

**Open**

# **Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

## **Agenda**

**6pm**  
**Thursday, 1st April 2021**  
**To be held remotely**



## Overview & Scrutiny Committee

### Members of Committee:

**Chairman: Councillor M J Hart**  
**Vice-Chairman: Councillor S J Chambers**

**Councillor N J Desmond**  
**Councillor C Edginton-White**  
**Councillor A L L'Huillier**  
**Councillor T L Onslow**  
**Councillor D R Sheppard**

**Councillor P Dyke**  
**Councillor S Griffiths**  
**Councillor S Miah**  
**Councillor S E N Rook**

**Would Members please note that, to ensure continuity in scrutiny, substitutes should only be appointed for the Scrutiny Committee in exceptional circumstances.**

### Information for Members of the Public:

**Part I** of the Agenda includes items for discussion in public. You have the right to inspect copies of Minutes and reports on this Agenda as well as the background documents used in the preparation of these reports.

**Part II** of the Agenda (if applicable) deals with items of "Exempt Information" for which it is anticipated that the public may be excluded from the meeting and neither reports nor background papers are open to public inspection.

1. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee 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.
2. Members of the public will be able to hear and see the meetings by a live stream on the Council's website:  
  
<https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/streaming.aspx>
3. This meeting is being held remotely online and will be recorded for play back. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. All streamed footage is the copyright of Wyre Forest District Council.

### **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.

## **Co-opted Members**

Scrutiny Committees may wish to appoint Co-Opted Members to sit on their committee in order to add value to the scrutiny process. To appoint a Co-Opted Member, a Committee must first agree to appoint either a specific person or to approach a relevant organisation to request that they put forward a suitable representative (e.g. the local Police Authority). Co-Optees are non voting by default but Committees can decide to appoint voting rights to a Co-Optee. The Co-Option of the Member will last no longer than the remainder of the municipal year.

Scrutiny Committees can at any meeting agree to terminate the Co-Option of a Co-Opted Member with immediate effect. Where an organisation is appointed to put forward a Co-Opted Member, they are able to send a substitute in exceptional circumstances, provided that they notify Democratic Services in advance. Co-Opted Members must sign up to the Members Code of Conduct before attending their first meeting, failure to sign will mean that they are unable to participate. This also applies to substitute Co-Opted Members, who will need to allow sufficient time before a meeting in order to sign the Code of Conduct.

The following will apply:

- i) The total number of voting co-opted members on any Scrutiny Committee will not exceed 25% at any one time.
- ii) The total number of voting Co-opted Members on any Review Panel will not be limited.
- iii) Those Co-opted Members with voting rights will exercise their rights in accordance with the principles of decision making set out in the constitution.

## **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](mailto:louisa.bright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk)**

Wyre Forest District Council  
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 1st April 2021

To be held remotely

Part 1

Open to the press and public

<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Appointment of Substitute Members</b>  To receive the name of any Councillor who is to act as a substitute, together with the name of the Councillor for whom he/she is acting.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interests by Members</b>  In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's) and / or Other Disclosable Interests (ODI's) in the following agenda items and indicate the action that they will be taking when the item is considered.  Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's Constitution for full details.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Minutes</b>  To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on the 4th March 2021.	6
<b>5.</b>	<b>Update from the Environment Agency</b>  To receive an update from the Environment on the investigation into the circumstances which led to the compromise of the temporary barrier at Beales Corner, Bewdley.  Representatives from Worcestershire County Council and Severn Trent have also been invited to attend the meeting.	11
<b>6.</b>	<b>A Strategy for Enabling Business Growth and Enterprise 2021-26</b>  To consider a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place which sets out the proposals to update and adopt a Strategy for Enabling Business Growth and Enterprise 2021-26.	34

7.	<b>Strategic Facilities Asset Management Plan 2021-26</b>  To consider a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place which sets out the proposals to update and adopt a Strategic Facilities and Asset Management Plan (SF&AMP) 2021-26; this also includes the management and marketing plan for tenancies at Wyre Forest House.	65
8.	<b>Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-26</b>  To consider a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place which sets out the proposals to update and adopt a Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) 2021-26.	81
9.	<b>Press Involvement</b>  To consider any future items for scrutiny that might require publicity.	
10.	<b>To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor of the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.</b>	
11.	<b>Exclusion of the Press and Public</b>  To consider passing the following resolution:  “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”.	

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

12.	<b>Agenda Item 8 – Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-26</b>  EXEMPT Appendix 2 – Property Disposal Strategy 2021	
13.	<b>To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor of the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.</b>	

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**HELD REMOTELY**  
**THURSDAY, 4TH MARCH 2021 (6PM)**

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**Present:**

Councillors: M J Hart (Chairman), S J Chambers (Vice-Chairman), N J Desmond, P Dyke, C Edginton-White, S Griffiths, A L L'Huillier, S Miah, T L Onslow, S E N Rook and D R Sheppard.

**Observers**

Councillors: G W Ballinger, J F Byng, R H Coleman, H E Dyke, I Hardiman, F M Oborski MBE, C Rogers and P W M Young.

**OS.72      Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Rayner.

**OS.73      Appointment of Substitutes**

Councillor P Dyke was a substitute for Councillor M Rayner.

The Chairman announced that following the changes to the political balance agreed at Council in February, the membership of the Committee had been increased from 10 to 11, and he was pleased to welcome Councillor A L'Huillier onto the Committee.

**OS.74      Declarations of Interests by Members**

No declarations of interest were made.

**OS.75      Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 4th February 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

Councillor P Young joined the meeting at 6.13pm.

**OS.76      Public Participation**

The Chairman announced that five members of the public had registered to speak in relation to agenda item 6 - Review of Public Space Protection Orders and Results of the Consultation Process. He advised that Cath Pedwell was unable to attend and Linda McKenzie would read the statement on her behalf.

The Chairman invited each of the registered speakers in turn to address the Committee.

#### **Agenda Item No. 4**

**Linda McKenzie:** *I'd like to start by quoting The Local Government Association Workbook on Scrutiny which says that you have been elected by your local community to represent them and their needs that you bring a different perspective to the decision making process to that provided by the council executive or officers. I would therefore request that my questions are answered by an elected Councillor. I would like an elected Councillor to take responsibility and to be accountable for their decisions please.*

*The Workbook also says "The scrutiny committee gathers evidence on issues affecting local people and all scrutiny work must add value. It must make a positive contribution to the lives of local people. The Dog Limit PSPO fails on every requirement and expectation stated in that workbook. On the evidence question there is no evidence that has been offered that these multiple dog owners in this district have ever caused a reportable incident or allowed their dog to foul without picking up after them. So if there is no negative impact in the first instance there is no positive impact under the PSPO and absolutely no evidence to support the PSPO or indeed in my opinion any limit on the number of dogs at all. Do you know what shocked me to the core about the Council's decisions? It is the victimisation of innocent dog owners who own multiple dogs and professional dog carers, without any evidence to support their decision. I cannot believe that a local authority wants to victimise a minority group. The Council have wrapped up a load of emotionally charged issues and then lumped them in with owners of more than a couple of dogs. You vilified them and made them enemies of the people with this PSPO dog limit. Any dog related incidents are covered in law whether that's fouling or an out of control dog. I don't believe that you should be meddling in the lives and stopping people going about their lawful and harmless business of walking multiple dogs.*

*British law rests in the hands of the Police. Please remove this extra unnecessary layer of bureaucracy which victimises innocent people. The dog limit adversely impacts just 10 people in this district. You don't know those 10 people. 10 people that you don't know because they've never brought themselves to your attention. 10 people who've done nothing more than own some dogs and walk them. 10 people that you have decided to target and victimise. 10 people that you have greatly impacted, and my question is why?*

**Linda McKenzie on behalf of Cath Pedwell:** *Under the 10 principles of public life and in particular the following principles: objectivity - members should make a decision on merit; openness – members should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions. Mrs Pedwell would like to understand how this PSPO was deemed by the Council and its authority to be necessary in the Wyre Forest area when there has been no evidence of any detrimental effect of walking multiple dogs or any number on the quality of life in the locality. In fact, of the 900 plus responses received to the online dog control order survey review consultation to increase the number of dogs a person can have under their control had a clear majority of 63% in favour of 6 dogs. However, Mrs Pedwell says there was not an option in the survey for more than 6. There was no option of no limit. She believes that the majority would have agreed to use the existing British law whereby walking any amount of dogs is not considered to be unreasonable, hence Wyre Forest District Council's PSPO without any evidence to support the need for it have put this PSPO in place erroneously. Therefore, I see no justification for such a restriction outlined in the PSPO and I request that this PSPO dog limit is removed altogether*

#### **Agenda Item No. 4**

**Lisa Taylor:** *PSPO's were implemented for Councils to deal with antisocial behaviour which have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life for those in the local community within defined areas.*

*During all of the meetings and information provided by WFDC and the police, there was no evidence produced of reported antisocial behaviour from owners of multiple dogs. It appears that the PSPO was instigated because of ill-informed personal views from a minority of councillors, and an anecdotal story provided by one of those who witnessed an elderly lady being tripped up by 5 dogs which was not reported as "the lad walking the dogs has learning difficulties".*

*No detrimental effect to the community was proven to implement the PSPO. However, in the 5 months it has been in place, an extreme minority of owners of multiple dogs have experienced severe detrimental effects to their everyday life affecting their social and personal lives and more importantly their mental health. Our local petition that was presented at a meeting asking to rescind the PSPO 3 dog limit received over 2,900 signatures, over 850 of which were from WFDC/neighbouring area residents. I respectfully request that my questions are answered by an elected councillor and not a council executive or officer.*

*My question is How exactly was this PSPO initially justified and in particular how was it justifiably implemented disproportionately across the whole of the district?*

*My supplementary question is What is the justification to not only victimise the extreme minority of owners of multiple dogs within their district, who have never caused an issue and who are now experiencing a severe detrimental impact on their everyday lives, and to also ignore over 850 residents' views especially as revenue from such a minority is extremely unlikely to be raised?*

**Wayne Greenwood:** *Thank you for inviting me to attend. This is a topic I am very interested and concerned about and so I appreciate the opportunity to ask questions directly to this committee. Hardworking taxpayers in Wyre Forest will want to know why their locally elected members are pursuing policies that appear to have little to do with the mandate and strategy that they were elected to deliver. Having reviewed the council's core strategy and local plans I can see no logical alignment whatsoever with the objectives set out in these delivery commitments which you have made people living in the area.*

*Therefore, I ask on what rational basis can the committee justify the decision to use public money to enact and enforce a scheme of little to no public value, which unfairly targets a minute number of law abiding households, and which bears no relation to the genuine needs and priorities of the community, particularly at a time when the council is running a significant financial deficit?*

*My supplementary question is, given this current financial crisis the average person paying council tax and expected to foot the bill for this makes no sense for it to pursue schemes which fritter away precious limited resources. There are not insignificant costs in administration time putting together a proposal of this nature, not to mention the costs of running a proper public consultation, and the signage and enforcement costs that will follow. All good money which could have been far more wisely spent elsewhere to the greater benefit of more people in our community.*

#### **Agenda Item No. 4**

*Therefore, it will be of a great interest to all local people expected to foot the bill for this and who want to know the answer to exactly how much the council has had to spend in developing, considering, consulting and enforcing this scheme which does not reflect their local priorities?*

**Marianne Salmon:** *There was no evidence was offered by either Wyre Forest District Council Enforcement Officers or by West Midlands Police so I wondered why Wyre Forest District Council feels the need to have a limit on the number of dogs that can be walked by any one person?*

The Chairman thanked the public speakers for their participation.

#### **OS.77**

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

The Committee considered a report from the Community Services Manager to decide whether the Council should make any changes to Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) following the review after a 6-month period of implementation and results of the consultation process.

The Community Services Manager presented the report. She explained that the Cabinet decided in July 2020 to make a district-wide Dog Control PSPO and PSPOs restricting alcohol consumption in Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn. It also committed to undertake a review within 6 months after the orders came into force in October 2020. She added that over 900 responses were received for the online dog control order survey and almost 300 responses were received in relation to the alcohol restrictions.

Having heard the public participation in relation to the Dog Control PSPO, a full discussion ensued. The Committee acknowledged that the number of dogs that one person may have under their control was a very emotive issue; however, there was a clear steer from the consultation results in favour of increasing the numbers.

In response to some of the comments and questions raised the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism confirmed that it was a requirement of the legislation regarding PSPOs that the authority had to review them every 3 years. There were no additional costs incurred as the statutory process was undertaken with existing resources. She stressed that PSPOs were not introduced to make money; they are done to look after the areas they cover. She confirmed that enforcement was actively taking place across the district.

In relation to the evidence for the number of dogs, she explained that, when the original public consultation was undertaken, people were asked what they thought was a reasonable amount, and the responses came back with those figures. It was not about looking to victimise any particular group of dog owners, or any part of the population. She said that dog control PSPOs were in place in many major towns and cities across the Country.

The Cabinet Member said that she was concerned to see on a social media site that it appeared that people from out of the area were being encouraged to take part in the Council's consultation review; she said she hoped that the responses the authority had received were from residents living within the district as the PSPOs

relate to the Wyre Forest district and not any other areas.

The majority of the Committee agreed that the current limit was too prescriptive and, having had regard to the evidence from the Kennel Club and the guidance from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), members agreed to recommend that the number should be increased from 3 to 6.

**Agreed: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet:**

**That no changes are made to the alcohol orders in Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn but that the Dog Control PSPO should be amended to substitute 6 for 3 in relation to the limit of dogs that one person may have under his or her control, in line with the consultation response.**

Councillors T Onslow and R Coleman left the meeting at this point.

**OS.78 Work Programme**

The Committee reviewed the work programme for the remainder of the municipal year. The Chairman advised that confirmation had been received that representatives from the Environment Agency would be attending the April meeting to give an update on the investigation into the circumstances which led to the compromise of the temporary barrier at Beale's Corner, and for any other matters they confirmed that they will attend the May meeting.

The Chairman invited the Committee to take the opportunity to consider whether there were any other statutory bodies that should be invited to the April meeting, it was agreed that representatives from Worcestershire County Council and Severn Trent be invited to provide an update.

**OS.79 Press Involvement**

The Chairman advised that the update from the Environment Agency and other statutory bodies on the flooding issues would require publicity.

**OS.80 Any Other Business**

The Chairman advised that, since the last meeting, Councillor M Rayner had been appointed to Cabinet which meant she was no longer a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

He reminded members that at the last meeting she had been appointed as Chairman of the Fireworks Review Panel. Therefore the Committee were asked to appoint a replacement.

**Agreed: Councillor S Miah be appointed as the Chairman of the Fireworks Review Panel.**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.39pm.

The full meeting is available for viewing on the Council's website  
<https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/53298>



## **Wyre Forest District Council Scrutiny Committee Report - Beales Corner Temporary Barrier**

Date: March 2021

Report version: FINAL

We are the Environment Agency. We protect and improve the environment.

We help people and wildlife adapt to climate change and reduce its impacts, including flooding, drought, sea level rise and coastal erosion.

We improve the quality of our water, land and air by tackling pollution. We work with businesses to help them comply with environmental regulations. A healthy and diverse environment enhances people's lives and contributes to economic growth.

We can't do this alone. We work as part of the Defra group (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs), with the rest of government, local councils, businesses, civil society groups and local communities to create a better place for people and wildlife.

Published by:

Environment Agency  
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Bristol BS1 5AH

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## Appendices

Appendix A - Beales Corner Temporary Barrier Initial Findings Report, January 2021

Appendix B - Beales Corner Newsletter, March 2021

# 1. Introduction

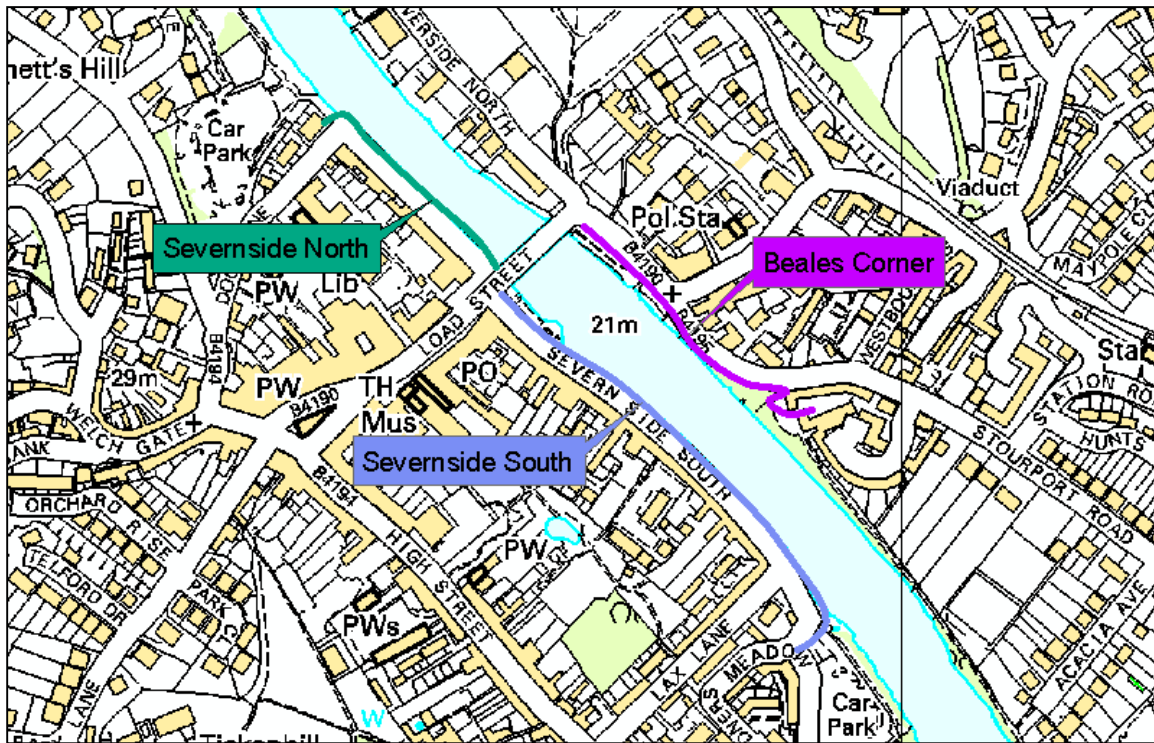
The Environment Agency is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by, but independent from, the United Kingdom Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs ("Defra"). The Environment Agency was established in 1996 to protect and improve the environment. As part of its functions in relation to water, the Environment Agency manages the risk of flooding from rivers designated as "main rivers", reservoirs, estuaries, and the sea, and has a general supervisory role for all types of flooding and coastal erosion. There are a number of designated main rivers in the Wyre Forest District area, including the River Severn and the River Stour.

