vital in preventing and disrupting CSE and in building intelligence which can help with prosecutions. Those in upper tier authorities and district authorities where responsibilities for children's social care and community safety lie in different tiers, have additional partnership challenges, but these can not be insurmountable.

Finally, that local government and the police should not fear seeking out and shining a light on sexual exploitation for fear they may be held to account for what they find. **The failure is not in the existence of CSE but in not recognising it and taking appropriate action.**

WSCB's aim is to deliver an effective system and infrastructure to address Child Sexual Exploitation across the children's partnership underpinned by the following principles:

- CSE is a form of child abuse which can involve the sexual, physical and emotional abuse of children as well as neglect
- Children do not make informed choices to enter into or remain within sexually exploitative situations, as they do so via coercion, manipulation, grooming and/or other forms of enticement
- Children under 16 years cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult, and sexual activity with a child aged less than 13 years is statutory rape
- Children who are sexually exploited will experience difficulty and/or confusion around their autonomy to make choices, and their understanding around sex, sexuality and the sexual activity into which they have been coerced
- Sexually exploited children must be treated as victims of child abuse, and not as offenders
- Help and support to families should be tailored to their individual needs and circumstances, taking into account sexuality, gender, physical disability or learning disabilities, those from ethnic communities, and those with additional language needs
- Law enforcement efforts must involve disruption of sexually exploitative activity, and target offenders as sexual abusers, who may be adult, but could also be the child's peers and/or other young people. CSE is one of those problems where silo working is actively harmful to the protection of children and stopping offenders
- It is essential that the 'voice of the child' is heard and agencies actively engage with children and young people to provide them with the opportunity to tell their own story, to seek to understand the child/young person's perspective, experience and the impact of this upon them.

## **6. Key Priorities**

WSCB recognises the requirement to understand the scale of child sexual exploitation in the local area and to continue to develop a local 'problem profile'. In line with this WSCB's key priorities are as follows:

<b>Prevention and Education</b>
---------------------------------

**Overarching priority:** Increasing knowledge and understanding of CSE, including the development of protective factors, across children and young people (to include victim focus), the children and young people's workforce and local communities

**Key target areas:**

- Undertake a public awareness campaign
- All schools to deliver a CSE awareness programme to children and young people, tailored to their age
- All staff to receive awareness training
- Develop a means of evaluating the effectiveness of the staff training programme

### Recognition and Identification

**Overarching priority:** Providing information and tools to support the identification of potential indicators of CSE; providing and publishing agreed models of assessment; and agreed protocols for the effective sharing of information across the multi-agency partnership

**Key target areas:**

- Identify vulnerable children for potential sexual exploitation and develop a risk assessment framework and pathway to protect them
- Develop professional curiosity amongst front line staff to ensure they look for and act on signs of potential CSE (particularly social workers, Health workers and school staff)
- Identification of vulnerable children who have the potential to become perpetrators
- Promote the crucial importance of effective information sharing

### Intervention and Support

**Overarching priority:** Drawing on models of recognised good practice to develop local responses; tailoring intervention and support to individuals; and mapping and publicising a range of available intervention/support services

**Key target areas:**

- Develop different methods/casework suited to CSE
- Develop victim and family specialised support
- Develop community safety, regulatory and taxi licensing functions (consider a Partnership Enforcement Team)

### Pursue and Disrupt

**Overarching priority:** Being pro-active across multi agency partnerships to identify, disrupt and prosecute perpetrators of child sexual exploitation through criminal or civil means

**Key target areas:**

- Align cross-border arrangements with neighbouring areas/regions
- Develop an ongoing problem profile, mapping hot spots and keep relevant agencies informed
- Use criminal and civil powers wherever possible to bring to justice perpetrators who exploit and abuse children

**Appendix 2** outlines how these priorities will be met.

## **7. Governance and Accountability**

WSCB has statutory responsibility for co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in each partner agency and collectively. It will therefore hold partners to account for their individual arrangements and challenge any silo working to ensure children are properly protected from CSE and perpetrators are stopped. Full ownership and responsibility for the effective delivery of this strategy lies with individual agencies and with Board members collectively. More specifically, the Board will:

