

Open

Cabinet

Agenda

**To be held remotely
6pm
Tuesday, 7th July 2020**



Cabinet

The Cabinet Members and their responsibilities:-

Councillor G Ballinger	Leader of the Council & Strategy & Finance
Councillor F Oborski MBE	Deputy Leader & Economic Regeneration, Planning & Capital Investments
Councillor N Martin	Housing, Health, Well-being & Democratic Services
Councillor H Dyke	Culture, Leisure & Community Protection
Councillor J Thomas	Operational Services

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 Friday 17th July 2020.

Councillors wishing to "call in" a decision on this agenda should contact Louisa Bright, Principal Committee and Member Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster. Telephone: 01562 732763 or email louisa.bright@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.

1. The Cabinet meeting is open to the public except for any exempt/confidential items. These items are normally discussed at the end of the meeting. Where a meeting is held remotely, “open” means available for live or subsequent viewing.
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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 Louisa Bright, Principal Committee and Member Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF. Telephone: 01562 732763 or email louisa.bright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

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Wyre Forest District Council

Cabinet

Tuesday, 7th July 2020

To be held remotely

Part 1 - Open to the press and public

Agenda item	Subject	Page Number
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interests by Members In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's) and / or Other Disclosable Interests (ODI's) in the following agenda items and indicate the action that they will be taking when the item is considered. Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's Constitution for full details.	
3.	Minutes To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on the 20th May 2020.	7
4.	CALL INS a verbal update will be given on any decisions which have been "called in" since the last meeting of the Cabinet.	
5.	Items Requiring Urgent Attention To consider any item which, in the opinion of the Chairman requires consideration at the meeting as a matter of urgency.	
6.	Public Participation In accordance with the Council's Scheme for Public Representations at Meetings of Cabinet, to allow members of the public to present petitions, ask questions, or make statements, details of which have been received by 12 noon on Monday 29 th June 2020. (See front cover for contact details).	

7.		
Councillor G Ballinger		
7.1	COVID-19 Framework for Recovery Plan To consider a report from the Chief Executive to adopt the framework for recovery from COVID-19 in respect of the Council and its services.	11
7.2	Financial Stress Testing re Coronavirus Pandemic Impact To consider a report from the Corporate Director: Resources which provides a second briefing for members on the impact of the current Coronavirus Pandemic on the Council's financial performance for 2020-21.	30

8.		
Councillor H Dyke		
8.1	Review of Public Space Protection Orders and results of the consultation period To consider a report from the Chief Executive which outlines the results from the consultation process regarding the dog control PSPO and the restriction of alcohol consumption in Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn PSPOs and outlines the implementation process if the Public Space Protection Orders are agreed. To also consider recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2 nd July 2020 (to follow)	44

9.		
Councillor N Martin		
9.1	Community Led Housing Policy Update To consider a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place on the progress on Community Led Housing (CLH) and to seek approval for the updated CLH policy. To also consider recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2 nd July 2020 (to follow)	74

9.2	<p>Amendment to Capital Programme to administer Property Flood Grants</p> <p>To consider a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place which outlines the process for the Government funded Property Flood Grants to be distributed to affected residents and businesses. This will include the requirement to amend the capital programme.</p> <p>To also consider recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2nd July 2020 (to follow)</p>	83
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10.		
	Councillor F Oborski MBE	
10.1	<p>Bromsgrove Street Car Park – User Agreement</p> <p>To consider a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place to agree a proposed Agreement with the Council's former Glades Leisure Centre site development partner, Cordwell, in respect of the public car park at Bromsgrove Street and its usage in relation to the proposed cinema led leisure scheme planned for the former leisure centre site.</p> <p>To also consider recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2nd July 2020 (to follow)</p>	86

11.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.	
12.	<p>Exclusion of the Press and Public</p> <p>To consider passing the following resolution:</p> <p>“That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of “exempt information” as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act”.</p>	

Part 2 - Not open to the Press and Public

13.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.	
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**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET
HELD REMOTELY
20TH MAY 2020 (6PM)**

Present:

Councillors: G W Ballinger (Chairman), F M Oborski MBE (Vice-Chairman), H E Dyke, N Martin and J W R Thomas.

Observers:

Councillors: J F Byng, A Coleman, N J Desmond, P Dyke, C Edginton-White, I Hardiman, P Harrison, M J Hart, S Miah, M Rayner, C Rogers and L Whitehouse.

CAB.01 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CAB.02 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB.03 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 11th February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.04 Call Ins

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

CAB.05 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.06 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

CAB.07 Cabinet Advisory Panel on the Green Agenda

A report was considered from the Chief Executive which sought approval to establish a Cabinet Advisory Panel drawn from members of the Cabinet and from other members of the Council to oversee work on the green agenda.

Councillor P Harrison left the meeting at this point, (6.05pm).

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and formally moved the recommendation for approval. He advised that this was the first advisory panel that the Cabinet had been invited to set up following last year's review of governance and decision-making in the Council.

He said that the review indicated that Cabinet Advisory Panels could be a useful tool for Cabinet members and members outside the Cabinet to work together on complex areas of policy, where it would be helpful to draw on expertise and knowledge from a wider group of members. He added that the green agenda was an ideal candidate for such an advisory panel, and was pleased that the Council's first and only Green Councillor, Vicky Caulfield, had agreed to lead its work.

The Leader confirmed that the two Councillors from the Independent, Liberal Democrat and Green Group who would serve on the panel were Councillors Mary Rayner and Councillor Shazu Miah; and from the Conservative Group it would be Councillors Anna Coleman and Chris Rogers.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services seconded the recommendation. She explained that in May 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency, and unfortunately the district had experienced devastating floods in February 2020. She added that in the last 12 months Council had passed a number of resolutions, which included every child in a Wyre Forest school to be able to be involved in planting a tree; to ensure that adequate electric vehicle charging points are provided in Council owned public car parks; to stop using plastic water cups in Wyre Forest House and to explore any other initiatives for zero emission energy production / storage.

Councillor L Whitehouse joined the meeting at this point, (6.14pm).

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services gave a brief update on the progress on the items and added that the Panel's work programme was expected to focus on actions that the authority can take and implement itself rather than on seeking to influence. She said that the Council would look at its own carbon footprint which would allow it to track any progression as well as reviewing the existing Climate Change Action Plan. In conclusion the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services said she was very much looking forward to being part of the Panel and working alongside other members and partner organisations that were interested and had expertise in these matters.

Decision: A Cabinet Advisory panel be established as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

CAB.08 Financial Stress Testing re Coronavirus Pandemic Impact

A report was considered from the Corporate Director: Resources which provided an early briefing for members on the impact of the current Coronavirus Pandemic on the Council's financial performance for the first quarter of 2020-21 and beyond.

The Leader introduced the report. He said that it was a very complex situation and the Government had provided a huge amount of financial assistance initiatives to help the community, businesses and local authorities through the pandemic. He was pleased to announce that the authority was one of the first District Councils to distribute this help to businesses and council tax payers.

He added that, whilst the financial assistance from Government was very welcome, Councils up and down the country were still facing financial difficulties that were not so far covered by the additional Government funding. If the Government did not meet the bulk of the extra costs and loss of income faced by the Council, it would have to look at ways of reducing expenditure on certain discretionary services.

The Leader invited the Corporate Director: Resources to present the report.

The Corporate Director: Resources outlined the key points from the report. She advised that the report set out early estimates that would be refined and improved as time goes on.

She said that the current pandemic was placing unprecedented stress on the Council's budget in the short term. The authority was likely to see the reduction in or even complete failure of some of its income streams for at least three to four months of the year. Together with cost pressures in certain services and cash flow implications, this would mean that the authority would have to take action to safeguard the budget in the medium term.

The Corporate Director: Resources added that the Local Government Association, Societies of District and County Council Treasurers and District Councils' Network continued to lobby hard on the sector's behalf for additional funding. She answered members' questions about the breakdown of costs shown in the report and it was also explained that any property purchases at this time would require additional due diligence before proceeding.

The Leader agreed that a written response would be provided to a member question asking if the Council should put consideration of any further property acquisitions and investments on hold given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic until the market in property stabilizes.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Capital Investments thanked the Corporate Director: Resources and her team for the work they have been doing. She said that the financial briefings provided for Members were excellent. She added that the current financial situation was unpleasant and nobody would have known when the budget was set in February that it would have been thrown into the air with the current Covid-19 situation. She added that the authority would be facing some very challenging decisions if circumstances did not change, and formally moved the recommendations for approval.

On behalf of the Cabinet, the Leader thanked the Corporate Leadership Team for constantly working hard to try and look at the way forward for the district and the way forward out of the current financial plight. He said they were all doing a brilliant job.

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Protection seconded the proposals.

Decision:

- 1.1 The projected budgetary impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic outlined in the report and related actions both taken so far and planned for the future be noted.**
- 1.2 Delegated Authority be given to the Corporate Director: Resources in consultation with the Corporate Leadership Team and the Cabinet Member for Strategy and Finance to use General Reserves to replace reduced income and increased expenditure that is not covered by government funding for the period April to end of June 2020.**

CAB.09 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 paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CAB.10 Financial Stress Testing re Coronavirus Pandemic Impact – Appendix 2 Potential Contractual Claim

The Corporate Director: Resources led members in detail through the confidential paper which detailed a potential contractual claim and answered questions from members about it with input from the Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.23pm.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
7th July 2020**COVID-19 RECOVERY FRAMEWORK**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Graham Ballinger, Leader of the Council
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Ian Miller, Chief executive
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ian Miller ext 2700 ian.miller@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 – Recovery framework

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To adopt the framework for recovery from COVID-19 in respect of the Council and its services.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 **ADOPT** the framework in Appendix 1;
- 2.2 **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that it authorises the Head of Paid Service to initiate formal consultation with staff and unions with a view to maximising home working at the optimal level, in order to minimise the building space that the Council occupies (paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4), with a further report to Council no later than December 2020 to seek Council's approval of any changes to terms and conditions;
- 2.3 **CONTINUE** to use remote meeting technology wherever possible for all informal meetings involving Cabinet members including Cabinet advisory panels and, if legislation is changed permanently to allow its formal meetings to be held remotely, to continue to use remote meeting technology for such meetings;
- 2.4 **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that a survey of Councillors should be undertaken about the impact of remote working on them, with a report and any recommendations being submitted to Council in September.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has made massive changes to how it operates since March 2020. This involved rapid expansion of home working and implementation of remote meeting technology, both successfully undertaken at pace by the ICT team. It also depended on the cooperation of staff who were asked at very short notice to work in different

ways and to learn new skills – as has also been the case for councillors. Some significant changes have been implemented to how services are delivered, with public access to Council buildings being ended with the sole exception of support for homeless people at the customer services centre in Green Street. Some services, such as the Bewdley Museum, were required to shut by Government legislation and others, such as waste collection, had to adjust their operation to minimise risk of spread of the disease among staff. Some staff have been temporarily redeployed from their normal work to areas that required additional support in order to maintain operation or to undertake projects, such as arrangements to support safe reopening of town centres. Many staff found that workloads changed very significantly as a result of COVID-19, such as the Revenues and Benefits team who had to work at pace and often at weekends and in evenings to deliver Government-funded grants and reliefs speedily to local businesses and residents.

- 3.2 Lockdown has started to ease, albeit that some sectors of the economy continue to be closed at the time of writing. Those businesses that have reopened have often had to make significant changes to the physical layout of their premises, to how many people are allowed to be in them at one time and to other aspects of how they operate (for example, many retail premises now accept contactless and card payments only). The experience of the lockdown is causing virtually all organisations to review their future operational models, particularly in respect of office buildings. The question that many organisations are asking is: if we have continued operating successfully without the need for most staff to be in offices, why should we use them as much or even at all in future, given the cost of occupying and operating offices?
- 3.3 The Council needs to review its own operational model, particularly in areas where the potential exists to take forward positive experiences from the pandemic situation and to apply them to enable more flexible working arrangements, rather than returning to “how things used to be”. These are areas where, if the opportunity to embed change is not seized now, it may not be as easy to seek to implement such changes at a future point. Embedding some current arrangements on a permanent basis would:
 - 3.3.1 contribute to the reduction in carbon emissions required by the Council’s declaration of a climate change emergency;
 - 3.3.2 provide the ability to reduce our office footprint permanently, freeing up more space for letting and potentially allowing the Council to reduce the number of buildings that it owns and so reduce running costs;
 - 3.3.3 promote better work-life balance for both members and staff. A simple example is that, when a remote meeting finishes in the evening, all participants can be “at home” immediately;
 - 3.3.4 support the ongoing shift to modern ways of working and away from inherited practices that recent months have shown are not essential and therefore do not need to be retained;
 - 3.3.5 demonstrate to staff and future recruits that WFDC is a modern, flexible organisation;

- 3.3.6 improve resilience because the Council is less dependent on availability of and ability to reach physical buildings;
- 3.3.7 ensure that staff and members retain IT and other skills that have been learned during lockdown.
- 3.4 As some of the proposals in this report affect staff terms and conditions, it is intended that the recovery plan will also be taken to Council later in July to seek its endorsement of potential changes that affect staff. Job descriptions specify people's ordinary place of work and a review is proposed of home working and broadband allowances. Group leaders and deputy groups leaders have therefore been briefed about the recommendations in this report before its publication.
- 3.5 A survey of staff has been undertaken to seek their views: this was focussed on staff who undertake "office-style work", some of whom were already doing most or all their work from home. Two hundred responses were received, representing about 80% of staff who undertake "office-style work". Generally, the responses received on the following issues were very positive:

Issue	Number of responses (%) satisfied/very satisfied
Working environment	154 (80%)
Productivity/ability to work effectively	165 (83%)
IT facilities	169 (84%)
Manager/team communications	185 (98%)
Corporate Communications	188 (95%)

64 respondents (32%) responded either "fairly unsatisfied" or "unsatisfied" under one or more of the headings. The main reasons cited included technical issues around connectivity, equipment & IT platforms, working environment – space and equipment, childcare, interruptions, isolation, physical health e.g. backache, insufficient access to senior managers, colleagues not answering phones or emails.

- 3.6 An equivalent survey of members has not yet been undertaken. This report recommends that such a survey should be put in place and its results reported to the September meeting of Council.

4 KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The framework is wide-ranging and covers service delivery as well as economic recovery but much of its focus is on the issues that are raised below.
- 4.2 In terms of embedding changes that have successfully operated during lockdown, the three areas for consideration at this time relate to home-working; customer service arrangements; and future arrangements for meetings involving Cabinet members.
- 4.3 The report proposes seeking the optimal level of home working by staff, with a view to maximising home working.** It is inevitable that, while social distancing is required, we would not in any case be able to allow all staff to return to work in our offices: physically, there is not enough space and, at most, about 50% of desk spaces

could be used if applying 2m social distancing guidelines. There is a wide range of practical and employment policy issues to be addressed if the Council is going to embed the current position where the clear majority of staff undertaking office-style work do it from home. It is recognised that some work and roles will always have to be performed within an office, such as supervisory roles for front-line staff at Green Street, certain ICT work with servers or the network, running an election or supporting members in a formal face-to-face meeting. As a responsible employer, the Council will have to take account of exceptional individual circumstances where relevant such as no/limited space to work at home, poor broadband connection that cannot be remedied etc. Ultimately there will be something of a hybrid position as it is simply not possible for the Council to operate without some office space, and some staff will occupy it either permanently or from time to time. The review proposed in this paragraph will include ensuring staff have satisfactory workstation arrangements at home, which may be different to the current 'temporary' arrangements. Individual risk assessments are being undertaken accordingly. It is important to ensure that all staff who work from home have a common support package from the Council in terms of equipment and (if it is required) furniture, and this will be addressed in light of the assessments.

- 4.4 The review would also encompass home working allowances and broadband allowances with a view either to phasing them out (only some staff receive them at present) or to replacing them for all staff with a small increase in base pay as part of the grading review in April 2021. The latter route would avoid unnecessary divisions across the workforce, as there are some staff who can never do their work from home. In order to progress with the review outlined in this and the preceding paragraph, a process of formal consultation will be necessary with unions and staff following authorisation by full Council: this will provide the opportunity for a further staff survey explicitly to ask about their support for changing working arrangements as outlined above.
- 4.5 **The report also proposes minimising face-to-face customer service except for homelessness and urgent housing issues**, with retention of an appointment only system for significant financial hardship/welfare issues and (already the existing practice) planning advice. There would be no impact on people's ability to raise issues online through the website, direct messages on social media and email; through the new MyWyreForest app; or on the telephone.
- 4.6 **Finally the report proposes carrying on with minimal face-to-face meetings of Cabinet members.** Unless the Government changes legislation permanently to allow councils the choice of holding remote formal meetings, the current flexibility will expire in May 2021. If the legislation was to be extended permanently beyond May 2021, this report seeks the Cabinet's agreement that it would continue to use remote meeting technology for its own formal meetings. The May meeting of Cabinet was attended by many more councillors as observers than previous face-to-face meetings and was also available for the public to view live or on catch up, a facility that had previously been removed for face-to-face Cabinet meetings on grounds of cost of the webcasting system used at Wyre Forest House and limited take up. The same approach is generally envisaged for informal meetings that include Cabinet members, such as Cabinet Advisory Panels and briefing meetings for Cabinet portfolio holders. This report proposes a recommendation to Council about a survey of Councillors to obtain feedback about their experience of remote working, and that this would be

followed by any recommendations to Council at its September meeting in respect of future arrangements for meetings of Councillors more generally.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has faced significant costs and loss of income arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government has provided some funding to help meet these but further funding support is required. The current position is set out in another report on tonight's agenda.
- 5.2 The proposals in this report could have a range of potential financial implications that are difficult to quantify at present:
 - (a) potential savings and/or additional income: office accommodation, travel costs;
 - (b) potential costs: furniture, ICT etc staff to enable continuation of home working on the basis of a common package of support; ICT costs;
 - (c) uncertain: changes to homeworking and broadband allowances, potential adjustment to base salaries.
- 5.3 In respect of furniture for staff working at home, if the Council had to provide a desk and chair and one could not be relocated from its buildings, this is estimated to cost approximately £400 per person. The Council has provided such furniture for a few staff in the past to enable them to work from home.
- 5.4 The recommendation to Council about commencing negotiation with staff and unions about continuing home working includes a requirement for a further report to Council not later than December 2020, which would set out the financial implications of any changes to terms and conditions.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 In implementing the framework, the Council will need to comply with all relevant legislation, including employment legislation in respect of changes to staff terms and conditions. The proposals in this report could result in changes to HR policies as well as service arrangements for members of the public.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Screening Assessment will be required as the detail of proposals on continuation of home working are developed. The screening assessments for changes to customer services and arrangements for meetings of Cabinet members have not shown any adverse implications for people with protected characteristics. Conversely, they either have no impact or have positive impacts – for example, making it easier for members with disabilities or caring responsibilities to take part in meetings as they would not need to leave home in order to do so.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The existing arrangements have been implemented successfully since March and any risks mitigated, for example using appropriate security in rolling out remote meeting technology. However risks exist in seeking permanently to embed some changes, including the potential inability to reach agreement with the unions about terms and conditions. The recovery framework and the detailed plans that underpin it

in themselves help to mitigate risk by ensuring that change is planned through a clear structure.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The Cabinet is invited to consider the recommendations set out in section 2.