The Environment Agency has legal powers to undertake certain flood risk management works for the public good, but these are permissive powers rather than statutory duties. Works are carried out across the country, at public expense, to reduce flood risk because of the wider economic and social case for reducing the effects of flooding. There is no general right to be protected from flooding and no right to be protected to any particular standard where risk management action is taken. In common law, the owners of land are responsible for safeguarding their own land and property.

The Environment Agency also has a role in responding to flood incidents, primarily operating Environment Agency flood risk management assets, the issuing of flood warnings where possible, and supporting LRFs. The free flood warning service issues warnings by text email and phone to the public and professional partners across England to warn of flooding from river and the sea. There is no legal right to be warned about floods. Flood warning is a flood risk management tool which enables those acting upon the warning to reduce the potential impact of flooding, including any potential damage.

## 2. Environment Agency flood risk management assets in Bewdley

The Environment Agency has a number of flood risk management assets which it can deploy in Bewdley. These consist of demountable defences on the River Severn's right bank at Severnside North and Severnside South, and temporary defences on the left bank at Beales Corner. The locations of these assets are shown in the map following.



Location of Bewdley demountable and temporary defences

### 3. Flooding in January 2021

In January 2021 significant rainfall was experienced across the River Sever catchment. This led to rising river levels and Environment Agency assets were deployed at all three sites in Bewdley. On the evening of Friday 22 January, with river levels still rising, the temporary flood defence barrier at Beales Corner, was compromised. This event is summarised in the table below.

Monday 18th January	Beales Corner scheduled for deployment on 20th January
Wednesday 20th January	Phased deployment started. 13:01: Initial Flood Alert issued (031WAF108 – River Sever in Worcestershire).
Thursday 21st January	Membrane attached to first section (Phase 1)

Friday 22nd January	<p>Barrier System completed with Phase 2 in place and all membrane secured. Additional pumps and sandbags provided to residents to bolster PFR.</p> <p>13:14: Flood Warning (031FWFSE370 – River Severn at Wribbenhall, Bewdley) informed residents that Beales Corner will become ineffective from this evening, 22/01/21.</p> <p>18:40: Standard of Service at 5.0mASD (Bewdley Gauge) exceeded.</p> <p>23:45: Barrier system compromised at 5.225mASD (Bewdley Gauge)</p>
Saturday 23rd January	<p>05:20: Level at Bewdley Gauge rose above 5.36mASD, which is estimated to be the overtop level in January 2020.</p> <p>08:00 An additional 10 submersible pumps ordered for EA staff to assist homeowners.</p> <p>12:00 Peak level of 5.435mASD recorded (Bewdley Gauge).</p>
Tuesday 26th January	Initial Findings Report issued

Following the barrier's compromise, the Environment Agency was able to offer help and support to those affected by the flooding. It also commenced a review into what happened. The review's initial findings can be found in the Initial Findings Report, included as Appendix A.

Information has also continued to be shared with stakeholders via a regular newsletter. The latest newsletter is included in Appendix B.

## 4. Next Steps

Our detailed review of the Beales Corner temporary defences is currently ongoing. Unfortunately, we are currently unable to erect the temporary flood barriers should river levels rise again. This is because we need to carry out more ground investigation and evaluation of the site which will include a better understanding of conditions below ground. We need to have full confidence that erecting the barriers again in this location will not compromise public safety.

If flooding occurs again in the short term, Environment Agency staff will be on site to help support the residents in a Covid safe manner with their individual property level flood measures. This will include helping them with sandbags and pumping should they wish.

## **Appendix A - Beales Corner Temporary Barrier Initial Findings Report, January 2021**

# Initial Findings Report - 26/01/21

## Beales Corner Temporary Barrier

### Introduction

The Beales Corner temporary barrier trial started in 2006, with approximately 25 deployments to date. The barrier system consists of 210 metres of 1.25 metres high aluminium pallet barrier. The barrier alignment runs south from high ground at the B1490 Severn Bridge approach down to a return into a property wall just beyond Millside Court.

The Environment Agency (EA) began the erection of the Beales Corner temporary barrier System on 20th Jan 2021 in response to Storm Christoph forecasts for levels on the river Severn to exceed 4mASD (Above Stage Datum) at the Bewdley Gauge. The full system was completed on Friday 22nd Jan 2021 (Figure 1) and the 5.0mASD (Bewdley Gauge) standard of service the barrier provides was reached at 18:40 that evening. At 23:45 the defence was compromised and 19 properties behind the defence were affected.



Figure 1: Bewdley Defences - Beales Corner temporary barriers are to the north east of the River Severn.

Water levels receded on Monday 25th January 2021 and it was possible to access the site to carry out an inspection of the defences. A drone survey was carried out on the undisturbed defence as it became visible, and the EA West Midlands Area Catchment Engineer undertook an initial site assessment. A representative from the barrier manufacturer also completed a visual inspection of the site prior to the barrier being removed.

This report documents the initial findings of the site visit and also draws on photographic and visual accounts of the barrier before and during the breach to make initial observations as to the likely cause.

## Beales Corner Temporary Barrier Deployment

### History and Standard of Service

In spring 2003, the Environment Agency was allocated funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to purchase plant and equipment that would facilitate the trials of temporary flood defence barriers. Three locations along the River Severn were initially identified as suitable, which were later extended to an additional three including Beales Corner in Wribbenhall, Bewdley, in 2006.

The barrier trial offers a standard of service to the properties behind the barrier of 5.0m ASD on the Bewdley gauge (this is the level at which flooding behind the barrier would occur) and reduces risk of flooding to 19 properties on a 10% annual flood event. The original barrier trial consisted of a short length of 1.8m and then 1.25m high barriers.

An assessment was carried out by the EA in 2014, based on an independent engineering report, which identified risks with the continued use of temporary barriers in this location. These risks included failure to deploy the barriers in time, operational failure, barrier sliding and seepage. The structural analysis indicated that there is a high risk that the barriers will move under full height loading when erected on paved surfaces, due to the lubrication effects of flood and rain water. Due to local conditions, it has not been possible to provide permanent fixings in the highway to support the erection of the temporary barriers or to extend the polythene sheet to the full extent. Combined with the uneven road surface, this contributes to a higher rate of seepage than other trial sites, and additional pumping has been required to deal with seepage at Beales Corner. During flood events, problems with delamination of the tarmac surface of the road, causing 'blisters' in the road surface have been observed.

Due to these considerations, a total of 44 properties at Beales Corner have received Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures, including the 19 properties impacted by the 22nd January 2021 event. The local residents were made aware of these residual risks associated with continued deployment; the preference of the community was that the barriers continue to be deployed while a permanent scheme is investigated.

A 2019 assessment concluded that the standard of protection is achieved with solely the 1.25 m barrier sections due to the outflanking at higher levels, and the short 1.8m barrier section was discontinued.

It is understood that the last time an overtopping event occurred in February 2020 it corresponded to a level of 5.36m ASD on the Bewdley Gauge. The barriers were last operated in March 2020, it is estimated that they have been deployed 25 times since the trial began in 2006.

## Event Time Line (January 2021)

Timeline Summary	
Monday 18th January	Beales Corner scheduled for deployment on 20th January
Wednesday 20th January	<p>Phased deployment started.</p> <p>13:01: Initial Flood Alert issued (031WAF108 – River Severn in Worcestershire).</p>
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Friday 22nd January	<p>Barrier System completed with Phase 2 in place and all membrane secured. Additional pumps and sandbags provided to residents to bolster PFR.</p> <p>13:14: Flood Warning (031FWFSE370 – River Severn at Wribbenhall, Bewdley) informed residents that Beales Corner will become ineffective from this evening, 22/01/21.</p> <p>18:40: Standard of Service at 5.0mASD (Bewdley Gauge) exceeded.</p> <p>23:45: Barrier system compromised at 5.225mASD (Bewdley Gauge)</p>
Saturday 23rd January	<p>05:20: Level at Bewdley Gauge rose above 5.36mASD, which is estimated to be the overtop level in January 2020.</p> <p>08:00 An additional 10 submersible pumps ordered for EA staff to assist homeowners.</p> <p>12:00 Peak level of 5.435mASD recorded (Bewdley Gauge).</p>

## Deployment

The decision to deploy the 1.25m temporary barrier system at Beales Corner, Bewdley, was made on Monday 18th January 2021 by the EA virtual Area Incident Room and scheduled for the morning of Wednesday 20th January.

Deployment commenced as scheduled on Wednesday 20th January in a phased manner. The first section (phase 1) of frame was deployed without the membrane with a Watching Brief for the second section. This follows the normal operating procedure, ensuring the best use of resource across the Bewdley defences and reducing the exposure of the membrane to wind loading while the barriers remain dry.

The membrane was attached and secured to Phase 1 (outlined in figure 2) on the evening of Thursday 21st January.

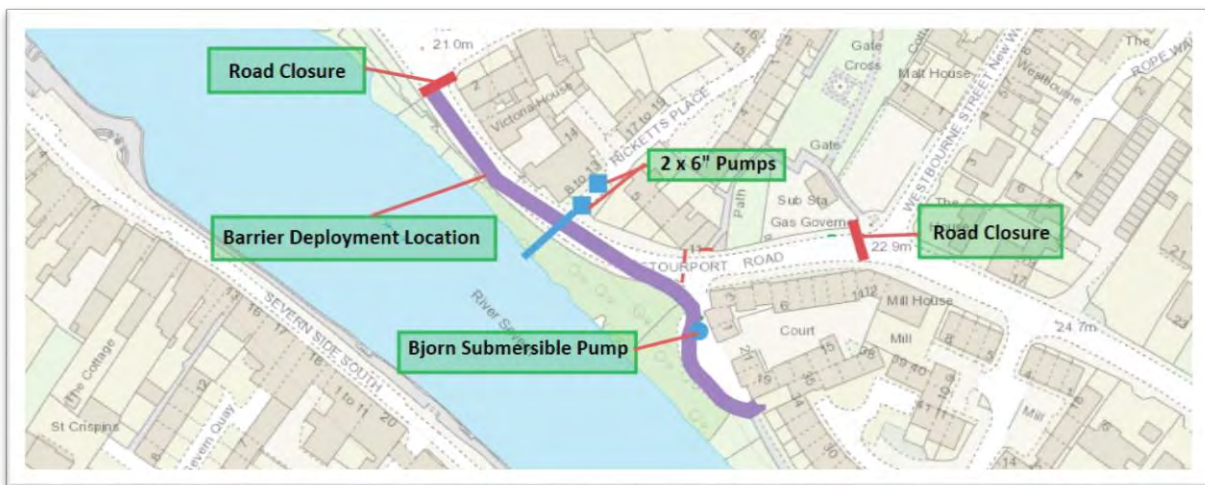


Figure 2: Bewdley temporary barriers Phase 1

The second phase (outlined in figure 3) was instructed for deployment on Friday 22nd January at 09:30, with the full temporary barrier system complete and all membrane installed.

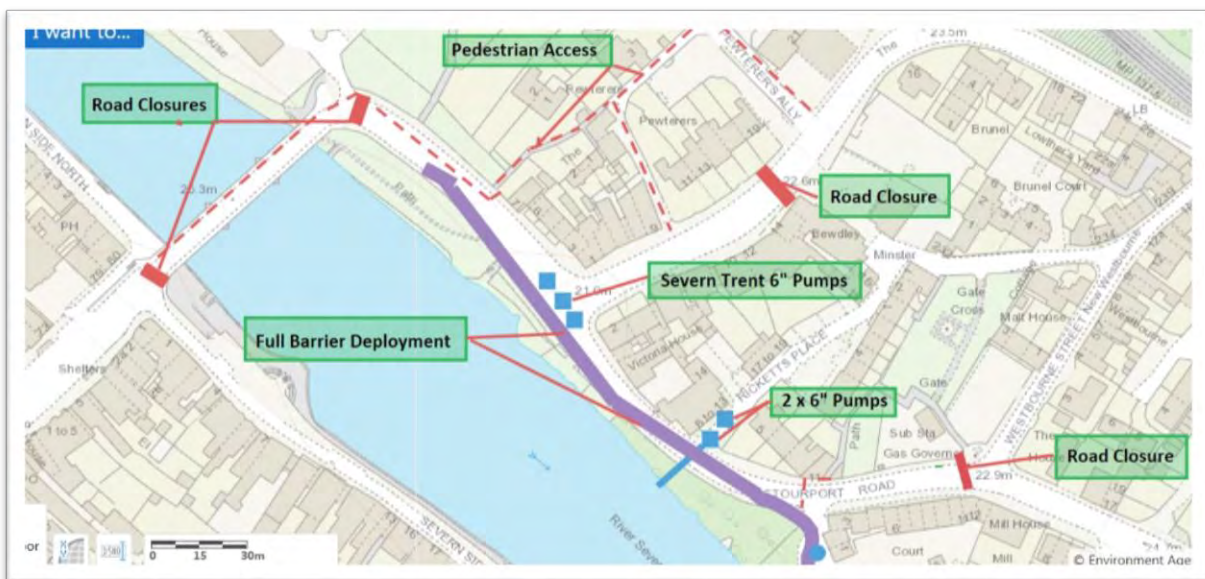


Figure 3: Bewdley Temporary Barriers Phase 2

## Operation

The full temporary barrier system was in place by the morning of 22nd January 2021, and as the forecast developed river levels were expected to exceed 5m ASD (Bewdley Gauge) that evening. Residents were informed as early as possible through the EA Flood Warning Service, allowing five hours to make preparations:

At 13:14 on 22nd January 2021, the following Flood Warning was issued – 031FWFSE370 – River Severn at Wribbenhall, Bewdley:

*As a result of recent heavy rainfall River levels have risen at the Bewdley gauge. BEALES CORNER barrier will become ineffective from this evening, 22/01/21. Flood water will overtop or outflank the Beales Corner temporary barrier. Flooding may affect Beales Corner, Severnside South, Kidderminster Road, B456, access to Bewdley Bridge including property on Stourport Road. Millside Court, Kidderminster and Stourport Roads, Greenacres Lane, Pewterers Alley, Springfield Place, Ricketts Place, Springfield Villas, Nunneries and Acacia Avenue. Predicted Peak:- Bewdley 5.2 to 5.4m Saturday afternoon 22/01/21. Our incident response staff are liaising with emergency services. Move possessions and valuables off the ground or to safety and have a bag ready with vital items like medicines and insurance documents. Please follow advice from emergency services. This message will be updated by 10am tomorrow 23/01/21, or as the situation changes*

This was followed up by door knocking on site to ensure that the warning had been received and to provide support where possible. The standard of service the barrier provides (5m ASD at the Bewdley Gauge) was reached at 18:40 on 22nd January 2021.

As per the operational procedures, the two EA operations staff on site were not behind the barrier once the Multi Agency Bronze Cell had been triggered, and no barrier performance issues had been observed by the point that the standard of service was met. Earlier in the day as river levels rose EA staff observed that the road surface was leaking more than had been seen on the previous deployments, with water under pressure issuing from many small points across the surface.

The Beales Corner temporary barrier system was compromised on Friday 22nd January 2021 at 23:45. The level at the time of breach was 5.225m ASD (Bewdley Gauge). The temperature at time of breach was 0 degrees with heavy frost and snow overnight.

The operations staff followed the 'Beales Corner Flood Barrier Deployment' Construction Phase Plan and moved to the evacuation point, notifying the Bronze Control and confirming their whereabouts with the (virtual) EA Area Incident Room. They then returned with the Fire and Rescue Services once the waters had settled and maintained a presence on site supporting the community.

The estimated overtopping level (taken from previous deployments where property flooding occurred) was reached at 05:20 on Saturday 23rd January 2021; this was 5-6 hours after the breach occurred. The river level peaked later that day at 12:00, reaching 5.435mASD (Bewdley Gauge).

The following photograph (figure 4) was taken on Saturday 23rd January 2021 and illustrates the flood extent.



Figure 4: Beales Corner on Saturday 23rd January 2021

## Performance Assessment

Temporary Barrier Systems can be affected by three principal modes of failure:

- Functional Failure (overtopping, outflanking or excessive seepage)
- Structural Failure (insufficient strength or stability)
- Operational Failure (not installed in time)

Footage captured by remote camera just before the breach shows an inland movement in the temporary barrier alignment (figure 5). Eyewitness accounts from residents describe watching the barrier move just before the breach occurred.

