

Open

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

6pm
Thursday, 5 December 2024
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Members of Committee:

Chairman: Councillor N Martin

Vice-Chairman: Councillor F M Oborski MBE

Councillor V Caulfield

Councillor N J Desmond

Councillor N Gale

Councillor P Harrison

Councillor M McDonnell

Councillor G Connolly

Councillor H E Dyke

Councillor I Hardiman

Councillor D Little

Councillor D Russell

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.

Disclosure of Interests

Members and co-opted Members of the Council are reminded that, in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and the statutory provisions of the Localism Act, they are required to consider in ADVANCE of each meeting whether they have a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI), an other registrable interest (ORI) or a non-registrable interest (NRI) in relation to any matter on the agenda. If advice is needed, Members should contact the Monitoring Officer or other legal officer in good time before the meeting.

If any Member or co-opted Member of the Council identifies a DPI or ORI which they have not already registered on the Council's register of interests or which requires updating, they should complete the disclosure form which can be obtained from Democratic Services at any time, copies of which will be available at the meeting for return to the Monitoring Officer.

Members and co-opted Members are required to disclose any DPIs and ORIs at the meeting.

Where the matter relates to a DPI they may not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not stay in the meeting unless granted a dispensation.

Where the matter relates to an ORI they may not vote on the matter unless granted an advance dispensation.

Where a Member or co-opted Member has an NRI which directly relates to their financial interest or wellbeing, or that of a relative or close associate, they must disclose the interest at the meeting, may not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not stay in the meeting unless granted a dispensation.

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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 Karen Morton, Assistant Committee Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF. Telephone: 01562 732726 or email committee.services@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

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* Unless there are no reports in the open session.

Wyre Forest District Council
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 5 December 2024

Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster

Part 1

Open to the press and public

Agenda item	Subject	Page Number
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Appointment of Substitute Members 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.	
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 interest (DPI), an other registrable interest (ORI) or a non-registrable interest (NRI) in relation to any matter on the agenda. 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 the 7 November 2024.	7
5.	Response to consultation: enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings To consider a draft of a Cabinet report from the Chief Executive to agree a response to the consultation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.	12
6.	Cost of Living Action Plan Update To consider a draft of a Cabinet report from the Head of Strategic Growth that provides an update on actions carried out in 2024 to progress delivery of the Cost of Living Action Plan 2024-25.	19
7.	Wyre Forest Health Action Plan Update To consider a draft of a Cabinet report from the Head of Strategic Growth that provides an update on action to improve health and wellbeing and tackle health inequalities in Wyre Forest.	33

8.	Wyre Forest District Council Local Enforcement Plan To consider a draft of a Cabinet report from the Head of Strategic Growth on the Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) Local Enforcement Plan which has been updated to include a process flowchart.	46
9.	Warm Homes: Local Grant To consider a draft of a Cabinet report from the Head of Strategic Growth that seeks approval to enter into a procurement exercise to appoint a contractor to undertake the works required to deliver the Warm Homes: Local Grant (WHLG).	66
10.	Major capital projects update To receive a briefing note from the Deputy Chief Executive: Regeneration and Commercial that provides an update on the main capital projects.	77
11.	Work Programme To review the work programme for the current municipal year with regard to the Corporate Plan Priority, Annual Priorities and the Forward Plan.	83
12.	Press Involvement To consider any future items for scrutiny that might require publicity.	
13.	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.	
14.	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 paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act”.	

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

15.	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.	
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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2024 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: N Martin (Chairman), V Caulfield, G Connolly, N J Desmond, H E Dyke, N Gale, I Hardiman, P Harrison, D Little, M McDonnell, S Miah and D Russell.

Observers

Councillors: B Brookes, K Gale, M J Hart, T L Onslow, C Rogers and D Ross.

Observed remotely: Councillor L Whitehouse.

OS.30 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor F M Oborski MBE (Vice-Chairman).

OS.31 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor S Miah was a substitute for Councillor F M Oborski MBE.

OS.32 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

OS.33 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS.34 Budget and Performance Monitoring Second Quarter 2024-25

The Committee considered a draft Cabinet report from the Head of Resources and s151 Officer, which briefed members on the Council's financial and other performance at the end of Quarter 2 ending 30 September 2024 and presented the emerging budget pressures and known variances that are likely to have an impact on the outturn position for the 2024-25 financial year.

The Head of Resources and s151 Officer presented the budget section of the report and then the Head of Revenues, Benefits & Customer Services presented the measures around performance aspects of the report. The Committee fully

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scrutinised the report and members were given the opportunity to ask questions. The Head of Resources and s151 Officer, Head of Revenues, Benefits & Customer Services, the Head of Strategic Growth and the Head of Community and Environment were able to provide members with verbal responses to their questions and comments. Councillor H Dyke commented that certain key activities noted on page 40 of the agenda were actually civic duties.

Councillor L Whitehouse (observing remotely) left the meeting at 6.10pm.

Councillor K Gale left the meeting at 6.22pm

Councillor K Gale returned to the meeting at 6.24pm

Councillor M Hart left the meeting at 6.25pm

Councillor M Hart returned to the meeting at 6.31pm

Recommendation: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the information in the report and recommend to Cabinet to NOTE:

- 1.1 The projected budget variations, virements and comments within the report and appendices 1 to 5.**
- 1.2 The performance against measures and actions as set out in the report and appendix 6.**

OS.35 Council Tax Reduction Scheme Review 2025-26

The Committee considered a draft Cabinet report from the Head of Revenues, Benefits & Customer Services that discharges the requirement to consider, for each financial year, whether to revise the scheme or to replace it with another scheme.

The Head of Revenues, Benefits & Customer Services presented the report, the Committee fully scrutinised the report and members were invited to ask questions but there were none.

Recommendation: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the information in the report and recommend to Cabinet to DECIDE:

- No changes should be proposed to the council tax reduction scheme for 2025-26.**

OS.36 Fleet & Garage Service Review

The Committee considered a draft Cabinet report from the Head of Community & Environment that sought approval to secure a more resilient delivery model for the council's fleet and garage function via an external procurement exercise and to seek authority to tender for the services required together with the outlined evaluation criteria.

Councillor T Onslow left the meeting at 6.41pm

Councillor T Onslow returned to the meeting at 6.43pm

The Head of Community & Environment presented the report, and the Committee discussed it, being given the opportunity to ask questions. The Head of Community & Environment provided verbal responses.

