

Open

Council

Agenda

To be held remotely
6pm
Wednesday, 14 July 2021



Council

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COUNCIL MEETING

6 July 2021

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL AND HONORARY ALDERMEN

PRESS AND PUBLIC

Dear Member

YOU ARE INVITED to attend a meeting of the Wyre Forest District Council to be held **remotely at 6.00p.m. on Wednesday 14 July 2021.**

The Agenda for the meeting is enclosed.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "I R Miller".

Ian Miller
Chief Executive

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(A) TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COUNCIL

The Council

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

(B) MATTERS RESERVED TO THE COUNCIL

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

Wyre Forest District Council

Council

Wednesday, 14 July 2021

To be held remotely

Part 1

Open to the press and public

Agenda item	Subject	Page Number
1.	Prayers To be read by Rev Sallie Butcher, Priest-in-Charge, Wyre Forest West (Mamble, Bayton, Rock, Heightington and Far Forest)	
2.	Apologies for Absence	
3.	Declarations of Interests by Members In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's) and / or Other Disclosable Interests (ODI's) in the following agenda items and indicate the action that they will be taking when the item is considered. Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's Constitution for full details.	
4.	Minutes To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2021.	11
5.	Public Participation In accordance with the Council's scheme for public speaking at meetings of Council, one member of the public has registered to speak about the Council's use of casual contracts. <i>If you wish to speak on an urgent matter that has arisen since the deadline and you could not reasonably have known about it at the time, you should register your interest in speaking no later than 9am on the day of the meeting of Council. In the case of a request to speak on an urgent matter, the Solicitor to the Council will rule on whether or not the matter is urgent and that ruling will be final.</i>	
6.	Questions 11 questions have been submitted in accordance with Standing Order Section 7, 1.8 by Members of the Council, details of which have been received by 12 noon on Monday 5 July 2021 and the replies of the leader of the Council or other appropriate Cabinet Member.	18

	<i>In the case of an urgent matter that has arisen since the deadline above, and could not have been reasonably known at that time, it must be delivered in writing to the Solicitor to the Council no later than 9am on the day of Council.</i>	
7.	<p>Chairman's Communications</p> <p>To note the engagements of the Chairman of the Council since the Council's last meeting.</p>	20
8.	<p>Leader of the Council Announcements</p> <p>To receive announcements from the Leader of the Council.</p>	
9.	<p>Motions Submitted under Standing Orders</p> <p>Five motions have been received in accordance with Standing Orders (Section 7, 4.1).</p> <p>1. Notice of Motion on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group</p> <p>Council commends individuals, local organisations and councillors in the District who have actively contributed to and raised funds to install defibrillators in various public places. Council notes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A recent research by West Midlands Ambulance Services showed that around 50% of sudden cardiac arrests are witnessed by bystanders or family members; ▪ There is a 68% chance of survival from a sudden cardiac arrest if a public access defibrillator is used; ▪ Quick intervention could make the difference between life and death; ▪ 270 Children a year in the UK die as a result of sudden cardiac arrests; ▪ Only a third of the population are comfortable giving CPR on a stranger; ▪ 45.5% of the population in Wyre Forest are over 50 years old and therefore at an increased risk of a sudden cardiac arrest; <p>Council resolves to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Require every new housing development to have a defibrillator within the vicinity of the development and to require at least one defibrillator per 1000 homes. ▪ All multi occupation homes or flats to have a defibrillator ▪ WFDC to provide annual training in conjunction with West Midlands Ambulance Service and/or any other organisation for staff, councillors and members of the public who wish to attend. 	

2. Notice of Motion on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group

Council commends the young people in this District who selflessly provide care for others.

Council notes that:

- Recent research shows that one in five secondary school children may be a young carer. For many, their caring journey begins at a much younger age.
- Caring for someone can be very isolating, worrying and stressful. For young carers, this can negatively impact on their experiences and outcomes in education, having a lasting effect on their life chances.
- Child carers provide vital support for their loved ones, whether this is for physical or mental health problems. However, their own mental health is often overlooked.
- Each year, The Carers Trust has organised a Young Carers' Action Awareness Day. In 2021 this was renamed Young Carers' Action Day and was marked on March 16.
- The purpose of the day is to raise public awareness of the challenges faced by young people and young adults because of their caring role, and to campaign for greater support for young carers to meet their needs.

Council resolves to:

- Promote Young Carers Action Day as widely as possible on an annual basis, particularly to young carers and their families.
- work with the Carers' Trust, KDYT and Worcester Young Carers (YSS) and any other relevant organisation to establish an annual event in Wyre Forest to mark this date to which young carers and their families can be invited in person or online, and at which appropriate information and services can be accessed.

3. Notice of Motion from the Conservative Group

This Council is concerned at the state of the grass verges on many of our estate roads.

This Council welcomes the funding that Worcestershire County Council provides to WFDC to undertake the grass cutting on their behalf on WCC land, in particular, the year on year increases received over the last 5 years.

Whilst acknowledging there are benefits to allowing insects, wild flowers and wildlife to thrive in long grass, this should not be done at the expense of safety or keeping our area clean and looking good.

This Council **resolves** to request that the Cabinet Member for Operational Services to ensure that this noticeable reduction in service is restored as a matter of urgency and formally urgently

report to Council as to what he has done to tackle this important issue.

4. Notice of Motion from the Conservative Group

This Council fully supports the Green Agenda and is committed to ensuring that sustainability is at the heart of our decision making.

Furthermore, this Council fully endorses the need for a Solar Farm on land owned by WFDC as proposed by the Conservative Group in February 2020 and the need for electric charging points in our pay and display car parks.

This Council is concerned about the delay in making real progress on these really important issues for our communities and calls upon The Leader of the Council to provide a full formal update to this Council urgently.