10. CONSULTEES

10.1 Cabinet/CLT

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – recovery framework

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Reports to Cabinet on financial impact of COVID-19, May and July 2020

Summary of staff survey on home working, June 2020

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Framework for a Council recovery plan

Introduction

The Coronavirus pandemic has created an unprecedented emergency response by the Council which is unique in its history. Working as part of the wider West Mercia Local Resilience Forum, the Council is a Category 1 responder and is a central part of the response to this major incident. It is working closely with other principal councils in Worcestershire under the “One Worcestershire” principle.

Council staff have been classified as key workers and many have been spending much of their time dealing with the response, although are increasingly focussed on supporting recovery. In parallel, the Council has tried to maintain core services with almost all office-based staff working remotely. This has proved possible by a rapid acceleration of the Council’s agile working programme. Moreover, in April, the normal governance and decision-making procedures have been swiftly and successfully modified to allow remote meetings of Councillors and Councillors have been able to continue the community leadership role in their wards.

While the situation remains one of response, it is prudent to plan the recovery phase for this crisis, not least in light of changes to the restrictions which took effect from 13 May and were further amended in June. This is in line with established planning procedures. Any recovery plan for the Council will need to align as appropriate with wider plans across Worcestershire or the LRF area and also have regard to Government guidance as it emerges.

The difference to planning the recovery phase for this crisis is that it is highly likely that it will be a prolonged one, and also that the response phase will continue alongside any recovery – for example in assisting the county council in managing any future local outbreaks.

The local authority sector has experienced wide-reaching impacts and in particular for district councils these include such matters as governance, service delivery, financial pressures, unplanned expenditure and loss of income, workforce matters and increased (or reduced) demand for some services.

The transition back to ‘business as usual’ is likely to be a phased one and this needs to be reflected in any planning. In addition, the profound changes to the day-to-day operations of the Council forced by the response will have resulted in learning, such as the productivity and benefits of remote working. For some aspects of workforce management, service delivery and governance, it should not therefore be presumed that ‘business as usual’ will mean a return to how things used to be done prior to the pandemic:

the opportunity should be taken to review temporary arrangements that have been made and whether to embed some of them permanently.

The Framework

The Council's approach to recovery should be centred on the following 4 main and inter-linked pillars

Resetting the corporate plans of the council	Recovery of the organisation "Finding the new normal"	Councillors and democracy	Our communities and the local economy
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RESET THE CORPORATE PLANS OF THE COUNCIL					
Area of Focus	Objectives	Actions required	Timescale S/M/L	Lead officer	RAG rating
Revise Corporate Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy	<p>Review impact on delivery of promises and reconsider the prioritisation within the plan</p> <p>Review all assumptions for medium term financial planning, including income from all sources</p>	<p>Cabinet/CLT</p> <p>To include analysis of delivery/resources vs. impact/priority</p> <p>Complete monthly finance data returns to MHCLG</p> <p>Rewrite annual</p>	S/M	Ian Miller & Tracey Southall	Amber

		governance statement and statement of going concern in light of circumstances Commercial Activity Programme Board met in late June to reset commercial offer			
RECOVERY OF THE ORGANISATION “FINDING THE NEW NORMAL”					
Area of Focus	Objectives	Actions required	Timescale S/M/L	Lead officer	RAG rating
Strategic asset management plan Facilities asset management plan	To ensure plans remain fit for purpose To protect health of staff by minimising spread of disease and minimising impact on availability of staff, in order to maintain safe working arrangements	Review future of operational buildings, in particular office space – to be informed by review of existing home working arrangements (below) Working group established by Elaine Brookes – reports to CLT during June on implementation plan for working safely at WFH and Green St offices	S/M	Mike Parker/Elaine Brookes/Victoria Bendall	Amber

<p>Retain remote working at least until all restrictions on opening of restaurants and public houses lifted (which will signal that the public can use crowded spaces again)</p> <p>Subject to outcome of review of strategic asset management plan (above)</p>	<p>To protect health of staff and residents by minimising spread of disease and minimising impact on availability of staff</p> <p>To minimise unnecessary expenditure on and complexity of social distancing within buildings</p>	<p>Communicate rationale to staff and members</p>	<p>S</p>	<p>Ian Miller</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>Resetting expectations on remote working</p>	<p>To reduce the Council's carbon footprint by minimising commuting by staff</p> <p>To maximise space at WFH and Green St that could be let to tenants or could allow opportunity to sell a building</p>	<p>To undertake a review on whether existing home working arrangements should be maintained as "business as normal", in light of learning from the crisis.</p> <p>Review current home working and broadband allowances; promotion of tax allowance for mandatory home working</p> <p>Consider ICT requirements & cyber risk</p>	<p>S/M</p>	<p>Ian Miller/Rachael Simpson</p> <p>Dave Johnson</p>	<p>Amber</p>

		<p>Complete risk assessments of home working locations</p> <p>Report to Cabinet & Council, July 2020; followed by consultation with staff and unions and report to Council by December 2020</p>		Relevant staff, all service managers	
Use of remote meeting technology for staff meetings	<p>To maximise use of skills learned during COVID pandemic; to maximise effectiveness and efficiency; to reduce/eliminate travel time and cost. Consistent with Council's declaration of climate emergency</p>	Consider ongoing ICT requirements	M	<p>Dave Johnson</p> <p>All service managers to embed as good practice</p>	Green
Support staff in new and future ways of working	<p>To maintain morale and positive well-being</p> <p>To maintain effectiveness</p>	<p>Wellbeing support</p> <p>Support for managers effectively to manage and coach staff remotely</p> <p>Recognition strategy - all workers</p> <p>Building new social networks within the</p>	S/M/L	Rachael Simpson	Amber

		“workplace”			
Workforce planning – realignment of workforce to new service demand	<p>To ensure job roles meet needs, employees have the right skills and any change to operating structures is implemented effectively</p> <p>Review workforce in services with suppressed demand or where services have continued successfully with reduced staffing levels</p>	<p>Workforce planning within Services – gap analysis and actions identified</p> <p>Roles redefined where necessary</p> <p>Learning and development strategy in place to meet new organisation needs, including any new succession planning priorities</p>	<p>S/M</p> <p>M</p>	<p>Rachael Simpson</p> <p>Relevant CLT member</p>	Amber
Controls over expenditure	To ensure control over costs during and post crisis in uncertain financial context	<p>CLT to continue to oversee vacancy management</p> <p>Delegation (Cabinet, 20 May) to use reserves to meet any gap in</p>	S/M	Tracey Southall	Amber

		<p>income/expenditure till end June – further report in July to seek extend delegation to September</p> <p>CLT to keep under review whether other expenditure controls, review of earmarked reserves etc are required</p>			
Corporate Risk Register	Review key corporate risks	<p>CLT to review</p> <p>Report to Audit Committee July</p>	S	Tracey Southall	Amber
Capital Programme and major projects	Review capital programme and timing of delivery of schemes	Cabinet/CLT to conduct review	S/M	Tracey Southall	Amber
<p>Reopening facilities and services to the public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Toilets - Parks - play areas, other facilities etc - Museum - Trade waste collection - Wyre Forest House 	<p>To minimise risk for the public and to minimise risk of spread of the disease</p> <p>To minimise risk for staff</p>	<p>Risk assessments to be completed at the appropriate time, to take account of Government and sectoral guidance</p> <p>Equality impact assessment to be undertaken as part of this where relevant</p> <p>Liaise with and take account of guidance</p>	S/M	Relevant service manager in liaison with relevant member of CLT	Amber

- Hub		from Zurich in respect of insurance			
Adjustments to public realm/town centres	To minimise risk for the public and to minimise risk of spread of the disease	Work with WCC, Kidderminster BID, businesses, town councils on what signage and other arrangements would be appropriate to support the reopening of town centres wef 15 June, to cope with additional pedestrians and cyclists, taking account of relevant guidance	S	MP supported by AS and AB	Green
Reintroduction of car parking charges	To restart this important income stream	Announcement 22 May of reintroduction wef 1 June Monitor and respond to comment on social media etc, as necessary	S	Steve Brant/Ian Miller Media team	Green
Review Emergency Plan and Business Continuity Plan, and systems and processes in light of learning	To ensure we have the correct plan, resources and contingencies to meet future emergencies	Review BCP to confirm approach for any future pandemic virus Also feed in learning from recent flooding events	M	Rebecca Pritchett to support CLT	Amber

COUNCILLORS AND DEMOCRACY					
Area of Focus	Objectives	Actions required	Timescale S/M/L	Lead officer	RAG rating
Formal and informal meetings with councillors	To return to normal face-to-face meetings for formal meetings when it is safe to do so	Consider resurrecting when Government lifts all restrictions on public using restaurants and bars, taking account of Government guidance and also number of members in shielded group	M	Caroline Newlands	Amber
	To promote effectiveness of members and staff by reducing/avoiding time spent on travel, to promote resilience in the event of a future scenario that prevents face-to-face meetings and to embed the skills that have been learned by members and staff. Also supports Council's	Note provided to group leaders, 16 June to confirm legal position, and technological advice that a "mix and match" approach would be a retrograde step compared to Zoom Risk assessment shows no layout of chamber is possible to maintain social distancing for full council Survey of Councillors	M		Green

	declaration of climate emergency.	<p>after July Council about experience of remote working and report to Council in September about whether to continue with remote meeting technology for all informal meetings and briefings</p> <p>Report to Cabinet, 7 July about maintaining remote technology for informal meetings involving Cabinet members; and for Cabinet to use such technology for its formal meetings beyond May 2021 if the Government amends legislation.</p>			
OUR COMMUNITIES AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY					
Area of Focus	Objectives	Actions required	Timescale S/M/L	Lead officer	RAG rating

Rough Sleeping	To ensure a legacy for initiatives taken during crisis	Work with other councils to put pressure on registered providers to assist – meeting held 14 May	S	Kate Bailey	Red
Homelessness Reduction Act	To ensure preparedness for increase in service requests	If necessary, procure other facilities to accommodate; to be funded by share of £105m announced on 24 June Other actions agreed by CLT, 20 May			
Community safety					
Domestic Abuse and Exploitation	To address any potential increases	To take appropriate actions through Community Safety Partnership	S/M	Kathryn Underhill	Amber
Monitoring and enforcement of restrictions on opening of businesses etc	To minimise risk for the public	To take appropriate enforcement action including issuing of fines	S/M	Robert Beeston/WRS	
Localism	To secure transfer of ownership/cost of local assets to town councils	Re-commence discussions with town councils	S/M	Ian Miller supported by Kathryn Underhill	Red
Spacehive	Crowd-funding for local	Consider whether to	S/M	Ian Miller	Red

	charities and voluntary organisations	offer pump priming from Government grant, directed at Worcestershire Community Foundation			
WF Leisure Centre	<p>To get it open and running as soon as possible, but safely in accordance with Government guidance</p> <p>To minimise financial impact of closure on Places Leisure and WFDC</p>	<p>Risk assessment to be undertaken by Places Leisure</p> <p>Work with Strategic Leisure and Sport England on contractual arrangements during closure</p>	S/M	<p>Places Leisure</p> <p>Jane Alexander/Steve Brant</p>	Red
Economic recovery	To support economic recovery of district including town centres	<p>Future High Street Fund bid (submitted 4 June) – respond to any comments and requests from MHCLG</p> <p>Work through Worcestershire Economic Recovery Group on “One Worcestershire” programme of interventions to support economic recovery</p> <p>Issue Government-funded grants and reliefs expeditiously (discretionary scheme</p>	<p>S/M</p> <p>S/M</p>	<p>Ostap Paparega</p> <p>Ditto; liaison with relevant service managers</p> <p>Lucy Wright</p>	Amber

		launched 27 May, closes 30 June; amended 16 June)	S/M		
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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

7th JULY 2020

Financial Stress Testing re Coronavirus Pandemic Impact

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor G Ballinger, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Finance
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Corporate Director: Resources
CONTACT OFFICERS:	Tracey Southall Ext. 2100 Tracey.southall@wyreforestdc.gov.uk Helen Ogram Ext. 2907 Helen.Ogram@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 – Risk Analysis specific to Covid-19 and summary of Actions taken/planned <i>The appendices to this report have been circulated electronically and a public inspection copy for appendix 1 is available on request. (See front cover for details.)</i>

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide a second briefing for members on the impact of the current Coronavirus Pandemic on the Council's financial performance for 2020-21.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- 2.1 That the projected budgetary impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic outlined in this report and related actions both taken so far and planned for the future be noted.

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

- 2.2 That Delegated Authority to the end of September 2020 is granted to the Corporate Director: Resources, in consultation with the Corporate Leadership Team and the Cabinet Member for Strategy and Finance to use General Reserves to replace reduced income and increased expenditure that is not covered by government funding.
- 2.3 That Delegated Authority is granted to the Corporate Director Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategy and Finance to make in-year

**transfers from General Reserves to the General Risk and Innovation Fund
Earmarked Reserves.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The ongoing pandemic is placing unprecedented stress on our budget in the short term. We continue to experience the reduction in or even complete failure of some of our income streams for at least part of 2020-21. Together with cost pressures in certain services and cash flow implications, this means we will have to take action to safeguard the Council's budget in the medium term.
- 3.2. If the Government does not provide full funding to mitigate the financial losses, the Council's reserves will be used at a faster rate than predicted in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), the Funding Gap will increase and a more radical approach will be necessary to accelerate the Savings plans after the most significant period of the pandemic has passed and movement restrictions have been significantly relaxed.
- 3.3. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) continue to undertake monthly data collection exercises to gauge the degree of impact of the ongoing pandemic on public sector finances. Submissions for April, May and June have been made for this Council. So far the MHCLG response to these data collection exercises has been fairly positive, although further funding in particular to meet income losses is still required.
- 3.4. So far the Government has provided £3.2bn of generic funding and, in broad terms, this matches the massive impact that councils have faced to the end of May. However, MHCLG has published the data from the May returns and the Local Government Association's analysis of those returns shows that some types of council have received significantly less grant than the extra costs and loss of income that they have experienced to the end of May. The underfunding particularly affects district councils which have received £223m of grant but, based on the LGA's analysis, have faced a total financial challenge of £472m, over twice the amount of funding provided by the Government. The LGA, Societies of District and County Council Treasurers and District Councils' Network continue to lobby hard on the sector's behalf.
- 3.5. A report was considered by Cabinet on the 20th May 2020, setting out the first formal briefing for members on the financial impact of the Pandemic. This meeting approved the use of General Reserves to replace reduced income and increased expenditure not covered by government funding up until the end of June 2020. This report presents the latest position in relation to the financial forecast of the impact of the ongoing pandemic and requests that this flexibility is extended to the end of September.

4. KEY ISSUES/FORECASTS OF FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 4.1. The latest forecasts of the impact of the current pandemic on our budget are shown in the Tables below based on the assumption of the full impact of the restrictions lasting for a 4-month period, to be followed by a 3-month recovery timespan. This report provides the refreshed forecast impact for the first quarter of 2020-21 so up to the end of June 2020, together with a full year estimate. Further projections will be provided to Cabinet in due course as the pandemic hopefully continues to ease and more information is known.

4.2 Potential Cost Pressures

- 4.2.1 The Government has allocated this Council £1.06m from the £3.2bn Emergency Grant Fund towards meeting the extra costs arising as a result of the Pandemic. The following table show current projection of the areas we may see increased costs – **total additional costs over the first 3 months are estimated at £406k** to cover extra staffing resource in revenues, benefits, customer services and waste, software costs re reliefs and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) costs. The estimate of £406k also includes estimated expenditure as shown in the other services row; this is inclusive of exceptional contractual costs which will be the subject of a separate Exempt Strong Leader report in due course. We continue to collate the actual expenditure incurred and will include updated detail in further budgetary control Cabinet Reports. Whilst the extra funding is very welcome and covers estimated cost pressures in the period to end June, it only partly mitigates the loss of income as shown in the table in 4.3.1.

Spending Pressures	Quarter 1			2020-21 Estimated Outturn Variance (Q1 to 4)
	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	
	£	£	£	£
Highways and Transport Services	940	940	1,340	12,200
Housing (including homelessness services)	14,610	14,610	14,610	99,910
Environmental and Regulatory Services	2,640	2,640	4,240	30,810
Planning and Development	1,940	1,940	1,140	10,400
Finance/Corporate Services	2,830	2,830	2,830	63,050
Other Services (incl administering Government support packages)	108,440	108,440	119,140	858,630
TOTALS	131,400	131,400	143,300	1,075,000

- 4.2.2 Information is also being collated on areas of reduced costs and additional income as a result of the pandemic. These continue to emerge but an early estimate is provided in the table below:

Reduced costs and Income Growth	YTD	2020-21 FY Total
	£	£
Stationery and office supplies (including paper and print charges)	300	1,200
Travel and Subsistence	3,500	10,000
Energy usage (WFH)	1,800	10,000
Garden waste service	20,000	65,000
TOTALS	25,600	86,200

4.3 Reduced Income

- 4.3.1 The latest forecast reduction in Income Streams is shown in the Table below. Apart from council tax and business rates, it will be noted that the single largest line relates

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to income from car parking and enforcement. While all car parking charges were suspended from late March to the end of May, the table demonstrates why the Council's financial position would continue to be significantly impacted if charging had not been resumed. This is particularly relevant case in Stourport and Bewdley where a significant percentage of car park users are visitors to the district and do not contribute to the cost of the Council's services through council tax.