Recommendation: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the information in the report and recommend to Cabinet to:

- 1.1 AGREE to the procurement of an external service supplier, or suppliers, for the future delivery of the council's fleet and garage functions and to APPROVE the evaluation criteria in Appendix 1 of the report. Any predicted service commencements would be Spring 2025.**
- 1.2 DELEGATE authority to award one or more contracts to the Head of Community and Environment, in consultation with the Head of Resources and S.151 Officer, Solicitor to the Council and the Cabinet member for Operational Services, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Leader of the Council.**

OS.37 Wyre Forest District Council Air Quality Action Plan

The Committee considered a draft of a Cabinet report from the Head of Strategic Growth that presented the draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for the council's two air quality management areas.

Councillor D Ross left the meeting at 6.57pm

Councillor B Brookes left the meeting at 6.59pm

Councillor M Hart left the meeting at 7.00pm

The Principal Officer (WRS Technical Pollution) presented the report, which the Committee discussed, and the Principal Officer (WRS Technical Pollution) and Specialist Lead Officer (Air Quality) were able to provide members with verbal responses to their questions and comments.

Councillor K Gale left the meeting at 7.16pm

Councillor K Gale returned to the meeting at 7.22pm

Councillor M McDonnell left the meeting at 7.25pm

Councillor M McDonnell returned to the meeting at 7.27pm

Recommendation: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the information in the report and recommend to Cabinet to:

- 2.1 APPROVE the draft air quality action plan AND**
- 2.2 CONSULT on the plan for a period of two months from the 18 November 2024 – 12 January 2025.**

Councillor T Onslow left the meeting at 7.33pm

OS.38 Gilgal Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The Committee considered a draft of a Cabinet report from the Head of Strategic Growth that presented the Draft Gilgal Conservation Area Character Appraisal and agree that it be consulted upon for a period of four weeks.

The Conservation Officer presented the report, which the Committee discussed, and the Conservation Officer provided members with verbal responses to their questions and comments.

Recommendation: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the information in the report and recommend to Cabinet to:

2.1 APPROVE the draft Gilgal Conservation Area Character Appraisal AND

2.2 AGREE to a 4-week consultation on the SPD to take place from the 18 November and 16 December 2024 AND

2.3 AGREE the report comes back to Cabinet by spring 2025 for approval.

OS.39 Major capital projects update

The Committee received a briefing note, which provided a brief update on the main capital projects.

The Deputy Chief Executive: Regeneration and Commercial presented the report and invited members to ask questions, to which he provided verbal responses.

Agreed: The report be NOTED.

OS.40 Scrutiny review - interim update

The Committee received a briefing note, which provided an overview of the Scrutiny Review Process and Upcoming Actions.

The Head of Revenues, Benefits & Customer Services explained that, in the absence of the Corporate Policy and Performance Officer, the Committee is asked to note the interim report and the results will be presented at the meeting in December.

Agreed: The report be NOTED.

OS.41 Potential topics for the scrutiny review

Councillor H Dyke explained that feedback results will be provided in December.

OS.42 Work Programme

The published Work Programme 2024-25 for the municipal year was reviewed by

Agenda Item No. 4

the committee, and the items for the December, January and February meetings were noted. It was commented that there were a lot of items on this month's agenda and, if possible, please could items be spread more evenly between the meetings.

OS.43 Press Involvement

There were no further items for scrutiny that might require publicity.

Councillor N Gale left the meeting at 7.48pm

OS.44 Exempt Information

Decision: Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in paragraphs 2, 6 and 7 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Councillor N Gale returned to the meeting at 7.50pm

OS.45 Capital portfolio fund update – Jones Valerio Ltd

The Committee received an Investment and Portfolio Asset Management report update for the quarter ending 23 June 2024.

The Deputy Chief Executive: Regeneration and Commercial introduced the Property Services Manager, who will be taking over Asset Management from Jones Valerio. He then handed over to the Director from Jones Valerio, who presented the report, highlighting the key areas.

Councillors D Little and D Russell left the meeting at 8.11pm

The Committee fully scrutinised the report, was given the opportunity to ask questions and the Deputy Chief Executive: Regeneration and Commercial and the Director from Jones Valerio were able to give verbal responses and provide further clarification for members.

Agreed: The report be NOTED

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.55pm.

Report of: Ian Miller, Chief Executive

Thursday 5 December 2024

Open

**Agenda Item No. 5 – Response to consultation:
enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local
authority meetings.**

Summary

Attached is a draft of a Cabinet report from the Chief Executive on the response to the consultation on enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings, which Cabinet is expected to consider on 18 December 2024.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the report and provide recommendations to Cabinet.

Officer contact details

Name: Ian Miller

Title: Chief Executive

Contact number: 01562 732700

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
18 DECEMBER 2024**RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION: ENABLING REMOTE ATTENDANCE AND PROXY VOTING AT LOCAL AUTHORITY MEETINGS**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Marcus Hart – Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategy
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Ian Miller, Chief Executive 01562 732700 ian.miller@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1: Response for approval

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to agree a response to the consultation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The consultation closes on 19 December.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Cabinet is invited to **APPROVE** the response in Appendix 1.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Local Government Act 1972 governs procedures at local authority meetings. Unsurprisingly for legislation that is over 50 years old, it did not cater for technological advances or changing attitudes to inclusivity that have occurred since then. The 1972 Act requires that any voting member of a committee or of full Council has to be physically present in the meeting and to cast his or her vote in person. During the COVID pandemic, the Coronavirus Act 2020 provided for councils to hold meetings using remote meeting technology: this successfully operated in Wyre Forest District Council from April 2020 to July 2021. The legislation expired in December 2022.
- 3.2 The previous Government issued a call for evidence about remote and hybrid meetings between March and June 2021 but took no action, until making clear during the passage of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 that it did not support the case for change. The House of Lords passed an amendment to permit remote attendance at meetings, but this was overturned in the House of Commons, the then Minister stating “It is the Government’s view that face-to-face democracy should remain in place and that physical attendance at meetings is important, not just to build strong working relationships, but to deliver good governance and democratic accountability. It is clearly right that councillors are regularly and routinely meeting other councillors in person and that members of the public can ask questions in

person.” (Hansard, 17 October 2023, column 231) The Cabinet broadly endorses these comments.