5. Notice from Motion from Councillor Vicky Caulfield

Council notes that:

- I. Many local authorities are playing an important role in the UK taking action to achieve net zero carbon emissions, and to protect and revitalise local wildlife and natural habitats.
- II. Parliament in May 2019 declared an Environment and Climate Emergency, and this Council has already declared a Climate Emergency.
- III. There is a Bill before Parliament—the [Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill](#) (published as the “Climate and Ecology Bill”), which, if it became law, would require the government to develop a strategy to address the emergency that would ensure:
 - A. the **ecological emergency is tackled shoulder to shoulder with the climate crisis** in a joined-up approach;
 - B. the **Paris Agreement** is enshrined into law to ensure that UK does its real fair share to limit global temperature rise to the most stringent end of the Paris agreement **-1.5°C**.
 - C. the **Leaders Pledge for Nature** is enshrined into law to ensure that the **UK’s ecosystems are protected and restored** with a focus on biodiversity, soils and natural carbon sinks;
 - D. the UK takes **full responsibility for our entire greenhouse gas footprint** (ie consumption emissions plus shipping, flights and land-based transport) by accounting for all of the emissions that take place overseas to manufacture, transport and dispose of the goods and services we import and consume;
 - E. the UK takes **full responsibility for our ecological footprint** so that we protect health and resilience of ecosystems along both domestic and our global supply chains;
 - F. an **independent, temporary Climate and Nature Assembly** is set-up, representative of the UK’s population,

	<p>to engage with the UK Parliament and UK Government to help develop the emergency strategy.</p> <p>Council therefore resolves to:</p> <p>I. Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill;</p> <p>II. Inform the local media of this decision;</p> <p>III. Write an open letter to The Member of Parliament for Wyre Forest (shared with our residents through local and social media) urging them to sign up to support the Bill, or thanking them for doing so; and</p> <p>IV. Write to the CEE Bill Alliance, the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, expressing its support (joinus@ceebill.uk).</p>	
10.	<p>Urgent Motions submitted under Standing Orders</p> <p>To consider motions in the order they have been received which, by reason of special circumstances, should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Standing Orders (Section 7, 4.1 (vii)).</p>	
11.	<p>2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies</p> <p>To consider a report from the Chief Executive to agree the Council's response to the Boundary Commission for England's initial proposals on the boundaries of Parliamentary constituencies.</p>	21
12.	<p>Review of the May 2021 elections</p> <p>To consider a report from the Electoral Registration Officer and the Returning Officer on the Police and Crime Commissioner, Worcestershire County Council, Kidderminster Town Council elections and Bewdley Town Council, Bewdley West by-election, held on 6 May 2021.</p>	26
13.	<p>Policy and Budget Framework</p> <p>Matters which require a Decision by Council.</p> <p>(a) Recommendations from Cabinet (Strong Leader Decision) – 7 June 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of Properties in Kidderminster <p>(b) Recommendations from Cabinet – 6 July 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unity Park (Former Frenco Site) – Erection of Industrial Units – Amendment to Capital Programme <p>Please note that the reports and associated documents, referred to above, have been circulated electronically to Members. Public inspection copies are available on request. Please refer to the front cover for contact details.</p>	39 40

14.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.	
15.	Exclusion of the Press and Public 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 the paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act”.	

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

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

COUNCIL

HELD REMOTELY

12TH MAY 2021 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: S Miah (Chairman), J Aston (Vice-Chairman), G W Ballinger, C J Barnett, J F Byng, V Caulfield, S J Chambers, A Coleman, R H Coleman, B S Dawes, N J Desmond, H E Dyke, P Dyke, C Edginton-White, N Gale, S Griffiths, I Hardiman, P Harrison, M J Hart, K Henderson, L J Jones, A L L'Huillier, N Martin, F M Oborski MBE, T L Onslow, M Rayner, C Rogers, S E N Rook, D R Sheppard, J W R Thomas, A Totty, L Whitehouse and P W M Young.

In response to a member question regarding the legality of the meeting being held remotely, the Solicitor to the Council made the following statement:

Council considered and debated thoroughly all the risk issues in April and unanimously voted to continue remote meetings until July.

This is still an extant decision and it is still the case today that 1 in 3 people who do not realise they have contacted covid may be transmitting on a daily basis to others

From confidential health information on the specific vulnerabilities of individual members and officers in Wyre Forest, meeting in person would undoubtedly expose those individuals to unnecessary and totally avoidable risk of contracting covid 19.

This council would be liable to those individuals if we ignored these known risks and met face to face where the ability is available to meet remotely until such time as it is safe to do so.

C.01 Prayers

Prayers were said by Councillor P Young.

C.02 Election of Chairman

Councillor J Aston was nominated as Chairman. This was moved by Councillor H Dyke and seconded by Councillor G Ballinger.

Decision: Councillor J Aston be elected as Chairman of the Council for the municipal year 2021-2022.

C.03 Chairman – Investiture and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Agenda Item No. 4

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

C.04 Chairman's Response

The Chairman thanked members for supporting his appointment as Chairman. He announced that his chosen charities for the municipal year are Marie Curie and the Kidderminster & District Youth Trust (KDYT).

C.05 Retiring Chairman

The Leader of the Independent Health Concern Group, Councillor G Ballinger and the Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor M Hart thanked the retiring Chairman for his contribution to the role over the last two years.

Councillor S Miah thanked the Group Leaders for their kind words and said it had been an honour to be given the opportunity to take on this role.

C.06 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Councillor M Rayner nominated Councillor P Dyke as Vice-Chairman. This was seconded by Councillor S Griffiths.

Decision: Councillor P Dyke be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the municipal year 2021-2022.

C.07 Vice-Chairman – Investiture and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

After being invested with this Badge of Office, Councillor P Dyke made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Vice-Chairman.

C.08 Election of Leader

Council considered a report from the Chief Executive which asked members to elect a Leader of the Council for the period to the annual general meeting following the ordinary elections in 2023, in accordance with sections 44A and 44D of the Local Government Act 2000.

Councillor G Ballinger addressed members and nominated Councillor H Dyke for the position of Leader of the Council. The proposal was seconded by Councillor A L'Huillier.

There were no other nominations and following a unanimous vote Councillor H Dyke was elected as Leader of the Council.