Income Reductions	April	May	June	2020-21 Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Property Rental Capital Portfolio	68	68	68	310
Property Rental Ind Est & F Hse	27	27	28	150
Property Rentals WFH	18	16	16	150
Markets	1	3	3	14
Leisure Centres	46	46	46	551
Land Charges	12	5	5	42
Parking and Enforcement	121	135	87	561
Parking Weavers Wharf	3	14	7	33
Trade Waste Contracts	60	42	21	141
Bulky and Ext works	10	2	2	30
Bewdley Museum	12	15	15	101
Licensing	11	9	9	60
Green Waste	0	0	0	0
Garage, Driver Training, Trees & Gmaint	25	30	30	142
Planning	9	15	13	110
Building Control	3	4	4	40
Parks & Green Spaces	1	1	0	3
Cemetery	1	0	0	1
External Interest	23	15	15	110
Court Costs - Ctax & Business Rates	24	20	20	70
Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) local share	15	15	15	69
Council Tax - lower collection rate (local share)	48	77	77	275
Council Tax (Lower Tax base growth)	2	3	5	30
Retained Business Rates local share	80	280	280	840
Council Tax (Lower Tax base growth)	2	3	5	30
Receipt of Housing Benefits O/Payment (subsidy)	23	23	24	200
Housing Benefit overpayments - Bad debt provision	0	0	0	40
General Bad debt Provision	0	0	10	50
Bad debt Provision Council Tax	0	0	0	89
Bad debt Provision business rates	0	0	0	185
TOTALS	645	868	805	4,427

The local shares of the income losses from Wyre Forest District Business Rates and Council tax payers are shown in the table above. The Gross impact to all preceptors is shown in the table below. Whilst the collective impact will be felt in next 6-9 months, there could be an ongoing impact on the Council for next 3-4 years:

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Income Reductions District and Preceptors	April	May	June	2020-21 Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)	110	110	110	500
Council Tax - lower collection rate	350	560	560	2,000
Retained Business Rates	200	700	700	2,100
Bad debt Provision Council Tax	0	0	10	645
Bad debt Provision business rates	0	0	10	463
TOTALS	660	1,370	1,390	5,708

4.3.2 Garden waste income has increased as an indirect consequence of the pandemic and this income stream is estimated to exceed the original budget by £65k. This is welcome and will be reflected in the revised budget but offsets less than 2% of the total estimated income reduction in the above table.

4.3.3 The Business and Planning Bill was introduced on 25th June and is expected to become law before the Cabinet meets. It introduces a temporary regime of pavement licences, which could allow restaurants, pubs and cafes to have furniture on the pavement to support their trading recovery but without hindering unduly use of the pavement by the public including disabled people and those with pushchairs. The licences will be issued by district councils. The maximum fee is £100. While some additional income can be expected from this source, it is likely that it will at best cover the additional costs of Worcestershire Regulatory Services in administering the scheme. Therefore, any income is likely to represent a very small proportion of the income losses that have been experienced by the Council.

4.4 Funding Gap

4.4.1 The 2020-23 MTFS projected a funding gap in 2022-23 of just over £1.7m.

4.4.2 Progress on the achievement of these savings will now be considerably slower than planned due to diversion of resources to manage the impact of the Pandemic. It is currently forecast that £250k of the required £474k savings in 2020-21 may not be achieved.

4.5 Looking Forward to Recovery Phase

4.5.1 The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy was published on the 11th May 2020 and this provides a roadmap for how and when the UK will adjust its response to the Covid-19 crisis. As the pandemic is confirmed as being under control the national and local response is to the gradual lifting of lockdown with attention focussed on the medium and longer term recovery or 'exit plan' as it is sometimes referred to. The government's initial phased recovery plan has been given increasing attention and indeed locally the Worcestershire Chief Executives have already ensured the local response to support the economic recovery is well underway. The £90,196 grant allocation from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) £50m Reopening High Streets Safely Recovery Fund, announced on the 24th May, is being used across the three towns in Wyre Forest to reboot the economy. Toilets reopened in mid-June (although no expenditure on toilets is eligible for the ERDF funding). New safety signage together with the Town Centre Recovery Business Support Officers are positive outcomes to support the opening of non-essential

retailers on the 15th June. The Council will have to be mindful that, as part of the ongoing delivery of that 'exit plan', there may be increased expectation placed on the Council, including further distribution of national funding initiatives. The Discretionary Grants Scheme is one which the Council is currently managing (see para 6.7).

5 Cash Flow

- 5.1 The potential cash flow impact of the pandemic remains difficult to gauge at this early stage although County Councils will probably be most at risk of cash flow problems.

The following table provides further information on cash flow based on early information on receipts of instalments of Council Tax and Business Rates in the first three months of 2020-21. We made the first precept payments in full at the end of April, so all Town and Parish Councils have received 50% of their council tax and major preceptors have received payments so far in accordance with agreed payment schedules. The first three payments for the redistribution of the business rates funding will have been made to plan by the end of June. We will continue to review the position and work with Worcestershire County Council and our other major preceptors to ensure ongoing precept payments are sustainable.

The payments received for council tax and business rates to mid-June are summarised in the table below. The table shows that council tax receipts fell by almost 8% compared to the position a year earlier, with the main drop being in payments made in cash, by cheque or by card. Business rates income are 65% down on a strict comparison but, after Government-funded reliefs are taken into account, the drop is about 33% and has been experienced across all means of payment.

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Table to show Cashflow Receipts of Council Tax and Business Rates - First three Collection Runs 2020-21					
	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
Receipts	Actual Income to 07 June 2019	Actual income to 07 June 2020	Difference between columns 1 and 2	Column 1 with uplift applied*	Difference between columns 4 and 2
	£	£	£		£
Council Tax					
Council Tax Direct Debits (DD)	13,957,134	14,076,455	119,321	14,486,110	- 409,654
Council Tax Bounced DD	- 95,062	- 64,609	30,453	- 98,664	- 34,056
Council Tax Standing Orders	580,052	475,182	- 104,870	602,036	- 126,854
Council Tax Cash, cheque, card	2,863,619	2,134,616	- 729,003	2,972,150	- 837,535
Sub Total Council Tax	17,305,744	16,621,645	- 684,099	17,961,632	- 1,339,987
	Actual Income to 07 June 2019	Actual income to 07 June 2020	Difference between columns 1 and 2	Column 1 with reduction for Reliefs applied**	Difference between columns 4 and 2
Business Rates (NNDR)					
Business Rates (NNDR) DD	4,306,092	1,856,648	- 2,449,443	2,242,856	- 386,207
Business Rates (NNDR) Bounced DD	- 29,399	- 20,390	9,009	- 15,313	- 5,077
Business Rates (NNDR) Standing Orders	2,834,521	631,338	- 2,203,183	1,476,379	- 845,041
Business Rates (NNDR) Cash, chq, card	247,346	114,485	- 132,861	128,832	- 14,347
Sub Total NNDR	7,358,560	2,582,081	- 4,776,478	3,832,753	- 1,250,672
Total Council Tax and Business Rates	24,664,303	19,203,726	- 5,460,578	21,794,385	- 2,590,659
Note overall uplifts between 2019-20 to 2020-21:					
Council Tax	3.79%	103.7900%			
Whilst Council Tax collections for the three months are circa 7.5% down on expectations this is manageable within overall cashflows currently so the precept payment are being made to plan - we will continue to keep this under review					
Business Rate collections for the first three month are circa 65% down on expectations due to COVID-19 reliefs, or 33% down compared to the recalculated expectations taking into account the overall reduction for new Reliefs. The governments has committed to paying the Section 31 grant funding to cover these reliefs so Councils overall cashflows should allow normal payments to MHCLG, the County Council etc to be made in line with agreed timetables. We awarded all the Retail Hospitality and Leisure Reliefs before April 2020 so we now are comparing a balance of approx £28,468,706 at the end of March to £14,828,110 as at the start of April 2020 for the total year, the above table assumes payments over 10 months.					
Note:					
Council Tax refunds issued to 7th June 2020 not included in above £122,584					
NNDR refunds issued to 7th June 2020 not included in above £518,718					

Collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates (NNDR) compared to prior years have decreased as shown below. Due to the reliefs awarded to businesses, the amount of NNDR due to be collected has reduced by approximately 50% which we will recoup in section 31 grants. With the closure of the majority of businesses, our NNDR collection rates have taken the worst hit.

We ended 2019-20 on a real high with the best performance in terms of percentage of Council Tax collected for 10 years. The impact of the Pandemic is clear in the reduced recovery rates, not helped by the diversion of resource from recovery work to the distribution of government grants. Recovery has recommenced during June.

£s collected against 2020/21 liabilities

Council Tax 2020/21	£ 11,891,978.50	18.80%	
Council Tax 2019/20	£ 12,437,307.15	20.35%	1.56% decrease in percentage collected and a decrease in collection of £ 545,329

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NNDR 2020/21	£ 1,910,143.32	13.53%	6.72% decrease in percentage collected and a decrease in collection of £ 4,047,623
NNDR 2019/20	£ 5,957,765.95	20.25%	

Note – decrease in £s collected is largely due to reliefs granted

£s collected against previous years' arrears

The **additional** income (or rather loss **after** refunds and costs have been deducted) collected this year against all previous years' debts are:

Council Tax	£ 151,178	– We have collected £57k against previous years but have refunded £357k so the net loss is £299k
NNDR	<u>£ - 299,492</u>	
Total	<u>£ -148,314</u>	

Measures to help ease immediate financial pressures faced by councils in England due to the coronavirus outbreak were announced by the government on the 16th April 2020. Councils are being allowed to defer £2.6 billion in business rates payments to central government, and £850 million in social care grants were paid up front in April in a move aimed at helping to ease immediate pressures on local authority cash flows. Worcestershire County Council is advising on the impact on cash flows for the Pool.

Reserves, Balances and Final Accounts Timeline

- 5.2.1 The table shows reserves previously reported as available as part of the three-year financial strategy now updated to take into account the very welcome Final Account Provisional Outturn savings of just over £1m. In addition to these general reserves a Working Balance of £1.2m is held together with significant Earmarked Reserves currently estimated at £8.8m that all feed into cash flow management.

Reserves Statement	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Reserves as at 1st April	3,787	4,833	4,348	3,934
Contribution from Reserves	1,046	(485)	(414)	(835)
Reserves as at 31st March	4,833	4,348	3,934	3,099

- 5.2.2 The Final Accounts Provisional Outturn was reported in a Strong Leader Report on the 9th June. The outturn saving of £1.065m after the creation of several Business Rates Risk reserves, has been used to increase General Reserves to help buffer the pandemic impact. The use of this extra funding is however intended as a temporary buffer as it is required to help close the significant pre-Covid-19 funding gap. Whilst this is positive news, unless Government funding in response to the pandemic covers a high percentage of additional costs and lost income, the overall position in respect of reserves is expected to deteriorate.

- 5.2.3 The Provisional Outturn report stated that in-year increases to the separate Innovation Fund and General Risk Earmarked Reserves may be considered as more information becomes known about the current pandemic, to what degree the Savings Plans can be progressed and whether resultant “spend to save” funding requirements will materialise. Delegation to the Corporate Director: Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategy and Finance for such increases is now recommended for speed and ease of decisions in these dynamic times.
- 5.2.4 Final Accounts closure is proceeding well and is in-line with the later timetable. Public inspection will commence on the 6th July until the 14th August.
- 5.2.4 Audit Committee on the 22nd July will consider the draft accounts with the post external audit Statement of Accounts going to the 9th September meeting. Transparency regarding ongoing financial sustainability continues to be important.

5.3 Financial Consequences of Pandemic

- 5.3.1 It is uncertain whether the Government will provide full funding to mitigate the financial losses arising as a result of the pandemic. Ministers have promised a “comprehensive plan to ensure financial sustainability of councils this financial year” but details are not to hand at the time of finalising this report. If the Government does not provide full funding, the Council’s reserves will be used at a faster rate than predicted in the MTFS, the Funding Gap will increase and a more radical approach will be necessary to accelerate the savings plans. The Council’s focus has moved to focus on recovery, particularly economic recovery in the county and elsewhere. Alongside this it will be necessary to consider the Council’s own recovery. In simple terms, if additional funding from the Government does not cover all the lost income and extra costs faced by the District Council, and the gap between the two is significant, the Council’s own recovery will focus on what expenditure has to be cut and over what timespan in order to bring the position into line with the MTFS. It is stressed that it remains impossible to know the scale of the issue to be addressed, as there is no certain knowledge about the totality of Government funding or about the Council’s loss of income and extra costs. It is therefore still not possible to predict what steps might be required but it is right that the Council continues to be candid with local residents and others about what might have to happen as set out in the previous report.
- 5.3.2 In the short term, it is likely that it will be necessary to draw on reserves in order to cover extra costs or reduced income, to the extent that Government funding is insufficient: hence the proposed extended delegation in paragraph 2.2 of this report.

6 Funding Confirmed and Timing

- 6.1 The Council has been allocated £1.06m from total generic funding of £3.2bn provided to councils. While the Government’s additional grant is very welcome, as set out above, it is not likely to cover the full financial impact on the Council, the extent of which is difficult to predict accurately when we do not know how long all aspects of the lockdown will be in place or how quickly the local economy will recover. It may still be necessary to call

on the Council's reserves pending receipt of or in the absence of additional Government funding.

- 6.2 The Government has provided funding for a range of specific issues in addition to the generic funding: the bulk of this funding is for distribution to others, including businesses and residents facing financial difficulty and therefore does not in most cases assist the Council's financial position.

Individuals facing financial hardship

- 6.3 Hardship Fund - £952,367 - the money was paid on the 3rd April to billing authorities through a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. This Council's scheme for application of grants was published in the Strong Leader Report of 31st March 2020.

http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/docs/doc55707_20200331_cabinet_decisions_report.pdf

Further changes to the council tax relief policy were made under delegated powers on 17th April 2020 by the Corporate Director: Resources. In summary, the Council has granted relief of £150 in 2020-21 for working age households in respect of council tax reduction support. This applies to households already on CTRS and new households claiming as a result of the pandemic. The high number of claimants mean there will not be funding left for a more generic hardship fund. To date £778k of this funding has been paid out in reliefs of up to £150 to 5,240 working age CTRS claimants with the balance retained to help new claimants of CTRS during this difficult year. We will continue to help others who are adversely affected by the lockdown, including any affected by Government changes to welfare support and benefit thresholds such as the temporary £20 per week addition to Universal Credit. The Government has promised "new burdens" funding to councils for administering the hardship funding but no information on the detail has yet been provided. The "new burdens" funding mentioned in this and subsequent paragraphs will meet some or possibly all of the relevant spending pressures outlined in the table in paragraph 4.2.1.

- 6.4 On 11th June, DEFRA announced £63m to help people struggling to pay for food and other essentials. At the time of writing, it has still not been confirmed that this funding will be distributed to billing authorities, including district councils, which normally provide such emergency welfare support. It is therefore uncertain whether the Council will receive a share of this funding or, if it is incorrectly given to county councils, whether the Council will be able to access a share via Worcestershire County Council. The County Council does not have comprehensive data on or links with people in financial difficulty and might therefore struggle to ensure that help is delivered to those who need it.

Support for businesses and town centres

- 6.5 Payment of Business Rates grants and granting of relief from 2020-21 in respect of business rates reliefs and the grants to businesses. The Government is providing full funding for the reliefs via grants under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 by payments in year to billing authorities via in-year adjustments to MHCLG business rate payments: £15.7m of reliefs have been implemented for eligible businesses in Wyre Forest. In addition, "new burdens" funding has been promised for the administrative costs but the details are still awaited.

6.6 The MHCLG paid £22.5m to this Council on the 1st April to fund grants to businesses. As at 29th June, the District Council had distributed 94% of the grant funding to 1,780 businesses totalling £21.13m. £1.28m of grant funding remains set aside for national chains but we suspect they will not be eligible due to State Aid limits (we have written to them and are now chasing them for a nil response). Across England, it is reported that up to £600m of the initial mandatory grant funding will not be capable of being used, mainly because of the State Aid limits. A Government announcement is expected on whether local government will be allowed to retain this money for other purposes to support economic recovery, although there would have to be a redistribution of the unspent amounts because the position in respect of spending is not even across councils. BEIS is working on “new burdens” funding for the cost of administering the schemes described in this paragraph and paragraph 6.7 but allocations have not yet been confirmed.

6.7 BEIS announced in early May a further £617m of funding for local discretionary business grants for business that did not meet the eligibility criteria for the mandatory scheme in paragraph 6.6. The allocation for this council is £1.153m and was paid to the Council on 15th June. This Council's Local Scheme was approved by a Strong Leader report on 27th May 2020 :

http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/docs/doc55834_20200527_cabinet_decision_report.pdf supplemented by a further Strong Leader report of the 15th June approving two revisions to the scheme so that take up may be maximised before the 30 June deadline.

http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/docs/doc55861_20200616_cabinet_decisions_report.pdf. At the date of writing, 44 grants have been paid totalling £242k, although this is expected to increase to over £500k after the provision for “top up” grants in the adopted scheme has been activated. The Council will review the scheme further after the closing date of 30 June to ensure that the full allocation of £1.153m is used in the most effective way.

6.8 Extra funding of £6.1m across for Business Improvement Districts was announced on the 1st May. The funding boost is to help high streets and town centres through the pandemic, to help cover their day to day costs for the next 3 months. This council's BID is relatively small and new so the allocation received on the 1st June is £10,252. This has been directly passported to the BID to help with their ongoing financial sustainability.

6.9 A grant allocation of £90,196 from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) out of a total £50m Reopening High Streets Safely Recovery Fund was announced on the 24th May. It is being used across the three towns in Wyre Forest to reboot the economy as set out in paragraph 4.5.1.