- ensure that the needs of children and young people who have been or may be sexually exploited, and their families, have been considered when planning and commissioning local services
- provide analysed and reconciled data that is shared with relevant agencies, building a composite picture of CSE in Worcestershire over time
- routinely seek assurance of the effectiveness of the CSE strategy, building its implementation into its operational planning and reporting mechanisms
- undertake regular assessments on the effectiveness of Board partners' responses to CSE and include the outcomes in its Annual Report
- monitor the sharing of information protocol to ensure this is not a barrier to effective working in CSE cases
- work with other local partnerships to co-ordinate any CSE activity, particularly Community Safety Partnerships
- work with other regional/national groups to develop a co-ordinated approach and learn from best practice
- ensure its governance structure has clear lines of accountability for CSE (see Appendix X for proposed arrangements)
- ensure that delivery of the strategy is properly supported
- provide external assurance as appropriate that CSE is being properly tackled and managed in Worcestershire

## **8. Monitoring and Review**

The implementation of this strategy will initially be overseen by the Strategic CSE Group and then by the Vulnerable Children Sub-Group with regular reporting to WSCB. Key measures of its effectiveness will include evidence of:

- Prevention being managed through staff awareness of CSE – knowing how to spot it and taking appropriate action
- Knowledge of the perpetrators and hot-spots
- Responding to CSE victims in a timely and suitable manner to meet their needs and wishes

The strategy will be reviewed annually by WSCB, or updated more frequently if required, to ensure it is making a difference to the children and young people of Worcestershire involved in CSE

## Appendix 1

### Policy and Legislation

1. "Dealing with Child Sexual Exploitation" March 2015 Government Response

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-child-sexual-exploitation--2>

2. HM Government (2009) *Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation* 2009

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/278849/Safeguarding\\_Children\\_and\\_Young\\_People\\_from\\_Sexual\\_Exploitation.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/278849/Safeguarding_Children_and_Young_People_from_Sexual_Exploitation.pdf)

3. HM Government (2015) *Working Together to Safeguard Children*

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/419595/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Safeguard\\_Children.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf)

4. HM Government (2003) *Sexual Offences Act* 2003

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/section/3>

5. WSCB Safeguarding Children Who May have been Trafficked 2009:

[http://westmerciaconsortium.proceduresonline.com/chapters/g\\_sg\\_trafficked.html](http://westmerciaconsortium.proceduresonline.com/chapters/g_sg_trafficked.html)

6. Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board Guidance, Policy and Procedures:

<http://westmerciaconsortium.proceduresonline.com/>

7. Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/anti-social-behaviour-crime-and-police-bill>

### WSCB Guidance for Practitioners *Child Sexual Exploitation*

Practitioner guidance can be found at:

[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/550/practitioner\\_guidance\\_august\\_2013](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/550/practitioner_guidance_august_2013)

## Appendix 2

### WSCB Action Plan for Implementation

<b>Key Priority 1</b> <b>Prevention and Education</b> Overarching priority: Increasing knowledge and understanding of CSE, including the development of protective factors, across children and young people (to include victim focus), the children and young people's workforce and local communities				
Key Target Areas/Objectives				
1.1 Undertake a public awareness campaign				
Action	Action Owner	Measure	Accountable body	Timeframe
1.1.1 Commission a communications / publicity campaign based on best practice across the region, including the publicising of helplines and support centres	Head of Protecting Vulnerable People/Head of Corporate Communications – West Mercia Police	Options report to Board and decision made	West Mercia Police	End November 2015
1.1.2 Draw up a timed action plan including media engagement	WSCB Business Support Team	Timed action plan produced	Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board	End November 2015