Decision: Councillor H Dyke be appointed as Leader of the Council.

C.09 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

C.10 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interests were made.

C.11 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2021, 1st March 2021 and 21st April 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C.12. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

C.13 Questions

No questions had been submitted in accordance with Standing Order Section 7, 1.8 by Members of the Council.

C.14 Chairman's Communications

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

C.15 Political and Constitutional Structures 2021-2022

Council considered a report from the Solicitor to the Council on the proposed political and constitutional structures for the municipal year 2021-2022.

The Leader of the Council presented the report and formally moved the full suite of recommendations as set out in the report for approval. Councillor G Ballinger seconded the proposals.

Upon a vote, the recommendations were agreed.

Decision:

- 1.1 The revisions to the Constitution as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed.**
- 1.2 The proposed Political Management Structure of committees for 2021/2022 as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved.**
- 1.3 The Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees as contained in Appendix 3 be agreed.**
- 1.4 The Municipal Calendar as set out in Appendix 4 be adopted.**
- 1.5 The appointments to outside bodies as set out in Appendix 6 be agreed.**

- 1.6 The Solicitor to the Council be authorised to settle any outstanding details relating to the political structures and to make changes as necessary to the Council's Constitution to give effect to the Council's decisions and any other revisions necessary to reflect needs or circumstances.**

C.16 Members' Annual Activity Reports and Attendance 2020-2021

Council received the schedule of Members' Annual Activity Reports giving details of their activities in their role as District Councillors and a record of attendance for the 2020-2021 municipal year.

Decision: The reports and attendance be noted.

C.17 Annual Reports for the Municipal Year 2020-2021

- (a) Cabinet
- (b) Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- (c) Ethics and Standards Committee

Council received the annual reports from the previous Leader of the Council, and the Chairmen of both the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Ethics and Standards Committee.

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

C.18 Leader of the Council Announcements

The Leader of the Council thanked Councillor G Ballinger for his kind words and for the support of members for her appointment. She advised that there would be no changes to the membership of the Cabinet; however slight changes would be made to the portfolios which will be circulated in due course.

C.19 Urgent Motions submitted under Standing Orders

There were no urgent motions.

C.20 Policy and Budget Framework

Matters which require a Decision by Council.

- a) **Recommendations from Cabinet – 22nd December 2020**
 - **Capital Strategy 2021-31**

The Leader of the Council presented the recommendations from Cabinet and formally moved them for approval. The proposal was seconded by Councillor G Ballinger.

Upon a show of hands, the vote was carried.

Decision: Council AGREED that:

- 1. Delegation of authority to Cabinet to make amendments to the Capital Programme in instances where the Council receives external capital grants and the full amount of the grants to be distributed is met from the external funding source.**
- 2. Delegation to the Corporate Director: Resources and Corporate Director Economic Prosperity and Place to make revisions to the Capital Portfolio Strategy and Asset Management Strategy in order to comply with best practice and latest relevant guidance.**

C.21 Management review

Council considered a report from the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service on changes to the senior management structure of the Council.

The Chief Executive gave a brief introduction to the report. He said that he and members of the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) would stay in the meeting to deal with any factual questions that members may have. If any of those factual questions relate to the confidential appendix 3, members were asked to hold on to the question until the Council had resolved to exclude the press and public. Once all the questions had been dealt with, he and CLT members would leave the meeting, but would welcome being invited to re-join it after the Council has taken a decision.

The Chief Executive advised that the Solicitor to the Council had provided legal advice throughout the process leading to the publication of the report and advised on the process constitutionally, and the report and appendices had been verified by the S151 officer.

Council were advised that West Midlands Employers were asked to provide independent external assurance on the consultation process and adherence to policy and legal requirements in respect of the employment aspects of the overall process. The Chief Executive added that for the purposes of this report Colin Williams, who is an associate with West Midlands Employers, would remain in the meeting and be able to support members in responding to any employment related questions that they may have. Claire Felton has kindly agreed to support the Council as deputy monitoring officer for the purposes of this item of the meeting only, to ensure the Council has the appropriate assistance on the rules of debate in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and provide assistance to the Chairman of the Council.

The Chief Executive advised that on 1st March, Council decided that he should lead a management review and that it should be implemented by April 2022 at the latest (no other parameters were set). He said that a consultation paper, which was fully supported by all members of CLT, was issued on 31st March and consultation closed on 26th April. He advised that

Agenda Item No. 4

over 40 responses had been received. The Chief Executive drew members' attention to the two options as set out in the report and invited members to ask any factual questions relating to the report and appendices 1 or 2.

A discussion ensued. Several members thanked the Chief Executive for taking the time to attend their Group meetings to brief members on the process.

C.22 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Decision: Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of "exempt Information" as defined in paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The Chief Executive and CLT members left the meeting at this point. Colin Williams, Claire Felton and the Principal Committee and Member Services Officer remained in the meeting whilst members reached their decision.

C.23 Management review

The Leader of the Council formally moved the recommendations for option 2 for approval. Councillor G Ballinger seconded the proposals.

A discussion ensued. Upon a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

The Chief Executive and CLT members returned to the meeting and were advised of the decision.

Decision: Council AGREED:

1.1 The following changes to be implemented with effect from no later than 31 December 2021:

Option 2

- (c) The redundancy of the posts of Corporate Director: Resources and Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place;**
- (d) Acceptance of an application from the Solicitor to the Council for flexible retirement on the basis of reduction in working hours to three days a week without actuarial reduction in pension;**
- (e) No change to the terms and conditions or designation of the Chief Executive.**

Council:

- 1.2 **AUTHORISE the Head of Paid Service to take all necessary steps to ensure implementation of the agreed changes on the basis set out in this report, with AUTHORISATION for the HR and Organisational Development Manager to bring forward the date of implementation if necessary as set out in paragraph 4.19 of the report;**
- 1.3 **AUTHORISE the Solicitor to the Council, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council and the Head of Paid Service, to amend the Constitution as appropriate to reflect the changes to the senior management structure (paragraph 4.20);**
- 1.4 **AUTHORISE the Corporate Director: Resources/Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Finance to determine the most advantageous way of funding one-off costs, including the balance between use of capital and revenue resources, but subject to obtaining Cabinet's approval for use of any capital resources that it allocates (paragraph 5.8).**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.22pm.