- 3.3 WFDC has continued to use remote meeting technology to allow members who are not voting members of a committee to attend and, if called by the chair, to contribute. This facility is available at meetings of the Cabinet, Audit Committee, Planning Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The facility also allows remote participation by officers and by others, such as the Council’s auditors. Legislation does not govern or require the physical presence of anyone other than voting members at a meeting.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The response supports the need for change in the legislation in respect of remote attendance, so that councils are equipped with powers to permit and can take decisions locally about the circumstances in which remote attendance is available, rather than being prevented from doing so by outdated legislation.
- 4.2 The response calls for the simplest and widest approach in legislation, if the Government decides to bring forward legislation: councils should be equipped with the ability to permit remote attendance at their meetings to the extent and in such circumstances as each council wishes to decide. There is no need for complicated regulations or statutory guidance. In line with the Government’s support for devolution, it should be a matter for each council to decide to what extent it allows remote participation, having regard to its own circumstances and business needs as well as its duties under the Equality Act. In line with other constitutional matters such as adoption of standing orders, the arrangements for WFDC would fall to full Council to decide in due course and they are not the focus of the response or this report.
- 4.3 In respect of proxy voting, WFDC operates substitution arrangements for all of its committees (other than Cabinet) under which a member of the same political group may attend and vote in place of the ordinary member of the committee. There are also requirements, where relevant, that the substitute member has undertaken recent training such as on planning. No substitution arrangements are possible for full Council. The response expresses concern about the Government’s suggestion of introduction of proxy voting. It is not something that local government has sought (unlike powers to permit remote attendance), although it is recognised that the House of Commons has operated proxy voting arrangements since 2020. There are particular concerns about how proxy voting could operate in councils in a way that avoided pre-determination: decisions taken by the House of Commons rarely relate to the rights and liabilities of specific individuals or businesses in the same way as councils have to take regulatory decisions in respect of planning and licensing. In the latter cases, members have to take part in a meeting with an open mind and take account of all the points raised in a debate before taking a decision. Thus, a member exercising a proxy vote on behalf of another member could not legitimately be instructed how to cast the proxy vote in advance and should decide how it is used only in the meeting. This would leave the impression, if not the reality, that the member would have two votes on the issue in question, whereas other members in the meeting would have only one.

- 4.4 The response does not call for change but, if the Government decides to proceed, then in line with local decision making, the legislation should be permissive and leave councils to decide the extent and circumstances in which they consider it appropriate to allow proxy voting. However, it is essential that, if legislation introduces such a facility, the proxy vote should be exercised only by another member of the council and that that member should be present throughout the debate on the matter where the proxy vote is to be used. It would represent a fundamental weakening of good governance - and would expose a council to greater risk of legal challenge - if someone who had not been present throughout the debate concerned was able to vote on that matter; or if a member was able to cast a proxy vote in advance without listening to such a debate. That is particularly the case for regulatory decisions. A proxy vote should be cast only by another member of a council so that the person casting the proxy vote is subject to the code of conduct for elected members, which among other things imposes a requirement to disclose relevant interests. Finally, proxy votes should not be permitted for decisions on budget calculations and setting council tax because of the conflict with extant legal provisions that bar a member who is more than two months in arrears from voting on such decisions. As with remote participation, if the Government proceeds with change any legislation should be kept simple and leave discretion to councils on the circumstances in which proxy votes might be used, subject to the important safeguards about governance that are suggested in this paragraph.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The response has been prepared within existing resources. If the Government brings forward legislation to permit remote attendance and/or proxy voting, no significant additional costs are forecast. The Council already has the technology in place that permits remote attendance.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Part V of and Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972 are the main provisions that govern procedures at council meetings. The response is being provided under the Council's generic powers, including section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 and section 111 of the 1972 Act.

7. IMPACT AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- 7.1 No impacts arise from responding to the consultation. If the Government legislates for change, any decision by WFDC on how to exercise discretions would require an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that the needs of those with protected characteristics are addressed. There are no expected impacts on health or climate change.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 No risks have been identified in responding to the consultation.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The Cabinet is invited to approve the response in Appendix 1.

10. CONSULTEES

10.1 Leader of the Council

10.2 CLT

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 MHCLG consultation paper, 24 October 2024 [Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings - GOV.UK](#)

11.2 Part V of and Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972

11.3 Proxy voting arrangements in the House of Commons (October 2024)
[Proxy voting in divisions in the House - House of Commons Library](#)

Appendix 1 – response to the consultation document

Wyre Forest District Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

The Council operates arrangements that maximise the opportunity for members to take part in meetings but supports the case for change to allow more flexibility for remote attendance.

WFDC has continued to use remote meeting technology to allow members who are not voting members of a committee to attend and, if called by the chair, to contribute. This facility is available at meetings of the Cabinet and a range of other committees.

WFDC operates substitution arrangements for all of its committees (other than Cabinet) under which a member of the same political group may attend and vote in place of the ordinary member of the committee. There are also requirements, where relevant, that the substitute member has undertaken recent training such as in respect of planning.

Questions 2 to 9

WFDC supports the need for change in the legislation in respect of remote attendance, so that councils are equipped with powers to permit and can take decisions locally about the circumstances in which remote attendance is available, rather than being prevented from doing so by outdated legislation that is over 50 years old.

We urge the Government to adopt the simplest and widest approach in legislation. Each council should be equipped with the ability to permit remote attendance at its meetings to the extent and in such circumstances as it wishes to decide. There is no need for complicated regulations or statutory guidance. In line with the Government's support for devolution, it should be a matter for each council to decide to what extent it allows remote participation, having regard to its own circumstances and business needs as well as its duties under the Equality Act.

Questions 10 to 13

WFDC expresses concern about the Government's suggestion of introduction of proxy voting. It is not something that local government has sought (unlike powers to permit remote attendance), although it is recognised that the House of Commons has operated proxy voting arrangements since 2020. There are particular concerns about how proxy voting could operate in councils in a way that avoided pre-determination: decisions taken by the House of Commons rarely relate to the rights and liabilities of specific individuals or businesses in the same way as councils have to take regulatory decisions in respect of planning and licensing. In the latter cases, members have to take part in a meeting with an open mind and take account of all the points raised in a debate before taking a decision. This means that a member exercising a proxy vote on behalf of another member could not legitimately be instructed how to cast the proxy vote in advance and instead should decide how it is used only in the meeting. It would leave the impression, if not the reality, that the member would have two votes on the issue in question, whereas other members in the meeting would have only one.

If the Government decides to proceed with change despite the concerns that we have about the need for it, in line with local decision making, the legislation should be permissive and leave councils to decide the extent and circumstances in which they consider it appropriate to allow proxy voting.

However, in this case, we believe it is essential that, if legislation introduces such a facility some constraints should be imposed centrally through the legislation:

- 1) the proxy vote should be exercised only by another member of the council. This ensures that the person casting the proxy vote is subject to the code of conduct for elected members, which among other things imposes a requirement to disclose relevant interests;
- 2) the member who is to cast the proxy vote should be present throughout the debate on the matter where the proxy vote is to be used;
- 3) a proxy vote should not be available for a vote on budget calculations and setting council tax etc. This is because of the prohibition on voting in section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 where a member is more than two months in arrears. Contravention of the prohibition is a criminal offence, yet a member casting a proxy vote on behalf of another member will not have and should not have to have knowledge of that member's council tax affairs. To avoid any conflict between data protection requirements and the correct operation of section 106, the simplest approach would be that a proxy vote should not be available for any of the matters mentioned in section 106.