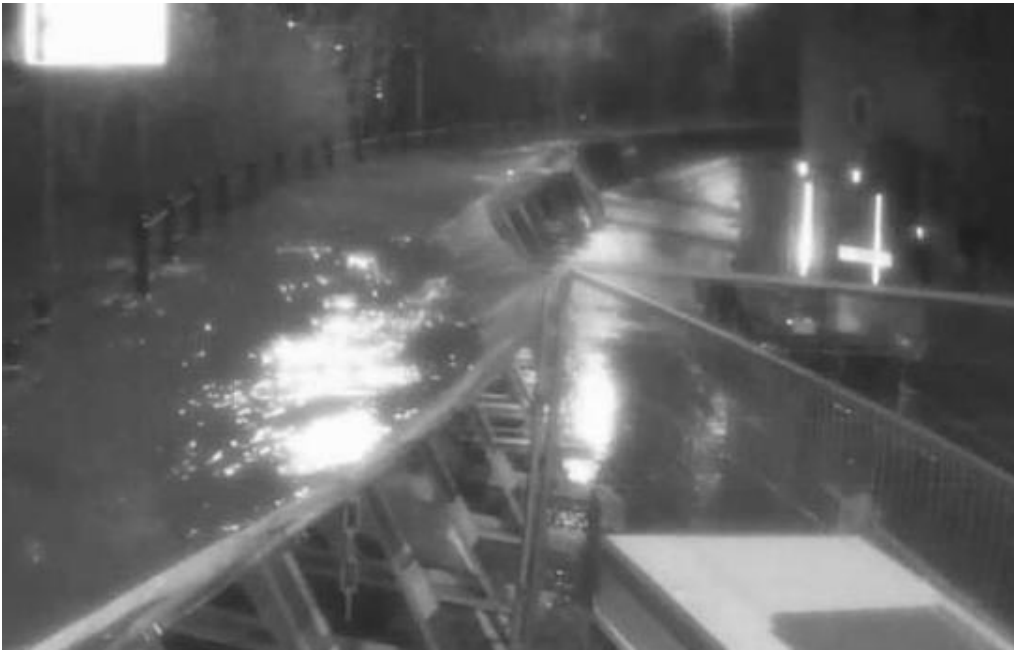


Figure 5: EA Remote Camera photograph showing inward movement of a section of barrier at the centre of the image at 23:34.

This initial movement and change in the barrier alignment captured by remote camera suggests sliding of the barrier and indicates that structural failure may have been the mode of failure which occurred.

Operational failure has been considered, however the team that deployed the barrier are all trained and experienced, and the construction is methodical and checked by a qualified engineer.

The visual site inspection has been broken down into 4 main sections:

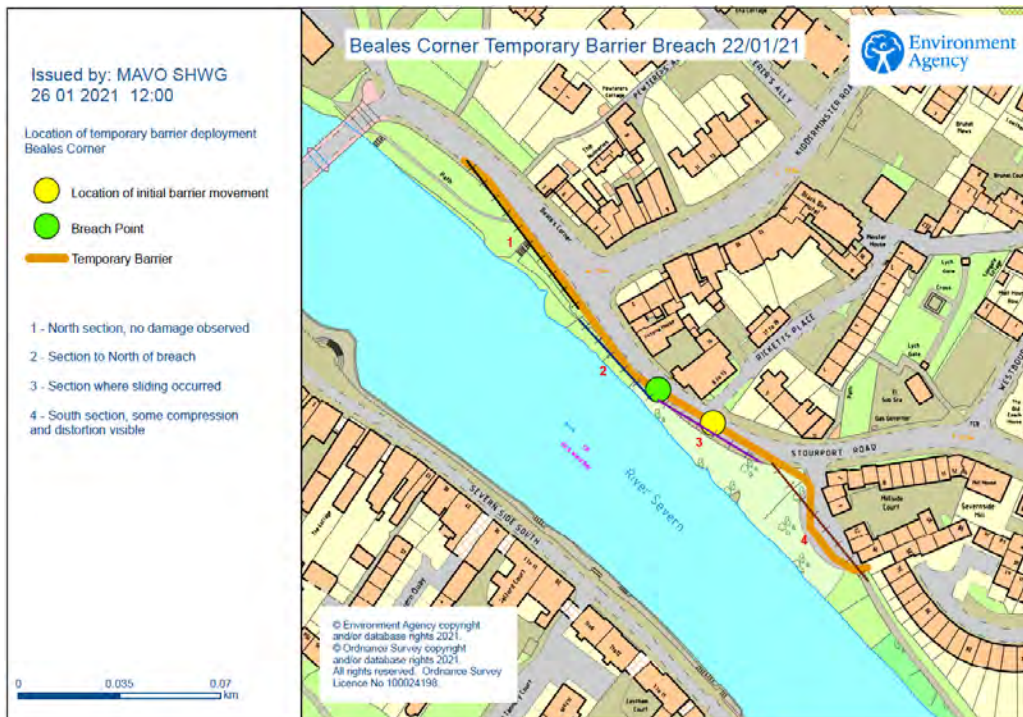


Figure 6: plan referencing sections of defence for inspection purposes.

Section 1 is the northern section of barrier which appeared to be on its original alignment (see figure 7) with no visible damage until past the Beales Corner road junction:



Figure 7: Showing the top north east end of Section 1

Section 2 is the section of temporary barrier which culminates at the breach. At the point of breach a spacer bar was observed with its weld broken and the membrane was torn. The barriers were twisted backwards against the back of the adjacent barrier, this is likely to have been caused by the force of the water flowing through the breach point.



Figure 8: Section 2

Section 3 is comprised of barrier which had moved from its original alignment just behind the toe of the kerb, approximately 4m inland across the road. Damage to the road service in the form of scrape marks is most evident at the entrance to Ricketts Place, which is the low spot in the scheme. This observation ties in with where the initial movement was captured in Figure 5. This indicates that the slide started at this location with 1 or possibly 2 legs losing grip on the road surface and the barrier moving under load. The membrane was damaged and the barrier deformed most at the centre of the slide where there were no kerb or barrier restrictions to slow movement.

As the movement occurred and the barrier exerted force on each adjacent section through the pins it appears to have stopped at the location of the breach point. Barriers are not designed for erratic lateral tension and it is likely that the weld broke at this point and the top section of Section 3 was washed backwards against the kerb.



Figure 9: Section 3

Section 4 showed evidence of compression and displacement at the bottom end, and bins and other debris had struck legs damaging spacer bars and exerting pressure along the line. The alignment remained unchanged, however some material has been washed out and many feet were unevenly seated.



Figure 10: Section 4

General observation of the site showed a marked deterioration in carriageway pavement condition with gouge marks from the barrier system, stress cracks, settlement away from the kerb and loss of surface material. Some of these issues may have been present before the event.

## Summary of Impacts and Conclusion


As of 24/01/21 it is believed that 19 properties at risk within the 10% annual probability flood outline were impacted due the breach. PFR measures combined with sandbags and additional pumps previously provided by the EA were able to minimise the impacts in a small number of properties.

From the site inspection and evidence collated prior to and after the event, it appears likely that the barrier underwent sliding failure which lead to distortion at the furthest point of slide, and a breach further along the line of the defences where the forces transferred by the continuing slide were too great for the barrier spacer plate connections.

The resistance to slide is provided by the anchoring forces between the teeth under the base plates and the ground, and the membrane and the ground. Observations on site indicate that the friction between the teeth of the base plate and the ground may have been reduced due to any of the following factors:

- delamination of the road surface (allowing the surface to be stripped off),
- water seepage through the road surface creating a buoyancy force,
- environmental conditions on the day with freezing temperatures.

Following this initial site inspection of the abnormal barrier operation, we have engaged an independent engineer to review the findings and, in line with normal Environment Agency procedures, a full Post Incident Review will be completed.

Version	Final V2
Date	26.01.21
Signed	
Author	Lindsey Sayner, BEng(Hons) MSc CEng(MICE)
Role	Catchment Engineer

## **Appendix B - Beales Corner Newsletter, March 2021**

# Environment Agency Update

Beales Corner, Bewdley

March 2021

**This is the latest update on what we are doing at Beales Corner, Bewdley.**

**On 22 January 2021 flooding occurred in Beales Corner, when the temporary barrier was compromised by the flood water during high river levels.**

Following this we supplied you with a copy of the initial findings report on the 27<sup>th</sup> January, and held a socially distanced Covid-safe drop in on the 28<sup>th</sup> January.

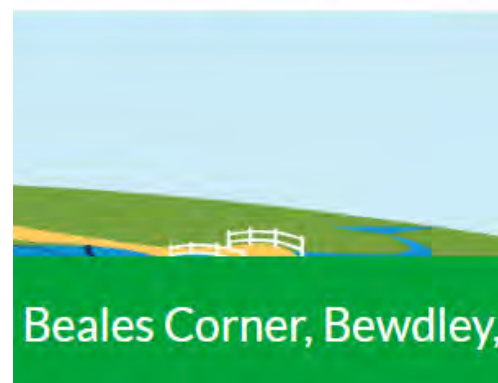
We have said we would continue to keep you updated on our continued work in your local area in the short term, so the main aim of this newsletter is to follow on from this.

At the same time we wanted to tell you that we are working with your Town Council and Flood Group on an engagement plan around potential options for a permanent flood defence, and we have set up a web site with more information on the proposed scheme, which you can view at

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/west-midlands/bealesfrms/>



Consultation Hub Find Consultations



## Next steps for temporary barrier review

We have commissioned a comprehensive topographic survey of the carriageway and surrounding area. This will enable us to identify any changes in road level. We will also carry out a ground investigation that will allow us to assess the condition of the road and road sub layer and determine any improvement works required.

In order to undertake the ground investigation works in this historic location we are working with the local authority and highways to identify and meet any road closure, listed building, environmental and heritage requirements with the view to progress the investigation as quickly as possible. We have appointed a supplier to provide an independent design assessment of the current temporary barrier arrangement, and we will work with the supplier and barrier manufacturers to identify any site improvements which can be implemented to reduce the risk of barrier movement.

We will supply a further progress update to you later in the spring, and we hope to be able to supply the full findings and recommendations in the summer.

## What if we have elevated river levels again?

Unfortunately, we are currently unable to erect the temporary flood barriers should river levels rise again. This is because we need to carry out more ground investigation and evaluation of the site. This includes a better understanding of conditions below ground. We need to have full confidence that erecting the barriers in this location will not compromise public safety.

We have assured residents that if a flood event should occur in the foreseeable future, we will be there to support them with their individual resilience, and will do everything we are operationally able to in support. This might include assisting with property flood resilience installation or with pumping.

### Stay flood aware – the Flood Warning Service and staying safe

To check your local flood risk and to register for the service, or to review your existing registration please visit <https://gov.uk/check-flood-risk> or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188

There is more information online on the messages you may receive from the service and what to do next.

- Flood Alerts; issued when flooding to low lying land and roads is possible
- Flood Warnings; issued when flooding to residential property is expected
- Severe Flood Warning; only issued if extreme danger to life is expected

You can register for more than one location, for example if roads you use, a school, workplace or relative's property are at flood risk.

*If you decide not to fully register, your mobile phone service provider may automatically register you to receive a free text alert flood warning for your home area.*

*However you will not receive all the available information, so we still recommend full sign up.*

- Please be prepared and take a few minutes to review your details or take action now.
  - Please also be aware that flood water will contain contaminants such as sewage and chemicals, and do not enter it, allow children to play in it or allow it to contact your skin.
- Further information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/floods-how-to-clean-up-your-home-safely>

Independent advice, including on any insurance matters, is available from the National Flood Forum <https://nationalfloodforum.org.uk/> or 01299 403 055

### Property flood resilience

Property flood resilience (PFR) measures do offer a level of protection from flooding but are not designed to stop all water from entering the property. They are designed to minimise the entry of water, offer residents additional time to move furniture and other valuables and to minimise the impacts when water does enter the property.

The PFR scheme to 44 homes in the Beales Corner area is now substantially complete. Our contractors will be completing the final improvements over the next couple of weeks and then JBA consultants will be conducting the independent post inspection audit (PIA) which involves the final checks.

We know that many residents wish to pass on useful feedback on the performance of their property flood resilience measures. We will continue to contact households individually to complete any final works, but you are also very welcome to pass on your thoughts and observations using the contact details below.

### Contacting us

More information will follow, but in the meantime, please contact [BLBFRMS@Environment-Agency.gov.uk](mailto:BLBFRMS@Environment-Agency.gov.uk) if you have any queries or comments, or contact us via your town council.

**We're on Twitter:** Please follow @EnvAgencyMids

**We're on Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/environmentagency](https://www.facebook.com/environmentagency)

**On the web:** <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/west-midlands/bealesfrms/>

**Would you like to find out more about us or your environment?**

**Then call us on**

**03708 506 506** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)

**email**

**enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk**

**or visit our website**

**www.gov.uk/environment-agency**

**incident hotline**

**0800 807060** (24 hours)

**floodline**

**0345 988 1188** (24 hours)

Find out about call charges ([www.gov.uk/call-charges](http://www.gov.uk/call-charges))

**Environment first:**

Are you viewing this onscreen? Please consider the environment and only print if absolutely necessary. If you are reading a paper copy, please don't forget to reuse and recycle.



## Overview & Scrutiny Committee

### Briefing Paper

Report of: Mike Parker – Corporate Director Economic Prosperity  
& Place  
Date: 1st April 2021  
Open

### A Strategy for Enabling Business Growth and Enterprise 2021-26

#### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposals to update and adopt a Strategy for Enabling Business Growth and Enterprise 2021-26.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 One of the Council's Corporate Priorities is to 'support a successful local economy'. As such, the Council has a very active economic development and regeneration programme and also hosts the North Worcestershire Economic Development & Regeneration (NWEDR) shared service which covers Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest. Good progress has been made in recent years in attracting new investment to the district and supporting new and existing companies to grow.
- 2.2 The Council through its membership of two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), Worcestershire and Greater Birmingham & Solihull, has benefited from participation in a number of strategic business support programmes that support business formation and local business growth. Furthermore, both of the LEPs have 'Growth Hubs' which act as 'access points' for local businesses to find out more about available forms of business support.
- 2.3 As part of its overall approach to supporting economic growth, in recent years, the Council has invested its own resources in a number of initiatives including:
- **Forest House** – acquisition and conversion of this former Community Housing Group depot for permanent incubator space to support fledgling businesses for an initial 3 years; building on the success of the initial SPACE concept;
  - **Kidderminster Rail Station** – working with the County Council with funding from both LEPs the new station and forecourt was completed in 2020;
  - **Unity Park** – the erection of nine new small industrial units to complement the adjacent Hoobrook enterprise Park;
  - **Development Loan Fund** – provision of loans for projects in the district which contribute to regeneration and economic growth;

- **Business support programmes** – participation in a number of schemes funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF);
  - **South Kidderminster Enterprise Park** – Local Development Order, now in its third renewal period; simplified planning for businesses wishing to invest within the district's key employment zone;
  - **Apprenticeships** - since 2012/13, the Council has invested up to £50,000 per year to help businesses to employ apprentices.
- 2.4 The Wyre Forest economy is still in the process of recovery from the previous downturn and in reality is still probably in the process of fundamental structural recovery from the decline in the carpet manufacturing industry. The district continues to experience lower than average wages, productivity and skills compared to other parts of Worcestershire and the rest of the West Midlands region.
- 2.5 The first Enterprise and Business Growth Strategy was adopted in 2016 and this is the first refresh. This remains the principal document to guide how the Council plans to encourage enterprise and business growth. The Strategy will complement the adopted Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) which is also being refreshed in parallel; this sets out opportunities for the Council to utilise its property and land assets to support the development of new starter units and grow on space for small businesses, whilst generating new sustainable revenue streams to the Council.
- 2.6 This strategy will be considered by the Cabinet at the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

### 3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Within the Strategy, the Council presents a number of objectives that will frame the Council's approach, these include:
- Foster an Entrepreneurial Culture
  - Create sustainable business start-ups
  - Nurture existing businesses and retain them within the district
  - Encourage new inward investment into the district
- 3.2 The Strategy proposes that the Council utilises three delivery models to deliver its enterprise and business growth ambitions, 'direct commissioning', 'enabling and engaging' and 'support and signposting'. The Council will continue to be pro-active and directly commission services and solutions where it considers that it can achieve an impact and/or there is a gap in the market that needs to be filled.
- 3.3 Having reviewed the available economic evidence and data, the Strategy identifies three principal ways in which the Council can make the biggest difference to supporting new enterprise and business growth;

- **Providing flexible business accommodation**

Through the direct commissioning of new incubator and starter units as well as 'grow on' space, the Council has demonstrated the ability to utilise its own land and property assets and/or purchasing third party owned assets. The Council will continue to work with private sector partners to help facilitate the development of new small-medium sized units, such as those at Ratio Park.

The Council will aim to ensure that tenanted businesses can benefit from 'wraparound' support programmes, offering business coaching, mentoring and potentially grant assistance through the Growth Hubs.

In its role as local planning authority, the Council will also continue its important role in ensuring that the district has a sufficient supply of employment land. The Submitted Local Plan sets out the provision for employment land over the 2016 to 2036 plan period.

- **Providing business support, mentoring and targeted financial assistance**

Going forward, the Council will continue to maximise the benefit of Business Support Programmes to businesses in the district. The Council will work closely with LEP partners to ensure that there is in place a portfolio of schemes available locally that will encourage further business start-up activity, business growth and inward investment.

The Council via the NWEDR shared service is well placed to continue to act as a 'gateway' to local and regional business support programmes and initiatives. The team will work to ensure that local businesses understand what is available and how to access the support that they need.

- **Ensuring that Wyre Forest is 'investment ready'**

The district has been successful in bringing new businesses to the area and also supporting existing firms to invest and expand their operation, creating new jobs for the local workforce. The NWEDR service has raised the profile of the area and together with the Council will continue to promote an 'open for business' culture to position the district as a good place to do business.

The Council intends to continue to play a pro-active role in securing investment opportunities and work to ensure that it creates the right conditions for growth. This will be through delivery of its economic development activities and delivery of services and functions such as car parking, Development Management and Local Plans. Services that support the delivery of the Council's corporate priority to create 'a safe, clean and green living environment' also make an important contribution to supporting business growth, for example the Depot

through delivery of its commercial waste and recycling service, helps to save businesses money, whilst the Council's parks and green spaces create a more inviting environment for the area which can form part of the overall offer to encourage businesses to locate in the district.