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

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
14 JULY 2021**

QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL

1. Question from Councillor Fran Oborski MBE to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

Could the Cabinet Member tell me:

How many staff, including temporary summer staff are currently employed in the Council's Parks/Ground Maintenance Section? How many were employed at July 2020, July 2019 and 2018?

2. Question from Councillor Fran Oborski MBE to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services

The Covid Pandemic has led to all Councils having to assist vulnerable homeless people and Rough Sleepers. Could the Cabinet Member tell me: Since the start of the Pandemic how many vulnerable homeless people have been placed in hostel accommodation outside Wyre Forest? How many of those have been placed in Birmingham? What steps are taken to ensure that all hostel accommodation used is operated by companies who are compliant with RSH (Register of Social Housing) Standards?

3. Question from Councillor Fran Oborski MBE to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services

Achieving low Carbon Targets requires domestic properties to achieve EPC certificates at levels of A and B for preference with C as the lowest acceptable level. Can the Cabinet Member tell me what percentage of domestic properties in Wyre Forest are at EPC levels: A or B? C? D or lower?

4. Question from Councillor Shazu Miah to the Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio

The Covid pandemic has caused severe losses for many local businesses especially the Self Employed. Could the Cabinet Member tell me how many Wyre Forest Taxi Drivers received Covid payments from the Council and how many did not?

5. Question from Councillor Ian Hardiman to the Leader of the Council

Would the Leader of the Council update Council on the current progress in respect of the Local Plan, following the Examination in Public earlier in the year?

6. Question from Councillor Marcus Hart to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio

Would the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital portfolio provide an update on income from our investments purchased through the Capital Portfolio Fund?

7. Question from Councillor Tracey Onslow to the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Safety

Would the Cabinet Member for Culture Leisure and Community Safety update Council regarding what cultural and leisure activities are planned for later in the year, when the Covid restrictions cease and indeed what activities are in the programme for next year?

8. Question from Councillor Marcus Hart to the Leader of the Council

Would the Leader of the Council advise Council on the projected rental income for Wyre Forest House from external tenants for the year 2021-2022 and update on the number of tenancy agreements and the percentage footprint of the building occupied?

9. Question from Councillor Chris Rogers to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

Would the Cabinet Member for Operational Services like to comment on whether he thinks the Progressive Alliance are delivering on its corporate priority in respect of place, and in particular litter picking and grass cutting?

10. Question from Councillor Lisa Jones to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

Is the Cabinet Member for Operational Services satisfied with the level of civil enforcement in respect of parking across this District, especially in our rural areas and on estates?

11. Question from Councillor Chris Rogers to the Leader of the Council

Could the Leader of the Council advise this Council when will the public and our wider communities expect to see work commence to regenerate Worcester Street using the £20.5 million awarded by the Conservative Government for the Future High Street Fund?

Chairman's List of Functions – 2021/22

June 2021

01/06 – Raising of Pride Flag at Wyre Forest House

22/06 – Armed Forces Flag-raising Event at Stourport British Legion

* Denotes attendance by Vice Chairman

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
14th JULY 2021

2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Helen Dyke Leader of the Council
DIRECTOR:	Chief Executive
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ian Miller x 2700 ian.miller@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Nil

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree the Council's response to the Boundary Commission for England's initial proposals on the boundaries of Parliamentary constituencies.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to:

- 2.1 **SUPPORT the proposed retention of a constituency coterminous with the district;**
- 2.2 **OPPOSE the proposal to rename the constituency as "Kidderminster" and call instead for retention of the name of "Wyre Forest".**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Under the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 as amended by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020, the Boundary Commission for England and equivalent Commissions for the other nations are reviewing the number and boundaries of Parliamentary constituencies. The size of the House of Commons is left unchanged at 650 – previous reviews that were due to be implemented in 2013 and 2018 involved reducing the size of the House to 600 members but ultimately were not progressed. The final reports for the current review have to be submitted by 1 July 2023 with the intention that the resulting changes will be implemented at the next following general election. While a general election has to be held in 2024 at the latest, the removal of the provisions for fixed term Parliaments means that an election could be held earlier. The Commissions are required to use the electoral registers for 2 March 2020 as the basis for the review, and with limited exceptions for some Scottish island groups, the Isle of Anglesey and the Isle of Wight, all proposed constituencies must be within a range of +/- 5% from the UK electoral quota of 73,393. This means that proposed constituencies

must have electorates in the range of 69,724 to 77,062. Initial proposals for England were published on 8 June and the deadline for responses is 2 August. This report therefore gives the Council the opportunity to consider and agree its response to the initial proposals.