1.1.3 Undertake the campaign and evaluate it	WSCB Business Support Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Increase in levels of awareness</li> <li>•Increase in CSE referrals received</li> </ul>	Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board	Campaign : January 2016  Evaluation : March 2016
<b>1.2 All schools to deliver a CSE awareness programme to children and young people, tailored to their age</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Action Owner</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Accountable body</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
1.2.1 The Board to develop and endorse a 'whole school' model for raising CSE awareness, in line with the Children's Commissioner's report: 'If only someone had listened' (Nov 2013), and to evaluate its impact.  This will include the production of a menu of resources for use in schools.	WSCB Head Teacher Reps	Numbers of schools implementing Whole School Approach.  (Including academies, post 16, and independent schools)	WSCB Head Teacher's Group	December 2015
1.2.2 WSCB to seek assurance that schools and FE colleges are raising awareness of CSE within their own organisation.	Chair of the Monitoring Effectiveness Group	Percentage of schools evidencing they have a robust programme in place for raising awareness	Monitoring Effectiveness Sub Group	July 2016

1.3 All staff to receive training in line with their role and responsibilities.				
Action	Action Owner	Measure	Accountable Body	Timeframe
<p>1.3.1 Review existing CSE training strategy and refresh in line with CSE Strategy 2015-2017.</p> <p>To include training pathway, suite of training materials and evaluation framework.</p>	Chair of WSCB Workforce Development Group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training strategy covers all elements of the CSE Strategy 2015-18</li> <li>• Practitioners and managers have a clear understanding of their training requirements</li> <li>• Staff are trained at the appropriate level for their role and responsibilities.</li> </ul>	Improving Frontline Practice Sub Group	November 2015
<p>1.3.2 Ensure that commissioners of services to children young people and their families make CSE training a requirement within their contracting processes from a given date</p>	Individual agencies (TBC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSE training is a requirement for all commissioned services</li> <li>• Assurance is provided through the S11 Audit undertaken by WSCB</li> </ul>	Monitoring Effectiveness Sub Group	January 2016
<p>1.3.3 Evaluate effectiveness of training strategy through the WSCB annual audit of training and workforce development</p>	Chair of the Monitoring Effectiveness Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of agencies providing assurance that all staff are trained at the appropriate level</li> <li>• Increased awareness/</li> </ul>	Monitoring Effectiveness Sub Group	End March 2016

		confidence levels		
<b>Key Priority 2</b>  <b>Recognition and Identification</b>  Overarching priority: Providing information and tools to support the identification of potential indicators of CSE; providing and publishing agreed models of assessment; and agreed protocols for the effective sharing of information across the multi-agency partnership				
<b>Key Target Areas/Objectives</b>  <b>2.1 Identify vulnerable children for potential sexual exploitation and develop a risk assessment framework and pathway to protect them</b>				
Action	Action Owner	Measure	Accountable Body	Timeframe
2.1.1 All key statutory partners to devise a flagging protocol for those deemed to be at risk of child sexual exploitation; NHS, GPs, Sexual Health, CAMHS.	Missing, CSE and Trafficking Subgroup Chair	Establishment of flagging process within each agency, and numbers of children identified as at risk.	CSE Strategic Group	September - December 2015
2.1.2 Work with pharmacies to develop a checklist for identifying those at risk of CSE to improve early identification of risk, and	Chair of Missing, CSE and Trafficking Group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Checklist developed</li> <li>•Increase in numbers of children flagged to MASH</li> </ul>	CSE Strategic Group	30 September 2015

information sharing. To include GP dispensing surgeries and school nurses.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Increase in risk assessments undertaken</li> </ul>		
2.1.3 Identification of care providers within Worcestershire to create closer links (see 2.1.2)	Missing Person Co-ordinator within the Police/ Chair of Missing, CSE and Trafficking Group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•List of care providers maintained within Children's social care – including 16+ and independent providers</li> <li>•Increase in numbers of children flagged to MASH</li> <li>•Increase in risk assessments undertaken.</li> </ul>	CSE Strategic Group	End October 2015
2.1.4 Embed widely existing screening tool to support the assessment and management of risk (links with 1.3.1)  Develop and embed risk indicator toolkit for professionals	Chair of Missing Children, CSE and Trafficking Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Percentage of referrals where screening tool has been completed</li> <li>•Risk indicator toolkit available for professionals</li> </ul>	CSE Strategic Group	November 2015  November 2015
2.1.5 Complete full review of existing CSE Pathway to align with CSE Strategy 2015-18	Chair of Missing Children, CSE and Trafficking Group	Refreshed pathway in place	CSE Strategic Group	July 2015