3.4 The core objectives of the Enterprise and Business Growth Strategy are as follows:

- Support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities;
- Provide a strategic framework to underpin Council investment in economic development and business growth initiatives and projects;
- To identify how the Council can support the growth of existing businesses within the district, to create a fertile ground for new business ideas and innovations to flourish and for entrepreneurs to succeed in starting up a new business;
- To ensure that the district is positioned as an attractive location for inward investment opportunities, to drive new jobs and investment;
- To help to identify commercial investment opportunities that support economic growth and can potentially provide a significant revenue stream to the Council;
- Promote Partnership working, in particular with the Local Enterprise Partnerships and Growth Hubs;
- To inform, influence and complement other Council Plans and Strategies i.e. Local Plan, Strategic Asset Management Policy.

3.5 There is a strategic imperative for the Council to encourage and invest in business growth to help with its own financial position. Business growth ultimately translates into an increase in business rates and in future years the Council will increasingly need to rely on business rates to provide a sustainable form of funding to help maintain delivery of front line services.

3.6 The Council is already supporting or leading on a number of economic development and regeneration initiatives utilising existing funding allocated through its budget setting process. However, the Council will continue to be pro-active in securing additional resources through external funding opportunities to deliver some of the business support activities proposed in the strategy. For example, the Levelling Up Fund and the Shared Prosperity Fund.

3.7 As part of this strategy, the Council will continue to encourage and support investment in new commercial workspace, to continue to develop a portfolio of modern business accommodation offers for new and expanding local companies. The Council's Evergreen Investment Fund and Development Loan Fund remain potential funding sources to help finance projects alongside other funding including grant funding from the Local Enterprise Partnerships.

- 3.8 The Enterprise and Business Growth Strategy and the proposed activities contained within it are supportive of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities and relevant Council strategies, including the Financial Strategy and Strategic Asset Management Policy.
- 3.9 The Enterprise and Business Growth Strategy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it takes account of any changes to the economic climate or the wider business support environment. The Council will monitor the progress made in delivering against its enterprise and business growth ambitions by reporting against and monitoring a suite of measures.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The Enterprise and Business Growth Strategy sets out the Council's ambitions to support economic growth and provides a strategic framework against which the Council's activities can be developed.

#### **5. OPTIONS**

- 5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the following options:
  - 5.1.1 To recommend to Cabinet that the Strategy for Enabling Business Growth & Enterprise 2021-26 is agreed.
  - 5.1.2 To recommend to Cabinet any other alternative recommendation.

#### **6. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Wyre Forest Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy

#### **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Business Growth & Enterprise Strategy 2016-21

#### **Officer Contact Details:**

Name: Mike Parker  
Title: Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place  
Contact Number: 2500

# 2021-2026 Enabling Enterprise & Business Growth in Wyre Forest

## A Strategic Approach



# 1. Introduction

This document sets out the Council's strategic approach to helping new businesses to start up successfully and to nurture existing businesses within the district, to support them to achieve sustainable business growth.

This strategy sets out the Council's ambitions for economic growth and how the Council through its direct and indirect actions will deliver its support, including the importance of the Council's role in developing a successful Functional Economic Geography (FEG) across North Worcestershire and the wider West Midlands for its businesses to thrive in.



## 2. Strategic Context

The Council's economic development and regeneration activities are particularly focused on supporting business growth by creating the right conditions to attract new businesses and to enable existing businesses to flourish. Significant successes have been made over the past years since the Council first adopted this strategy in 2016 in attracting new investment and jobs to the district, assisting local firms with their expansion plans, improving the business start-up rate in Wyre Forest and improving infrastructure.

As a direct consequence of the the ReWyre Programme which began in 2009 and subsequent 'State of the Area' debates in 2012 and 2013, the Council has invested significant amounts of its own resources to support projects that have promoted business growth and new enterprises. Examples include

**Forest House** - Building on the success of SPACE, the Council has purchased and converted this building into new incubation space to support fledgling businesses for an initial 3 years;

**Silverwoods** – The Council has built nine small industrial units on the former 'Frenco' site and plans are underway for the construction of six more medium sized units off Crosbie Grove.

**Business support programmes** – participation in a number of European Regional Development Fund funded schemes;

**South Kidderminster Enterprise Park** – The Local Development Order has been renewed twice and facilitated new build such as Specsavers Lens Online and International Glazing Services and Barton Firtop through a simplified planning process for businesses wishing to invest within the district's key employment zone;

**Apprenticeships** - since 2012/13, the Council has invested over £250,000 to help businesses to employ apprentices; since the scheme started over 50 apprentices have been supported.

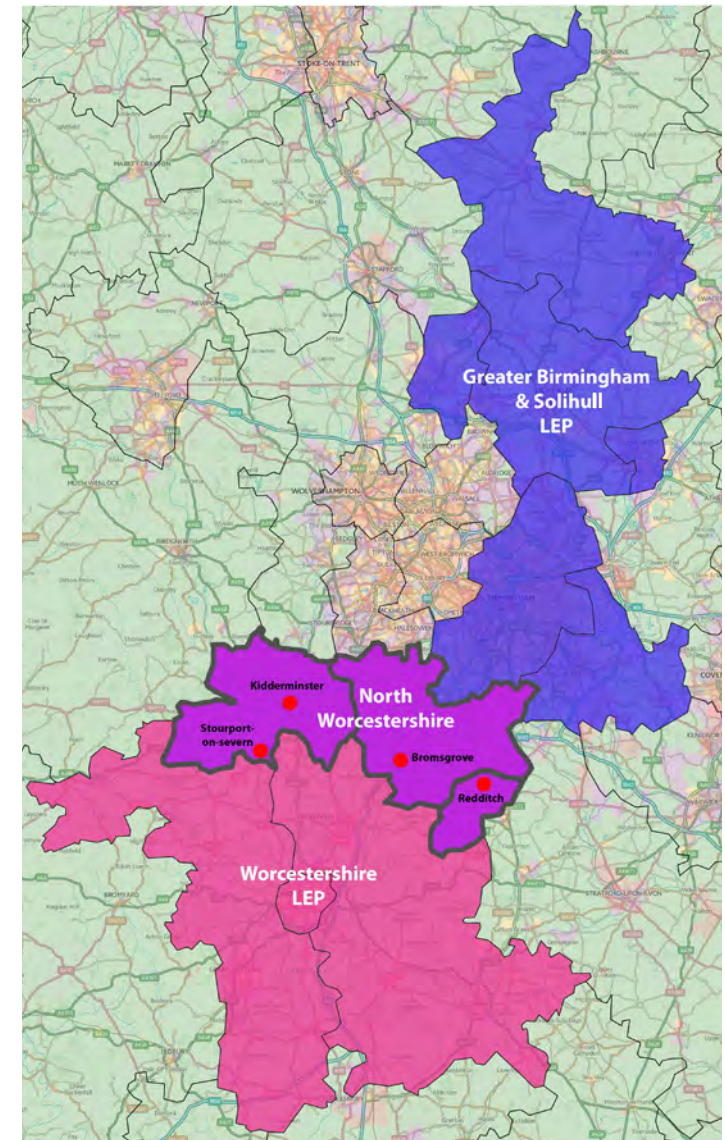
The Council has successfully embraced an 'open for business' culture and endeavoured to work with its key partners to nurture the growth of local companies and attract new inward investment that otherwise would not have been invested in the district. The Council has promoted a growth agenda through the progress towards the adoption of its new Local Plan 2016-2036 and has a joined up approach to the delivery of its services to make Wyre Forest part of the North Worcestershire 'Natural Place to Do Business'.

The Council has not only played a direct role in attracting public monies into the district to support new infrastructure and regeneration, but has also played an active role in supporting economic growth across the wider FEG through the use of its Capital Portfolio Fund and Development Loan Fund. Examples of key new infrastructure are to be found in Kidderminster's new Rail Station building and new road layout for Churchfields; funding has just been awarded under the Future High Streets Fund for Kidderminster Town Centre which includes plans to redevelop and refurbish the Former Magistrates' Court as a new creative and innovation hub. Through the establishment of the Capital Portfolio Fund the Council has acquired strategically significant assets within and outside the district across different sectors where there was a demonstrable business case that doing so would support the economic growth opportunities for the district and the wider FEG. The Council through its Development Loan Fund has been able to offer direct loan support to developers wishing to invest in the district to support regeneration or economic development.

Wyre Forest District Council has hosted the North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) shared service since 2011 which covers the three local authority areas including Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest. The NWEDR service has firmly established its profile across the West Midlands area, working in partnership with both the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership and the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership and their respective Growth Hubs to ensure that businesses in Wyre Forest get the best access to the wider business support services offered locally and regionally. In 2019 the three North Worcestershire councils adopted an economic strategy for the combined geography for the period 2019-2024. This should be read in parallel with this strategy for enabling enterprise and business growth.



The two LEPs have played an increasing role in supporting local business growth and formation as well as part funding key infrastructure and have introduced strategic programmes utilising funding from Local Growth Fund and European Structural Funds.



As part of their Strategic Economic Plans, both LEPs have made a commitment to supporting a number of 'priority sectors'. These sectors either are of strategic importance to the LEP economy or have the potential to grow and develop. Wyre Forest has an opportunity via its dual membership of the LEPs to benefit from support programmes that are commissioned by the LEPs to grow these sectors:

#### Worcestershire LEP

1. Advanced manufacturing
2. Cyber security and defence
3. Agri-food/Agri-tech
4. Visitor & Destination economy



#### GBS LEP

1. Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering
2. Life Science
3. Creative Industries
4. Energy technology & Services
5. Business, Professional & Financial Services

#### Cross-Cutting Priorities

1. Skills
2. Business Support & Access to Finance
3. Place
4. Emerging and Disruptive Technologies
5. Digital



Furthermore, the launch of two 'Growth Hubs' covering each LEP area means that local businesses can access a range of business support advice and support opportunities. It is likely that there will be a continuing re-focusing of business support activity towards the Growth Hubs, as national programmes such as the Manufacturing Advisory Service and Growth Service are to be closed down. There is a commitment across public sector partners to work together in a more integrated way, sharing data, resources and knowledge to ensure that businesses receive a more seamless and responsive service.

### 3. Wyre Forest Economic Context

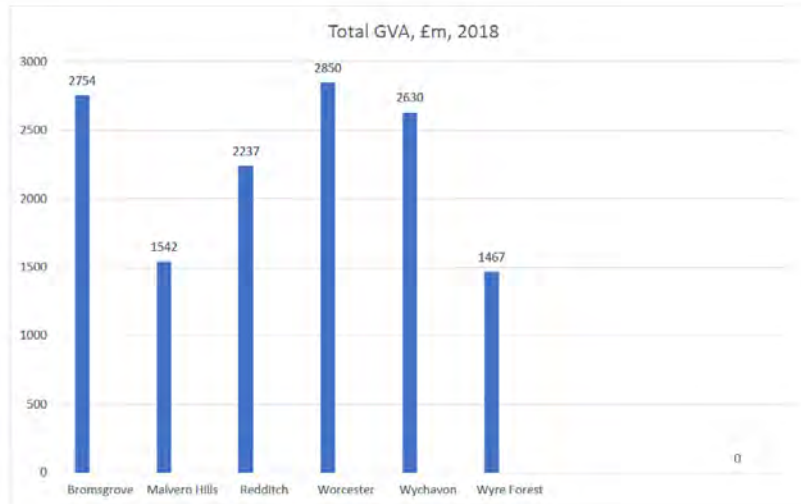
**Evidence suggests that the district still suffers from lower wages, skills and productivity than other parts of Worcestershire and the region. However, the district has an improving record around business start-ups and enterprise. It is also important to acknowledge the impact of Covid-19 which is already seeing a significant change in the operation and fortunes of our businesses – both positive and negative.**

Data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) shows that between 2009 and 2012, Wyre Forest experienced zero growth in the number of people employed in the district, with modest growth in private sector employment negated by a similar contraction in the public sector. Furthermore, the area has performed badly over the last few years in terms of wages which has acted as a drag on local income levels and purchasing power and the ability of local residents to get onto the housing ladder.

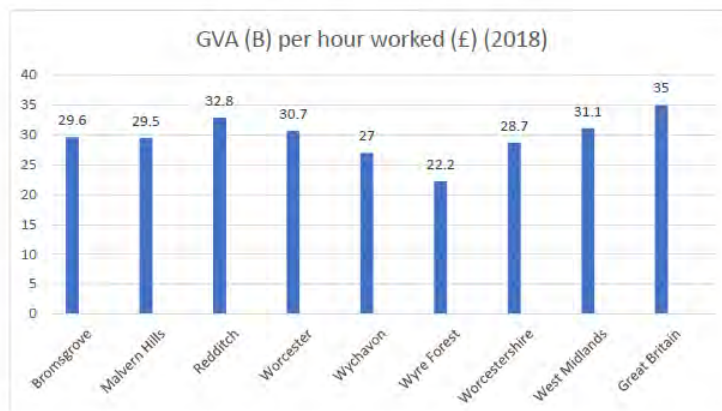
Although wages (as measured by average weekly pay per full timeworker) have increased slightly since 2012, they remain steadfastly behind the county and regional rate. A key factor has been the inability of Wyre Forest's economy to fully re-structure following the decline of traditional sectors such as the carpet industry.

The Wyre Forest economy is increasingly reliant on the service sector to provide employment, with the retail, accommodation and food services accounting for one third of all jobs in the district. These sectors provide lower wages than knowledge intensive sectors such as manufacturing and also have been significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.



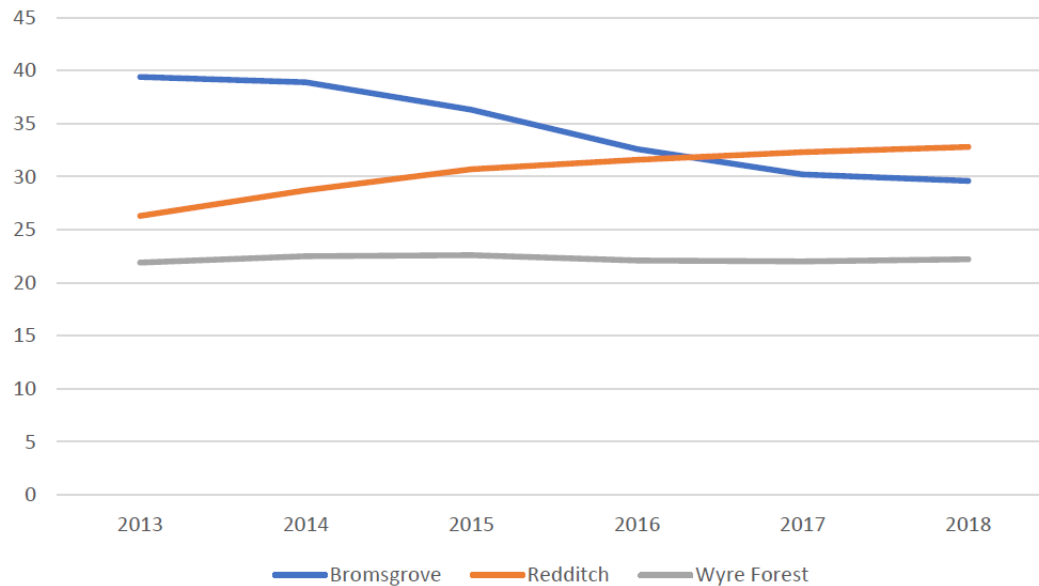


In 2018, Wyre Forest had the lowest total Gross Value Added (GVA) of any local authority area in Worcestershire.

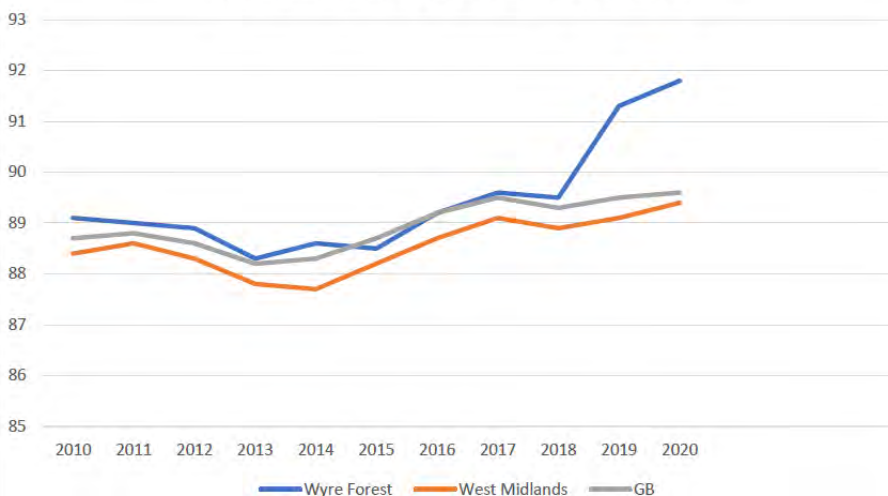


In 2018, Wyre Forest had the lowest level of productivity (measured as GVA per hour worked (£)) compared to any other district in Worcestershire and significantly below the regional and national levels.