- 3.2 Before turning to the current proposals, it is worth briefly considering the proposals from the 2013 and 2018 reviews and the history of the Wyre Forest constituency. The 2013 review, both in the initial proposals in 2011 and in the revised proposals in 2012, suggested that there should be no change to the Wyre Forest constituency. At the time of that review, there were 77,800 electors in Wyre Forest which meant that the constituency would have been 1.51% above the midpoint of the prescribed range of 72,810 to 80,473. The 2018 review used a different approach to sub-regional groupings and the initial proposals would have added Hartlebury to the Wyre Forest constituency. This was not strictly necessary in mathematical terms as the electorate for Wyre Forest in May 2015 was 75,226, which was slightly above (+0.61%) the UK electoral quota of 74,769. In the 2018 review, the Commission was required to produce proposals for seats that lay within a range of +/- 5% of this figure i.e. 71,031 to 78,507. Adding 2,152 voters from Hartlebury would have produced a seat that, on May 2015 figures, would have had 77,378 electors – much closer to the upper limit but still within the prescribed range, as it would have been 3.49% above the electoral quota. However the proposal to add Hartlebury to the constituency was dropped in the Commission’s final proposals which left Wyre Forest unchanged.
- 3.3 There has been a long history of a constituency based wholly or mainly on the present boundaries. The Wyre Forest constituency was first formed in 1983 and since then has been coterminous with the district of Wyre Forest, except for 1997 to 2010 when Rock and Ribbesford were part of the Leominster constituency. From 1950 to 1983, the former Kidderminster constituency included the whole of the present district plus Martley and Tenbury. Thus there have been times when the local constituency has included areas outside the present Wyre Forest district and it will be noted that these were areas in Worcestershire.
- 3.4 The initial proposals for the 2023 review recommend no change to the Wyre Forest constituency – except suggesting that it should be called “Kidderminster” because it is the largest town. This approach to renaming constituencies after their largest town seems to be part of a pattern that does not affect only Wyre Forest. The district’s electorate in March 2020 was 77,015, which is 4.9% above the electoral quota and therefore only just below the point at which it would have been necessary for the Commission to consider adding part of Wyre Forest to another constituency.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The retention of a constituency that is coterminous with the district of Wyre Forest is welcome and provides for simplicity and ease of understanding by electors, the Member of Parliament and others alike. It also means that

administration of Parliamentary elections is kept as simple as possible, because there is no involvement with neighbouring areas.

- 4.2 The only comment on why the Commission has proposed the change of name for the constituency is to be found here:

“However, we propose to change the name of the existing Wyre Forest constituency to Kidderminster, to reflect the main population centre in this constituency. We welcome representations on this proposed constituency name.”

- 4.3 Informal consultation with Group Leaders has not identified any support for such a change in name. The Member of Parliament has submitted a response which concludes:

“the proposed name of Kidderminster for the constituency fails to recognise the diverse nature of the constituency. One compromise suggestion might be to name the constituency “Kidderminster, Stourport, and Bewdley” to reflect the diversity. However, having taken soundings from constituents, might I suggest we maintain the status quo and stay with the all-inclusive “Wyre Forest”?”

- 4.4. Council is invited to consider objecting to the proposal to change the name for the following reasons:

- the constituency has been aligned with the district’s boundaries for almost forty years since 1983 (with the exception of Rock and Ribbesford parishes being part of a neighbouring constituency for 13 years). There is thus strong and clear identification in electors’ minds between the constituency and the district;
- no change is proposed to the boundary of the constituency. The need to consider a change in name should arise only if there was a change to the boundary. There should not be change for change’s sake;
- the proposal of “Kidderminster” is not inclusive of all areas of the constituency. It would tend to alienate any electors not living in Kidderminster, including the towns of Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley and the rural areas. There is a risk that such alienation could affect electoral participation in areas outside Kidderminster.

- 4.5 The proposals relate only to Parliamentary constituencies and do not affect local government boundaries or electoral arrangements for councils. In particular, they do not affect the name of the District Council. The Council has the power in section 74 of the Local Government Act 1972 to change the name of the district (the last such time this power was used is believed to have been in 2018 when “Shepway” became “Folkestone & Hythe”). Otherwise, it would require a merger of the district with another area or a wholesale local government reorganisation to result in a change of name, and that would require legislation being approved by Parliament.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications for the Council arising directly from this report.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None. The review is being undertaken by the Boundary Commission under the legislation mentioned in paragraph 3.1.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An equality assessment impact is not required as this relates to constitutional arrangements decided by the Boundary Commission and Parliament.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 There are no significant risks to the Council arising from this report. Risks relating to administration of Parliamentary elections, in the event of any change to the constituency's boundaries, would be mitigated through effective planning by the acting returning officer.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Council is invited to consider its response to the Boundary Commission's initial proposals.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 The Leader of the Council
10.2 Mark Garnier MP
10.3 Corporate Leadership Team.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020

[Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

General information about the review:

[2023 Review | Boundary Commission for England \(independent.gov.uk\)](https://www.independent.gov.uk)

The proposals for the West Midlands, which will lose two seats overall:

[Initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in the West Midlands region | Boundary Commission for England \(independent.gov.uk\)](https://www.independent.gov.uk)

The proposals for Worcestershire (Worcestershire would retain 6 MPs, 4 constituencies being unchanged)

[Initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in the West Midlands region | Boundary Commission for England | Page 5 \(independent.gov.uk\)](https://www.independent.gov.uk)

Initial proposals for the Worcestershire sub-region

40. There are six existing constituencies in Worcestershire, four of which have electorates within the permitted electorate range. As a result, substantial change to the existing constituencies in Worcestershire is not necessary.
41. The electorates of four existing constituencies (West Worcestershire, Worcester, Wyre Forest, and Bromsgrove) are such that they can remain completely unchanged, and we propose no changes to these constituencies. However, we propose to change the name of the existing Wyre Forest constituency to Kidderminster, to reflect the main population centre in this constituency. We welcome representations on this proposed constituency name.
42. Of the remaining existing constituencies in the sub-region, Mid Worcestershire has an electorate above the permitted electorate range, and the Redditch constituency, with an electorate of 65,507, is below. We therefore propose extending the Redditch constituency both northwards and southwards, to include the Wychavon District wards of Dodderhill, and Harvington and Norton. We recognise that our proposed Redditch constituency disrupts local ties between Wychbold and Droitwich Spa, and Norton and Evesham. However, we consider that other configurations of constituencies in this area (for example, including wards from the Bromsgrove local authority in the Redditch constituency) would not better reflect the statutory factors. Other than the transfer of these two wards, the existing Mid Worcestershire constituency is unchanged. However, we propose that this constituency be named Droitwich and Evesham, to reflect the main population centres in the constituency.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**COUNCIL**
14 JULY 2021**Review of the May 2021 elections**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Nicky Martin, Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being & Democratic Services
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	The Electoral Registration Officer and the Returning Officer
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ian Miller, Chief Executive ian.miller@wyreforestdc.gov.uk Ext 2700
APPENDICES: (These appendices are being circulated electronically only)	Appendix 1: data on turnout, rejected ballot papers etc