Support for homeless people and rough sleepers

6.10 This Council's share of the £3.2m funding specifically announced by the MHCLG for homelessness was £4.5k.

6.11 Plans to provide thousands of long-term, safe homes for vulnerable rough sleepers taken off the streets during the pandemic were unveiled on the 24th May 2020 by Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick MP. This commitment will be backed by £160 million this year and will support rough sleepers currently housed in emergency accommodation to move on to more sustainable, long-term housing. By accelerating plans for the £381 million announced for rough sleeping services at Budget – now extended to £433 million – the funding will put 6,000 new housing units into the system, with 3,300 of these becoming available in the next 12 months. However, as an estimate this might equate to funding for only 33 units within Worcestershire whereas the current

demand is more in the region of 100, so the impact for this Council, whilst welcome, is not sufficient.

- 6.12 An additional £105 million was announced on the 24th June to help local authorities implement a range of support interventions for people placed into emergency accommodation during the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes supporting moves into the private rented sector, helping individuals to reconnect with friends or family, and extending or procuring interim accommodation. Worcestershire's allocation is likely to be in the region of £1m in total so this Council's share could be circa £200k but is yet to be confirmed.

7 Supplementary Estimates and Virements

- 7.1 As previously reported, changes were made to the Financial Regulations for Supplementary Estimates and Virements increase the limit for Service Manager Virements from £20,000 to £50,000 for a 6-month period and the cumulative Cabinet approval limit for both Virements and Supplementary estimates from £200,000 to £500,000 in 2020-21. These changes were also reported formally to the extraordinary council meeting on 21st April. They will be reviewed at the end of September.

8 LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Local Government Act 2003 (sections 25–29) placed additional duties on Local Authorities on how they set and prioritise budgets.
- 8.2 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 Cabinet currently reviews the Budget on a quarterly basis but this second forecast of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been brought to Members as an additional report due to the significant financial impact and uncertainty about government support to mitigate this.
- 8.3 Our External Auditor Grant Thornton makes an assessment based on the annual programme of external audit work. The focus is on ensuring there are proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience and that the organisation has proper arrangements for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 8.4 Under section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the chief financial officer in consultation with the monitoring officer has the power to issue a report if there is, or is likely to be an imbalanced budget. A full council meeting must then take place within 21 days to consider the notice. In the meantime, no new agreements involving spending can be entered into. The impact of this would effectively be to "freeze" the financial activity of the council in terms on any new/non-essential expenditure. There is no plan to do so at present and it is understood that MHCLG are considering further measures, in addition to the funding and other changes mentioned above, to minimise the risk of any council being the subject of a section 114 notice. CIPFA has implemented a temporary modification to its guidance for councils under budgetary pressure due to Covid-19, to give them the time and space to explore alternatives to freezing spending via section 114 notices: this would include notification to the Government. These guidance changes could remain in place for several months.

9 **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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

10 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 10.1 The inability to deliver a balanced budget is one of the Council's key corporate risks. The Risk Register for 2020-21 has recently been agreed by CLT and includes specific reference to the risks arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to this the Leadership team (Officers and Members) are managing more granular risks summarised together with key actions taken and planned as set out in Appendix 1. This Risk analysis includes assigned Red, Amber, Green (RAG) ratings.
- 10.2 There is still a risk in relation to the Business Improvement District (BID) in Kidderminster. Total levies payable are c£205k but the Government failed to cover these as part of business rates reliefs. The extra funding for BIDs announced on the 1st May whilst very welcome will only mitigate the financial risk in part, as the Cabinet had agreed a loan of £75k to the Kidderminster BID which was due to be repaid from the first levy. Bills for the levy have been issued but confidence that they will be paid in full is low: indeed, only £67k was collected as at the timing of writing (The invoices were due in one payment on or before 1st April 2020.) This amount is being paid over to the BID net of system software costs purchased by the Council on behalf of the company. The upfront cash flow loan provided to the BID company will mitigate the risk of the BID company failing in the short-term and a deferment of the repayment of this loan from future years' levies has been agreed.
- 10.3 [The Institute for Fiscal Studies published a briefing note](#) on the 22nd June 2020 setting out their view on how different local authorities could be exposed to a different nature of financial risk arising from the impact of COVID-19. This briefing note comes alongside a [financial risk dashboard](#) which brings together a series of indicators and allows local authorities to compare themselves against other councils on those metrics. The dashboard results show that this Council has a relatively high financial risk as a result of the COVID-19 impact and needs to manage the resultant challenges very carefully to meet its fiduciary duties.

11 **CONCLUSIONS/ACTION**

- 11.1 The current pandemic is placing unprecedented stress on our budget in the short term. We are seeing the reduction in and in some cases even complete failure of some of our income streams for at least part of 2020-21. Together with cost pressures in certain services and cash flow implications, this will mean we will have to take action to safeguard the Council's budget in the medium term. While the Government's additional grant announcements are welcome, they are not likely to cover the full financial impact on the Council, the extent of which is difficult to predict accurately.

This second report sets out key issues, updating estimates for the potential overall impact of the pandemic to the end of June 2020 and beyond – dependent on Government funding and proposes delegation to allow for use of General Reserves for a further 3 months to manage the short-term position after which further reports will be made to Members.

12. CONSULTEES

Corporate Leadership Team
Cabinet
Service Managers

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Council 26th February 2020
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-23
Hyperlink to Final Accounts timeline
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/404/contents/made>
Local Scheme was approved by a Strong Leader report on 27th May 2020 :
http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/docs/doc55834_20200527_cabinet_decision_report.pdf supplemented by a further Strong Leader report of the 15th June:
http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/docs/doc55861_20200616_cabinet_decisions_report.pdf.
Hardship Fund - Scheme for application of grants was published in the Strong Leader Report of 31st March 2020.
http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/docs/doc55707_20200331_cabinet_decisions_report.pdf
Hyperlink to BID funding announcement
https://www.gov.uk/government/news/6-1-million-funding-boost-to-help-high-streets-and-town-centres-through-pandemic?utm_source=a2f758f0-99ab-478a-8c67-743c985ef94f&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate
Financial Stress Testing re Coronavirus Pandemic Impact – Cabinet, 20th May 2020 <https://www.ifs.org.uk/research/local-dashboard>

APPENDIX 1 – CABINET REPORT ON FINANCIAL STRESS TESTING COVID-19 – RISKS AND ACTIONS

1. Risks and assigned RAG Rating

- 1.1 Reputational damage –coordinated, controlled communications (internal and external) response consistent across council, will mitigate this risk. ***This is being well-managed and the Council has received lots of positive feedback about the refuse service, garden waste service and timely payments of business rate grants. - GREEN***
- 1.2 Costs of borrowing volatility – extra interest costs, particularly if MHCLG doesn't cover cash flow in full. ***Not an issue yet as government grant payments front-ended but could become a problem if the pandemic last more than 4 months and MHCLG do not response to further assistance with funding. - AMBER***
- 1.3 Pension Fund value fluctuations. This could increase future costs. ***Remains a risk, WCC S151 is in liaison with the actuaries for revised valuations on some of the pensions fund investment areas. - RED***
- 1.4 Capital Portfolio Values and Property income/performance deteriorates: ***early indications are that property values will dip in response to the economic impact of the pandemic it is unknown how long the recovery will take once the global position eases. - RED***
- 1.5 Reduced scope for further proposals for purchases due to market uncertainty; ***Remains a risk; valuers are reporting market volatility and the potential for what is hoped will be temporary reductions in valuations - RED***
- 1.6 Loss of key staff - statutory duties cannot be met. ***Remains a risk but managed so far within existing resources supplemented by overtime. Now the lockdown is easing HR are working with staff that have been shielded but unable to work from home to agree return to duties where possible - AMBER***
- 1.7 Risk Reserves need to be used and are insufficient to assure financial resilience. - ***This is inevitable unless MHCLG provide more funding – will be covered in first Budget Monitoring report for 2020-21.- RED***
- 1.8 Business Improvement District (BID) Kidderminster– ***Total levies payable c£205k but the Government failed to cover these as part of business rates reliefs. The extra funding for BIDS announced on the 1st May whilst very welcome will only mitigate the financial risk in part, as the Cabinet had agreed a loan of £75k to the Kidderminster BID which was due to be repaid from the first levy. Bills for the levy have been issued but confidence that they will be paid in full is low: indeed, only £67k was collected as at the beginning of June (The invoices were due in one payment on or before 1st April 2020). This is being paid over to the BID net of system software costs purchased by the Council on behalf of the company. The upfront cash flow loan provided to the BID company will***

APPENDIX 1 – CABINET REPORT ON FINANCIAL STRESS TESTING COVID-19 – RISKS AND ACTIONS

mitigate the risk of the BID company failing in the short-term and a deferment of the repayment of this loan from future year's levies has been agreed. - RED

- 1.9 Localism – significant savings stream will now be delayed due to resource redeployment. ***Remains a key risk as currently resource required to manage the pandemic, and because of delay in Kidderminster Town Council elections to May 2021. - RED***
- 1.10 Risk that savings programmes may not be achieved this year and later savings programme will slip – need to plan for this and model how long reserves will last. ***Remains a key risk as currently resource required to manage the pandemic. – RED***
- 1.11 Cash flow - Raft of Government assistance facilitated through Councils should not have a significant impact on cash flow as so far, payments are to be made in advance. However, cash flow is a concern over the next few months due to uncertainty from ongoing receipts of council tax, business rates and other income streams as well as many more council tax reduction support claims. The diversion of resource to administer various government grants has also resulted in reduced recovery action. ***Remains a key risk – AMBER to RED***
- 1.12 Spending Review timetable could slip further, but not discussed as yet. Accounts completion deadline – has slipped in line with audit date being moved back to September, but no formal decision made yet. ***External Audit slipped back 4 weeks, no relaxation of Accounting Code - AMBER***

2. Actions

2.1 The following actions/decisions have been taken by CLT so far and status update report:

1. Regular communications bulletin, coordinated approach with Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) and Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) as set out in Chief Executives update. ***-Ongoing***
2. Ongoing work with our Worcestershire colleagues to understand the wider financial impacts. ***-Ongoing***
3. All non-essential expenditure suspended by default due to resource concentration on responding to the pandemic. ***-Ongoing***
4. Business Continuity Plans used by all teams – homeworking wherever possible; daily reports from HR on working arrangement for all staff. This will inform potential redeployment decisions. ***-Ongoing***

APPENDIX 1 – CABINET REPORT ON FINANCIAL STRESS TESTING COVID-19 – RISKS AND ACTIONS

5. Recovery/enforcement action of Council Tax, Business Rates Recovery and other income areas reviewed and action taken to suspend as appropriate until June when recovery action recommenced. **Ongoing review**
6. Revision of Business Rates and Council Tax policies where required ie Section 13A, 1C policy, - see Strong Leader report issued 31st March on **Officer decision taken under delegation 16th April 2020**
7. Review and revision/suspension where necessary of Constitution, particularly in relation to remote meetings. – **Achieved – Council agenda 21st April 2020, Financial Regulations updated under delegation 7th April 2020.**
8. Implementation of free car parking (LGA initiative) – extra 3 months parking for car park season ticket holders. – **Reviewed and charges reintroduced from 1st June. The impact across the three towns on economic recovery will be monitored.**
9. Town Centre Recovery Plan - **Progressing, toilets open from 15th June, together with new safety signage and launch of Town Centre Recovery Business Support Officers scheme.**
10. Discretionary Grants Scheme – **Strong Leader Decisions 27th May and 15th June 2020**
11. Quarantine for staff –returning from holidays abroad – **policy decision shared 5th June 2020**
12. Recovery – homeworking – **Staff Survey 9th June 2020, Report to July Cabinet on recovery**

2.2 Ongoing/future actions/decisions:

1. Monitor financial resilience and cash flows, request MHCLG support where appropriate. - **Delta submissions April 15th, May 15th, June 19th**
2. Recruitment to priority posts/extra resource by CLT agreement. - **ongoing**
3. Precept payment dates to be reviewed in liaison with other Worcestershire treasurers. - **no changes required to April, May or June payment plans as Council Tax direct debits were sufficient and Business Rates S31 grants paid monthly from mid-May (via in-year adjustments to MHCLG business rate payments). However, this position may change and will be kept under review.**
4. Savings plans –reconsider and come up with alternative strategies to close funding gap. **MHCLG lobbied for additional funding.**

**APPENDIX 1 – CABINET REPORT ON FINANCIAL STRESS TESTING COVID-19
– RISKS AND ACTIONS**

5. Ongoing monitoring of resource requirement to manage COVID-19. Where gross income streams fall, review resource, consider ongoing use of agency staff and/ or redeploy staff to other service areas to reduce costs in the short term- ***Ongoing***
6. Consider if delivery of any new capital or revenue projects should be deferred – ***no deferrals necessary to date.***
7. Introduce functionality for remote Council Meetings. ***Temporary changes agreed by Council 21st April 2020, remote meetings continue to work well, Zoom and Teams roll-out in progress***
8. Reports to Members as appropriate. –***This is the second Cabinet Report and follows regular Member briefings***

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET
7 July 2020**

Review of Public Space Protection Orders and Results of the Consultation Process

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor H Dyke
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Chief Executive
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kathryn Underhill, Ext. 2956 Kathryn.Underhill@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	<p>Appendix One: Summary of Consultation Responses Dog Control</p> <p>Appendix Two: Summary of Consultation Responses Alcohol PSPO Stourport</p> <p>Appendix Three: Summary of Consultation Responses Alcohol PSPO Bewdley</p> <p>Appendix Four: Maps</p> <p>Dog Control PSPO Map of Specified Area (District wide)</p> <p>Dog Control PSPO Map of Specified Area (QEII Jubilee Gardens)</p> <p>Dog Control PSPO Map of Specified Area (Kidderminster Cemetery)</p> <p>Dog Control PSPO Map of Specified Area (Hurcott Pool)</p> <p>Dog Control PSPO Map of Specified Area (Stackpool)</p> <p>Alcohol PSPO Map of Specified Area - Bewdley</p> <p>Alcohol PSPO Map of Specified Area - Stourport</p>

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline the results from the consultation process regarding the dog control PSPO and the restriction of alcohol consumption in Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn PSPOs and to outline the implementation process if the Public Space Protection Orders are agreed.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is asked to **DECIDE** that:

- 2.1 **A Public Space Protection Order regarding dog controls, within the specified area, outlined in Appendix 4, is implemented.**
- 2.2 **A Public Space Protection Order to restrict the consumption of alcohol within the specified area of Bewdley, outlined in Appendix 4 is implemented.**

- 2.3 A Public Space Protection Order to restrict the consumption of alcohol within the specified area of Stourport-on-Severn, outlined in Appendix 4, is implemented.**
- 2.4 The Public Space Protection Orders are reviewed 6 months after their implementation.**
- 2.5 Council Officers and Partners to give due consideration and implement appropriate actions regarding issues that have been raised through the consultation but are not suitable for inclusion in a PSPO.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A Strong Leader report, on 30 April 2020, approved the undertaking of a review of the district wide Dog Control PSPO and PSPOs restricting alcohol consumption in Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn and, subject to the findings, to commence consultation.**

4. KEY ISSUES

4.1 Consultation Process

Having reviewed the evidence, the Chief Executive approved the launch of a consultation process for each PSPO. The formal consultation process was launched on 19 May 2020 and closed on 15 June 2020. The Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 does not specify what constitutes appropriate consultation. However it is clear that the local authority must consult with the following:

- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Chief Officer of Police for the local area
- Any Community representatives the Council feels appropriate
- Owner or occupier of land within the restricted area, such as local businesses.

Letters were sent to a wide range of stakeholders and the questionnaires were made available on the Council's website. Press releases and social media messages were issued during the period to solicit further responses.

4.2 Key Consultation Findings

Individual surveys were undertaken regarding district wide dog control orders and restricting alcohol consumption in Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn. The Summary of the Results is at Appendix 1, 2 and 3. Over 860 responses were received for the dog control order survey and over 600 responses in total for the alcohol related surveys (400 for Bewdley, 200 for Stourport-on-Severn). This compares with 927 responses on the dog control PSPO in 2017.

Dog Control Order Proposals

The consultation on the district wide Dog Control Order proposed to continue various restrictions and conditions and to introduce some new offences to be regulated under the Order, all of which were supported by a majority in the consultation as set out in the table. The strength of support varied with the proposed new offences generating lower levels of support, but in each case there was clear gap between those strongly supporting/supporting a proposal and those

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strongly opposing/opposing it. Even in the case of the proposal that received the lowest level of support, the proposed restriction to require a lead at or adjacent to Hurcott Pool had 51.4% of responses who strongly agreed/agreed but only 36.8% who strongly disagreed/disagreed

Proposed offence to be covered by the PSPO (continuation from the 2017 Order)	Percentage support for the proposal (strongly support/support)
Failure to pick up dog faeces when in control of dog	98.4%
Failure to carry a poop bag or other means to clean up after a dog	93.3%
Failure to keep a dog on a lead in a designated area (Kidderminster Cemetery and Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Gardens, Bewdley)	Kidderminster Cemetery 90.8% QEII Jubilee Gardens 73.2%
Failure to place a dog on a lead when directed to do so	87.7%
Failure to exclude dogs from specified areas, including fenced off or enclosed children's playgrounds	Specified areas 92.1% Children's play area 99.2% Splash pad, water play area 95.2%
Two new proposed offences to be covered by the PSPO	
Walking more dogs than is permitted at a time	60.1%
Failure to keep a dog on a lead in a designated area – Stackpool, Springfield Park and Hurcott Pool, Hurcott Woods	Stackpool 54.7% Hurcott Pool 51.4%

In respect of limiting the number of dogs that one person is permitted to walk at one time, there was clear majority support in favour of introducing such a restriction. There was a mix of views about the maximum number of dogs in a person's control at one time: the most popular answer was "up to 3 dogs" (37.4%) with 36.1% supporting a lower number of "up to 2 dogs". Given that a very clear majority, over 73%, supported the limit being set at three dogs or less, the recommendation is that the PSPO should set the limit at three dogs.