Table 3 - Nominal GVA per hour worked (£)

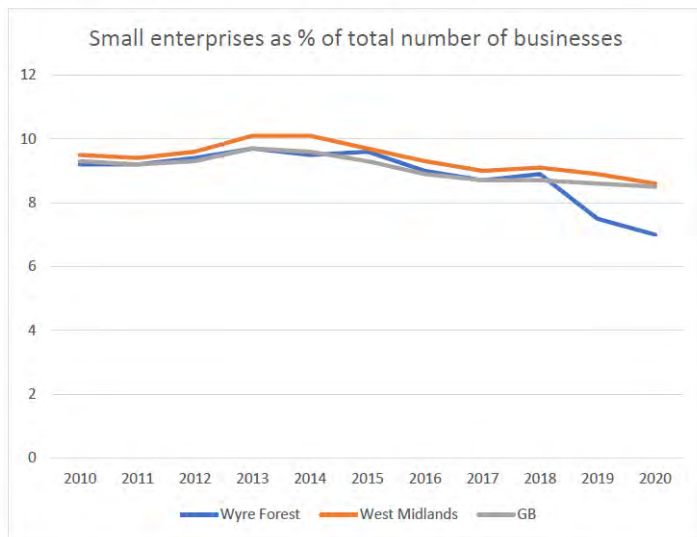


Micro-enterprises as % of total businesses



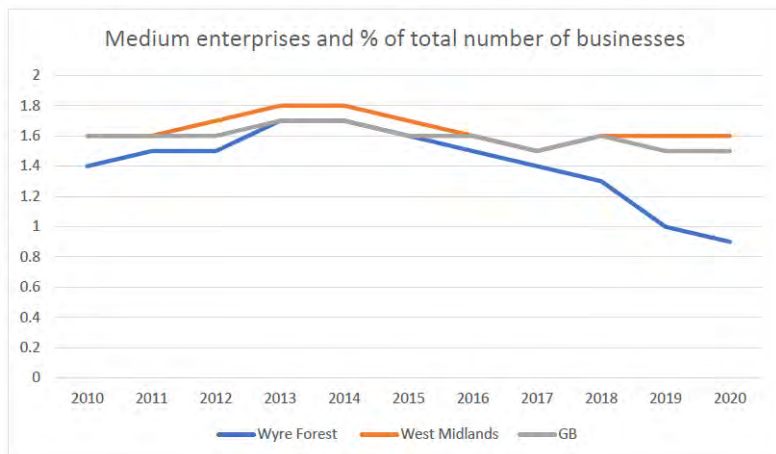
Micro-enterprises (0-9 employees) as % of total number of businesses

The chart shows significant growth of micro-enterprises in Wyre Forest over the past decade well above regional and national averages.



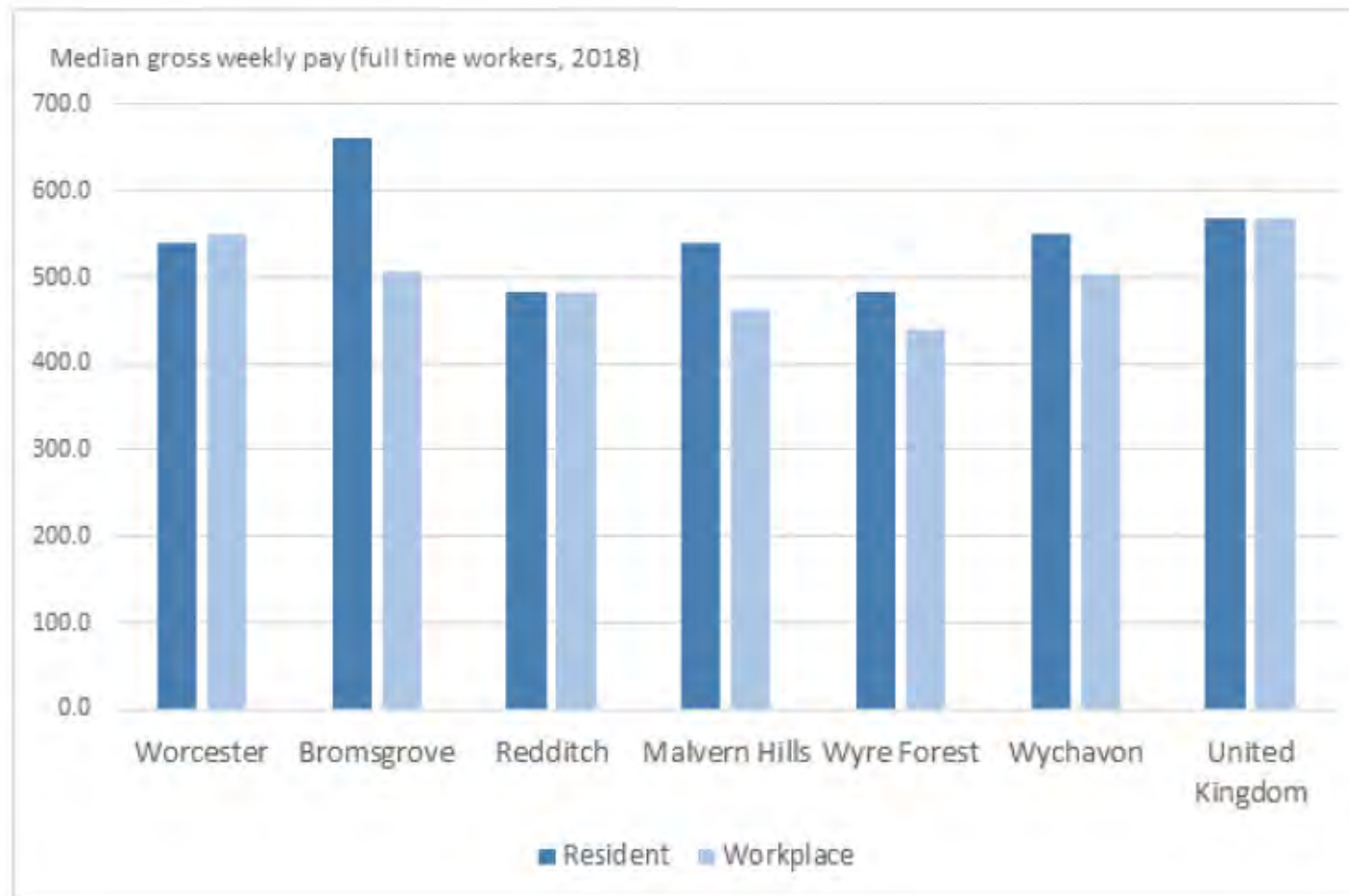
#### Small enterprises (10-49 employees) as % of total number of businesses

The chart shows a reduction in small businesses in Wyre Forest over the past three year and a drop below regional and national averages.



#### Medium enterprises (50-249 employees) as % of total number of businesses

The chart shows a sustained reduction in the percentage of medium businesses in Wyre Forest over the past seven years and a significant drop below regional and national averages.



Wyre Forest is predominantly a 'small business economy' with the majority of firms (91.8 %) within the district employing up to 9 workers. There are relatively few companies employing over 250 workers (0.3%) which is similar to the overall regional rate. The district has an improving record on enterprise and business start-ups, with just over 78 new business registrations per 10,000 working age population compared with 72 across the West Midlands. Self-employment is also on the rise, with 8.7% of the working age population falling within this category.

As part of the current Local Plan review process, the Council has commissioned Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners to undertake an Employment Land Review. The report identifies a number of issues that will have an effect on the ability of the district to support business start-up activity and business growth, these include:

**Demand for industrial properties is strongest for units up to 27,000 square foot;  
mainly due to the fact that the local economy is dominated by small-medium sized businesses;**

**There is scope for the further provision of flexible work space and small units to accommodate business start-ups and  
expanding local firms, offered on flexible leases and 'easy in-easy out' terms;**

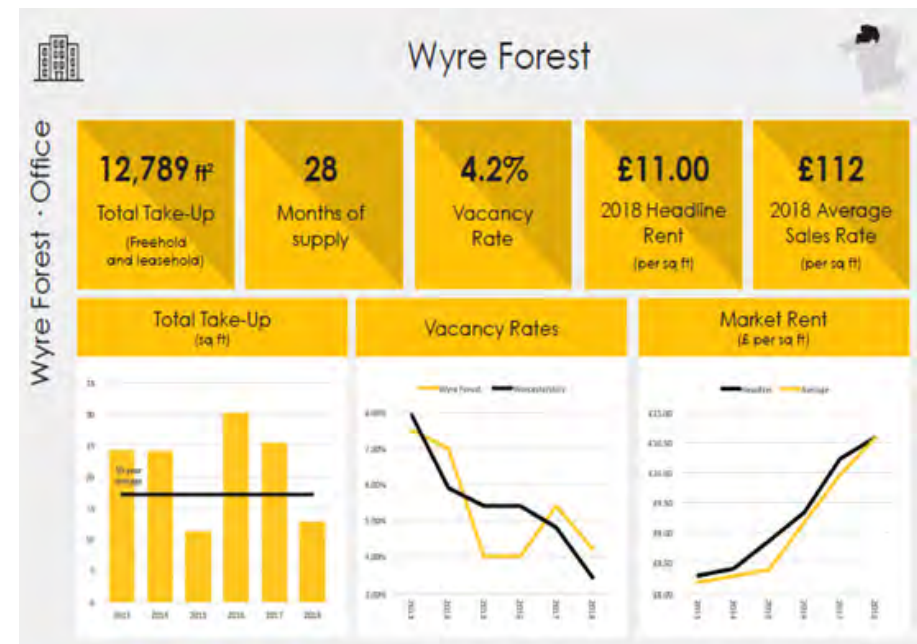
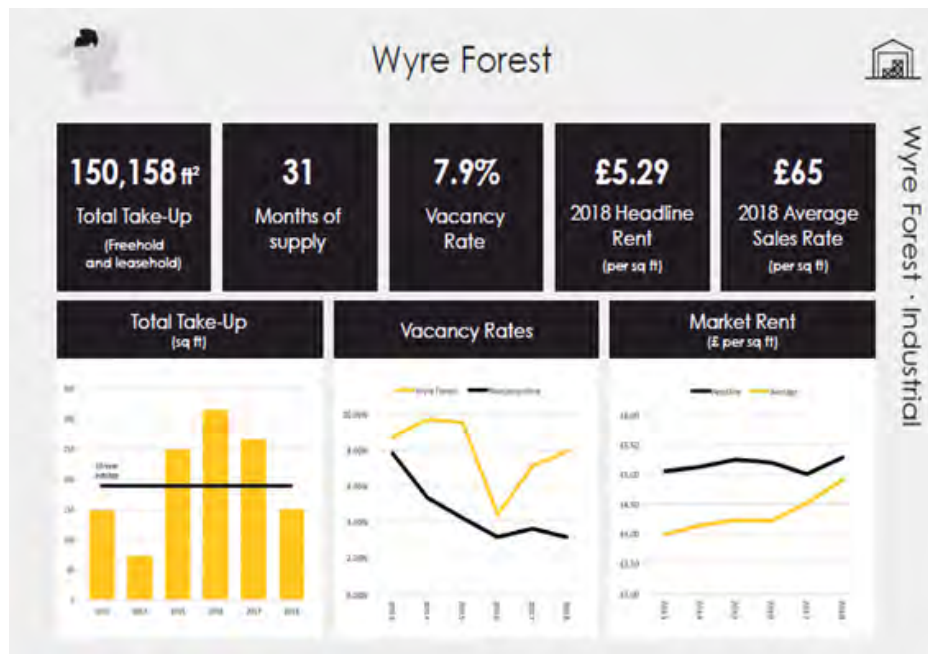
**However, the above units are not being provided by commercial developers due to a lack of certainty and risk in  
filling the units;**

**The District lacks the necessary critical mass to attract and sustain larger office occupiers;  
office facilities in Wyre Forest tend to mainly service small local occupiers;**

**Due to the distance from the motorway network, Wyre Forest is a less desirable location for logistics firms;**

**Policies such as the Local Development Order for the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park area have proved to be positive in  
attracting investment to the district and encouraging local business growth.**

The two graphs below show the supply position in the office and industrial sub-markets in Wyre forest in 2018  
(source: GJS Dillon, 2019)



## 4. Our Enterprise and Business Growth Ambitions

One of the Council's corporate priorities is 'supporting a successful local economy'.

Key to the realisation of this corporate priority is to help new businesses to start-up successfully and to support existing businesses to achieve sustainable business growth. This strategy sets out how the Council proposes to continue to deliver its economic ambitions and ensure that they remain 'front and centre' in all areas of the Council's service delivery.

The Council recognises that the Wyre Forest economy is transforming successfully, but is in need of further structural change. The Council is firmly committed to continuing to do what it can to ensure that the district makes the transition from a traditional manufacturing area to a modern, dynamic, digitally connected and flexible economy that is resilient and can adapt to future challenges as well as the present on on-going implications of Covid-19.

Recent history has proved that areas like Wyre Forest will not be able to rely on one or two major industries to provide its employment so we continue to plan for and develop a diverse economy which provides for a range of opportunities and is a fertile ground for new ideas and innovations to come forward.



## Enterprise and Business Growth Ambitions

Corporate Priority 'Support you to contribute to a successful local economy'

### Foster an entrepreneurial culture

Encourage the next generation of entrepreneurs to start up their own business  
Make it easy for people to start up their business  
Put in place effective 'pre-start' support programmes

### To create sustainable business start ups

Provide access to high quality coaches and mentors for new start-ups (0 to 12 months)  
Offer 'incubation' or flexible workspace to provide the right environment for businesses to start up  
Intensive programmes for 'high growth' businesses and young business (up to 3 years)  
Provide sufficient grow on space

### To nurture existing businesses and retain them within the district

Strategic engagement with our key businesses / employers  
Support programmes to encourage business growth and expansion  
Availability of suitable sites and premises

### To encourage new inward investment into the district

Maximise opportunities to position Wyre Forest as an excellent place to do business  
Responsive and flexible approach when dealing with prospective investors  
Work pro-actively with existing land owners and developers to promote available employment sites and premises

The Council will continue its pro-active approach to supporting business growth and creation through its Economic Regeneration activities, which will continue to be primarily delivered through the NWEDR shared service.

However, the following Wyre Forest District Council services will also continue to contribute, in their own way, to supporting local businesses and realisation of the Council's corporate priority, 'supporting a successful local economy' and 'a safe clean & green living environment':

- **Local Plan 2016-2036:** delivering land use policies which enable the District to be a good place to do business and which support wider regeneration proposals aimed at delivering new investment, jobs and skills to the area;
- **Strategic Housing:** planning for and delivering new affordable housing in the district to provide housing opportunities for aspiring people and families, therefore encouraging them to live and work in the district;
- **Development Management:** advising and guiding businesses, wanting to change, expand or develop existing land and/or buildings, through the planning process;
- **Street Cleansing:** keeping the District clean and tidy for businesses and visitors;
- **Waste Collection:** offering commercial waste collection and recycling services to businesses;
- **Leisure Centres:** offering opportunities for the workforce to stay fit and healthy through a range of physical activities
- **Green Spaces and Parks:** creating a more inviting environment for the area which can form part of the overall offer to encourage businesses to locate in the district.
- **Car Parking:** providing visitors and businesses with a range of car parks in all three centres;
- **Finance:** Guiding relevant businesses to apply for small business rate relief and discretionary support as appropriate; providing direct loans to businesses delivering regeneration initiatives in the district;
- **Capital Portfolio Fund:** Strategic acquisition of assets across the FEG which support economic growth from which the district can benefit.
- **Strategic Tourism:** Helping to promote the District's visitor attraction and accommodation businesses and local events;
- **Worcestershire Regulatory Services:** Supporting economic growth, especially in small businesses, by ensuring a fair, responsible and competitive trading environment.

## 5. Delivery Approach

Over the last few years, the Council has demonstrated its credentials in terms of supporting local economic growth. The approach in this document reflects ‘evolution’ not ‘revolution’ and intends to build on the good work done to date. However, to achieve our ambitions we will need to continue to explore new ideas and models for delivery and develop our understanding of what businesses actually need.

**The Council will use 3 ‘delivery models’ to support enterprise and local business growth, as follows:**

### Direct Commissioning

The Council is proactive in directly commissioning business support or accommodation such as it does with Forest House and the new industrial units at Unity Park.

### Enabling & Engaging

The Council works alongside public or private sector partners to facilitate support or accommodation such as it did working with Worcestershire County Council and SLC Rail to develop the new Kidderminster Rail Station.

### Support and Signposting

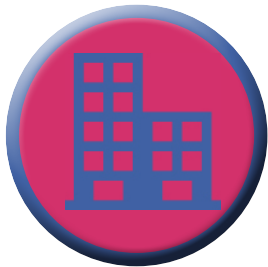
The Council supports the work of others such as LEPs and Growth Hubs where it acts as a ‘signpost’ for businesses looking for support.

The Council will consider using each of these approaches depending on the circumstances and will always take into account who is best placed to provide a solution to a particular business need. In many cases, the Council will play an ‘enabling’ or ‘signposting’ role, but it may be appropriate on occasions to be more pro-active and directly commission services where it is clear that there is a gap in the market that could be filled by the Council.

## 6. Proposed Activity

Delivering against our ambitions is the most critical part of this strategy. Although economic growth will primarily be driven by investment from the private sector, the Council and its strategic partners such as Worcestershire County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnerships can make a considerable contribution to the development of a successful local economy.

**Aside from the fact that the Council is a major local employer, has some land and property assets and purchasing power which can potentially benefit local companies, the Council can make the biggest difference to the enterprise and growth agenda in three ways:**



**Providing flexible business accommodation**



**Providing business support, mentoring and targeted financial assistance**



**Ensuring that Wyre Forest is investment ready**



## Providing flexible business accommodation

**The Council manages a diverse portfolio of property and land assets. In recent years, the Council has focused on utilising its assets to support the local economy through plans to regenerate key sites in the district as well as exploring opportunities to support local businesses.**

The Council's Strategic Asset Management Policy (SAMP) sets out a future approach which is focused on identifying opportunities for the Council to invest in existing and new assets to generate revenue and support economic growth, whilst disposing of under-performing assets to provide capital funding to invest. The Council has approval to deposit such capital receipts into an 'Evergreen Investment Fund'. Funding from this pot can be invested into schemes that bring a commercial return to the Council.

Through its direct commissioning approach the Council used its business incubator unit at Hoo Farm Industrial Estate branded as SPACE as 'proof of concept' which led to the acquisition and conversion of Forest house on the same industrial estate as the permanent home for new business incubation.. The unit was purchased and converted in 2020 and provides flexible workshop, office and storage space for small start up and growing businesses as their first business accommodation (rather than working from home).

Leases are for a maximum of three years during which businesses are supported to establish and grow before being encouraged to move out into more permanent accommodation at the end of the three year period, thus opening up space for new businesses to access.

As part of this strategy, the Council recognized the need to support the incubated business tenants at Forest House to move out at the end of the three year period and has constructed nine new small industrial units on the site of the former Frenco works, now named Unity Park, which adds to the existing popular units on the adjacent Hoobrook Enterprise Centre. But the Council is going further and recognising the need for the public sector to lead the way (per the Litchfield report) is also planning the new build of six medium sized industrial units, Forest Industrial Park, off Crosbie Grove in 2021.