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a report on the Police and Crime Commissioner, Worcestershire County Council, Kidderminster Town Council elections and Bewdley Town Council, Bewdley West by-election, held on 6 May 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to:

- 2.1 **NOTE the report on the May 2021 elections.**

3. ELECTION BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 13 March 2020 the Prime Minister announced that all elections between 16 March 2020 and 5 May 2021 would be postponed until 6 May 2021. This was legislated for in the Coronavirus Act 2020 on 25 March 2020. This meant that the Police and Crime Commissioner election and the Kidderminster Town Council elections would now happen on the same day as Worcestershire County Council elections on 6 May 2021.
- 3.2 These elections had to be Covid-19 secure for Candidates, staff and electors and several things were put into place to ensure this, including one way systems with floor markings in polling stations and count venue; all polling, count and postal vote staff and count attendees wearing face shields and face masks; and hand sanitiser available at every location. Additional pencils and cleaning equipment were supplied to polling stations.

4. FEEDBACK FROM THE DEBRIEFING MEETING.

4.1 A 'wash up' de-brief was held remotely with agents and candidates on 25 May 2021 to discuss the preparation and delivery of the elections on 6 May 2021. This meeting was attended by 3 Political parties. The main discussions included:

- The elections in May were well run and organised despite the additional challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Thanks were given to the Returning Officer and the Elections staff from all parties present.
- The addition of an extra poll clerk at every polling station was well received by political parties and candidates.
- The count was well run despite only 50% of usual staffing numbers.
- The Funhouse polling station in Bewdley worked for this election but was not ideal: at a Parliamentary or any election with a higher turnout there would be significant issues with flow of voters.
- Electors who live in Kidderminster town centre have a fair way to travel to a polling station and could this be reviewed.
- The number of 'rejected' ballot papers at the count where the "grass skirt" counting method is used.

5. Turnout

5.1 A breakdown of the turnout is set out in Appendix 1 The turnout overall exceeded 32% and was generally a little higher than previous comparable elections, although the turnout at ward or division level varied around the average with a few areas seeing a modest drop in participation.

5.2 Turnout among postal voters was 76% which was higher than the participation rate of 71% in the last set of district-wide local elections in May 2019. There were almost 2,800 additional postal voters in May 2021 (+24%) compared to postal voters in the local elections in 2019. This reflected the desire of many to vote by post rather than in person during the ongoing pandemic. It seems likely that many of those who requested a postal vote in 2021 would have voted in person in previous years, and this has led to the higher participation rate among postal voters.

6. Absent voting

6.1 Table A below shows the number of postal votes issued and returned including the number of rejected postal votes for the elections in May 2021 compared to previous elections.

Table A postal votes

	2021	2019 UKPE	2019 Local
No. of Postal votes Issued	14,346	12,756	11,552
No. of Postal votes returned	10,998	11,134	8,349
Postal votes accepted as valid and counted	10,506	10,827	8,034
Postal Votes rejected for missing statement or Ballot paper(s)	346	68	132
No. of Postal Votes rejected at scanning	146	239	183
Rejected at Scanning %	1.33%	2.15%	2.19%

- 6.2 23 postal vote packs were received in the post in the 24 hours after the close of poll and a total of 50 have been received in the post since 6 May 2021.
- 6.3 The overall increase in postal voters from previous elections was to be expected due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the local and national push to encourage people to sign up for a postal vote.
- 6.4 The trend of postal voters being far more likely to cast their vote than people voting in person has become well established. Therefore, while other measures to encourage participation will continue, the most effective is likely to be encouraging more people to register for a postal vote.
- 6.5 By law the Electoral Registration Officer must write to postal voters whose ballot papers were not included in the count because their personal identifiers on the postal vote could not be verified and to explain the reason why e.g. incorrect date of birth provided or signature didn't match that on their original application form. A total of 146 letters have been issued to those electors who had a postal vote rejected in May 2021. Those whose signature didn't match the original supplied will also be sent an identifier refresh form to complete. A total of 380 letters were issued at the UK Parliamentary election in June 2017 and 239 at the UK Parliamentary election in December 2019 for the same purpose.
- 6.6 The number of proxies appointed at these elections was 38. A breakdown of proxy voters compared to previous elections is set out in Table B.

Table B proxy voters

	2021	2019 UKPE	2019 Local	2018 Local	2017 UKPE	2017 Local
Proxies	38	297	24	60	345	50

6.7 Whilst the decrease in proxy voters between the elections in December 2019 and May 2021 is substantial, the numbers are similar to the 2019 Local elections.

7.0 COUNT AND RESULTS

7.1 The verification of all ballot boxes and the count for Worcestershire County Council and Kidderminster Town Council elections and the Bewdley Town Council by-election took place on Friday 7 May 2021. The count for the Police and Crime Commissioner election took place on Monday 10 May 2021. Information on rejected ballot papers, including unused votes in multi-member wards, is set out in Tables 13 to 17 in Appendix 1.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 All the costs of these elections will be met by other bodies as none of the elections was for the District Council. The financial accounts for the Police and Crime Commissioner, Worcestershire County Council, Kidderminster Town Council and Bewdley Town Council elections held in May 2021 are currently being compiled so the appropriate recharges can be made to the Electoral Claims Unit and the relevant councils.

9. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The legislative framework for implementing the elections as well as electoral registration can be viewed at <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk>.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

10.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report. However, all elections and electoral registration activity have due regard to the public sector equality duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 The Council is invited to note the report of the May 2021 elections.

13. CONSULTEES

13.1 Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being & Democratic Services

13.2 Corporate Leadership team

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 A breakdown of the full results for the May 2021 elections held on 6 May 2021 can be found at

<http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/the-council/elections-and-voting/election-results.aspx>

Appendix 1 – detailed tables on turnout etc

Turnout by Electoral Division for the Worcestershire County Council election is set out in Table 1, The Police and Crime Commissioner election in Table 2, Kidderminster Town Council in Table 3 and Bewdley Town Council by-election in Table 4.