Alcohol Restriction Orders

The consultation on Alcohol Restriction Orders in Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn proposed to continue various restrictions and conditions, all of which were supported by a majority in the consultation as set out in the table.

Proposed offence to be covered by the PSPO (continuation from the 2017 Order)	Percentage support for the proposal (strongly support/support)
Bewdley	
To provide the power for authorised officers of the Council, Police Officer or Police Community Support Officer to require a person drinking alcohol in public to surrender their alcohol (or anything which is reasonably believed to be alcohol)	90.86%
Failure to comply with the requirements of the PSPO by drinking alcohol in a public place will be an offence and people may result in a £100 fixed penalty notice	92.59%
Stourport-on-Severn	
To provide the power for authorised officers of the Council, Police Officer or Police Community Support Officer to require a person drinking alcohol in public to surrender their alcohol (or anything which is reasonably believed to be alcohol)	93.02%
Failure to comply with the requirements of the PSPO by drinking alcohol in a public place will be an offence and people may result in a £100 fixed penalty notice	91.6%

In the survey, some comments were made in relation to motorbikes, primarily on Severnside South, Bewdley. Nine comments were received directly from local residents by email. These were focused on noise and illegal parking obstructing the highway and pedestrian areas. These matters will be considered under other relevant legislative powers with Worcestershire County Council as highways authority and West Mercia Police.

4.3 Legal Conditions

Local authorities have the power to make a PSPO if satisfied on reasonable grounds that two conditions are met.

The first condition is that –

- a) activities carried on in a public place within the Authority's area have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, or
- b) it is likely that activities will be carried on in a public place within that area and that they will have such an effect.

The second condition is that the effect, or likely effect, of the activities –

- a) is or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature,

- b) is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable, and
- c) Justifies the restrictions imposed by the notice.

4.4 Creating a Public Space Protection Order

In order to make each of the PSPOs, Members need to be satisfied that the legal conditions, laid out above, have been met.

The view of Officers is that the legal conditions have been met to enable all of the proposals consulted upon to be implemented. This is based on:

- Evidence gathered by the Council itself and from other partners and associated agencies including the Analyst and Intelligence Team at West Mercia Police, which has provided an anti social behaviour report. A Review of PSPOs – Key Findings was considered as part of the delegated decision to go ahead with consultation.
- Results from the consultation process.

4.5 Implementation

For each PSPO, a communications plan is being developed and will be put in place ahead of the implementation of the PSPOs in October 2020.

For a period of three months after the introduction of any new offences in the PSPOs, Council officers will use their discretion and adopt an informal/educational approach to the enforcement of those aspects of the legislation. During this period a campaign will run aimed at alerting the public to the changes in the orders and to engage with the town and parish areas, particularly on the issue of replacement signage and patrolling of hotspots. No such “period of grace” is required for offences that are set out in the current orders as members of the public have had ample time to become familiar with them.

In order to meet the legislative requirements of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 we must publish the order as made, extended or varied on our website. We also have to erect public notices to draw the attention of any member of the public that the order has been made, extended or varied and the effect of that order being made, extended or varied.

The intention is to publicise the orders, once agreed, through the use of signage in key locations. The publicity is intended to ensure that residents and visitors are aware of each of the PSPOs and the associated restrictions and conditions.

Each order will take effect for a three year period, unless the Council decides to discharge an order during this time.

4.6 Boundaries

A map of the proposed boundaries for each PSPO is at Appendix 4.

4.7 Enforcement and Communications

For each PSPO an enforcement plan is being developed and will be put in place ahead of the implementation of the PSPOs in October 2020.

The Dog Control PSPO will continue to be enforced by the Council’s Community and Environmental Protection team.

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The enforcement of the alcohol restriction orders in Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn will be a shared responsibility between the Council's Community and Environmental Protection team and the Wyre Forest Safer Neighbourhood Team at West Mercia Police.

The PSPOs will be publicised on the Council's website, social media channels and press releases.

4.8 Review of the Order

The orders will be reviewed after a six month period by the Community Services Manager in conjunction with the Senior Community and Environmental Protection Officer and colleagues at West Mercia Police and reported to Cabinet. Annual reviews will take place thereafter.

4.9 Other Matters

The consultation has elicited a number of responses, which are regarded as unsuitable for inclusion in a PSPO. These have been collated and will be brought to the attention of Council Officers and Partners to ensure they are given due consideration and appropriate actions are implemented. These have been highlighted in the Summary of Consultation Responses.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Costs associated with the implementation of the PSPOs will be met from existing Community and Environment Service budgets.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 When making a PSPO the Council must have particular regard to the rights of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly set out in the European Convention on Human Rights.
- 6.2 Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998: implications with regards to the duty of local authorities to consider the impact of their decisions and actions on crime and disorder in the local area.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Needs Assessment will be undertaken in relation to each of the Public Space Protection Orders and will be made available on request.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 If the correct process to introduce a PSPO is not followed correctly this could lead to challenge, which will mean the Council could face legal costs and reputational damage.
- 8.2 There is also a risk that expectations will be raised by these orders, which agencies may not be able to meet.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The implementation of these PSPOs has the potential to deliver a significant positive community impact and will contribute to a cleaner and safer district and individual town centres and for visitors, businesses and residents of the area.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Corporate Leadership Team
- 10.2 Head of Community and Environment Services
- 10.3 Countryside and Parks Manager
- 10.4 Principal Solicitor
- 10.5 Senior Community and Environmental Protection Officer

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Strong Leader Report 28 April 2020
- 11.2 Delegated officer decision, 18 May 2020

Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order
Summary of Responses June 2020

Summary

Wyre Forest District Council consulted on the extension of the district wide dog control Public Space Protection Order between 12 May 2020 and 15 June 2020.

Over 860 responses to the consultation were received. Responses were received from a range of stakeholders including individuals, local organisations, town and parish councils and representative bodies.

The consultation on the district wide Dog Control Order proposed to continue the following the restrictions and conditions for a further three year period:

- Failure to pick up dog faeces when in control of dog
- Failure to carry a poop bag or other means to clean up after a dog
- Failure to keep a dog on a lead in a designated area (Kidderminster Cemetery and Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Gardens, Bewdley)
- Failure to place a dog on a lead when directed to do so
- Failure to exclude dogs from fenced off or enclosed children's playgrounds

Two new offences were also consulted upon:

- Walking more dogs than is permitted at a time
- Failure to keep a dog on a lead in a designated area – Stackpool, Springfield Park and Hurcott Pool, Hurcott Woods

Council Officers' Response

The view of officers is that having analysed the consultation responses it remains appropriate that all existing restrictions and conditions should be continued for a further three year period. The two new offences should also be included in the PSPO and a limit of walking no more three dogs at a time should be imposed. Education, community engagement and effective signage will be important prior to the commencement of enforcement of the new offences.

Other Matters

Other matters raised through the consultation, such as drug dealing in parks and open spaces, are to be brought to the attention of relevant council officers and partner organisations, including the Countryside and Parks Service and Community and Environmental Protection Service.

Consultation Question 1

To what extent do you agree/disagree that the council should continue to have the power to make sure a person in charge of a dog cleans up after it?

Consultation Responses

877 responses were received for this question. 98.4% (N=863) strongly agreed/agreed that the council should continue to have the power to make sure a person in charge of a dog cleans up after it.

Consultation Question 2

To what extent do you agree/disagree that it should continue to be an offence under the PSPO that would mean dog walkers could receive a fine if they don't have the means (e.g. bags, poop scoop) to pick up their dog's poo?

Consultation Responses

871 responses were received for this question. 93.3% (N=813) strongly agreed/agreed that it should continue to be an offence under the PSPO that would mean dog walkers could receive a fine if they don't have the means (e.g. bags, poop scoop) to pick up their dog's poo.

Consultation Question Q3a

To what extent do you agree/disagree that dogs should continue to be kept on a lead in Kidderminster Cemetery?

Consultation Responses

863 responses were received for this question. 90.8% (N=784) strongly agreed/agreed that dogs should continue to be kept on a lead in Kidderminster Cemetery.

Consultation Question Q3b

To what extent do you agree/disagree that dogs should continue to be kept on a lead in QEII Jubilee Gardens?

Consultation Responses

855 responses were received for this question. 73.2% (N=626) strongly agreed/agreed

Consultation Question 4

To what extent do you agree/disagree that a dog owner should continue to be required to put their animal on a lead when asked to do so by an authorised person (e.g. a council officer) on any public land?

Consultation Responses

866 responses were received for this question. 87.7% (N=760) strongly agreed/agreed

Consultation Question 5

To what extent do you agree/disagree that dogs should continue to be excluded from certain areas, e.g. children's play areas?

Consultation Responses

866 responses were received for this question. 92.1% (N=798) strongly agreed/agreed

Consultation Question 6a

If you agree dogs should be excluded from certain areas, do you think they should continue to be excluded from Children's Play Areas?

Consultation Responses

796 responses were received for this question. 99.2% (N=790) strongly agreed/agreed.

Consultation Question 6b

If you agree dogs should be excluded from certain areas, do you think they should continue to be excluded from Splash pad/water play?

Consultation Responses

794 responses were received for this question. 95.2% (N=756) strongly agreed/agreed.

Consultation Question 7

Wyre Forest District Council suggests that the penalty for committing an offence under a PSPO should continue to be a £100 fine (the legislation says this is the maximum).

Consultation Responses

859 responses were received for this question. 84.4% (N=725) agreed this was about right.

Consultation Question 8

We are proposing that the council should continue to have the power to make sure a person in charge of a dog cleans up after it on all land in the district to which the public has access. This would continue to include nature reserves, agricultural land with rights of way and private land accessed by the public.

Consultation Responses

856 responses were received for this question. 92.2% (N=790) strongly agreed/agreed.

Consultation Question 9

If you disagree or strongly disagree – which areas of the district do you think it is ok for people not to clear up after the dog they're in charge of and why?

Consultation Responses

52 comments were received for this question. The majority of comments mentioned that the 'stick and flick' method should be adopted for rural areas of land, the countryside, agricultural land with public rights of way and nature reserves. Comments were made that this method is less harmful than people leaving plastic bags. Also suggested that areas where there are no bins or other provision to dispose of bags should be excluded. One comment also stated that Councils should only have powers to fine people on council owned land.

Consultation Question 10

We regularly receive concerns from the members of the public about the number of dogs one person has under control at once. This is not currently restricted in the existing PSPO. Do you think that the number of dogs one person may have under their control in a place to which the public have access should be limited?

Consultation Responses

853 responses were received for this question. 60.1% (N=513) agreed that the number of dogs one person may have under their control in a place to which the public have access should be limited.

Consultation Question 11

If Yes, how many dogs do you think one person should be allowed to have under their control at a time?

Consultation Responses

516 responses were received for this question. 37.43% (N=192) said up to 3 dogs.

Up to 2 36.06% (N=185)

Up to 3 37.43% (N=192)

Up to 4 21.64% (N=111)

Up to 5 4.09% (N=21)

More than 5 0.78% (N=4)

Consultation Question 12a

To what extent do you agree or disagree that dogs should be kept on leads by Stackpool Pool at Springfield Park?

Consultation Responses

849 responses were received for this question. 54.7% (N=465) strongly agreed/agreed. 32% (N=272) strongly disagreed/disagreed. 13.19% (N=112) were of no opinion/don't know.

Consultation Question 12b

To what extent do you agree or disagree that dogs should be kept on leads by Hurcott Pool, at Hurcott Woods SSSI?

Consultation Responses

847 responses were received for this question. 51.4% (N=436) strongly agreed/agreed. 36.8% (N=312) strongly disagreed/disagreed. 11.69% (N=99) were of no opinion/don't know.

Consultation Question 13

Do you have any other comments on the proposed order at Springfield Park and Hurcott Woods?

Consultation Responses

255 comments were received for this question. The key themes were:

- Owners to take responsibility to ensure their dogs are under control
- Effective and large numbers of signage should be erected.
- Reiteration of support for restrictions at the Stackpool and Hurcott Pool
- The need for places for dogs to be able to swim
- Importance of protecting wildlife
- Fencing off bodies of water
- Restrictions are unnecessary

Consultation Responses Question 14

Any other comments?

Consultation Responses

339 comments were received for this question. Similar comments were made to those already received for question 13. The key themes were:

- The lack of control a minority of owners have over their dogs

- Further support was demonstrated for the restrictions
- Fines should be even greater than £100. £500-£1000 suggested
- Reference to more bins being needed on Council owned land and areas which aren't, such as Blackstone and Hartlebury Common
- Suggestions to bring back dog licences
- people leave dog poo bags on the ground/in trees
- Dog fouling on residential streets, barking and noisy dogs in residential areas
- Effective enforcement and more enforcement officers needed
- Dogs should be on leads at all times
- Dogs should be allowed off leads for exercise purposes
- Designated exercise areas should be made available

Comments regarding problems with dog fouling were also made in relation to land which falls outside of the administrative boundaries of Wyre Forest District Council, in particular Hartlebury Common and Kinver Edge.

Consultation Question 15

Are you a dog owner/dog walker?

Consultation Responses

819 responses were received for this question. 68.38% (n=560) were dog owners. 27.47% (n=225) were not dog owners. 4.15% (n=134) preferred not to say.

Consultation Question 16

How many dogs do you usually walk?

Consultation Responses

819 responses were received for this question. The average number was one dog.

Consultation Question 17

Which of the following applies to you? I walk my own dog, I walk a friend or family member's dog(s), I walk dogs as a business, none of the above.

Consultation Responses

819 responses were received for this question. 63.49% (n=520) walk their own dog(s). 12.09% (n=99) I walk a friend or family member's dog(s). 1.10% (n=9) I walk dogs as a business. 29.67% (n=243) none of the above.

Consultation Question 18

Where do you live? (Please select the first part of your postcode)

Consultation Responses

819 responses were received for this question. The top three postcodes were DY10 44.32% (n=363). DY11 22.1% (n=181) and DY13 14.16% (n=116).

Formal Written responses

In addition to the survey, formal written responses were received from Bewdley Town Council, West Mercia Police, a Worcestershire County Councillor and the Dogs Trust.

Bewdley Town Council

Bewdley Town Council agreed with all the proposals and also commented that 'there have been issues with dogs not being on leads in Blackstone Meadows and the field

beyond the gas works house. These areas could be added to the list previously provided, if possible. It would also help if the signage was improved (i.e. larger signs) so all owners are aware of the need for a lead.'

West Mercia Police

The Dog control order seems sensible but checking our systems I can't see we have had any calls about this issue.

Worcestershire County Councillor

My ideas on dogs is that they should be kept on leads and under control of the owner at all times. My rationale for this statement is the incident that occurred in Baxter Gardens recently when a dog was attacked by another dog.

If the dogs are on leads then the owner has control and responsibility of the dog. I know years ago we had dog licences which the owner had to have. Times have changed but owners must take the responsibility for the behaviour of their dog. They have the right to owning a dog then they need to be aware of their responsibilities of owning a dog. I am aware of another incident in Springfield Park of a dog on a lead being attacked by a dog not on a lead. The dog on the lead needed a lot of veterinary surgery. The other owner ran away and left the responsible dog owner with a lot of fees.

Dogs Trust

Dear Sir/Madam,

Dogs Trust has been made aware that Wyre Forest District Council is planning to introduce a series of Public Space Protection Orders. As the UK's largest dog welfare charity, we would like to make some comments for consideration.

Dogs Trust's Comments

1. Re; Fouling of Land by Dogs Order:

- Dogs Trust consider 'scooping the poop' to be an integral element of responsible dog ownership and would fully support a well-implemented order on fouling. We urge the Council to enforce any such order rigorously. In order to maximise compliance we urge the Council to consider whether an adequate number of disposal points have been provided for responsible owners to use, to consider providing free disposal bags and to ensure that there is sufficient signage in place.
- We question the effectiveness of issuing on-the-spot fines for not being in possession of a poo bag and whether this is practical to enforce.

2. Re; Dog Exclusion Order:

- Dogs Trust accepts that there are some areas where it is desirable that dogs should be excluded, such as children's play areas, however we would recommend that exclusion areas are kept to a minimum and that, for enforcement reasons, they are restricted to enclosed areas. We would consider it more difficult to enforce an exclusion order in areas that lack clear boundaries.
- Dogs Trust would highlight the need to provide plenty of signage to direct owners to alternative areas nearby in which to exercise dogs.

3. Re; Dog Exclusion and sport pitches:

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- Excluding dogs from areas that are not enclosed could pose enforcement problems - we would consider it more difficult to enforce an exclusion order in areas that lack clear boundaries.
- We feel that exclusion zones should be kept to a minimum, and that excluding dogs from all sports pitches for long stretches of the year is unnecessary. In some cases sports pitches may account for a large part of the open space available in a public park, and therefore excluding dogs could significantly reduce available dog walking space for owners.
- We would urge the Council to consider focusing its efforts on reducing dog fouling in these areas, rather than excluding dogs entirely, with adequate provision of bins and provision of free disposal bags.

4. Re; Dogs on Leads Order:

- Dogs Trust accept that there are some areas where it is desirable that dogs should be kept on a lead.
- Dogs Trust would urge the Council to consider the Animal Welfare Act 2006 section 9 requirements (the 'duty of care') that include the dog's need to exhibit normal behaviour patterns – this includes the need for sufficient exercise including the need to run off lead in appropriate areas. Dog Control Orders should not restrict the ability of dog keepers to comply with the requirements of this Act.
- The Council should ensure that there is an adequate number, and a variety of, well sign-posted areas locally for owners to exercise their dog off-lead.

5. Re; Dogs on Lead by Direction Order:

- Dogs Trust enthusiastically support Dogs on Leads by Direction orders (for dogs that are considered to be out of control or causing alarm or distress to members of the public to be put on and kept on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised official).
- We consider that this order is by far the most useful, other than the fouling order, because it allows enforcement officers to target the owners of dogs that are allowing them to cause a nuisance without restricting the responsible owner and their dog. As none of the other orders, less fouling, are likely to be effective without proper enforcement we would be content if the others were dropped in favour of this order.