In parallel the Council continues to work with private sector partners to help facilitate development of further new units or conversion of existing buildings that would accommodate start up or growing businesses.

The new units at Unity Park and Forest Industrial Park provide essential small to medium sized units between 600 sq ft to 4,000 sq ft. The Council continues to work with strategic partners such as the LEPs and Growth Hubs, to ensure that businesses can benefit from 'wraparound' support programmes, offering business coaching, mentoring and potentially grant assistance.

The Council will also be open to exploring opportunities to work with the private sector to deliver larger industrial or office units (2,000 square foot and above) that could be offered at the market rate on long lease arrangements.

The Council's Evergreen Investment Fund and Capital Portfolio Fund will be a potential sources of funding to finance 'investable' schemes along with the Development Loans Fund and financial mechanisms such as prudential borrowing and any grants that can be secured from LEPs.

In its role as local planning authority, the Council also has an important role to play in ensuring that the district has a sufficient supply of employment land and that sites and premises are of the right type and size. The new Local Plan provides for 29Ha of new employment land over the 2016 to 2036 plan period.



## Providing business support, mentoring and targeted financial assistance

In recent years, Wyre Forest has benefited from participation in a number of business support programmes funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and delivered in conjunction with LEP partners. Some of the key outputs delivered in Wyre Forest as part of the 2014 - 2020 ERDF programme include:

- **Funding secured: £1,341,666**
- **Existing Businesses supported: 93**
- **Start ups generated: 92**
- **Jobs created: 130**

Worcestershire and GBSLEP have allocated almost all of their European Structural Funding with current programmes funded until 2023. Programmes of support are currently available to help business to start-up and grow (Priority Axis 3). There are also a number of programmes that provide specialist support for innovation (Priority Axis 1), moving towards a green economy (Priority Axis 4) and upskilling the workforce. Programmes of support that are currently available are:

Enterprise for Success  
Enterprising Worcestershire  
Elevate  
WINN  
Proof of Concept  
Business Energy Efficiency Programme  
Low Carbon Opportunities Programme  
Elevate Technology  
Supplier Skills Programme  
Skills Support for the Workforce

Going forward, the Council plans to continue to maximise the benefit of ERDF funding to businesses in the district. The Council will work closely with LEP partners to ensure that there is in place a portfolio of schemes available locally that will encourage further business start-up activity, business growth and inward investment.

The Council (via NWEDR) has already indicated financial and 'in-kind officer' support for several strategic projects being promoted by larger local authority partners such as Birmingham City Council, Solihull Council and Worcestershire County Council.

Subject to the funding applications being approved, NWEDR will ensure that project delivery is co-ordinated effectively in North Worcestershire and eligible businesses are aware of the support that is on offer. The programmes will ensure that eligible local businesses and entrepreneurs can benefit from a menu of support including:

- Information/ guidance and diagnostic to identify business needs;
- Intensive support from a qualified business adviser;
- Coaching and mentoring support for pre-starts and new business start-ups;
- Targeted financial assistance with schemes offering grants of between £10,000 and £100,000 to encourage business start-up activity or existing businesses to be able to progress their growth plans;
- Support for product development and process improvement;
- Sector specific support for key sectors;
- Intensive assist for businesses with high growth potential;
- Innovation advice and 'proof of concept' support;
- Supply chain development including access to opportunities such as HS2;
- Support to achieve resource efficiency;
- Support for Apprenticeships, training and workforce development.

The Council via the NWEDR shared service is also well placed to continue to act as a ‘gateway’ to local and regional business support programmes and initiatives. The team will work to ensure that local businesses understand what is available and how to access the support that they need and also ensure that an effective working relationship is maintained with the Growth Hubs, so that local businesses can benefit from a ‘seamless’ customer journey.

Summary of current business support programmes –

### Start

Enterprise for Success  
Birmingham City University Enterprise for Success workshops  
Enterprising Worcestershire  
NWEDR Start-up Grant  
Peer to Peer Network from Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP Growth Hub  
Peer to Peer Network from Worcestershire LEP

### Grow

Elevate Programme Worcs  
Manufacturing Growth Programme  
NWEDR Booster Grant  
Small Business Leadership Programme  
Peer to Peer Network from Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP Growth Hub  
Peer to Peer Network from Worcestershire LEP

### Recover

Sustain & Grow  
Elevate Programme Worcs  
Adapt Business Support

### Innovate

Proof of Concept  
Low Carbon Growth Support Project  
WINN

### RELOCATE

Property Investment Programme

### RECRUIT

Wyre Forest Apprenticeship Grant  
Bromsgrove Apprenticeship Grant  
Redditch Apprenticeship Grant  
Develop Graduate Programme  
Kickstart

### UP-SKILL

Skills Support for the Workforce  
Supplier Skills Programme

### SPECIALIST SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

Additional Restrictions Grant For more information on eligibility criteria and application forms for the above two grants, click here for Redditch businesses, Bromsgrove businesses Wyre Forest businesses.  
Agricultural & Horticultural Business Grants  
Low Carbon Opportunities Programme  
Business Energy Efficiency Programme  
Low Carbon Growth Support Project  
Peer to Peer Network from Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP Growth Hub  
Peer to Peer Network from  
Worcestershire LEP



## Ensuring that Wyre Forest is investment ready

Over the past few years the arrival of Amtek, now Liberty Aluminium Technologies, and Superform to Kidderminster has re-energised the manufacturing base and this growth is expected to continue with other developments planned or underway including:

May 2021, Barton Firtop due to open its new 45,000 square foot facility which is the first phase of its expansion and relocation into the district where its manufacturing, testing and warehouse facility brings its world class filtration systems operation to the Silverwoods site;

Autumn 2017, Ratio Park, Finepoint Way Phase 1 begins to let small and medium sized units from 960 sq ft to 2145 sq ft; phase 2 of the site still development ready;

March 2021, Suma Developments Ltd of Shrewsbury begin work on 35,000 sq ft of industrial units on Silverwoods Way, 17,000 sq ft of which the Council is due to purchase as 'Forest industrial Park' providing new units of 2-4,000 sq ft capacity;

March 2024, Following the successful award of Future High Streets Fund monies, the Council plans to open a new 4,000 sq ft facility in the former Magistrates' Court and indoor market building in Kidderminster town centre as a creative and innovation hub, providing space for business acceleration and creative industries to locate and expand.

The Council has played a pro-active role in securing investment opportunities and has worked to ensure that it creates the right conditions for growth, whether this is through its economic development activities, streamlining of its planning processes or by demonstrating the strategic leadership required to do whatever it can to incentivise investment into the district.

The introduction of flexible planning policies such as the Local Development Order (LDO) for the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park, now in its third period, has provided a demonstrable example of how the Council can make it as easy as possible for businesses to invest in the district.

The Council intends to continue to ensure that enterprise and business growth is at the heart of everything that it does so that Wyre Forest can attract further investment and support further entrepreneurial activity.

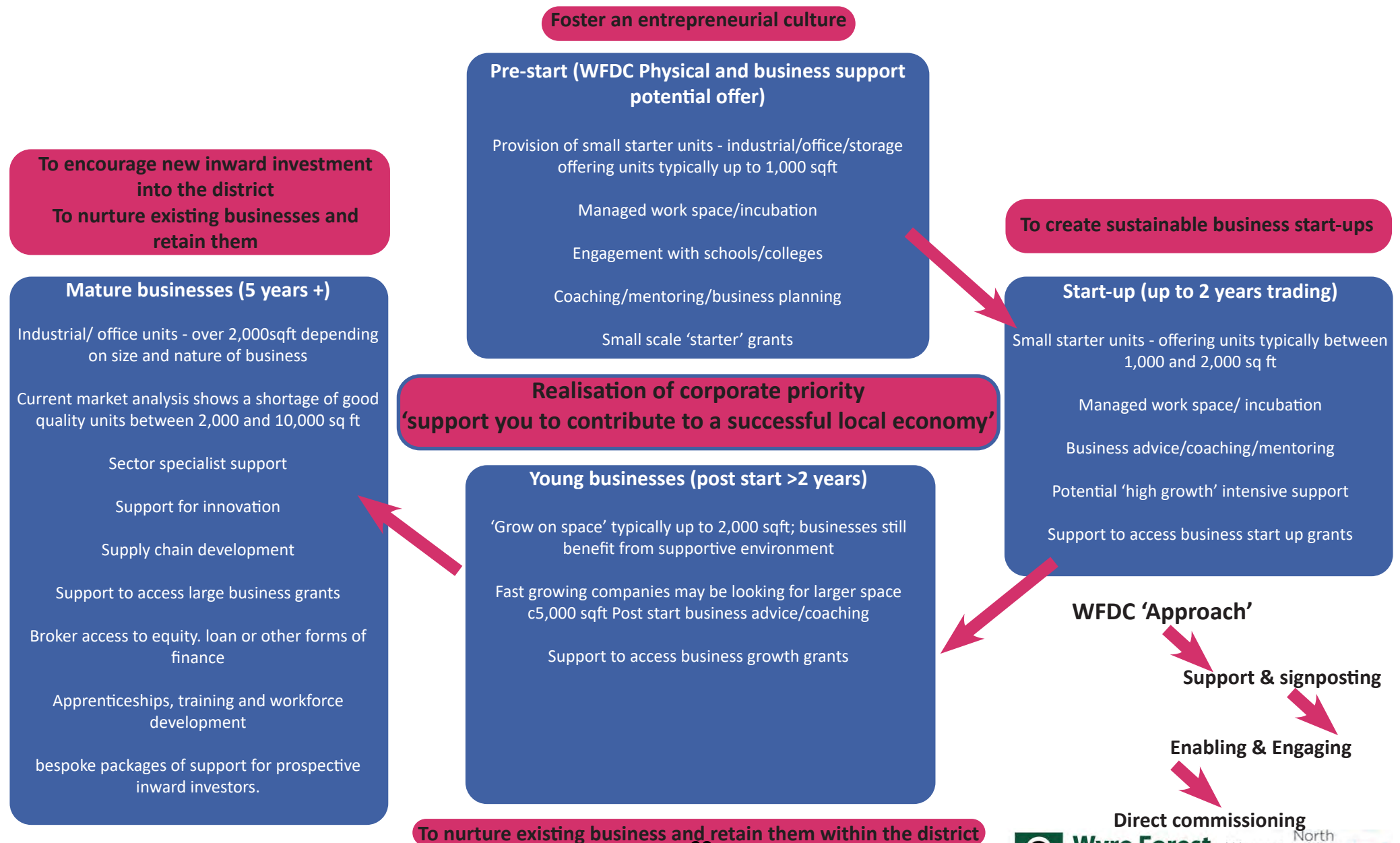
# Strategic Framework

This document has set out the continuation of the approach the Council has been pursuing to encourage enterprise and business growth activity.

The diagram overleaf provides a visual representation of the strategic framework that will guide the Council's effort to supporting business growth at all stages of the 'business life cycle'.

The strategy is intended to cover a five year period, but the Council's approach will be kept under regular review to ensure that any changes to the economic climate or business support environment can be factored in. Furthermore, the Council will monitor the progress made in supporting enterprise and business growth by reporting against and monitoring a suite of 'measures' which are attached.

# Enterprise and Business Growth Strategic Framework



## Appendix - Strategic measures

Support you to contribute to a successful economy	WFDC Enterprise and Growth Ambition	Proposed measures	Quarterly Frequency of Reporting
	Foster an entrepreneurial culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of schools supporting business related projects</li> <li>No. of FE colleges supporting business related courses</li> <li>No. of engagements between NWedR &amp; schools/Colleges</li> </ul>	Annually Annually Six monthly
	To create sustainable business start ups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nos. of businesses attending NWedR supported programmes surviving more than 1 year</li> <li>Nos. of businesses attending NWedR supported programmes surviving more than 2 year</li> <li>Nos. of businesses attending NWedR supported programmes surviving more than 3 year</li> </ul>	Annually  Annually (after 2 years)  Annually (After 3 years)
	To nurture existing businesses and retain them within the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nos. of businesses receiving support from NWedR/ERDF funded programmes</li> <li>Businesses receiving support which either increase profits and/or turnover and/or employees and which remain in the district.</li> <li>Nos. of businesses occupying WFDC owned accommodation</li> </ul>	Annually Annually  Annually
	To encourage new inward investment into the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amount of WFDC controlled property created per annum</li> <li>No. of promotional campaigns per quarter</li> <li>No. of approaches (direct or through intermediaries) made to potential businesses about available property/land</li> <li>No. of enquiries received resulting in a business locating in WFD</li> <li>No. of incentives promoted to businesses</li> <li>Total commercial floor space and/or land readily available in WFD advertised on search engines.</li> </ul>	Annually Quarterly Quarterly  Six monthly Quarterly Quarterly



## Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item No. 7

### Briefing Paper

Report of: Mike Parker – Corporate Director Economic Prosperity  
& Place  
Date: 1st April 2021  
Open

### Strategic Facilities Asset Management Plan 2021-26

#### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposals to update and adopt a Strategic Facilities and Asset Management Plan (SF&AMP) 2021-26; this also includes the management and marketing plan for tenancies at Wyre Forest House.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Facilities & Asset Management Team are key to ensuring that the Council's operational buildings and site portfolio is fit for purpose, accessible and well maintained.
- 2.2 The Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan (SF&AMP) is the principal document to identify how the Council plans to manage its operational sites and building portfolio; ensuring the portfolio is compliant with statutory, regulatory and corporate building management standards and supports the Council's Corporate Plan to contribute to a successful local economy.
- 2.3 Following the letting of office space at Wyre Forest House in February 2015, since that date the Council have now successfully let space to 13 external organisations with 7 currently in occupation. It is the Council's continued aspiration to grow the income from Wyre Forest House by taking a commercial approach to marketing available space and income generating opportunities. The Wyre Forest House Tenancy Management & Marketing Strategy accompanies the SF&AMP to ensure the Council has a sound strategic basis to maximise the optimum use of space for the generation of income whilst continuing to meet the operational needs of the Council and its tenants.
- 2.4 Wyre Forest House currently has 7 organisations renting space in the building. This provides an annual rental income of £186,826 (including charges for IT services and telephones). The income generated from hiring out the public meeting rooms at Wyre Forest House has decreased by 95.7% in the past twelve months due to the pandemic; taking income for 2020/21 to £1,094.26 to date.
- 2.5 The SF&AMP and Wyre Forest House Tenancy Management & Marketing Plan is due to be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

### **3. KEY ISSUES**

3.1 The core objectives of the Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan are:

- To provide a structured 5 year facilities and asset management strategy.
- Assist in the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities
- Support the objectives of the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-2026.
- Ensure the Council's operational buildings and site portfolio is fit for purpose, accessible, well maintained and compliant with statutory, regulatory and corporate building management standards.
- To implement a Tenancy Management & Marketing Strategy for Wyre Forest House.
- Ensure buildings support the Council's commercialisation activities through the letting of space to private tenants, the hire of public meeting rooms and the use of the cafe service at Wyre Forest House.

3.2 Like many office based businesses the Council's use of its operational buildings has been affected in 2020 and 2021 by the Coronavirus pandemic. Whilst buildings have been kept open and made social distance safe during the pandemic where services have continued to be delivered, like many companies the Council is considering its floorspace needs and safe configuration going forward. In December 2020 the Council agreed to consider embedding the new flexible ways of working which the pandemic has necessitated, for permanent ways of working and with greater emphasis placed on a 'hybrid' for most staff where they use a combination of working in the office with working at home. At the time of writing the potential for the Council to reduce its office footprint as a result of this new way of working is still being considered.

3.3 The SF&AMP will ensure that delivery of the facilities and asset management strategy is supportive of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities and relevant Council strategies, including the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-2026. The SF&AMP will ensure that the Council's operational buildings and site portfolio are compliant with statutory regulations relating to building management.

3.4 The SF&AMP will be reviewed regularly to ensure that objectives of the plan are being achieved and risks to the Council from breaches of statutory compliance are minimised and managed. Without an up to date and effective SF&AMP the Council risks having a portfolio of under performing assets and may miss opportunities to generate additional income through the letting of space to private tenants and the hire of public meeting rooms at Wyre Forest House.

**4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The Council has an existing Facilities and Asset Management Plan to guide the use of its administrative space requirements and it is due for renewal; the new proposed document will cover the period 2021-2026.

**5. OPTIONS**

- 5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the following options:

5.1.1 To recommend to Cabinet that the Strategic Facilities and Asset Management Plan 2021-26 is agreed.

5.1.2 To recommend to Cabinet any other alternative recommendation.

**6. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Strategic Facilities and Asset Management Plan 2021-26 including the Wyre Forest House Tenant Management & Marketing Strategy

**7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Strategic Facilities and Asset Management Plan 2017-20

**Officer Contact Details:**

Name: Mike Parker

Title: Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place

Contact Number: 2500



# Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan 2021–2026

Elaine Brookes  
Facilities & Asset Manager  
Economic Prosperity & Place

## Contents & Appendices

Page 3 – What is the Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan?

Page 4 – Facilities & Asset Management Team

Page 5 – Facilities & Asset Management Overview

Page 6/7 – Review of Facilities & Asset Management Outcomes -  
2017 - 2020

Page 8/9 – What are the Facilities & Asset Management Team  
objectives for 2021 – 2026?