Table 1 Worcestershire County Council

	Electoral Division	Electorate	Votes cast	Turnout
1	Bewdley	7,404	2,780	37.55%
2	Chaddesley	6,999	2,820	40.29%
3	Cookley, Wolverley & Wribbenhall	7,919	2,988	37.73%
4	St Barnabas	7,583	2,448	32.28%
5	St Chads	7,130	2,281	31.99%
6	St Georges & St Oswalds	7,495	2,158	28.79%
7	St Johns	7,436	2,377	31.79%
8	St Marys	9,659	2,423	25.09%
9	Stourport on Severn	16,061	4,870	30.32%
	Total	77,686	25,145	32.37%

The figures in Table 1 show that turnout varied between 25% (St Marys) and 40% (Chaddesley).

Table 2 Police & Crime Commissioner

	West Mercia Police Area	Electorate	Votes cast	Turnout
1	Wyre Forest	77,686	25019	32.21%

Table 3 Kidderminster Town Council

	KTC Ward	Electorate	Votes cast	Turnout
1	Aggborough & Spennells	6,641	2,447	36.85%
2	Blakebrook & Habberley South	6,950	2,052	29.53%
3	Broadwaters	6,721	1,869	27.81%
4	Foley Park & Hoobrook	7,518	2,009	26.72%
5	Franche & Habberley South	7,583	2,433	32.08%

6	Offmore & Comberton	7,440	2,243	30.15%
Total	Kidderminster Total	42,853	13,063	30.48%

Table 4 Bewdley Town Council by-election

	BTC Ward	Electorate	Votes cast	Turnout
1	Bewdley West	2,184	933	42.72%

The turnout by postal voters was 76%. Table 5 shows the turnout of postal voters and turnout in polling stations in the Worcestershire County Council elections, The Police and Crime Commissioner election is in Table 6, Kidderminster Town Council in Table 7 and Bewdley Town Council by-election in Table 8.

Table 5 Worcestershire County Council

	Count Area	Polling Station electorate	Polling station turnout	Turnout %	Postal Vote electorate	Postal Votes returned	Postal Vote Turnout %
1	Bewdley	5,899	1,659	28.12%	1,479	1,156	78.16%
2	Chaddesley	5,631	1,712	30.40%	1,317	1,139	86.48%
3	Cookley, Wolverley & Wribbenhall	6,276	1,720	27.41%	1,599	1,322	82.68%
4	St Barnabas	6,182	1,429	23.12%	1,370	1,055	77.01%
5	St Chads	5,875	1,339	22.79%	1,205	974	80.83%
6	St Georges & St Oswalds	6,242	1,258	20.15%	1,218	936	76.85%
7	St Johns	5,993	1,313	21.91%	1,419	1,098	77.38%
8	St Marys	8,172	1,404	17.18%	1,447	1,074	74.22%
9	Stourport on Severn	13,111	2,692	20.53%	2,884	2,24	77.81%

Table 6 Police & Crime Commissioner

	Count Area	Polling Station electorate	Polling station turnout	Turn out %	Postal Vote electorate	Postal Votes returned	Postal Vote Turnout %
1	Wyre Forest	63,354	14,513	22.91 %	14,331	10,998	76.74%

Table 7 Kidderminster Town Council

	Count Area	Polling Station electorate	Polling station turnout	Turn out %	Postal Vote electorate	Postal Votes returned	Postal Vote Turnout %
1	Aggborough & Spennells	5,318	1,424	26.78 %	1,279	1,072	83.82%
2	Blakebrook & Habberley South	5,640	1,120	19.86 %	1,282	976	76.13%
3	Broadwaters	5,693	1,137	19.97 %	1,006	770	76.54%
4	Foley Park & Hoobrook	6,308	1,146	18.17 %	1,181	1,055	89.33%
5	Franche & Habberley South	6,182	1,431	23.15 %	1,370	901	65.77%
6	Offmore & Comberton	6,173	1,306	21.16 %	1,210	962	79.50%

Table 8 Bewdley Town Council

	Ward	Polling Station electorate	Polling station turnout	Turn out %	Postal Vote electorate	Postal Votes returned	Postal Vote Turnout %
1	Bewdley West	1,742	577	33.12 %	429	368	85.78%

For comparison purposes a breakdown of the overall turnout figures compared to previous elections is set out in Tables 9, 10, 11 and 12.

Table 9 Worcestershire County Council

Turnout %	2013	2017	2021	% difference in Turnout between 2017 & 2021
Bewdley	35.8%	38.7%	37.55	-1.15%
Chaddesley	32.3%	38.66%	40.29%	1.63%
Cookley, Wolverley & Wribbenhall	33.8%	36.5%	37.73%	1.25%
St Barnabas	29.4%	33.99%	32.28%	-1.71%
St Chads	30.6%	30.95%	31.99%	1.04%
St Georges & St Oswalds	26.5%	28.06%	28.79%	0.73%
St Johns	30%	28.33%	31.97%	3.64%
St Marys	24.6%	24.65%	25.09%	0.44%
Stourport on Severn	29.1%	30.26%	30.32%	0.06%

Table 10 Police & crime commissioner

Turnout %	2012*	2016	2021	% difference in Turnout between 2016 & 2021
PCC - Wyre Forest Constituency	12.52%	30.6%	32.21%	1.61%

*2012 was a standalone PCC election

Table 11 Kidderminster Town Council

Turnout %	2019 District	2016 KTC	2021 KTC	% difference in Turnout between 2016 & 2021
Aggborough & Spennells	36.14%	33.4%	36.85%	3.45%
Blakebrook & Habberley South	28.29%	27.4%	29.53%	2.13%

Broadwaters	27.21%	27.9%	27.81%	-0.09%
Foley Park & Hoobrook	26.3%	27.6%	26.72%	-0.88%
Franche & Habberley South	29.81%	32%	32.08%	0.08%
Offmore & Comberton	28.67%	31.6%	30.15%	-1.45%

Table 12 Bewdley Town Council

Turnout %	2019*	2020**	2021	% difference in Turnout between 2019 & 2021
Bewdley West	39.57%	20.02%	42.72%	3.15%

*2019 was part of Bewdley Town Council elections, **2020 was a by-election

REJECTED BALLOT PAPERS AT THE COUNT

Tables 13 to 16 list the number of rejected ballot papers as reported in the official election results.