<b>2.2 Develop professional curiosity amongst front line staff to ensure they look for and act on signs of potential CSE (particularly social workers, Health workers and school staff)</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Action Owner</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Accountable Body</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
2.2.1 Ensure CSE Training Strategy and materials include specific reference to learning about the need to exercise professional curiosity.(Links to 2.1.1)	Chair of Workforce Development Group	Increased reporting of CSE concerns across all key partners.	Improving Frontline Practice Sub Group	November 2015
<b>2.3 Identification of vulnerable children who have the potential to become perpetrators</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Action Owner</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Accountable Body</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
2.3.1 Scope national good practice in the emerging field of understanding children who have the potential to become perpetrators.	YOS within Missing Children, CSE and Trafficking Group	Scoping completed within time scale	Vulnerable Children Sub Group	November 2015
2.3.2 Review toolkit to assist professionals to identify children who have the potential to become perpetrators.	YOS within Missing Children, CSE and Trafficking Group	Toolkit produced and promoted through WSCB website.	Vulnerable Children Sub Group	January 2016

2.4 Promote the crucial importance of effective information sharing				
Action	Action Owner	Measure	Accountable Body	Timeframe
2.4.1 Develop an information sharing agreement between all partners which differentiates between different levels of information required and the processes for sharing information	Chair of MASH Operational Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Establishment of internal information sharing pathways within and between agencies re CSE</li> <li>•Increase in numbers of children flagged to Access Centre</li> <li>•Increase in numbers of children flagged to MASH</li> <li>•Increase in risk assessments undertaken</li> </ul>	CSE Strategic Group	September 2015
<b>Key Priority 3</b>  <b>Intervention and Support</b>  Overarching priority: Drawing on models of recognised good practice to develop local responses ; tailoring intervention and support to individuals; and mapping and publicising a range of available intervention/support services				
<b>Key Target Areas/Objectives</b>  <b>3.1 Develop different methods/casework suited to CSE</b>				

<b>Action</b>	<b>Action Owner</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Accountable Body</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
3.1.1 Each child or young person identified at risk of CSE or experiencing CSE has a completed CSE risk assessment and management of risk plan	Chair of Missing Children, CSE and Trafficking Group /Chair of CSE Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Proportion of completed assessments and risk management plans</li> <li>•Repeat MACFA findings demonstrate robust risk management plans</li> </ul>	CSE Strategic Group	November 2015
3.1.2 Develop links with adult safeguarding to ensure transition for those young adults still at risk of exploitation.	Independent Chairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Adult safeguarding representative on Missing Children, CSE and Trafficking Group; MASH</li> <li>•Transition protocol for those from children's social care to adult social care updated to refer to CSE</li> <li>•Providers for 16+ have clear pathway written for CSE safeguarding for client.</li> </ul>	Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board	December 2015
3.1.3 Develop CSE Communication strategy for a range of media and audiences  (Links with 1.1)	Head of Protecting Vulnerable People/Head of Corporate Communications – West Mercia Police	CSE Communications Strategy in place	CSE Strategic Group	October 2015