Page 10 – Stakeholder Engagement

Page 11/12 – Challenges & Risks

### **Appendices:**

Wyre Forest House Tenant Management & Marketing Strategy

## What is the Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan?

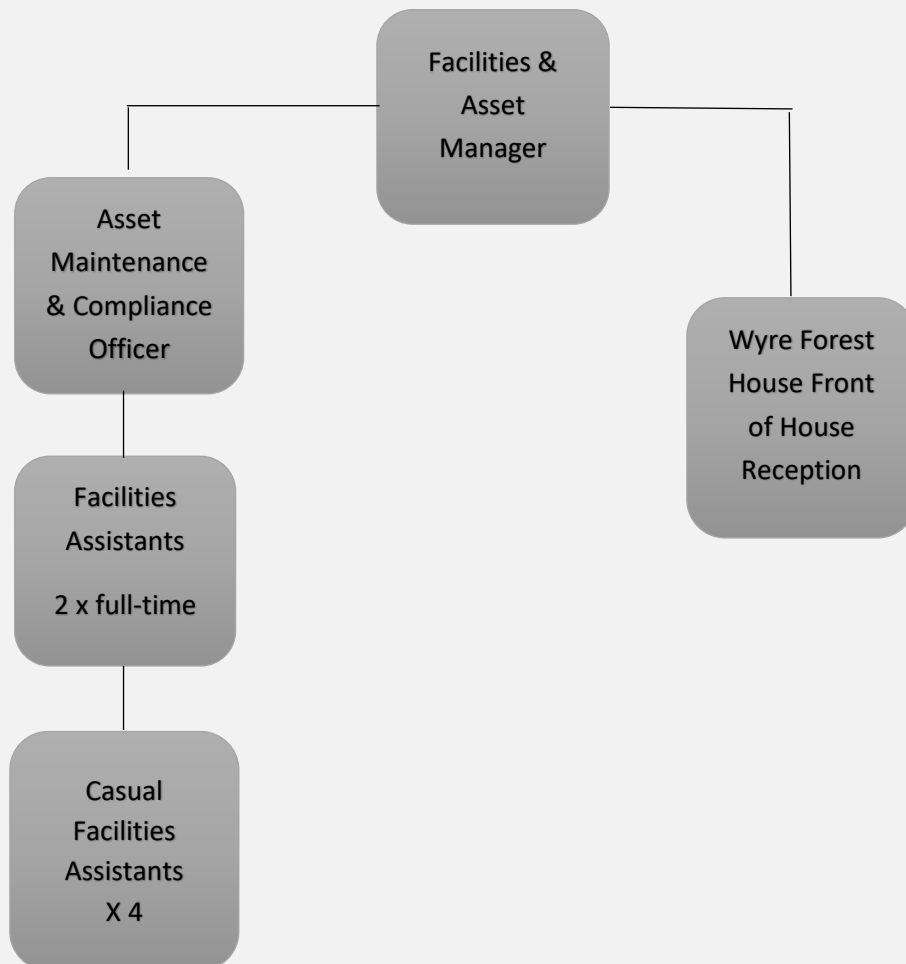
The Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan is a key document detailing the planned and proactive approach for the management and delivery of the Council's facilities and asset management services to support the primary objectives of Wyre Forest District Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2021 – 2024, focusing on

- People
- Safety
- Sustainability
- Cost effective facilities management services
- Building compliance with key regulations, legislation, and codes of practice

# Facilities & Asset Management Team

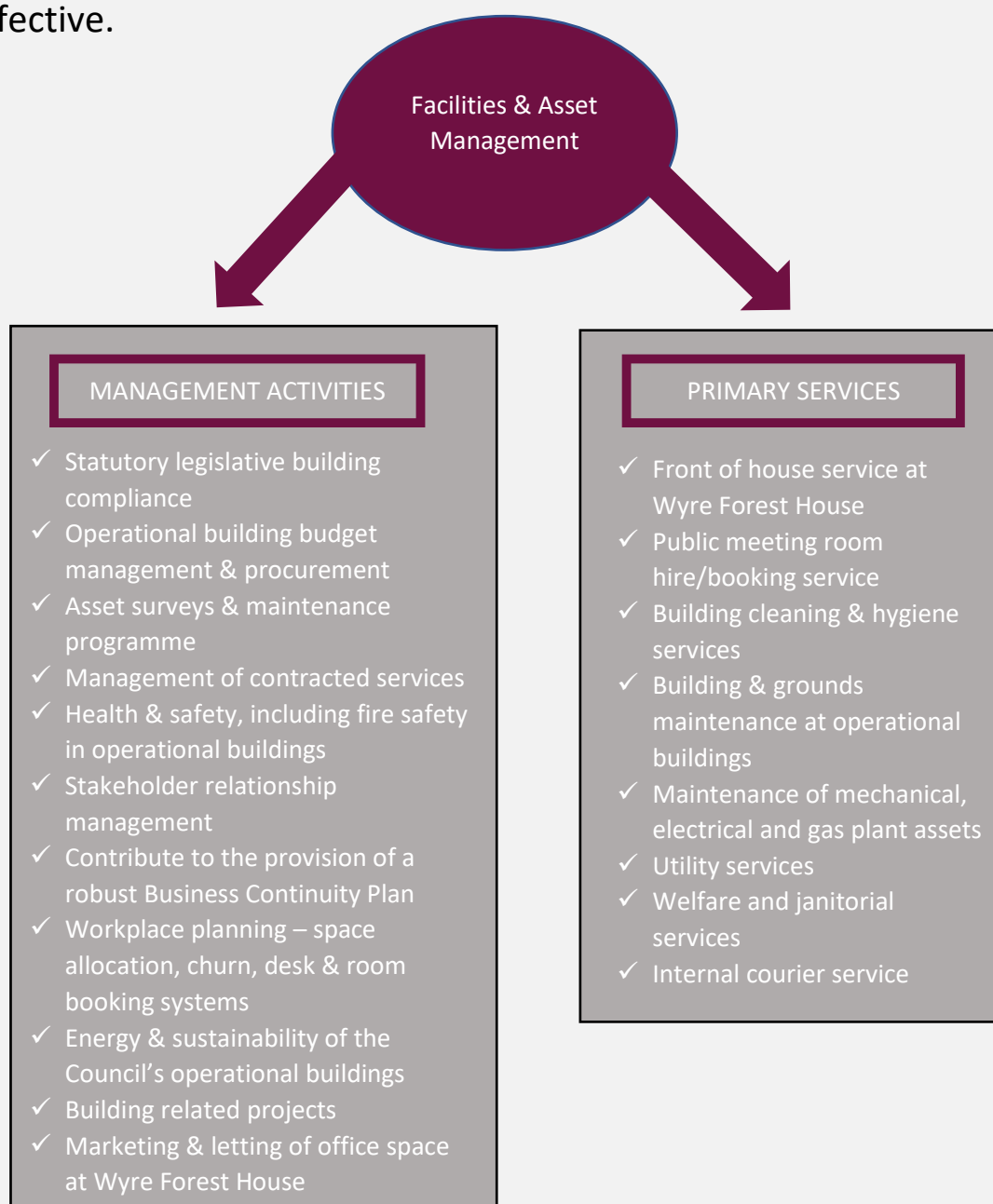
Wyre Forest District Council's Facilities & Asset Management services are provided by a small in-house team supported by contracted external specialist service providers.

## Structure



# Facilities & Asset Management Service Overview

The Facilities & Asset Management Team ensure the needs and objectives of the Council's Strategic Financial Strategy are supported by the effective management of the Council's places and spaces; providing services to staff and key stakeholders to ensure the working environment is safe, compliant, sustainable and cost effective.



# Review of Facilities & Asset Management Outcomes 2017 - 2020

Outcomes achieved by the Facilities & Asset Management Team prior to the Covid-19 pandemic:



## **Commercial Income from the letting of office space and the hiring of the public meeting rooms at Wyre Forest House**

- Income directly attributed to tenancies at Wyre Forest House for the financial years 2017 – 2020

£555,186 (including shared services income for tenant ITC arrangements of £16,091)

- Income for the hire of the public meetings rooms during the financial years 2017 – 2020

£52,632.05 (includes £12,260 recharge for elections)



## **Letting of space at Wyre Forest House**

Two new key Wyre Forest House tenants secured in 2019

- Aspens Vintage Events took on a lease to operate their catering service and café service at Wyre Forest House
- Severn Academies Education Trust took on a lease to occupy 4 offices on the first floor of Wyre Forest House

**Wyre Forest House currently hosts 7 tenants with an annual total income of £186,826 (including charges for IT services and telephones)**



**Capital Portfolio Fund** - working with the Council's Estate Surveyor, the Facilities & Asset Management Team provided an interim facilities & asset management service for the buildings and tenants of the Council's newly developed Capital Portfolio Fund properties until the procurement and appointment of an external property management company.



**Depot 2020 Project & Wyre Forest House Accommodation Review**

A successful accommodation review was carried out following the completion of the Depot 2020 project. Teams were decanted from Wyre Forest House to the refurbished accommodation at Green Street, which allowed internal moves within Wyre Forest House to take place to create additional vacant office space for commercial let.



**Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic**

The pandemic has seen a significant change in the way the Council's operational buildings are used and how the Facilities & Asset Management Team run the buildings.

The Facilities & Asset Management Team have made a significant contribution to the implementation of the Council's Covid-19 Recovery Plan.

A Covid-19 Working Group was set up for the various work elements required for returning to the workplace once lockdown restrictions were lifted.

Covid-19 'Working in Offices & Call Centre' Risk Assessments were completed, and measures subsequently put in place for the safe return to the workplace in keeping with Government guidelines.

A desk booking system was developed for Wyre Forest House and Green Street buildings to enable managers to take control of their team and working arrangements.

Tenants were kept informed and involved in the process for working safely and the team have supported the tenants by ensuring that they are able to continue with their business activities within Wyre Forest House.

Unfortunately, the impact of the pandemic has seen the Council's commercial income significantly reduced from the letting of the public meeting rooms at Wyre Forest House.

We have also seen a downward trend in interest for the lease of vacant office space as a result of the uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

# What are the Facilities & Asset Management Team objectives for 2021 – 2026?



## **Review of future floorspace requirements to meet the Council's reduced accommodation needs**

- The team will provide support to the Corporate Leadership Team for the commissioning of a business case to investigate possibilities and options to meet the Council's objective for the optimum use of buildings and space as the Council transitions to new ways of working and becomes a smaller organisation.
- We will prepare briefs for space layout, assess feasibility of changes, balancing costs versus benefits to help develop strategies for introducing alternative ways of working.



## **Transition to new 'hybrid' working arrangements**

- The Facilities & Asset Management team will support the Council in its transition to a new 'hybrid' way of working which will mean roles will be re-defined where feasible to ensure more flexible use of home/office working and will require a reduced office footprint.
- This flexible workstyle will bring about a reduction in the amount of office floor-space required and at the same time will reduce the amount of travel made by employees to support the Council's Green Advisory Panel in their objective to reduce carbon emissions.
- Once roles have been defined across the agreed patterns of working the Facilities & Asset Management team will assist the Corporate Leadership Team to translate the work patterns into floorspace requirements, e.g. the number of desks required, which will work in parallel with the review of the floorspace requirements to meet the Council's reduced accommodation needs.



### **Energy and sustainability**

- Sustainability and environmental management are an important operational criteria within the Council's buildings and the Facilities & Asset Management Team will be working with the Council's Principal Health & Sustainability Officer and Worcestershire County Council's Programme Manager to seek access to funding under the Public-Sector Energy Efficiency Programme (PEEP) to carry out –
  - Energy efficiency assessments at Wyre Forest House and Green Street to identify suitable energy savings options
  - A feasibility survey for a new energy efficient LED lighting system and solar PV installation at Wyre Forest House

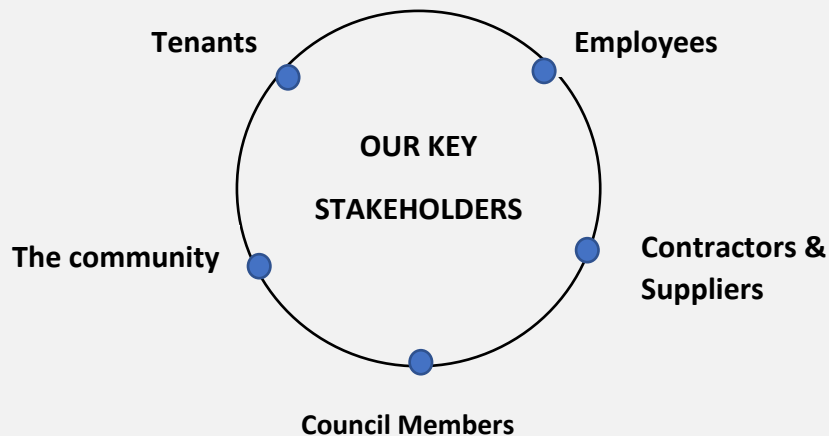
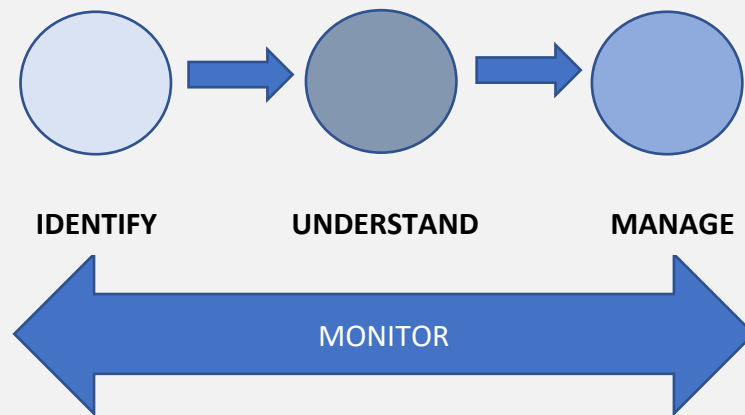


### **Building management, compliance, health & safety**

The Facilities & Asset Management Team will –

- Review planned and reactive maintenance contracts to develop specifications to use and manage contracts in accordance with business requirements whilst ensuring compliance with relevant legislation.
- Continually review and update building risk assessments, including fire risk assessments and fire evacuation procedures for operational buildings following the review of floorspace and the introduction of 'hybrid' working arrangements.
- Carry out in-house portable appliance testing to a scheduled programme of testing beginning with home working portable electrical equipment, e.g. pc's, screens, phones, cables etc.
- Ensure the Council's buildings are compliant with key regulations, legislation, and codes of practice to promote a safe and healthy working environment.
- Implement the Wyre Forest House Tenant Management and Marketing Strategy.

# Stakeholder Engagement



The Facilities & Asset Management Team actively engage with our stakeholders to work to identify and understand their ideas and concerns so that we can build, manage, and maintain relationships both internally and externally to continually improve on the services delivered.

Channels used are:

- Face-to-face where possible
- Remote meetings (Teams, Zoom)
- Email
- Telephone
- Digital Notice Boards
- Wyred Weekly on-line system
- Corporate Briefings
- Wyred-In Newsletter/mailshots using GovDelivery system
- Social media

## Challenges & Risks



### Wyre Forest House Vacant Space

2020 was a challenging year in many ways; the pandemic had a dramatic effect on the number of enquiries for office space being received across the market in general. However, the number of enquiries has begun to increase, and the Council is hopeful that companies will look at alternative ways of providing flexible office space for their organisation outside of city centres in areas that can provide good quality office accommodation with parking.

With this in mind the Facilities & Asset Management Team will continue to promote the vacant office space available at Wyre Forest House to meet the flexible terms organisations will be seeking as they consider different ways to offer office space for their employees.

A refreshed Wyre Forest House Tenant Management and Marketing Strategy will be implemented setting out the aims and objectives to continue to grow income by the letting of surplus office space at Wyre Forest House.



## Challenges & Risks (2)



### **On-going impact of the pandemic and the use of operational buildings**

The use of Council buildings will need to be continually reviewed as the Government Covid-19 guidelines change. The Facilities & Asset Management Team will ensure on-going reviews are carried out for the adjustment of operational arrangements to ensure optimum use of the buildings, including the hiring of the public meeting rooms.

We will monitor trends of change and the future direction of the workplace and facilities management needs and lead key stakeholders through the process to minimise any impact on their day to day activities.

The team will also consider the impact of the pandemic when ensuring accommodation needs are met as the Council transitions towards becoming a smaller organisation with a smaller office footprint within the operational buildings.



# Wyre Forest House

## Tenant Management and Marketing Strategy

### Introduction

Following the first letting of office space at Wyre forest House in February 2015, the Council has successfully let space to a total of thirteen organisations since this time. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the additional renting of the public meeting rooms had increased year on year.

To continue to meet the Council's objective for the generation of revenue, this strategy is intended to ensure the optimum use of space within Wyre Forest House, adopting a commercial letting approach, whilst continuing to meet the operational needs of the Council.