It would represent a fundamental weakening of good governance and would expose a council to greater risk of legal challenge if someone who had not been present throughout the debate concerned was able to vote on that matter; or if a member was able to cast a proxy vote in advance without listening to such a debate. That is particularly the case for regulatory decisions.

If the Government proceeds with change, any legislation should be kept simple and leave discretion to councils on the circumstances in which proxy votes might be used, subject to the important safeguards about governance that are suggested above.

Report of: Kate Bailey, Head of Strategic Growth

Thursday 5 December 2024

Open

Agenda Item No. 6 – Cost of Living Action Plan Update

Summary

Attached is a draft of a Cabinet report from the Head of Strategic Growth which provides an update on actions carried out in 2024 to progress delivery of the Cost of Living Action Plan 2024-25, which Cabinet is expected to consider on 18 December 2024.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the report and provide recommendations to Cabinet.

Officer contact details

Name: Jennifer Moreton

Title: Principal Health and Sustainability Officer

Contact number: 01562 732569

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
18th December 2024**Cost of Living Action Plan Update**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Chris Rogers Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing.
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Kate Bailey Head of Strategic Growth
CONTACT OFFICER:	Jennifer Moreton ext 2569 Principal Health and Sustainability Officer
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1: Cost of Living Action Plan Delivery 2024 Appendix 2: Cost of Living Action Plan 2025

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides Members with an update on actions carried out in 2024 to progress delivery of the Cost of Living Action Plan 2024-25

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is invited to:

2.1 Note the update on delivery of the Cost-of-Living Action Plan in 2024

AND

2.2 Approve the Cost of Living Plan for 2025

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 21st September 2022, Council decided an Emergency Summit should be held to explore how more local help can be provided for those struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. The summit was held on 13th October 2022 and the first Cost-of-Living Action Plan was then developed and endorsed by Cabinet. Since then, several more cost of living summits have been held at Wyre Forest House and attended by a wide range of organisations from across the district, such as local authorities, Community Housing, Police, Food Banks, Citizens Advice, Age UK, church and community groups, Barnardo's, health and social care organisations. These events provide the opportunity to share information on specific topics (e.g. Warm Spaces, Household Support Fund, Sustainable Warmth) as well as the chance for all organisations attending to update on the issues affecting them and the services they provide. They also help with identifying ways of working together to tackle cost

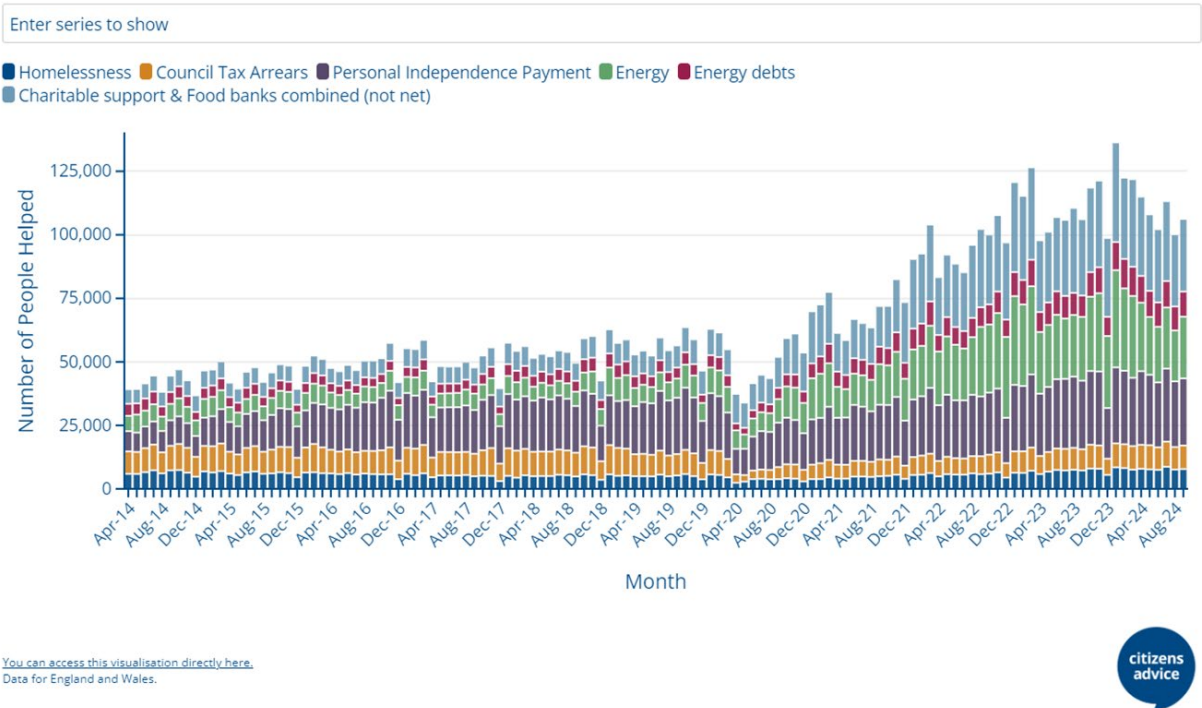
of living issues. A WFDC group with officers from Customer Services, Revenues and Benefits, Media and Strategic Growth also meets regularly to discuss council specific action on delivering this work.

- 3.2 Since the original summit there have been three further summits. These present an ideal opportunity to bring together partners to share information, advice and encourage collaboration across those organisations working in the District.
- 3.3 An updated action plan, covering the period from 1 January 2024 until 31 December 2025, was endorsed by Cabinet on 20 December 2023. This report provides an update on delivery of the action plan in 2024 and the plan is included in Appendix One. In Appendix Two is a slightly revised action plan to complete during 2025 until 31 December 2025.