3.1.4 Develop protocol for information sharing and management of risk re CSE with care providers to include the flagging of CSE concerns when children are placed in or outside of county.	Head of Assessment and Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Protocol established and embedded</li> <li>•Increase in children flagged as being at risk of CSE</li> <li>•Evidence that risk management plans are in place.</li> </ul>	CSE Strategic Group	November 2015
<b>3.2 Develop victim and family specialised support</b>				
Action	Action Owner	Measure	Accountable Body	Timeframe
3.2.1 Undertake a needs assessment to map existing support services and to identify gaps in provision for children at risk of CSE  (To include research into established good practice)	Designated Nurse/Strategic Lead for Early Help and Partnerships	Assurance that appropriate services are in place	CSE Strategic Group	December 2015
3.2.2 Ensure West Mercia SARC has adopted training, facilities and pathways to address the needs of sexually exploited children and young people in Worcestershire.	The Glade management reporting through Missing children, CSE and Trafficking Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Assurance that SARC links directly with CSE pathway</li> <li>•Documented evidence of CSE provision for staff within the SARC.</li> </ul>	CSE Strategic Group	September 2015



<b>3.3 Develop community safety, regulatory and taxi licensing functions (consider a Partnership Enforcement Team)</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Action Owner</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Accountable Body</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
3.3.1 District Community Safety Partnerships Tasking Groups to receive CSE intelligence and implement a partnership response to identified 'hot spots' in consultation with the Missing Children, CSE and Trafficking Group	Community Safety Partnership (North and South)	CSP multi-agency action plan in place for each identified 'hot spot'.	Safer Communities Board	October 2015
3.3.2 Community Safety Partnerships to encourage links with existing prevention and disruption strategies, e.g. Nightsafe and Street Pastor initiatives	Community Safety Partnership (North and South)	Completion of actions contained within CSP Partnership Plan (North and South)	Safer Communities Board	March 2016
3.3.3 Community Safety Partnerships to develop and incorporate CSE responsibilities within their annual Partnership Plan, taking a proactive approach to identification, risk assessment and evidence	Community Safety Partnership (North and South)	CSE responsibilities clearly set and monitored as part of the North and South Partnership Plan.	Safer Communities Board	December 2015

gathering				
3.3.4 Undertake a CSE awareness raising campaign with Hackney carriage and private hire licenced drivers/operators	Worcestershire Regulatory Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Guidance issued to all licence holders upon annual renewal of licences</li> <li>•CSE awareness raising rolled out through district taxi forums and liaison meetings</li> </ul>	WRS Joint Committee  (WRS Board from April 2016)	From July 2015  (review in 6 months)
3.3.5 Undertake a CSE awareness raising campaign with licenced premises in in partnership with the CSP District Tasking Groups, e.g. Nightsafe in Worcester Pub Watch in Redditch and Bromsgrove town centres	Worcestershire Regulatory Services and Community Safety Partnerships	Issuing and dissemination of information to licenced premises with a focus on 'hotspot' areas	WRS Board	December 2015
3.3.6 District Council Licence Committee Members to be made aware of CSE responsibilities	Worcestershire Regulatory Services	CSE awareness training is incorporated into Licence Committee Member inductions	WRS Joint Committee & Partner Licensing Committees (WRS Board from April 2016)	September 2015

3.3.7 Develop CSE guidance for Bed and Breakfast providers, hostels and HMO Licencing	District Council Strategic Housing Officers	Guidance developed and disseminated.	Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership (WSHP)	January 2016
3.3.8 Review the need for a partnership enforcement team following refreshed problem profile and increased awareness raising	Chair of CSE Strategic Group	Review completed and decision made.	CSE Strategic Group	March 2016
<b>Key Priority 4</b>  <b>Pursue and Disrupt:</b>  Overarching priority: Being pro-active across multi agency partnerships to identify, disrupt and prosecute perpetrators of child sexual exploitation through criminal or civil means				
<b>Key Target Areas/Objectives</b>  <b>4.1 Align cross-border arrangements with neighbouring areas/regions</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Action Owner</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Accountable Body</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
4.1.1 To ensure that appropriate intelligence is shared regionally with partners	Head of Protecting Vulnerable People, West Mercia Police	Evidence of sharing at regional level	Police Strategic CSE Group	November 2015