Table 13 Worcestershire County Council

	Count Area	Want of official mark	Voting for more candidates than entitled	Writing or mark by which voter could be identified	Being unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty	Rejected in part	Total
1	Bewdley	0	4	0	11	0	15
2	Chaddesley	0	4	0	10	0	14
3	Cookley, Wolverley & Wribbenhall	0	7	0	9	0	16
4	St Barnabas	0	3	1	19	0	23
5	St Chads	0	3	0	21	0	24
6	St Georges & St Oswalds	0	6	0	21	0	27

7	St Johns	0	9	0	8	0	17
8	St Marys	0	4	0	17	0	21
9	Stourport on Severn	2	8	0	511	0	521

Table 14 Police & crime commissioner

	Count Area	Want of official mark	Voting for more candidates than entitled	Writing or mark by which voter could be identified	Being unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty	Rejected in part	Total
1	Wyre Forest	0	181	2	325	25	533

Table 15 Kidderminster Town Council

	Count Area	Want of official mark	Voting for more candidates than entitled	Writing or mark by which voter could be identified	Being unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty	Rejected in part	Total
1	Aggborough & Spennells	0	0	0	1848	0	1848
2	Blakebrook & Habberley South	0	0	0	1380	0	1380
3	Broadwaters	0	0	0	2069	0	2069
4	Foley Park & Hoobrook	0	3	0	644	0	647
5	Franche & Habberley South	0	0	0	12	835	835
6	Offmore & Comberton	0	9	0	1580	0	1589

Table 16 Bewdley Town Council

	Ward	Want of official mark	Voting for more candidates than entitled	Writing or mark by which voter could be identified	Being unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty	Rejected in part	Total
1	Bewdley West	0	0	0	2	0	2

Within the rejected figures for the Stourport on Severn Division of Worcestershire County Council and all wards for Kidderminster Town Council are the number of unused votes. This is a quirk of our electoral software system where the figures are required to be entered to make the totals balance. **All valid votes were counted where voters used only some of their votes.**

Table 17 below shows the number of unused votes for each Division and ward where there were multiple seats contested. In the results for the May 2021 elections, the totals shown for “rejected ballots” include:

- the number of ballot papers which were wholly rejected. Generally there were few of these in each ward or division;
- those which were rejected in part because the voter had voted for only one or, in the case of Kidderminster Town Council, two candidates. Such examples were far more numerous and each “missing” or invalid vote has contributed to the total shown.

A detailed explanatory note has been provided to members and the parties that fielded candidates in Wyre Forest. It identifies follow up actions to review the functionality of the election software with the software supplier to address how rejected ballot papers and unused votes are recorded in the system and displayed in declarations in multi-member elections; and to review count sheets used by supervisors to ensure that, for multi-member elections, they capture separately information about rejected ballot papers and unused votes.

Table 17 – detailed analysis of “rejected votes” in multi-member wards

Count Area	Ballot papers void for uncertainty	Ballot papers rejected for excess votes	Ballot papers rejected for want of official mark	Unused votes on valid ballot papers
Aggborough & Spennells	9			1821
Blakebrook & Habberley South	11			1347
Broadwaters	11			2036
Foley Park & Hoobrook	8	1		620

Franché & Habberley South	12			835
Offmore & Comberton	12	3		1544
Stourport on Severn (WCC)	15	4	1	481

It will be seen that, in total, fewer than 100 ballot papers were wholly rejected in these electoral areas. The number of unused votes ran well into three or even four figures in each area, reflecting that **hundreds of electors withheld their second and/or third vote**. The proportion of electors who withheld their votes varied greatly between wards/divisions. The lower proportions were seen in wards/divisions where two or more parties had fielded full slates of candidates – in such areas, party supporters were able to use both or all three of their votes to support the same party but, in other areas, party supporters were perhaps naturally less willing to use their second and/or third vote to support other candidates.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
14 JULY 2021**

**POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK
MATTERS WHICH REQUIRE A DECISION BY COUNCIL**

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET
(STRONG LEADER DECISION)
7 JUNE 2021**

Purpose of Report

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

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Would Councillors please note that the related reports and documents have not been included in the Council book, as they have already been sent to Members via the exempt Strong Leader report. The decision notice, referred to below, has been posted on the Council's website.

http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/docs/doc56686_20210607_cabinet_decision_report.pdf

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	CABINET MEMBER
<p>Acquisition of properties in Kidderminster</p> <p>RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:</p> <p>1.1 That provision of the amount shown in the confidential report, is made in the Capital Programme to facilitate the acquisition of the specified properties.</p>	<p>Councillor H Dyke</p>

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
14 JULY 2021

POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK
MATTERS WHICH REQUIRE A DECISION BY COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET
6 JULY 2021

Purpose of Report

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

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Would Councillors please note that the related reports and documents have not been included in the Council book, as they have already been sent to members via the exempt cabinet report.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	CABINET MEMBER
<p>Unity Park (Former Frenco Site) – Erection of Industrial Units – Amendment to Capital Programme</p> <p>RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:</p> <p>1.1 That the Capital Programme provision for Industrial Units on the Unity Park Site is increased by the amount shown in the confidential report, funded from the Capital Portfolio Fund and from the Evergreen Investment Fund to provide a revised overall Capital budget. This will enable the completion of the six industrial units on the Unity Park site.</p> <p>1.2 To note that a review of the project will be undertaken by the internal audit manager, the scope and timing of the review to be agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Audit Committee and the Leader of the Council.</p>	<p>Councillor J Thomas</p>