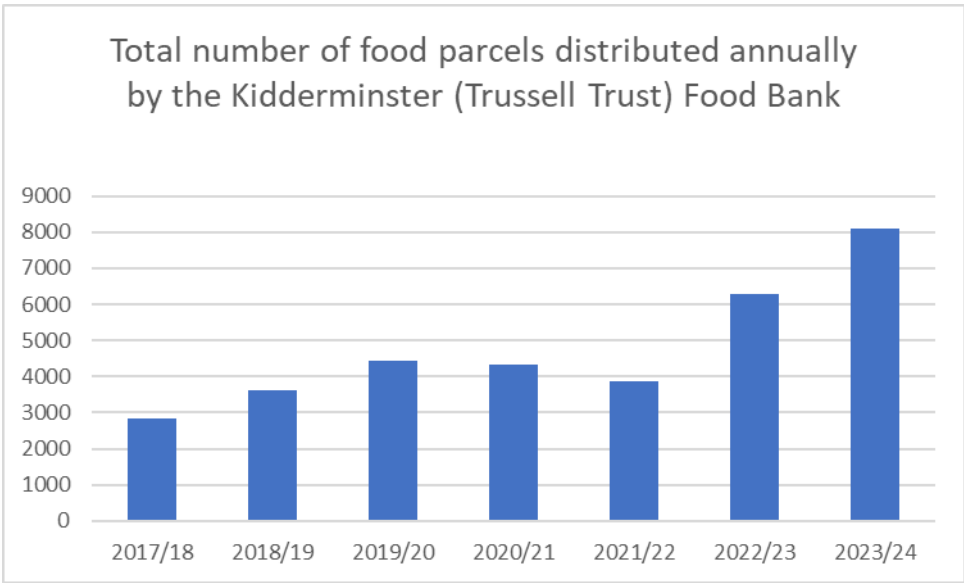
4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The cost of living, particularly food and energy costs, have risen markedly over recent years, partly in response to the conflict in Ukraine, with global recovery from the pandemic putting further pressure on prices.
- 4.2 Nationally and locally, Citizens Advice are one of the organisations people struggling with cost of living issues may turn to. Citizens Advice data insights (see [CA cost-of-living data dashboard | Flourish](#)) show that increasing numbers of people who are employed (whether self-employed, part time or full time) are in a negative budget, meaning their income isn't enough to cover their most essential costs. Overall this is the case for more than half of the people they help with debt advice. In January 2024, the number of people helped by Citizens Advice had reached record levels. These numbers reduced over the course of 2024 but are still at historically high levels. They are also seeing some groups impacted much more than others, such as those who are living with a disability or long term health condition. The graphic below shows the trends of key cost of living issues, affecting those seeking help from Citizens Advice nationally, since 2014.

Trends of key cost-of-living issues since 2014



4.3 Food banks locally and nationally have seen increased demand over recent years. The Trussell Trust report that their UK network (which includes the Kidderminster Foodbank) distributed more than 3.1 million emergency food parcels between April 2023 and March 2024, with 655,000 people using a food bank for the first time in that period. There are two main food banks serving the Wyre Forest district. The graph below shows the total number of food parcels distributed by the Trussell Trust’s Kidderminster food bank over recent years.



4.4 The independent Wyre Forest Food Bank, operating from Franche Community Church, also supplies food support to vulnerable families in the Wyre Forest area. They report that they have a constant stream of referrals from a variety of agencies (including WFDC, Citizen’s Advice and Home-Start) and the reason support is

needed is often the cost of living and being unable to buy food. They too have been impacted by price increases, with the cost of a typical food parcel rising by about 15% in the last 1-2 years.

- 4.5 In addition, the number of children in Wyre Forest, from Reception to Year 11, claiming Free School Meals, has increased in recent years:

School Census Date	Number of FSM Claimants in Wyre Forest
May 2021	2887
May 2022	3106
May 2023	3125
May 2024	3289

- 4.6 The Cost-of-Living action plan seeks to help address these issues locally through:

4.6.1 **Raising Awareness**

One issue in the Cost-of-Living crisis is that people may be unaware of the help that exists. A key part of the Council's ongoing work is to raise awareness about the support available both from the district council and our partner organisations in the public, voluntary and community sectors. Resources have been produced to support this and officers have carried out much outreach work to engage with people in a wide range of community venues including school and church settings.

4.6.2 **Partnership working through the Cost-of-Living Summit**

The Cost-of-Living Summits have shown how keen organisations are to work together to signpost and spread awareness of organisations and their services that could be useful. The summits have helped identify ways of working together as well as promoting the different sources of support available. The most recent summit was held on the 1 October and attended by 35 people from a variety of organisations.

4.6.3 **Energy and Food**

One of the major causes of the Cost-of-Living crisis is the increase of energy prices. Worcestershire has higher proportion of households living in fuel poverty than the national average, with particularly high proportions in Wyre Forest, Malvern Hill and Worcester. Recent increases in energy prices are very likely to exacerbate this for the most vulnerable families. The UK government's definition for fuel poverty in England uses the Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) indicator. Under this indicator, a household is considered to be fuel poor if:

It is living in a property with a fuel poverty energy efficiency rating of band D or below, and when they spend the required amount to heat their home, they are left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

Data using this definition is provided by government at Local Authority level, albeit with a two year time lag. The table below shows the latest data for Wyre Forest:

Year	Wyre Forest households in fuel poverty (%)
2019	15.5%
2020	15.7%
2021	16.5%

2022	18.0%
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District Council teams worked with organisations such as Act on Energy (our commissioned energy advice service), the Private Sector Housing team and local food banks to help people with energy costs, grants for energy efficiency improvements and food provision.

4.4.4 Warm Welcome Spaces

Warm Spaces were set up in winter 2023-24 to provide spaces in the community where people could keep warm but also meet other people, take part in activities and access information and advice. Many attendees reported that the warm spaces had helped them with their mental wellbeing over the colder months.

4.4.5 Financial Assistance

The Council currently provides a range of financial assistance to households including Discretionary Housing Payments, Council Tax Reduction Scheme, Housing Benefit, Welfare Assistance to help with food, utilities and furniture and help with rent bonds/deposits. Through the Private Sector Housing team, Health and Sustainability Team and Act on Energy there are also grants and loans available to improve the energy efficiency / thermal comfort within people's homes. Further help has also been made available to households through the distribution of the Household Support Fund.

- 4.5** New actions planned for 2025 include a continuation of the Warm Welcome Spaces scheme in 2024-25 and small grants are again being provided, utilising the Household Support Fund, to support the voluntary and community organisations with the costs of running these. The Council will continue to support households through grants for energy efficiency, advice and support from Council Officers, Act On Energy, CAB and other partners and ongoing raising of awareness of support. Please see appendix two for the action plan for 2025.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The costs of delivering the plan mostly relate to staff time and will be met through existing budgets. There is also external grant funding available to the council through external grants such as the Household Support Fund, the Home Upgrade Grant and Discretionary Housing Payments and this funding will be utilised to support the plan.
- 5.2** Whilst the HSF has been extended for the whole of 2025-26 there is no guarantee that it will continue beyond March 2026 and if it does not continue, 2025-26 will be the last year that WFDC can afford to sustain the range of initiatives at the current level.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The council can support residents through welfare schemes and in other ways under a variety of powers including under general powers in section one of the Localism Act 2011, section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

- 6.2** The development and delivery of the action plan support the Council in its Corporate Plan priorities “Economic Growth and Regeneration” and “A clean, safe and green place to live, work and visit”.