4.1.2 To ensure relevant intelligence from areas other than Worcestershire is shared with partners to maximise safeguarding	Operational Lead for CSE, Police	Effective CSE problem profile incorporating multi-agency information and regional threats and intelligence	CSE Strategic Group	November 2015
4.1.3 Embed PPRC (People Presenting a Risk to Children) information sharing within agencies to ensure that those who perpetrate CSE within statutory and collaborating agencies are identified and managed accordingly (Links to 2.4.1)	Chair of Missing Children, CSE and Trafficking Group	PPRC information guidance published on WSCB website.	CSE Strategic Group	30 September 2015
<b>4.2 Develop an ongoing problem profile, mapping hot spots and keep relevant agencies informed</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Action Owner</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Accountable Body</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
4.2.1 Production of an annually refreshed Alliance CSE problem profile, to be informed by data from police and other partners	Head of Head of Protecting Vulnerable People– West Mercia Police /Chair of CSE Strategic Group	Document to be made available annually to the LSCB.	CSE Strategic Group	31 October 2015
4.2.2 LSCB to agree a				

common dataset for CSE in line with national good practice	Head of Protecting Vulnerable People, Police/Chair of CSE Strategic Group	Dataset agreed and implemented	CSE Strategic Group	30 September 2015
<b>4.3 Use criminal and civil powers wherever possible to bring to justice perpetrators who exploit and abuse children</b>				
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Action Owner</b>	<b>Measure</b>		<b>Timeframe</b>
4.3.1 Utilise ancillary and civil orders to maximum effect to assist investigation, restrict and manage offenders and support victims	Police/YOS/Probation/CRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Data showing numbers and type of orders obtained</li> <li>•Number of breaches of orders</li> <li>•Number of abduction notices served</li> </ul>	CSE Strategic Group	November 2015
4.3.2 CSE investigations are driven by appropriately accredited staff	Head of Protecting Vulnerable People, Police	Numbers of SC Abuse Investigation Development Programme and Achieving Best Evidence accredited investigators	CSE Strategic Group	Nov 2015
4.3.3 Adoption of appropriate screening tool to assist in identification of CSE	Head of Protecting Vulnerable People, Police	Increase in numbers of children identified	CSE Strategic Group	30 September 2015
4.3.4 Maximise potential for forensic recovery with appropriate investigative strategies and training for	Head of Protecting	Compliance with HMIC child protection recommendations and delivery of Alliance CSE	CSE Strategic	31 March 2016

officers	Vulnerable People, Police	Action Plan	Group	
4.3.5 Establish a proper framework to investigate on-line CSE, appropriately resourced, with the necessary skill set	Head of Protecting Vulnerable People, Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Utilise a Nationally accredited risk assessment tool for on-line CSE</li> <li>•Toolkit for officers for on-line CSE</li> </ul>	CSE Strategic Group	September 2015
4.3.6 Ensure that hi-tech capabilities are keeping pace with new and emerging patterns of offending and able to meet increasing demand	Head of Protecting Vulnerable People, Police	Sufficient resources within the Hi-tech capability and equipment to meet demand	CSE Strategic Group	1 January 2016

## Appendix 3

### Child Sexual Exploitation Useful Resources:

1. "Research into gang-associated sexual exploitation and sexual violence; Interim Report", Beckett, H et al (2012) pub: University of Bedfordshire

[http://www.beds.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/215873/GASV\\_Interim.pdf](http://www.beds.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/215873/GASV_Interim.pdf)

2. "If only someone had listened", Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups, Final Report (November 2013) Sue Berelowitz, et al

[http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content\\_743](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_743)

3. Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation

<http://www.paceuk.info/>

4. National Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day:

<http://www.stop-cse.org/national-child-exploitation-awareness-day/>

5. National Working Group Network for Child Sexual Exploitation

<http://www.nwgnetwork.org/>

6. Just Whistle (no date) *Prevention Protection and Investigation* (on line)

<http://www.justwhistle.org.uk/index.php/home/whats-on/prevention-protection-and-investigation>

7. National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People (2008) *Sexual Exploitation Intervention Diagram* (on line)

<http://www.nationalworkinggroup.org/what-is-child-sexual-exploitation/sexual-exploitation-intervention-diagram>

## Appendix 4

### Models of Grooming and exploitation

#### Grooming

Grooming may take place face to face and can occur over a long period of time or relatively quickly. Grooming using the internet and mobile technology is increasingly common. Along with the significant risk in the use of mobile phones, including Bluetooth technology, perpetrators target children and young people through online sites, games and through picture messaging and texting.