### Aims & Objectives

The Council aims to:

- Continue to grow income by letting surplus space and the hire of public meeting rooms
- Meet the changing accommodation needs of the Council
- Ensure a commercial approach for the marketing of vacant office space
- Provide businesses the opportunity to occupy high quality, modern and flexible space
- Ensure the building retains its corporate image

### Our Strategic Plan

#### Space Planning

- Ensure the Council's needs are met efficiently and effectively
- Maximise opportunities for letting of surplus space to generate income
- Ensure Wyre Forest House provides the quality of space to support occupants needs

#### Marketing of Vacant Space

- Adopt a commercial approach to marketing opportunities to grow income
- Use marketing agent and digital means for marketing vacant space
- Offer flexible terms to enable businesses to take space at Wyre Forest House

#### Hire of Public Meeting Rooms

- Use digital means for marketing the hire of public meeting rooms
- Maintain a competitive schedule of rates
- Carry out an annual quality benchmark exercise

#### Relationship Management

- Provide a quality professional front of house service
- Engage with our stakeholders to identify, understand their ideas and concerns to continually improve on the services delivered



## Overview & Scrutiny Committee

### Briefing Paper

Report of: Mike Parker – Corporate Director Economic Prosperity  
& Place

Date: 1st April 2021

Open with an Exempt Appendix

### **Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-26**

#### **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposals to update and adopt a Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) 2021-26.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In 2014 the Council reviewed its approach to utilising its assets to support the local economy through plans to regenerate key sites in the district, as well as supporting local businesses to invest in their own plans for growth. As a result the Council adopted a new approach, considering investing in existing and new assets to support its corporate priorities to engender local economic growth as well as generating new or improved revenue compared to that which had previously been the case and disposing of under-performing assets to provide capital funding to invest. Consequently the Evergreen Investment Fund (EIF) was established, which aims to use the Council's assets to generate capital receipts and/or improve revenue streams and contribute to regeneration.
- 2.2 The Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) is the principle document to identify how the Council plans to manage its diverse portfolio of property and land assets. This portfolio is key to both the delivery of Council services and its Corporate Plan Priorities.
- 2.3 In 2017 the Council entered into a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) with PSP Facilitating Ltd as an alternative means by which the Council could add value to the development or disposal of its assets. This alternative delivery vehicle is currently working on a number of potential site developments.
- 2.4 In parallel with the SAMP sits the Disposal Strategy which indicates the Council's intention with regard to the future disposal of its assets where appropriate. This is an exempt appendix as it contains commercially sensitive information regarding the Council's assets.
- 2.5 The SAMP will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

### **3. KEY ISSUES**

3.1 The core objectives of the Strategic Asset Management Plan are:

- Provide a structured 3-5 year property strategy
- Assist in the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities
- Effective and sustainable use of the Council's land and buildings to support improved delivery services
- Enable disposal of surplus or under-performing assets to generate capital receipts for reinvestment and reduce running costs
- Use of the Evergreen Investment Fund to facilitate regeneration initiatives and other revenue generating opportunities
- Support the Council's Capital Strategy
- Promote Partnership working and shared use of accommodation

3.2 The Council aims to retain any property asset which provides a rental return on investment of 4% or above, unless there are exceptional strategic circumstances. The Property Disposal Strategy will look separately at each business case for disposal or retention of property not making a minimum 4% return, taking into account the specific type of asset held and costs of retention. The current Disposal Strategy reflects the current transfer of assets under the localism initiative as well as potential redevelopment of sites intended to be retained by the Council.

3.3 Capital funds generated from the disposal of land and property assets will be directed to the Evergreen Investment Fund for future investment use.

3.4 The Strategic Asset Management Plan will ensure that delivery of the property strategy is supportive of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities and relevant Council strategies.

3.5 All property transactions are made in accordance with current legislation, including new energy efficiency regulations, community right to bid and regulations governing delivery of self and custom build housing.

3.6 The Property Disposal Strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure that surplus or under-performing assets are identified for disposal. The process seeks to obtain best value for the Council's assets working within market conditions and realistic timescales. Without an up to date and effective SAMP the Council risks having a portfolio of under performing assets and may miss opportunities to invest in economic regeneration activities that could improve revenue income streams.

### **4. CONCLUSION**

4.1 Property assets provide a significant opportunity for the Council to support economic regeneration and growth in the district. The Strategic Asset Management Plan is a key driver in setting principles and priorities for the management of the Council's property asset portfolio.

**5. OPTIONS**

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the following options:

5.1.1 To recommend to Cabinet that the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-26 and accompanying Disposal Strategy 2021 is agreed.

5.1.2 To recommend to Cabinet any other alternative recommendation.

**6. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-26 including the Disposal Strategy

**7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Strategic Asset Management Plan 2016-21

**Officer Contact Details:**

Name: Mike Parker

Title: Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place

Contact Number: 2500

# STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2021 - 2026



## Contents

- 1 - What is the strategic Asset Management Plan?
- 2 - What are the Council's Property Assets?
- 3 - Operational and Non-operational Asset Split.
- 4 - Who manages the Council's Property Portfolio?
- 5 - How do we manage our assets?
- 6 - What do we want the Strategic Asset Management Plan to do?
- 7 - What are our Asset Management Achievements?
- 8 - How well does the portfolio perform?
- 9 - What are the Strategic Asset Management Plan objectives for 2021 - 2026?

## Appendices

Property Disposal Strategy 2021

# WHAT IS THE STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN?

The Asset Management Plan is the key document to identify how Wyre Forest District Council plans to manage its diverse portfolio of property and land assets. This portfolio is key to both the delivery of Council services and its Corporate Plan Priorities.

The Council's premises from which to operate, to ensure that it meets its corporate objectives.

The Strategic Asset Management Plan should be read alongside the Council's Facilities Asset Management Plan, which explains how the Council manages its operational properties and the Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy, which sets out how the Council is being proactive in facilitating economic growth, including how the Council intends to use its own assets as part of this strategy.

Examples of this can be seen in the way the Council

Way to create Unity Park comprising nine new 600 sq ft industrial units and the acquisition and conversion of Forest House on Hoo Farm Industrial Estate to provide incubator and growth space.



## WHAT IS THE STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN?

Since 2014 the Evergreen Investment Fund has been established, which aims to use the Council's assets to generate capital receipts or recycle them into regeneration and other projects which also improve the Council's Medium term Financial Strategy.

The Council has also established its Capital Portfolio Fund using its access to Public W portfolio of properties both within the District and at strategic locations within the Functional Economic Geography (FEG) which supports from the District.

Through the Capital Portfolio Fund a developing portfolio of cross sector acquisitions have been completed following a demonstrable business case being made, which contribute to the corporate priority 'to support a successful local economy'

- Worcester Street/High Street, Kidderminster – retail units
- Stratford Court, Solihull –
- 1 Buntsford Gate, Bromsgrove –
- Riverside, Kidderminster – retail units and
- Goldthorn Road, Kidderminster – industrial unit

As a responsible landlord, the Council continues to ensure that these assets are managed properly and has appointed BNP Paribas as Property Managers. To ensure that as a portfolio the Council maintains the capital and revenue value of the properties, Jones Valerio have been appointed as Asset Managers.

The impact of Covid-19 on the property market is still uncertain but it has had a negative impact on some of the Council's tenants, particularly in the retail and leisure sector, resulting in rental arrears and will continue to be a challenge over the coming months. The Council will continue to work with its tenants and appointed agents to mitigate arrears and the impact on the performance of the Council's property assets.

## WHAT IS THE STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN?

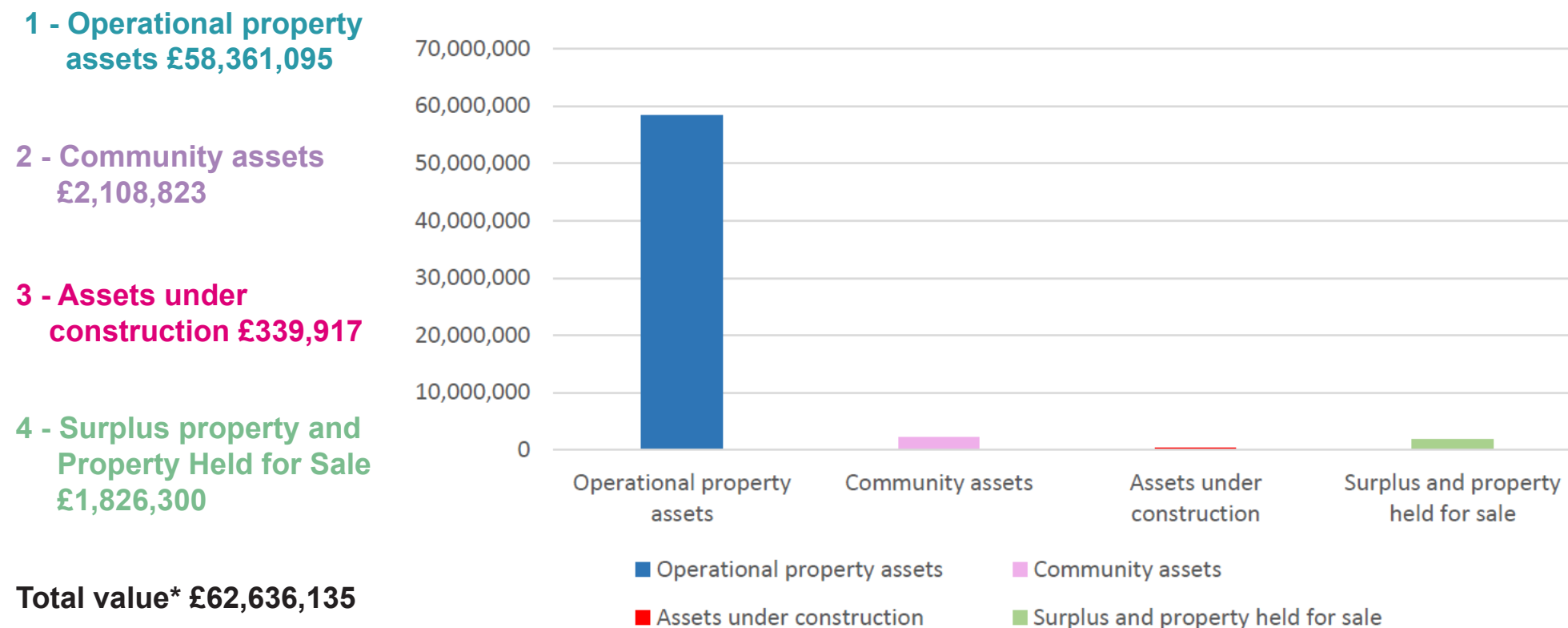
In 2017 the Council entered into a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) with PSP Facilitating Ltd as an alternative means by which the Council could add value to the development or disposal of its assets. This alternative delivery vehicle is currently working on a number of potential site developments.

The Council has successfully bid for £20.5m through the Government's Future High Streets Fund, which will see the transformation of the centre of Kidderminster and will enable the Council to acquire key strategic properties to re-connect the town as well as utilising its sites at former Crown House, Bromsgrove Street car park and the former Magistrates' Court and indoor market as a direct stimulus to new development that will diversify the town centre and promote more town centre living and employment opportunities across the town. The programme will be delivered over the period to the end of March 2024 with the development of the Council's sites being brought forward in parallel.

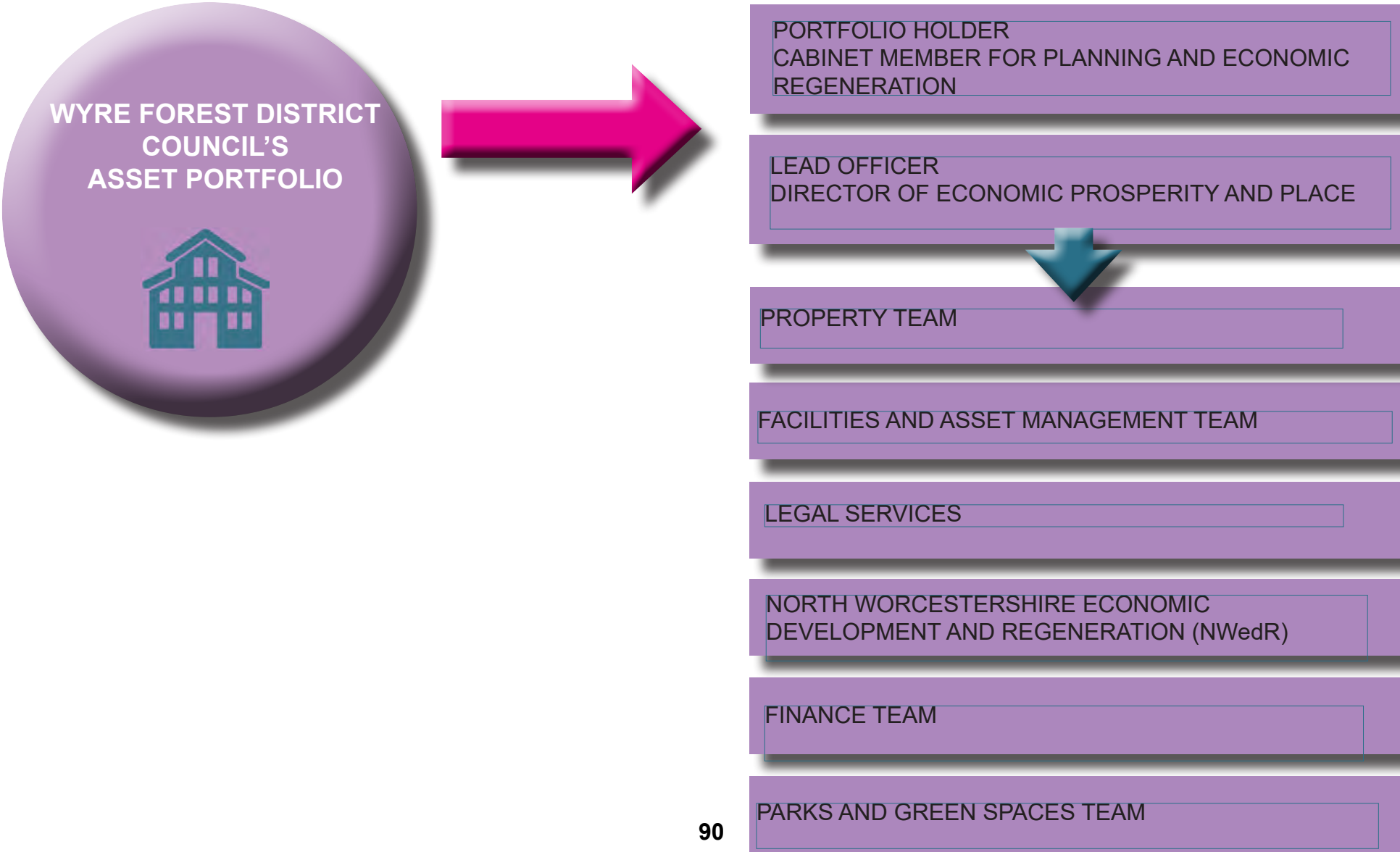
# WHAT ARE THE COUNCIL'S PROPERTY ASSETS?

The Council's property portfolio comprises a wide diversity of property and land assets with an approximate value of £62.6 million.

These include operational assets used in the delivery of Council services, such as administration buildings, car



WHO MANAGES THE COUNCIL’S PROPERTY PORTFOLIO?



# HOW DO WE MANAGE OUR ASSETS?

The Property team is pivotal to the strategic management of the Council's corporate property assets



Appointment and performance monitoring of external Property Consultants and contractors

Setting and monitoring repair and maintenance budgets

Landlord and Tenant work - Lease renewals, rent reviews, assignments and sub-letting

Rating appeals for Council owned property

Disposals and acquisitions of land and property

Project Management

Day to day management of retail and industrial property including Space at Hoo Farm and Hoobrook Enterprise Centre

Strategic Estate Management of the Council's operational and non-operational property

Asset valuations and Insurance valuations

Close working with other Council departments to support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priorities

Ensuring sustainable use of energy within Council assets, including compliance with new energy regulations

# WHAT DO WE WANT THE STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN TO DO?

- ➔ Compile and maintain up to date and accurate information about land and property assets
- ➔ Support the Council's Strategic Housing objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan 2019-23
- ➔ Acquisition of property assets to contribute to the Corporate Plan priority to support a successful local economy
- ➔ Support the delivery of self and custom build housing
- ➔ Ensure that assets are for purpose, accessible and well maintained
- ➔ Support the Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy of the Council
- ➔ and sustainable use of the Council's land and buildings to support improved delivery services
- ➔ Promote partnership working and shared use of accommodation.
- ➔ Provide a structured 5 year property strategy, which will be reviewed annually
- ➔ Ensure all transactions are made in accordance with current legislation, including community right to bid

CORE  
OBJECTIVES  
OF THE  
STRATEGIC ASSET  
MANAGEMENT PLAN



# WHAT DO WE WANT THE STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN TO DO?

- ➔ Provide a clear decision making process for property related matters
- ➔ Support overall improvement of the public realm
- ➔ Assist in the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities
- ➔ management of the Land & Property portfolio to provide a revenue stream
- ➔ Assess asset portfolio and consider acquisition opportunities
- ➔ Support the Council's Financial Strategy
- ➔ Support the localism agenda and transfer of selected assets such as public WCs and parks to Town and Parish Councils.
- ➔ Continue to work with PSP Facilitating Ltd (Limited Liability Partnership) to add value to potential site developments.
- ➔ Enable disposal of surplus or under-performing assets to reduce running costs and generate capital receipts for new acquisitions

CORE  
OBJECTIVES  
OF THE  
STRATEGIC ASSET  
MANAGEMENT PLAN



# WHAT ARE OUR ASSET MANAGEMENT ACHIEVEMENTS?

The Strategic Asset Management Plan ensures that the Council's use and management of its property assets helps to deliver the Council's Corporate Priorities, as set out in the Corporate Plan 2021-2023.

Supporting local economic growth by granting of long leasehold extensions on the Council's industrial estates.

Co-location of public and private sector bodies at Wyre Forest House to improve services and generate rental income.

Transfer of car park land in Bewdley to facilitate delivery of a new health centre.

Rationalisation of the Council's administration buildings to reduce running costs and enhance service provisions.

in the Corporate Plan.

Development of Unity Park to create 9 new industrial units

Acquisition and conversion of Forest House to provide more business incubator units at Space

Capital Portfolio Fund acquisitions to create a developing portfolio of cross sector acquisitions

Disposal of under-utilised assets to reduce costs and general capital receipts

Land transfers to community organisations to enable provision of enhanced sports facilities

Transfer of selected assets to Town and Parish Councils under the Localism agenda

**Support a safe, clean and green environment**

**Support a successful local economy**

## HOW WELL DOES THE PORTFOLIO PERFORM?

- 1 • The property portfolio generated c£1.5m of rental income in 2019/20 and this is expected to remain similar in 2020/21, although there will be some impact on rental income due to Covid-19.
- 2 • The Property Disposal Strategy will look separately at each business case for disposal or retention of property not making a minimum of 4% return, taking into account the specific type of asset held and the cost of retention. Capital funds generated from the disposal of land and property assets will be directed to the Evergreen Investment Fund for future use.
- 3 • Occupancy levels at Space since opening in January 2014 have averaged over 85%.
- 4 • Occupancy levels at Hoobrook Enterprise Centre currently at 100%.
- 5 • Capital receipts of £3.37m raised from land and property disposals and £168,000 raised in leasehold extension premiums since 2010.

# WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES FOR 2021-2026?