7. IMPACT AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

7.1 Equality Impact Assessment

An equality impact screening assessment has been undertaken and no negative impacts identified. The plan includes actions aiming to help overcome barriers to people accessing support e.g., due to a language barrier, transport poverty or digital exclusion. The plan also includes schemes to support people most impacted by deprivation and health inequalities, such as support schemes for food and energy/keeping warm.

7.2 Climate Change Impact

This action plan has a positive impact on climate change through actions within the action plan that support carbon reduction including grants to make properties more energy efficient and reducing food waste and other sustainability initiatives through the Green Alliance.

7.3 Health and Wellbeing Impact

This action plan has a positive impact on health and wellbeing through working with individuals to maximise income and reduce debt which has a positive impact on mental health and stress levels. Access to free warm spaces benefits all but particularly those suffering from loneliness and isolation or respiratory conditions. Access to free or affordable healthy food also improves health and wellbeing within the community.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1** Helping households to access financial assistance and maximise their income will support the council’s wider ambitions around economic growth and helping the health and wellbeing of the residents of Wyre Forest.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1** The cost of living continues to affect many households in the District to varying degrees. The Council has responded by developing and delivering a Cost of Living action plan to support the those in the greatest need within the community, based on a series of summits attended by a wide range of partner organisations.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1** CLT

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1** Not applicable

Appendix 1 WFDC Cost of Living Action Plan Update 2024

Awareness and Training	Who?	Activity carried out in 2024
<p>Ongoing awareness raising about Cost of Living support available through various communication channels, including using the WFDC website, social media channels, newsletters, fliers etc.</p>	<p>Media team Health & Sustainability Partner organisations</p>	<p>WFDC have published various news items through its communications channels on topics including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm Welcome Spaces • Disabled Facilities Grants • Cost of Living tips • Home Upgrade Grants • Repair Cafes • Council Tax Reduction Scheme • Food waste reduction and food action week • Community fridge set up in Birchen Coppice • Free 1 hour parking <p>Cost of Living is a standing agenda items at the monthly Wyre Forest Collaborative meetings and partner organisations have been encouraged to share cost of living information through their own communications channels.</p> <p>Information about support is shared between local organisations attending the cost of living summits, with the most recent one held on 1 October 2024.</p>
<p>Outreach work to promote the support available by attendance at events and venues throughout the district (e.g. at community buildings, schools, libraries).</p>	<p>Financial Inclusion Team Health and Sustainability Partner organisations</p>	<p>WFDC Financial Inclusion team have attended a range of events and venues throughout the year, including school and church settings, Warm Welcome Spaces and the Showcase of Services events for those aged 50+. WFDC Community Builders have established good contacts with schools in their areas and have been able to promote support available.</p> <p>Health and Sustainability also arranged for partner organisations (e.g. Act on Energy, Citizens Advice) to also attend these venues events as relevant.</p>

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Awareness raising for WFDC staff about cost of living support available as part of the employee health and wellbeing programme e.g. through the Financial Awareness Week.	Human Resources Health and Wellbeing staff group.	Various articles about available support have been included in Wyred Weekly and in the staff Health and Wellbeing updates. Financial Inclusion staff were also on hand to offer advice at the staff health fairs held in 2024.
Training and updates for frontline staff on support available and how to make referrals.	Financial Inclusion team Act on Energy	Act on Energy have held online training sessions in 2024 for front line staff and volunteers re fuel poverty and the schemes to support people. Internal training is carried out for new Customer Support Officers at the Hub.
Hosting Cost of Living forum summits for organisations to come together and network to encourage partnership working and as a useful way of keeping current on new themes and problems and how to tackle them with organisations.	Internal Cost of Living action group.	The most recent Cost of Living summit was held at Wyre Forest House on 1 October 2024 and was attended by 35 people from organisations including local authorities, housing associations, health sector, food banks and voluntary and community organisations. Updates were provided on the current cost of living picture in Wyre Forest and the support available. Recognising the impact that cost of living issues are having on mental health and wellbeing, a session was also held on Orange Button suicide prevention scheme, run by Worcestershire Public Health.
Energy and food.	Who?	Activity carried out in 2024
Utilising the Household Support Fund-distribution of district allocation to help households with costs of energy, water, food and other essentials.	Health & Sustainability Financial Inclusion team Housing Advice Team Partner organisations from the Health, Voluntary and Community sectors.	The Household Support Fund (HSF) has been made available to councils, by the Department of Work and Pensions, to support households in the most need. It is being used to help families with children, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers, and people with disabilities who would otherwise struggle with the costs of energy, food, water and other essentials. The HSF is delivered in Worcestershire through several county-wide schemes, via Act on Energy, the Worcestershire Advice Network and a school holiday food voucher scheme. An allocation is also made to district councils for local delivery through community based organisations. Through this district allocation, the HSF scheme for the 6 month period to 30 Sept 2024, saw 2426 households provided with a total of £172k of HSF support.
Local promotion of support available via county wide schemes e.g. through Household Support Fund and Holiday Activities and Food fund.	Health & Sustainability Media	Ongoing promotion to schools via Worcestershire County Council about support available through: Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme Worcestershire County Council

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Working on reducing carbon footprint and food wastage and promotion of community sustainability initiatives e.g. Repair Cafes.	WFDC Wyre Forest Green Alliance.	Working with Wyre Forest Green Alliance (WFGA) to promote education on how to reduce carbon footprint and increasing energy saving in households. Activities have included promotion of the monthly repair cafes in Bewdley and Kidderminster, promotion of relevant council initiatives through the WFGA newsletter, participation in Greener Living fairs organised by the WFGA as well as the annual SustFest Wyre Forest fortnight of events and activities throughout the district.
Signposting to Act on Energy and supporting their work on reducing energy inefficiency and fuel poverty	Act on Energy H&S	Ongoing cost of living communications includes promotion of energy efficiency and fuel bill support through Act on Energy. In 2023/24, Act on Energy received 1168 calls to their helpline from Wyre Forest residents. Their outreach advisors also carried out 21 home visits in Wyre Forest to provide more in depth support to these residents. Support is provided through information and advice, referrals for grants for energy efficiency schemes and through the HSF.
Grants /loans for energy efficiency improvements (insulation, heating improvements, solar panels); subject to eligibility criteria.	Private Sector Housing Team/ Act on Energy	
Support community partner organisations in increasing local food support, by helping them set up a community fridge.	Health and Sustainability	WFDC Community Builder assisted in purchase and set up of community fridge at St Peter's Church, Birchen Coppice.
Warm Welcome Spaces	Who?	Activity carried out in 2024
Setting up Warm Spaces in the local area accessible to all individuals and promoting these through WFDC communication channels.	Health and Sustainability Media	In 2023-24, 18 organisations utilised WFDC grant funding to assist with running Warm Welcome Spaces at venues including Tulip Centre, Stourport Civic, Rose Theatre, Burlish Bike Park and various village hall and church settings. The venues offer a variety of activities such as crafts and board games, as well as warm refreshments and advice available on cost of living issues. These were promoted at www.wyreforesdc.gov.uk/warmspaces
Promoting the Warm Spaces grant provided by WFDC. This helps organisations with costs of Warm Spaces	Health and Sustainability	See above. Warm Welcome Spaces are being set up for 2024/25, with grant funding from the HSF currently being awarded to 20 successful applicant organisations.