**Child sexual exploitation can occur in a variety of settings and may involve one or more person.** Barnados has identified three different sexual exploitation abuse models . Examples of quotes from young people are also included below.

#### Abuse model 1

##### Inappropriate Relationships

This usually involves one abuser who has inappropriate power – physical, emotional or financial - or control over a young person. The young person may believe that they have a genuine friendship or loving relationship with the abuser.

#### Abuse model 2

##### Boyfriend model and Peer exploitation, also known as party model

The abuser grooms the victim by striking up a normal relationship with them, giving them gifts and meeting in cafes/fast food outlets or shopping centres. A seemingly consensual sexual relationship develops but later turns abusive.

Victims are required to attend parties and sleep with multiple men and threatened with violence if they try to seek help. They may also be required to introduce their friends as new victims.

#### Abuse Model 3

##### Organised exploitation and trafficking

Young people are passed through networks, possibly over geographical distances, between towns and cities where they may be forced/coerced into sexual activity with multiple men. Often this occurs at 'sex parties' and young people who are involved



may be used as agents to recruit others into the network. Some of this activity is described as serious organised crime and can involve the organised buying and selling of young people by perpetrators.

Organised exploitation varies from spontaneous networking between groups of perpetrators to more serious organised crime where young people are effectively 'sold'. These activities are described as 'internal trafficking' or 'trafficking for child sexual exploitation.'

Victims of sexual exploitation may also be used as agents to recruit other children and young people and in some cases a young person may be both a perpetrator and a victim of CSE.

Sexual exploitation can be group and gang associated. Group associated exploitation refers to the number of perpetrators involved.

### **Gang Associated CSE**

Research undertaken by Beckett et al (2012) outlined key features of gang-associated sexual violence and exploitation that are unique to, or exacerbated by, the gang environment:

- Using sex as a means of initiating young people into a gang;
- Sexual activity in return for (perceived) status or protection;
- Young women 'setting up' people in other gangs;
- Establishing a relationship with, or feigning sexual interest in, a rival gang member as a means of entrapment; and
- Sexual assault as a weapon in conflict.

*"Research into gang-associated sexual exploitation and sexual violence,"*  
(2012)

### **Examples of quotes from young people**

1. 'I was 12 maybe a wee bit older, and I remember my mummy run out of drink and she says to me, there was fellas in the house and she says to one of them to take me up the stairs and she got me to go with this man for a bottle of vodka for her.'  
(Beckett 2011)

2. 'There was a guy running parties for sex. What was described to me was someone initially looking after you, taking you out, buying you clothes, looking after you, giving you lots of emotion and care. Then there were parties where other girls were there and it became a going upstairs with one person type of thing, but then it

came down to being the only girl with four or five men and it became quite frightening. There was also a separate pornography side to it, and they were getting pulled in to that as well.’ (Beckett 2011)

3. ‘We have a young woman at the moment who is Eastern European and was trafficked here and continues to be exploited by people. She lives with her parents but we reckon she is being sold on a regular basis. Well, she says she lives with her parents but we aren’t entirely sure if they are her parents. She is saying she is 17, but we suspect she’s more like 14.’ (Beckett 2011)

4. Sexual exploitation that involves one or multiple perpetrators who are themselves gang associated and where the CSE takes place as a form of introduction or inter-gang related violence. (Office of Children’s Commissioner 2012)



Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board  
[www.worcestershire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren)

For further information please contact:

Sue Haddon

WSCB Business manager

[shaddon@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:shaddon@worcestershire.gov.uk)

Tel. 01905 752803