6. Re; Taking more than a specified number of dogs onto a land:

- The behaviour of the dogs and the competency of the handler need to be taken into consideration if considering this order. Research from 2010 shows that 95% of dog owners have up to 3 dogs. Therefore the number of dogs taken out on to land by one individual would not normally be expected to exceed four dogs.

The PDSA's ['Paw Report 2018'](#) found that 89% of veterinary professionals believe that the welfare of dogs will suffer if owners are banned from walking their dogs in public spaces such as parks and beaches, or if dogs are required to be kept on leads in these spaces. Their report also states that 78% of owners rely on these types of spaces to walk their dog.

I would also like to bring your attention to the similar recommendations stated in the Government's ['Anti-social behaviour powers -Statutory guidance for frontline professionals'](#) document, pages 52/53.

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Appendix 1

We believe that the vast majority of dog owners are responsible, and that the majority of dogs are well behaved. In recognition of this, we would encourage local authorities to exercise its power to issue Community Protection Notices, targeting irresponsible owners and proactively addressing anti-social behaviours.

Dogs Trust works with local authorities across the UK to help promote responsible dog ownership. If you are interested, I can send you a copy of our Services Guide, a document listing the ways in which we may be able to help with promoting responsible dog ownership in your community. Please do not hesitate to contact should you wish to discuss this matter.

We would be very grateful if you could inform us of the consultation outcome and subsequent decisions made in relation to the Public Space Protection Order.

Restriction of Alcohol in Stourport-on-Severn Public Spaces Protection Order
Summary of Responses June 2020

Summary

Wyre Forest District Council consulted on the Public Spaces Protection Order to restrict alcohol consumption in Stourport-on-Severn between 12 May 2020 and 15 June 2020.

Over 200 responses to the consultation were received. Responses were received from a range of stakeholders including individuals, local organisations, town and parish councils and representative bodies.

The consultation on the Alcohol Restriction Order for Stourport-on-Severn proposed the following the restrictions and conditions for a three year period:

- To provide the power for authorised officers of the Council, Police Officer or Police Community Support Officer to require a person drinking alcohol in public to surrender their alcohol (or anything which is reasonably believed to be alcohol).
- Failure to comply with the requirements of the PSPO by drinking alcohol in a public place will be an offence and people may result in a £100 fixed penalty notice.

Council Officers' Response

The view of officers is that having analysed the consultation responses it remains appropriate that all existing restrictions and conditions should be continued for a further three year period. The proposed boundary of the PSPO is regarded as appropriate and is supported through the review of the evidence. However, the boundaries will be reviewed six months after the implementation of the PSPO.

Education, community engagement and signage will be essential to the effective operation of the PSPO.

Other Matters

The majority of comments were relevant to the remit of the PSPO. There were some comments that fall outside of the remit of the PSPO, for example issues that would be outside of the proposed PSPO boundary or were comments on organisations. These will be shared with the relevant council officers and partner agencies.

Consultation Question 1

Stop people continuing to drink alcohol when asked to stop by an authorised officer in the area shown on the map.

Consultation Responses

215 responses were received for this question. 93.02% (n=200) said yes. When asked to explain their answers there were 62 comments. All comments were in support of the power apart from one respondent.

Consultation Question 2

To require a person to hand over alcohol at the request of an authorised officer in the area shown on the map.

Consultation Responses

215 responses were received for this question. 91.6% (n=196) said yes. When asked to explain their answers there were 57 comments. All comments were in support of the power apart from one respondent.

Consultation Question Q3a

What impact do you think extending the PSPO will have on people living in the town?

Consultation Responses

215 responses were received for this question. 92.09% (n=198) agreed it would have a positive impact.

Consultation Question Q3b

What impact do you think extending the PSPO will have on people working in the town?

Consultation Responses

213 responses were received for this question. 91.55% (n=195) agreed it would have a positive impact.

Consultation Question 3c

What impact do you think extending the PSPO will have on people visiting the town?

Consultation Responses

214 responses were received for this question. 88.79% (n=190) agreed it would have a positive impact.

Consultation Question 4

Do you agree with the proposed boundaries of the PSPO being the town centre?

Consultation Responses

211 responses were received for this question. 82.46% (n=174) agreed and 17.54% (n=37) disagreed.

Consultation Question 5

If No, what would you change?

Consultation Responses

34 responses were received for this question. Some comments mentioned they wished the Memorial Park and the Riverside to be included but the proposed boundary already includes these areas. Some comments suggested the boundary should be the whole of Stourport, include the other side of the river, the whole of Vale Road and Hartlebury Common. Whereas a couple of comments suggested the boundary should actually be smaller or limited to only the High Street

Consultation Question 6

What best describes you?

Consultation Responses

206 responses were received for this question. 94.17% (n=194) were members of the public. 2.91% (n=6) were Parish Councillors/Councillors. 2.43% (n=5) were business owners.

Consultation Question 7

Your postcode

Consultation Responses

206 responses were received for this question. The top three postcodes were DY13 78.16% (n=161), DY10 10.19% (n=21) and DY11 6.31% (n=13).

Consultation Question 8

In the past 12 months have you been affected by alcohol related anti-social behaviour in Stourport?

Consultation Responses

206 responses were received for this question. 60.19% (n=124) said no, 30.10% (n=64) said yet and 9.71% (n=20) preferred not to say.

Consultation Question 9

If yes, please tell us where this happened? (e.g. street name, park name)

Consultation Responses

58 responses were received for this question. 42 of the comments referred to locations which are all within the proposed PSPO boundary. High Street, Stourport Riverside and the Memorial Park received the most mentions.

Consultation Question 10

How has it affected you?

Consultation Responses

58 responses were received for this question. Majority of comments stated that it made them feel reluctant to visit certain areas of the town centre, made them fearful upset or on other hand become aggressive. Comments were made about litter and noise nuisance. A few comments stated that they were not affected by the anti social behaviour.

Consultation Responses Question 11

Any further comments regarding the PSPO?

Consultation Responses

34 comments were received for this question. The key themes were:

- The PSPO is a good idea
- Effective enforcement and more police and council officers being on duty
- Planning ahead for when issues are at their peak at bank holidays and special events by the riverside
- Drinking should be kept within pubs and beer gardens
- Litter from discarded drink cans and bottles
- Will help to make the town more attractive

Formal Written Responses

In addition to the survey, a formal written response was received from West Mercia Police who agreed with all of the proposals.

Restriction of Alcohol in Bewdley Public Spaces Protection Order Summary of Responses June 2020

Summary

Wyre Forest District Council consulted on the Public Spaces Protection Order to restrict alcohol consumption in Bewdley between 12 May 2020 and 15 June 2020.

Over 400 responses to the consultation were received. Responses were received from a range of stakeholders including individuals, local organisations, town and parish councils and representative bodies.

The consultation on the Alcohol Restriction Order for Bewdley proposed the following the restrictions and conditions for a three year period:

- To provide the power for authorised officers of the Council, Police Officer or Police Community Support Officer to require a person drinking alcohol in public to surrender their alcohol (or anything which is reasonably believed to be alcohol).
- Failure to comply with the requirements of the PSPO by drinking alcohol in a public place will be an offence and people may result in a £100 fixed penalty notice.

Council Officers' Response

The view of officers is that having analysed the consultation responses it remains appropriate that all existing restrictions and conditions should be continued for a further three year period. The proposed boundary of the PSPO is regarded as appropriate and is supported through the review of the evidence. However, the boundaries will be reviewed six months after the implementation of the PSPO.

Education, community engagement and signage will be essential to the effective operation of the PSPO.

Other Matters

The majority of comments were relevant to the remit of the PSPO. There were some comments that fall outside of the remit of the PSPO or the proposed boundary, for example as litter, drug dealing/misuse and public disorder related matters. These will be shared with the relevant council officers and partner agencies.

In the survey, some comments were made in relation to motorbikes, primarily on Severnside South, Bewdley. Nine comments were received directly from local residents by email. These were focused on noise and illegal parking obstructing the highway and pedestrian areas. These matters will be considered under other relevant legislative powers with Worcestershire County Council as highways authority and West Mercia Police.

Consultation Question 1

Stop people continuing to drink alcohol when asked to stop by an authorised officer in the area shown on the map.

Consultation Responses

405 responses were received for this question. 92.59% (n=375) said yes. When asked to explain their answers there were 145 comments. All comments, apart from 8 were generally in support of the power.

Consultation Question 2

To require a person to hand over alcohol at the request of an authorised officer in the area shown on the map.

Consultation Responses

405 responses were received for this question. 90.86% (n=368) said yes. When asked to explain their answers there were 106 comments. All comments, apart from 11 were in support of the power.

Consultation Question Q3a

What impact do you think extending the PSPO will have on people living in the town?

Consultation Responses

404 responses were received for this question. 89.10% (n=360) agreed it would have a positive impact.

Consultation Question Q3b

What impact do you think extending the PSPO will have on people working in the town?

Consultation Responses

404 responses were received for this question. 88.11% (n=356) agreed it would have a positive impact.

Consultation Question 3c

What impact do you think extending the PSPO will have on people visiting the town?

Consultation Responses

403 responses were received for this question. 83.37% (n=336) agreed it would have a positive impact.

Consultation Question 4

Do you agree with the proposed boundaries of the PSPO being the town centre?

Consultation Responses

404 responses were received for this question. 85.89% (n=347) agreed and 14.10% (n=57) disagreed.

Consultation Question 5

If No, what would you change?

Consultation Responses

50 responses were received for this question. Key themes were:

- There should not be a PSPO at all with no restrictions in place
- Extend it but not specified where

- Widen the PSPO. Areas mentioned were the whole district, the Wyre Forest and its car parks, the whole parish of Bewdley, all residential areas, Wribbenhall, Pewterers' Alley, sports field behind Wyre Hill School, leisure centre playing field and all play areas

Consultation Question 6

What best describes you?

Consultation Responses

391 responses were received for this question. 92.83% (n=363) were members of the public. 2.81% (n=11) were Councillors. 2.55% (n=10) were business owners. 1.02% (n=4) were from a community group. 0.51% (n=2) were representative/employees in the alcohol licensing trade and 0.25% (n=1) was an employee of a business in Bewdley.

Consultation Question 7

Your postcode

Consultation Responses

391 responses were received for this question. The top three postcodes were DY12 74.16% (n=290), DY11 9.71% (n=38) and DY10 6.90% (n=27).

Consultation Question 8

In the past 12 months have you been affected by alcohol related anti-social behaviour in Bewdley?

Consultation Responses

391 responses were received for this question. 59.33% (n=232) said no, 35.29% (n=138) said yes and 5.37% (n=21) preferred not to say.

Consultation Question 9

If yes, please tell us where this happened? (e.g. street name, park name)

Consultation Responses

131 responses were received for this question. The majority of the comments referred to locations which are all within the proposed PSPO boundary. High Street, Load Street and Severnside received the most mentions.

Consultation Question 10

How has it affected you?

Consultation Responses

130 responses were received for this question. Majority of comments stated that it made them unsafe and reluctant to visit certain parts of the town centre. Comments were made about litter, noise nuisance and the impact on the town centre for visitors and residents.

Consultation Responses Question 11

Any further comments regarding the PSPO?

Consultation Responses

87 comments were received for this question. The key themes were:

- On the whole supportive of the PSPO
- Effective enforcement and more police and council officers being on duty
- Will help to make the town safer and more attractive
- Highway and noise issues caused by motorbikes

Formal Written Responses

In addition to the survey, three responses were received from stakeholders who were invited to participate in the consultation.

Bewdley Town Council

Bewdley Town Council agreed with the proposals in principle.

However, concerns were raised with regard to the area covered by the PSPO. There have been a number of reported alcohol issues at the Wyre Hill Sand Park, Millennium Green, the Wyre Forest and the playing field adjacent the Bewdley School. The Police have been informed and have visited these sites on numerous occasions. Bewdley Town Council therefore requests that consideration be given to extending the PSPO to large open spaces such as parks and playing fields.

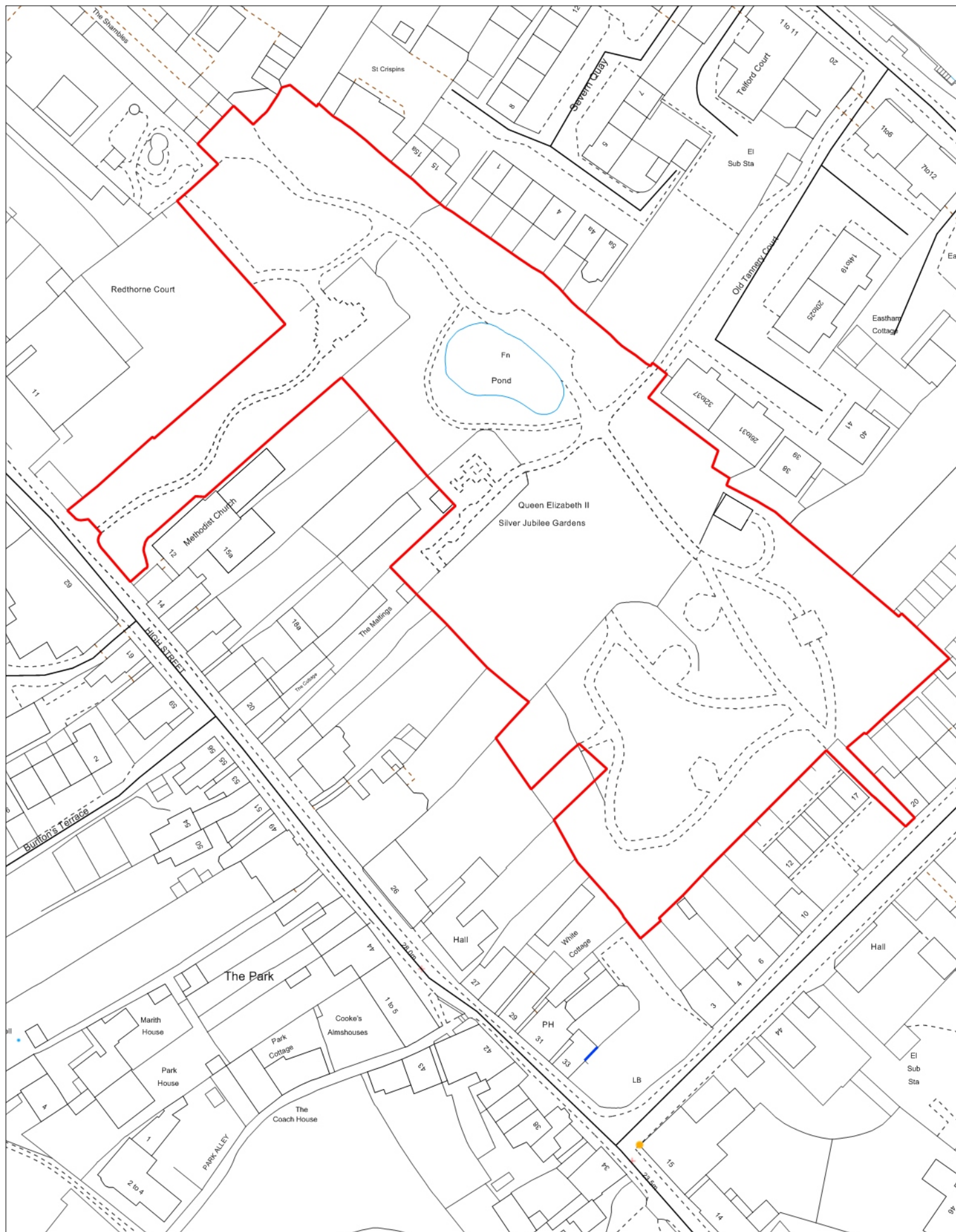
West Mercia Police

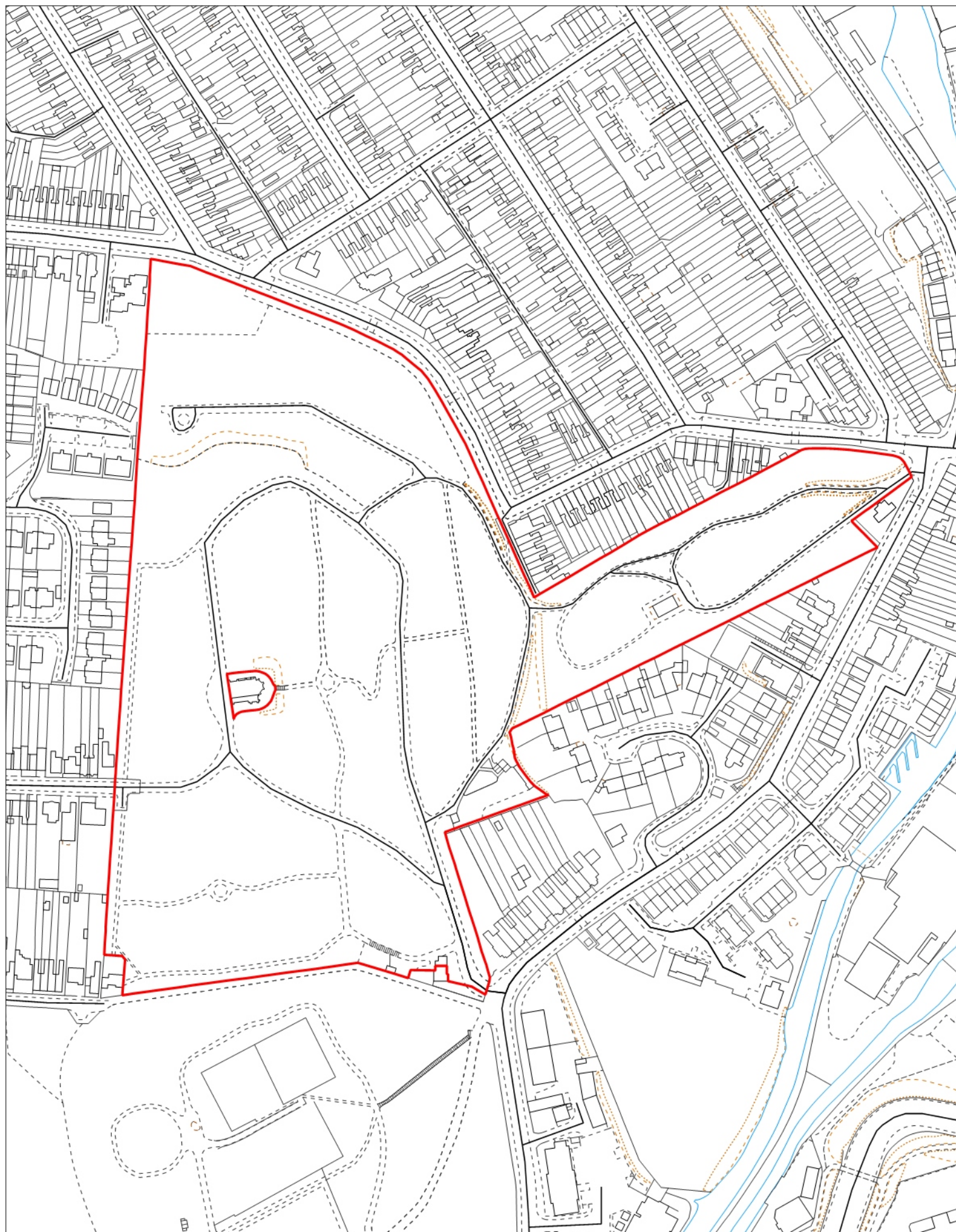
Agreed with the proposals. The PSPO for Bewdley is helpful on summer nights in dealing with the night time economy and serves as a prevention tactic when people try and takes drinks from licensed premises.