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Co-ordination of provision of cost of living / health and wellbeing support from WFDC and partner organisations at the Warm Welcome Spaces	Health and Sustainability	Provide via WFDC Community Builders and Financial Inclusion, Act on Energy, Your Health Vans and Citizens Advice.
Financial assistance	Who?	Activity carried out in 2024
Ensure take up of benefits and other forms of income and assistance (e.g. Council Tax Reduction Scheme) are maximised	Financial Inclusion Officers	Ongoing work by Financial Inclusion
Promote support for homeowners facing mortgage arrears.	Strategy & Enabling Team	https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/mortgageadvice

Appendix Two WFDC Cost of Living 2025 Action Plan

Awareness and Training	Who?	Expected Outcomes/ Timescale	Resources required	Notes/ Further Info
Ongoing awareness raising about Cost of Living support available through various communication channels, including using the WFDC website, social media channels, newsletters, fliers etc.	Media team Health & Sustainability Partner organisations	Ongoing throughout 2025	Officer time	Partner organisations encouraged to share this information through their own communications channels.
Outreach work to promote the support available by attendance at events and venues throughout the district (e.g. at community buildings, schools, libraries).	Financial Inclusion Team Health and Sustainability Partner organisations	Ongoing throughout 2025	Officer time	Health and Sustainability to also arrange for partner organisations (e.g. Act on Energy, Citizens Advice) to also attend events as relevant.
Awareness raising for WFDC staff about cost of living support available as part of the employee health and wellbeing programme.	Human Resources Health and Wellbeing staff group.	Ongoing throughout 2025	Officer time.	
Training and updates for frontline staff on support available and how to make referrals.	Financial Inclusion team Act on Energy	By the end of financial year	Officer time As part of existing SLA with Act on Energy.	
Hosting Cost of Living forum summits for organisations to come together and network to encourage partnership working and as a useful way of keeping current on new themes and problems and how to tackle them with organisations.	Internal Cost of Living action group.	March and October 2025	Officer time Small refreshment budget	

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Energy and food.	Who?	Timescale	Resources	Notes/ Further Info
Utilising the Household Support Fund-distribution of district allocation to help households with costs of energy, water, food and other essentials.	Health & Sustainability Financial Inclusion team Housing Advice Team Partner organisations from the Health, Voluntary and Community sectors.	HSF6 runs until 31 March 2025 Funding for HSF in 2025/26 was announced as part of the budget in October.	Household Support Fund	
Local promotion of support available via county wide schemes e.g. through Household Support Fund and Holiday Activities and Food fund.	Health & Sustainability Media	Ongoing	Officer time	
Working on reducing carbon footprint and food wastage and promotion of community sustainability initiatives e.g. Repair Cafes, community fridge.	WFDC Wyre Forest Green Alliance.	By December 2025	Officer time	Working with Wyre Forest Green Alliance to promote education on how to reduce carbon footprint and increasing energy saving in households.
Signposting to Act on Energy and supporting their work on reducing energy inefficiency and fuel poverty	Act on Energy H&S	Ongoing.	Officer time Existing SLA with Act on Energy	
Grants /loans for energy efficiency improvements (insulation, heating improvements, solar panels); subject to eligibility criteria.	Private Sector Housing Team/ Act on Energy	Ongoing	Better Care Fund Home Upgrade Grant ECO funding Warm Homes Local Grant	
Warm Welcome Spaces	Who?	Timescale	Resources	Notes/ Further Info
Setting up Warm Spaces in the local area accessible to all individuals and promoting these through WFDC communication channels.	Health and Sustainability Media	Winter 2024/25	Grant funding to support provision via health funding.	

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Promoting the Warm Spaces grant provided by WFDC. This helps organisations with costs of Warm Spaces up to £500	Health and Sustainability	Winter 2024/5	Grant funding to support provision via health funding..	
Co-ordination of provision of cost of living / health and wellbeing support from WFDC and partner organisations at the Warm Welcome Spaces	Health and Sustainability	Winter 2024/5	Officer time	
Financial assistance	Who?	Timescale	Resources	Notes/ Further Info
Ensure take up of benefits and other forms of income and assistance (e.g. Council Tax Reduction Scheme) are maximised	Financial Inclusion Officers	Ongoing	Officer time	
Promote support for homeowners facing mortgage arrears.	Strategy and Enabling Team	Ongoing	Officer time	https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/mortgageadvice

Report of: Kate Bailey, Head of Strategic Growth

Thursday 5 December 2024

Open

Agenda Item No. 7 – Wyre Forest Health Action Plan Update

Summary

Attached is a draft of a Cabinet report from the Head of Strategic Growth which provides an update on action to improve health and wellbeing and tackle health inequalities in Wyre Forest, which Cabinet is expected to consider on 18 December 2024.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the report and provide recommendations to Cabinet.

Officer contact details

Name: Jennifer Moreton

Title: Principal Health and Sustainability Officer

Contact number: 01562 732569

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
18 December 2024**Wyre Forest Health Action Plan Update**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Chris Rogers Cabinet Member for Housing, Health & Wellbeing.
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Kate Bailey Head of Strategic Growth
CONTACT OFFICER:	Jenny Moreton Principal Health and Sustainability Officer
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1: Wyre Forest Health Action Plan 2024 Update Appendix: Wyre Forest Health Action Plan 2025

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides Members with an update on action to improve health and wellbeing and tackle health inequalities in Wyre Forest. It includes an update on the delivery of the Wyre Forest Health Action Plan in 2024 and an updated Wyre Forest Health Action Plan 2025 for endorsement.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is invited to:

- 2.1 Note the update on delivery of the Health Action Plan in 2024 AND
- 2.2 Approve the Wyre Forest Health Action Plan 2025.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board oversees local health commissioning and leads on the strategic planning and co-ordination of local health services. The Health and Wellbeing Board is required to develop a strategy for improving the health and wellbeing of people who live and work in Worcestershire. The 'Being Well in Worcestershire' Strategy covers the period 2022-2032. This outlines commitments to improving mental health and wellbeing, supporting people to live well in good health for as long as possible, particularly those who have poorer health outcomes. The Board champions collective action to ensure children have the best start in life, young people will have hope and aspiration for the future, and residents live longer, more independent lives in good health, with fewer people going on to need care and support, which is vital to

supporting good mental health and wellbeing. The 'Being Well Strategic Group' subgroup has been delegated the responsibility to develop detailed action plans to deliver the strategy.