Worcestershire County Councillor

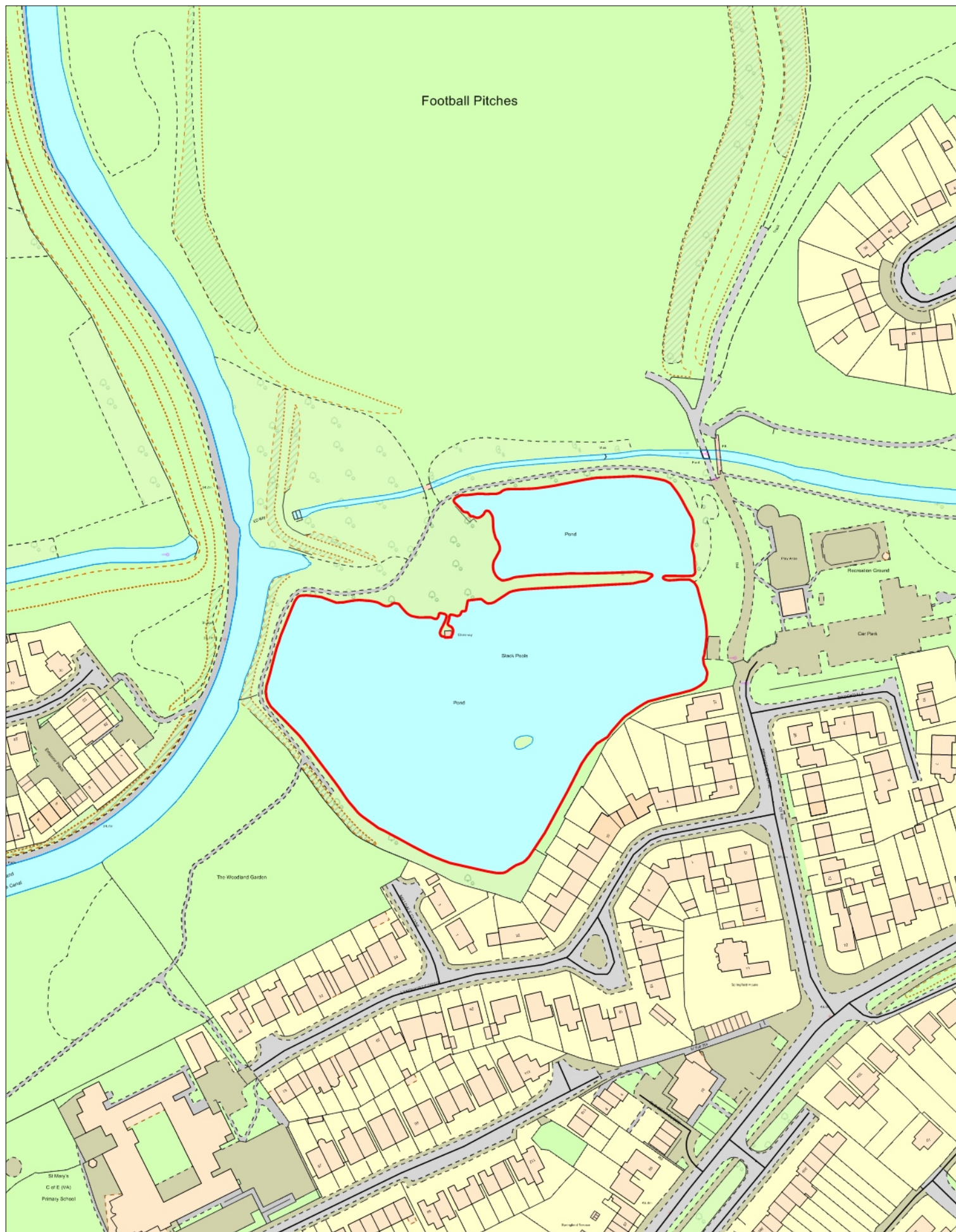
Agreed with the proposals.

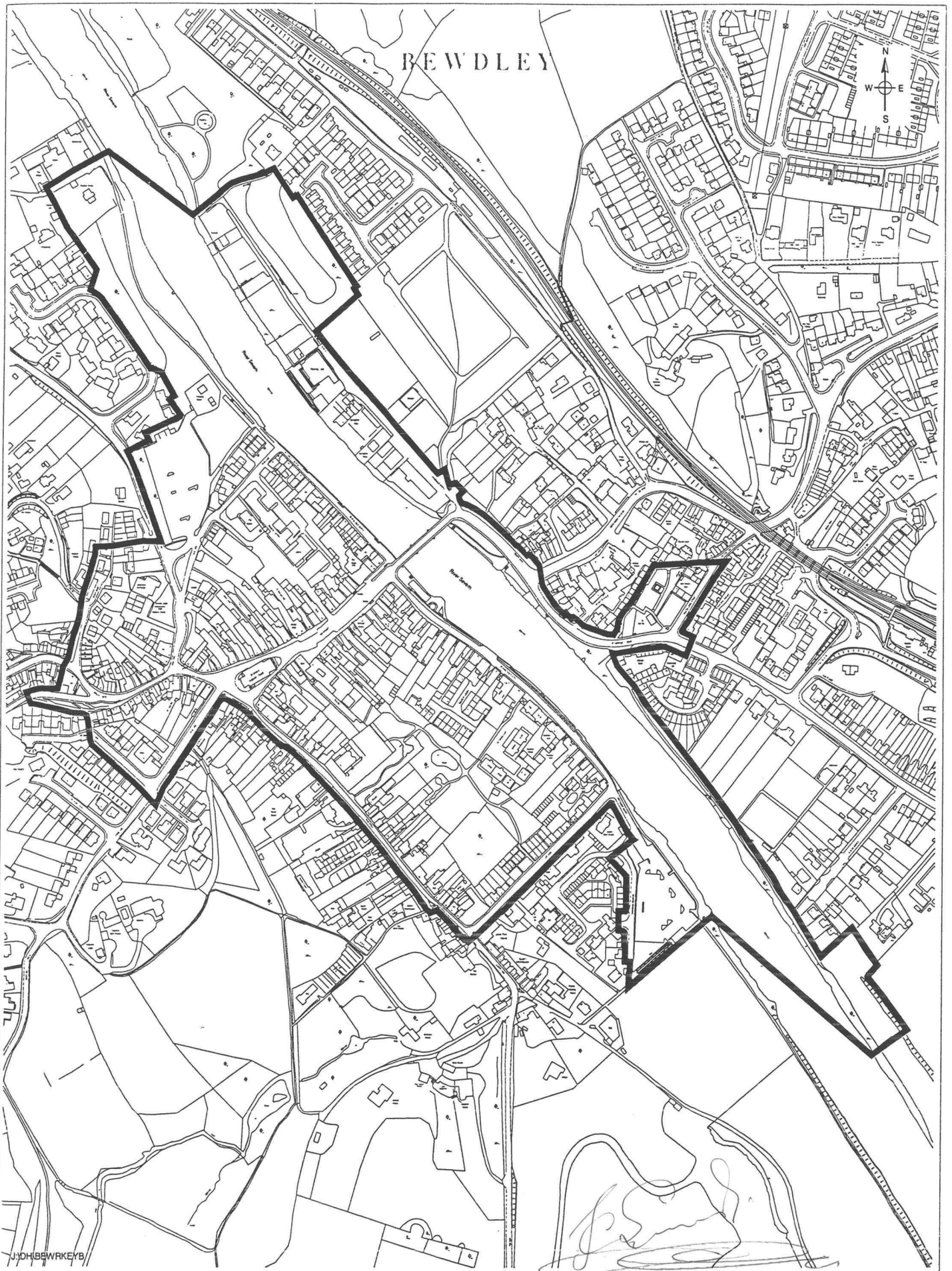


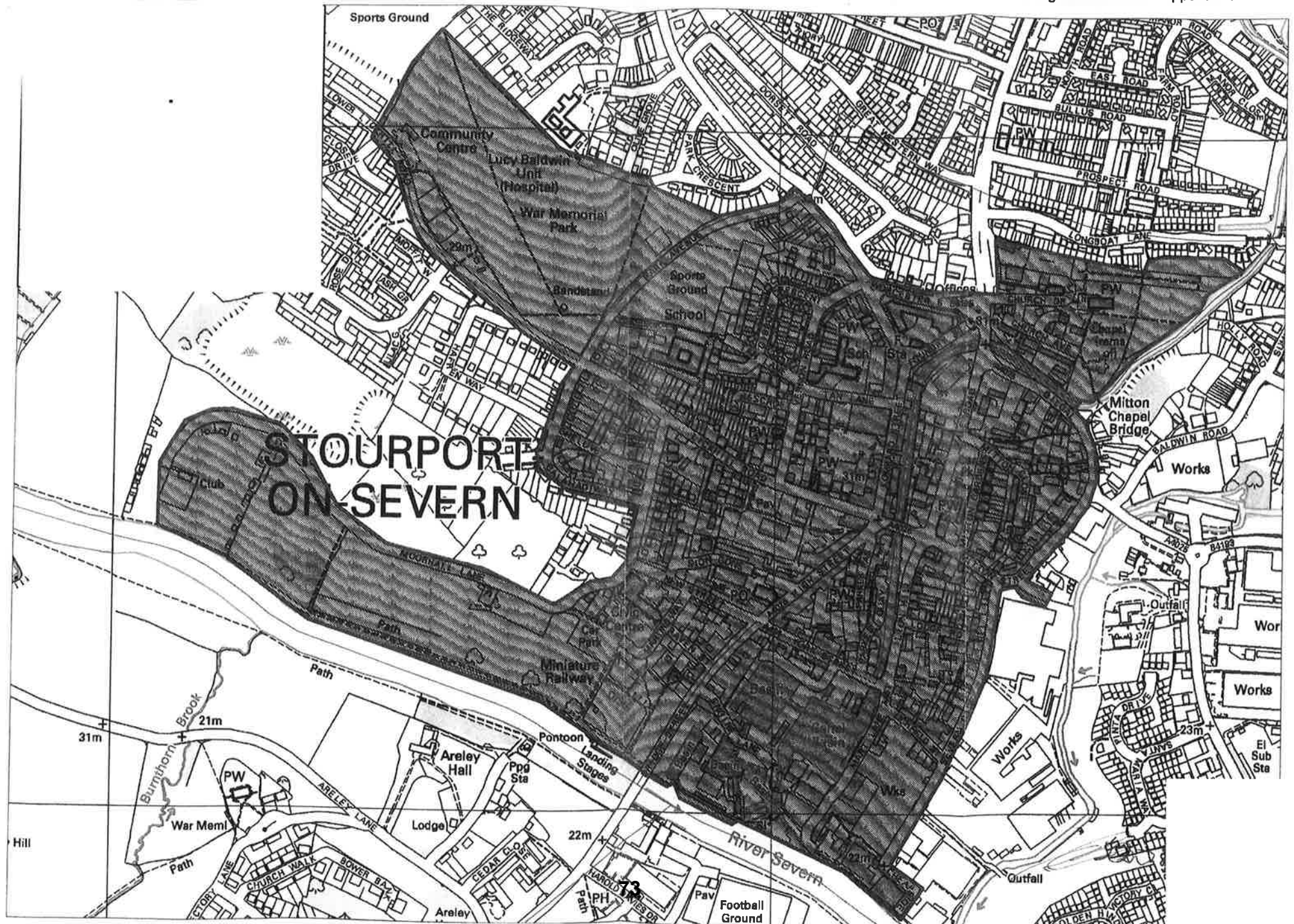












WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
7th JULY 2020**Community Led Housing Policy**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Nicky Martin, Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Wellbeing and Democratic services
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place.
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kate Bailey, Head of Strategic Growth 01562 732560
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 Community Led Housing Policy

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to share with Members progress on Community Led Housing (CLH) and to seek approval for the updated CLH policy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE that:

- 2.1 The Community Led Housing Policy is approved.
- 2.2 Delegated authority be given to Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Wellbeing and Democratic Services to agree future changes to the Community Led Housing Policy

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The CLH policy and pledge was approved by Cabinet in February 2018. Since then, there has been significant work within the district and nationally, which has meant it is necessary to update the CLH policy.
- 3.2 The Council received a grant of £191,250 from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in December 2016 and March 2017 called the Community Housing Fund, paid in two tranches. This fund was paid to 148 local authorities where there were issues of affordability and/ or a high density of second homes. Within Worcestershire, Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils also received an allocation.
- 3.3 The Council developed a proposal of how to utilise the funding, which was agreed by the DCLG and recruited a Community Led Housing Co-ordinator in 2017 to develop a range of approaches to support the growth of CLH within the District. The resources

were primarily aimed at promoting CLH, helping communities to undertake housing schemes and to provide them with the support they needed.

- 3.4 In February 2020, the Council, as part of a joint bid led by Redditch Cooperative Homes, applied for further funding to develop a Worcestershire Community Led Housing Hub. Redditch Cooperative Homes was successful in obtaining a funding award of £110,548 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The funding will contribute to the continuation and extension of the Community Led Housing work across Worcestershire until 2021. This includes an allocation of £28,500 for Wyre Forest District Council as a salary contribution towards the post of the Community Led Housing Coordinator.
- 3.5 The Worcestershire Community Led Housing Hub is a partnership between Redditch Cooperative Homes, Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils, and Wyre Forest District Council. The aim of the hub is to pool resources and expertise across the County, promoting Community Led Housing and increasing the number of affordable homes delivered for the community, in partnership with the community. The bid was also supported by the three remaining councils in the county and the officer resource will be used to support CLH in these areas as well.
- 3.6 To date the following work has been completed or is underway:
- The First Steps Grant has been made available to Community Led Organisations in Wyre Forest. Grants have been awarded to Wyre Forest Community Land Trust (CLT) and Wyre Forest Co-housing group. The money has been used to set up the groups, helping them to become legal entities, recruit members and publicise community led housing.
 - The CLH coordinator is working with Wyre Forest CLT to look at a number of possible development opportunities across the Wyre Forest. This work includes:
 - coordinating partnerships between different organisations, including Homes England, Registered Providers and other CLT projects,
 - looking at the feasibility of sites,
 - identifying best practice design and build methods
 - identifying funding and available finance.
 - Alongside this work, the Self Build and Custom House build regulations 2016 places a duty on local authorities in England to keep and have regard to a register of people who have an interest in self build and custom housing. There are currently 29 individuals and 1 association on the self build register in Wyre Forest. With the exception of 5 individuals, everyone else on the register has a local connection to the district.
 - As per the Self Build and Custom House build regulations 2016 there is now also a specific policy in the emerging Local Plan 2016-36. Policy 8D on self and custom build states that the Council will support applications for small and custom build housing, as long as they are in keeping with the other policies in the plan. It also states that developers of 10 units or more will be expected to demonstrate how the needs of self builders have been taken into consideration and where plots are made available, market plots for at least 12 months.

4. KEY ISSUES

Housing Growth

- 4.1 Housing growth and home ownership continues to be a priority for the Government. In the paper, “Planning for the Future”, published in March 2020, the Government reiterated its commitment to supporting communities to deliver more homes for local people. It will do this through a number of reforms aimed at encouraging local authorities to take a more proactive approach to enabling home building and supporting local community and self build housing.

- 4.2 The planned reforms include:

- Requiring all local authorities to have an up to date local plan by December 2023.
- Incentivising local authorities to deliver on their local plans by increasing the housing delivery test threshold to 75% by November 2020.
- Reforming the New Homes Bonus to reward delivery of housing.

The paper also states that the Government will work with local authorities, small and medium sized enterprises, local groups and the construction industry throughout the spring and summer of 2020 to undertake a comprehensive review of the housing market and planning system. This will inform the forthcoming Planning White Paper and Housing Strategy.

Funding for Community Led Housing

- 4.3 Homes England has been the predominant source of finance for CLH development across the UK. In 2018, they announced a £60m fund but this finished in the early part of 2020. There was no further specific funding for Community Led Housing announced by the Government in the budget in March 2020. However, a package of £12bn was announced for affordable housing. Therefore, there maybe scope for CLH organisations to tap into this funding through Registered Provider partners and also to influence the spending of this funding through the comprehensive spending review, which is due to be published alongside the Planning White Paper later in 2020.
- 4.4 There is funding available from other sources; including grants from trusts/foundations, social enterprise loans and private equity finance from banks such as CAF venturesome and Unity Bank. The CLH coordinator will continue to work with the local CLH groups to identify potential finance models for the development of community led housing in the district.
- 4.5 Given the previous work undertaken by the Council to help bring forward Community Led Housing, the Council and CLT are well placed to meet the potential obligations and opportunities that will be offered in the Planning White paper, when it is published.

Key changes to the CLH Policy

- 4.6 The Policy now has an updated section 4 which clarifies the definitions and different types of CLH models available.

- 4.7 Section 5 has also been updated to be clearer on what the Council would expect of a CLH organisation it is supporting through accessing resources, provided either directly or indirectly.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Work in relation to the policy will be undertaken by the current staffing resource and within existing budget.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment Screening has been undertaken and there are no adverse impacts.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The policy will give clarity to those wishing to work with the Council in delivering CLH.
- 8.2 The current funding for the CLH Hub in Worcestershire is only for 15 months. We will seek to ensure the continuation of CLH through bidding for additional funding from Homes England and other sources.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Community Led Housing is a way of delivering housing by working in conjunction with local communities and can therefore be perceived to be a more positive and inclusive form of housing delivery. The CLH Co-ordinator is working with local communities to raise awareness of CLH and to identify land, empty properties and other potential schemes that can be brought forward for this purpose.
- 9.2 It is seen as good practice for Local Authorities to demonstrate their support of CLH through the pledge and policy.
- 9.3 The funding we have for CLH Hub is short-term in nature and so to secure the longevity of the project, securing additional funding from other funding sources should be considered.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 CLT

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Not applicable.

Wyre Forest District Council Community Led Housing Policy 2020

1. General

- 1.1 This policy updates the earlier adopted Wyre Forest Council Community Led Housing Policy, which was published in February 2018. The policy will next be reviewed in 2022 to ensure that it remains current and relevant.
- 1.2 The CLH Policy is relevant to all officers of the Strategic Housing and Planning Policy teams within the Economic Prosperity and Place Directorate. Although the Policy is essentially focused on the provision of housing, it is equally relevant to the Planning Policy team who are responsible for ensuring future housing needs are met and incorporated into the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.3 The Council recognises that there are many situations where there is a shared or complementary role with other agencies. Relevant officers within the Housing Section will seek to work collaboratively with national and regional organisations who are leading on the CLH agenda. Agencies including the National Community Land Trust Network and UK Co-housing Network will be working together as they disseminate information and policy updates from central government as well as taking a lead on national 'good practice' training and events for local authorities who have received Community Housing Fund grants. We will also work with local organisations including the Worcestershire Community Led Housing hub, community groups and Registered Providers.
- 1.4 The Council also recognises that it has to have a flexible policy that responds to government housing strategy. CLH is currently seen as a viable method of increasing the supply of housing and at the same time, making a real impact on the lives of the communities who are delivering it. As government priorities change in the future, CLH may not receive the same level of support, but the Council will endeavour to continue supporting any groups or individuals (self-build or custom-build) who have taken an interest in delivering their own housing.
- 1.5 The Council will also work closely with neighbouring Local Authorities to deliver housing numbers and will work particularly closely with those Local Authorities who have also received CLH grants from the Community Housing Fund within Worcestershire.

2. Links to Other Strategies

2.1 The Council recognises that the CLH Policy will primarily work to meet the relevant objectives with the Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan and will complement the Wyre Forest Empty Homes Strategy.

2.2 The CLH Policy supports the **Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan** to:

- Maximise delivery of good quality housing of the right type and tenure by co-coordinating the activities of housing providers and support agencies to meet existing and future housing need in a sustainable way.
- To build new homes.
- To investigate alternative models of affordable housing delivery to meet the housing and support needs of specific groups and sectors of the housing market.

3. Purpose of the CLH Policy

The Policy has been developed to:

- Alleviate issues around housing affordability in the District by contributing to the overall delivery of housing
- Enable our communities to realise their potential and take forward their own small scale housing schemes
- Recognise the self-build and custom build community and put in place mechanisms to support the housing aspirations highlighted in the District's Custom and Self-build Register
- Raise awareness of CLH and encourage its delivery through putting a range of support structures in place to enable schemes to progress from the earliest opportunity.

4. Principles – The definitions of CLH

For the purpose of this policy, the Council recognises the following models of Community-led Housing:

- a) Self-build and custom-build housing
Self-builders usually build their own homes or enlist somebody else to customise a build to meet their needs.
- b) Self-help Housing
Bringing empty properties back into use. It usually involves people working together with a shared goal of solving a local housing issue. It

may also involve a renovation project where a redundant building is transformed into homes by an involved group of local people.

c) Community Land Trusts (CLTs)

CLTs are set up by local people in areas with a shortage of affordable housing. The local community take a lead role developing homes and other community assets. The CLT will work to ensure that the homes are genuinely affordable, based on average local earnings in the area.

d) Co-housing

These are intentional communities designed to live partially independently but with an element of shared resources/accommodation. By creating a more neighbourly community, the social benefits are thought to have a positive impact on quality of life.

e) Housing Co-operatives

A Housing Co-op is a housing organisation where members (tenants) democratically control and manage their homes. Co-ops often have an impact on the sense of a community in the area and this can lead to reduced anti-social behaviour and higher levels of satisfaction.

As can be seen above, there are a number of different models for community led housing. The following key principles in this policy however should be integral to schemes.

- The community should be involved throughout the process in key decisions such as what is provided, where, and for whom. The community does not have to initiate the proposals or build homes themselves.
- The benefits of the scheme to the community (whether that's a local area or specified group) should be clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity if possible.

Community Led Housing is also not just about new build, it is about new models by which the community can have more of a stake in existing homes, and this can be achieved by the community having varying degrees of influence over how their homes are managed. Therefore, community led housing could encompass the following:

- Development of new homes
- Conversion of existing properties to support community led housing opportunities

5. Identifying and implementing solutions to increase Community Led Housing

The Council's main objective for CLH is to encourage learning about CLH and increase provision of small scale affordable housing in the district by:

- Employing a designated officer to lead on CLH delivery. They will work in partnership with Registered Providers, Parish and Town Councils, Community Land Trusts, Cohousing projects and self builders to offer advice and support and encourage small scale CLH schemes within the District. This will be done by enabling groups to make contact with the niche social investment banks, building societies, solicitors and architects who have expertise in the field of CLH.
- Provision of the WFDC 'First Steps' grant to enable early stage financial support to check site viability and fund any surveys that may be required (subject to availability of resources).
- Supporting applications for funding to external grants and trusts. However in doing this, the Council needs to be satisfied of the following
 - the organisations ability to deliver and sustain any proposal
 - Key outcomes of the proposed scheme.
 - The creation of community led housing schemes;
 - The provision of greater empowerment for local communities and neighbourhoods; and
 - Increase in affordable/specialist housing to meet local needs.
 - Strong governance arrangements by operating through open and accountable, processes.That the skills and capacity exist within the organisation, or are available to the organisation or clear plans as to how this will be achieved to undertake the project

In addition, the Community Led Housing Co-ordinator will develop an effective communication strategy by;

- ensuring the Council's website content is updated to inform interested parties about the different models of community-led housing and current / forthcoming funding opportunities
- create an information leaflet as a brief reference guide for CLH and how to register interest
- utilise social media to promote CLH

The CLH Co-ordinator will oversee the ongoing development of the custom and self-build register through the Local Plan process, work closely with the Strategic Housing team to identify long term empty properties, housing needs and consider

their viability as CLH sites and explore opportunities to support CLH through identification of resources if available.

The CLH Coordinator will consider the mechanisms by which allocations to CLH schemes, built with any form of public subsidy, are made – both in terms of first letting and also re-lets. The use of Local Letting Plans (LLP) for first lets should be considered in line with the current approved policy on LLPs. The approach to managing allocations is to be further developed in consultation with the Council and the relevant Community Led Housing organisation.

6. Related Policy Documents

- The Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan 2017
- Wyre Forest District Council Empty Properties Strategy 2017 – 2022

This Policy is available to the public on request and is also available on the council's website www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk. Any comments about the Community-led Housing Policy can be made to the Head of Strategic Growth via the CLH Co-ordinator.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
7th JULY 2020**Property Flood Grants – Amendment to Capital Programme**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Nicky Martin, Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Wellbeing and Democratic services
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place.
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kate Bailey, Head of Strategic Growth 01562 732560
APPENDICES:	N/A

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the process for the Government funded Property Flood Grants to be distributed to affected residents and businesses. This will include the requirement to amend the capital programme.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND to Council that:

- 2.1 there is an amendment to the Capital Programme to include expenditure of £650,000 to provide Property Flood Grants fully matched by DEFRA funding, noting that the exact level of expenditure will be dependent of the number of eligible applicants received.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The district suffered flooding from storms Ciara, Dennis and subsequent swelling of the rivers Stour and Severn in February 2020. Approximately 80 Homes and 80 businesses were directly affected in Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport.
- 3.2 In response to the flooding, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has declared that affected districts can apply for funding to provide Property Flood Grants. Guidance has been issued and the grants for up to £5,000 to undertake work to help the properties resist water entry or make the property easier or quicker to recover from flooding. The grants are capital expenditure.
- 3.3 The North Worcestershire Water Management team has been in contact with the home and business owners known to be eligible to inform them of the grant and advise them of the process details. There has been collaboration with the Environment Agency in regard of properties that have already had works through a scheme they have been running in Wribbenhall to ensure those properties can

benefit from measures to aid flood recovery under this scheme. There has also been collaboration with neighbouring councils to develop a consistent approach.

- 3.4 A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by the Council and returned to DEFRA to register our intention to run the scheme in the district. Once the grant has been issued, DEFRA will reimburse the council

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The exact number of applications that will be received and the amount of grant eligible in each case will is not known. It is estimated that approximately 130 out of the 160 affected businesses and homes could apply (one property hosting several businesses for example could only have one application for the building itself). The £5k grants will be paid from the capital programme and then recovered from the grant from DEFRA.
- 4.2 The scheme will aim to complete all grants by end of March 2021, however some may run into the following financial year.
- 4.3 NWWM have identified the processes needed to administer the grants based upon the requirements of the MoU, the DEFRA guidance document and existing procedures used in the administration of other Grants awarded by the Council.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The likely financial implication based on the number of properties and businesses affected is in the region of £650,000. It is therefore proposed that the capital programme is amended to include the £650,000 estimated cost of this grant scheme; the exact expenditure will be dependent of the number of eligible applicants received. The Council will claim 100% of the costs of these grants back from DEFRA in line with the signed MofU so this scheme will be fully funded.
- 5.2 Other costs to the council in relation to officer time to process the grants will be met from existing budgets.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The eligibility for the grants has been determined by DEFRA. A Memorandum of Understanding between DEFRA and the Council signed to enable the Council to claim the grant.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Screening Assessment has been undertaken and this indicates there are no adverse effects of this decision on any groups with protected characteristics, so a full EIA is not required.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The Council has signed an MofU with DEFRA to enable us to recover any capital grants out. Colleagues in the Private Sector Housing (PSH) and Finance teams will work together to oversee the process of paying out the grants.
- 8.2 The PSH team will ensure eligibility for the scheme in each claim to ensure grant recovery.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 DEFRA has made available funding for Property Flood Grants to assist residents and businesses in the District following from storms Ciara and Dennis. The Council has signed a MofU with DEFRA to enable us to access this funding to be able to offer grants to residents and businesses in the District that were affected by flooding.
- 9.2 The Council will need to amend the capital programme and it is proposed to include an additional £650k into the programme to meet the costs of the grants and this funding will then be recovered from DEFRA.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 CLT

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Details of the scheme are available at the web address:
[https://collaborate.resilience.gov.uk/RDService/public/Property%20Flood%20Resilience%20\(PFR\)%20Recovery%20Support%20Scheme%20Guidance%20\(April%202020\).pdf?id=cf10fa08-a0b0-44ce-8f2f-eeb0f684714d](https://collaborate.resilience.gov.uk/RDService/public/Property%20Flood%20Resilience%20(PFR)%20Recovery%20Support%20Scheme%20Guidance%20(April%202020).pdf?id=cf10fa08-a0b0-44ce-8f2f-eeb0f684714d)
- 11.2 Flooding Briefing Paper, Overview and Scrutiny Committee 11th June 2020.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
7th July 2020

Bromsgrove Street Car Park Developer Agreement

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Fran Oborski – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning & Capital Investments
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Mike Parker - Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place
CONTACT OFFICER:	Mike Parker ext 2500 Mike.parker@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 – illustration of potential future car park layout

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree a proposed Agreement with the Council's former Glades Leisure Centre site development partner, Cordwell, in respect of the public car park at Bromsgrove Street and its usage in relation to the proposed cinema led leisure scheme planned for the former leisure centre site.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is recommended to AGREE:

- 2.1 To delegate to the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place in consultation with the Council's Solicitor and the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning & Capital Investments authority to finalise and sign the proposed Agreement.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council's former Glades Leisure Centre closed in 2016 and at their meeting in July 2016 the Cabinet agreed the Kidderminster Eastern Gateway Development Framework which subsequently became the Lion Fields Development Framework. As part of that Framework the redevelopment of the former leisure centre site was agreed and it was agreed by Cabinet in August 2016 to demolish the former leisure centre site. Cabinet had also agreed in February 2017 to procure a development partner to deliver a cinema led leisure redevelopment of the site. Having successfully run a procurement exercise to select a partner, the Cordwell Property Group Ltd (of Belbroughton) was appointed. They are funded by their partner Peveril Securities Ltd. The Development Agreement was finalised between the Council, Worcestershire County Council (which owns a small piece of the development site adjacent the health centre) and Cordwell in November 2019. Since then Cordwell have been working with a national cinema provider to secure them as anchor for the proposed

development; whilst this work is yet to be finalised, it is ongoing but has been hampered by the Coronavirus epidemic.

- 3.2 The draft layout for the redevelopment site indicates that approximately 150 car parking spaces could be provided on the site of the former leisure centre. A planning application for the development has yet to be submitted and the final layout may change in respect of car parking numbers but is not expected to be wholly different than the draft. In discussion with potential cinema operators and food and beverage outlets that are expected might be the end user tenants, Cordwell advise that operators would be looking for an additional c170 parking spaces within close vicinity to the site and of course the Council's public car park at Bromsgrove Street lies directly opposite the redevelopment site and would meet this requirement for the additional spaces.
- 3.3 In February 2019 as part of the ongoing release of redevelopment sites as part of the Lion Fields Development Framework, Cabinet agreed the vision for the redevelopment of part of the Bromsgrove Street car park at the northern end of the site (away from the former Glades site) for a residential redevelopment; this recognised that the car park was significantly underused since the leisure centre relocated and that part could now be released for redevelopment whilst retaining part to continue functioning as a town centre public car park.
- 3.4 In 2018 the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place commissioned White Young Green to undertake a strategic review of car parking provision in the wider Kidderminster Town Centre area to better understand how various redevelopment sites around the town affected the need for public car parking in the future. The report considered the impact of known redevelopment proposals on parking demand, such as the former leisure centre site. The conclusion reached in respect of Bromsgrove Street car park was that 130 spaces could be released for redevelopment purposes and that 176 should be retained for future town centre public parking needs. Fortunately this corresponds with the additional number of spaces required to support the cinema and leisure development.
- 3.5 During the course of their discussions with the intended cinema operator it has become apparent to Cordwell that it is essential in bringing forward the cinema development that some comfort is given to them that it is the Council's intention to retain the car park at Bromsgrove Street going forward and what is proposed is an Agreement between the Council, Cordwell and Peveril Securities to set out the proposed retention of the car park to enable use by visitors to the cinema development as well as the wider town centre.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is the potential reconfiguration of the Bromsgrove Street car park as was illustrated in the appendices to the report to Cabinet in 2019 when the vision for the release of land for development was agreed. This shows the retention of the 176 spaces as recommended by White Young Green.
- 4.2 The draft agreement is currently being finalised with Cordwell & Peveril Securities; currently the Council's Property Solicitor has an amended version out for their comment. There are a number of principles it is intended to resolve which reflect the heads of terms that Cordwell have agreed in principle with the cinema operator:

- 4.2.1 That the car park will remain in use as a public pay and display car park;
 - 4.2.2 That the car park continues to operate with a minimum number of 170 spaces, other than for unforeseeable reasons or for such needs as maintenance requirements;
 - 4.2.3 That the car park is open for thirty minutes either side of the trading hours of the cinema complex;
 - 4.2.4 That the parking charges are consistent with other Council public car park charges in Kidderminster;
 - 4.2.5 That the car park is maintained and lit;
 - 4.2.6 That the Council will collaborate with the owners and occupiers of the development on any planned changes;
 - 4.2.7 That the Council will not dispose of the car park for a minimum period of years.
- 4.3 Subject to negotiation with Cordwell and Peveril, none of these principles is considered unduly unreasonable and none should cause the Council to operate the car park in any other way than it has been operating as a public car park. The limit on the period the Council agrees to retain the car park and not dispose of it would be an impediment were the Council to be considering disposal, but in the light of the White Young Green report the Council can be confident that this amount of car parking will be necessary in the future as part of the strategic distribution of parking spaces across the town, so it should present no problem for the Council to offer this assurance to Peveril in order to facilitate the cinema proposal.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial consequences arising directly from this report, but Cabinet will note the limitations placed on the Council if it enters the Agreement in terms of revenue from car park charges and potential capital receipt from disposal.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct legal or policy implications arising from the report.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Screening Assessment is not required.

8 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 There are risks associated with both entering this Agreement and not entering it; entering the Agreement will place limitations on the Council's ability to dispose of the site (although this is part of the ongoing negotiation to limit the extent of this) and on the requirement to retain and maintain it for parking purposes. Not entering the Agreement risks the failure to deliver the cinema redevelopment and a key cornerstone of the Council's Lion Fields redevelopment plan, with consequential effects on the town centre and the Council's plans to re-balance the shift of the town centre to Weavers Wharf.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 As can be seen from the above, there is a proposal for the Council to enter into an Agreement with Peveril Securities Ltd to assist with the delivery of the cinema led leisure development of the former Glades Leisure Centre site by offering a period of guarantee during which the Council will retain a minimum of 170 car parking spaces on its Bromsgrove Street public car park. This will supplement the car parking to be provided on the site of the cinema redevelopment, but which falls short of the numbers that such a development would normally expect to provide.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Cabinet/CLT

11. APPENDICIES

Appendix 1 – Plan of potential car park layout following release of spaces to enable redevelopment of part of the existing car park site.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Cabinet reports July 2016, August 2016, February 2017, February 2019.
White Young Green Strategic Car Park review 2018

Design Option B - Computer Generated Images



View from north-west