- 3.2 District Collaboratives have been set up in Worcestershire to bring together organisations to work together collaboratively to deliver the Being Well in Worcestershire Strategy, to tackle health and wellbeing issues and address need in the local area. The Wyre Forest Collaborative was established in September 2021 and aims to take a joined-up approach in identifying need, addressing the wider determinants of health and reducing health inequalities through targeted and proactive care and support. As well as Wyre Forest District Council, the Collaborative partners include organisations such as Worcestershire Public Health, the two Primary Care Networks (Wyre Forest Health Partnership and the Wyre Forest Network of Independent Practices), West Mercia Police, Onside Advocacy and Age UK.
- 3.3 Within the District Council, delivery of this work is primarily carried out by the Health and Sustainability team in Strategic Growth, which includes until March 2025 the Wyre Forest Collaborative Project Officer, funded by Worcestershire Public Health.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Wyre Forest Collaborative has looked at population health data. A huge amount of data and information is available at district, ward and local super-output area level on the [Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Insights Website](#). In Wyre Forest there are various conditions with noticeably higher prevalence in patients compared to the national average, such as depression, hypertension, obesity, diabetes and asthma. These, along with common themes and pressures amongst the collaborative partner organisations, have informed the Collaborative's priorities which are outlined in the table below. The Wyre Forest District Council Health Action plan shows how the council will help to deliver on the these topics.

Theme	Topics to include:
Population Health Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and wellbeing. • Obesity (including diabetes and pre-diabetes). • Frailty.
Vulnerable Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Light approach to tackling vulnerabilities. • Drug related deaths. • Homeless health. • Domestic Abuse.
Community Connectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Based Community Development. • Taking services out to communities. • Sharing resources and information.
Best Start in Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy pregnancy. • Children's mental health.
Health Inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Disabilities. • Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Community.
Health Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing review and risk assessment.

4.2 Updates to the 2024 Plan are shown in the Appendix One. This shows the delivery against actions carried out in 2024. These include events aimed raising awareness of mental health and wellbeing, volunteering and 50+ showcase events, the family coach project which supported seventy families with healthy eating and lifestyle advice and the warmth on prescription project.

4.3 The Council have developed a new plan for 2025/26 and this includes activities around raising awareness, partnership working and physical activities (please see Appendix Two).

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The funding for the staff within the health and sustainability team are met through the base budget.

5.2 The end of Public Health funding for the Collaborative Protect Officer and the three ABCD project workers will have an impact on the scope of activities in future years.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The development and delivery of the action plan support the Council in relevant plans endorsed by the council, including the Wyre Forest Local Plan and the Worcestershire Housing Strategy.

6.2 The Council meets the wider public health policy and legislative objectives through undertaking activities that align with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy “Being Well in Worcestershire” 2022 – 2032.

7. IMPACT AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

7.1 Equality Impact Assessment - An equality impact screening assessment has been undertaken and no negative impacts identified. The plan includes actions aiming to help overcome barriers to people accessing support e.g. due to digital exclusion. The plan also includes schemes to support people most impacted by deprivation and health inequalities

7.2. Health – the plan aims to support the Council and partners work around improving the health and wellbeing of the population of Wyre Forest.

7.3 Climate Change – not applicable.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 Failure to implement measures to tackle health inequalities could have many negative implications for the council and Wyre Forest residents. This includes increased future cost/ demand on services, as well as reputational risk of failing to tackle the issue.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Wyre Forest Health Action Plan (Appendix 1) outlines actions taken by WFDC in 2024 to help improve health and wellbeing and tackle health inequalities in Wyre Forest. An new Health Action Plan for 2025 has been developed that continues work around raising awareness and working in partnership (please see Appendix 2).

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 CLT

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 [Worcestershire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032](#)

Wyre Forest Health Action Plan 2024

The current priority themes for the Wyre Forest Collaborative are:

Theme	Topics to include:
Population Health Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and wellbeing. • Obesity (including diabetes and pre-diabetes). • Frailty.
Vulnerable Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Light approach to tackling vulnerabilities. • Drug related deaths. • Homeless health. • Domestic Abuse.
Community Connectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Based Community Development. • Taking services out to communities. • Sharing resources and information.
Best Start in Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy pregnancy. • Children's mental health.
Health Inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Disabilities. • Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Community.
Health Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing review and risk assessment.

Wyre Forest District Council will support these themes through the following actions, carried out in partnership with Wyre Forest Collaborative partners:

Action	Indicator	Notes/Information	Update on delivery
Promote uptake of the Healthy Start voucher scheme.	Percentage of eligible Wyre Forest residents taking up the scheme.	Healthy Start is a Government Scheme that provides weekly vouchers to eligible pregnant women and parents of children under four. These vouchers can be spent on milk, fruit and vegetables and also includes coupons for free vitamins. See https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/	The scheme has been promoted generally via the Collaborative partners and seen more pro-active promotion by health staff, e.g. at six week checkups. Healthy start vitamins have been made more widely available. A national issue with the monitoring data means we do not have information on the

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			percentage of eligible residents taking up the scheme.
Promote Children's Mental Health Week	Activities/ communications during the Week.	Children's Mental Health Week (childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk) takes place 5-11 February 2024	Details of Children's Mental Health Week and available resources promoted to partner organisations. A mental health and wellbeing showcase event was held at Bewdley School during the awareness week.
Co-ordinate Mental Health and Wellbeing Showcase events in local High Schools	Number of events held/ number of attendees. Feedback results.	Showcase events are held in local high schools, bringing together organisations providing mental health and wellbeing support for children and young people.	Mental Health and Wellbeing Showcase event held at the Bewdley School in Feb 2024. 15 local agencies/organisations promoted their services and approx. 800 students attended throughout the day.
Promotion of local voluntary opportunities and the mental health benefits of volunteering.	Activities/ communications during Volunteering Week.	Volunteers Week takes place annually on 1-7 June. https://volunteersweek.org/	Volunteer event, organised in partnership with Unity (support into employment scheme) held at Kidderminster Library in May 2024. 20 organisations promoted their volunteering opportunities and 55 people attended. Volunteering opportunities have also been promoted at various other events, including the 50+ Showcase events. The Community Builders have also helped residents become volunteers with community organisations in their local areas.
Co-ordination of the Wyre Forest Suicide Prevention Group	Quarterly meetings held. Activities (e.g. events, training) delivered.	The Wyre Forest Suicide Prevention group supports local delivery of the Worcestershire Suicide Prevention Plan Suicide prevention and support Worcestershire County Council	Meetings have moved to bi-annual. Focus has been on specific topics including self-harm and support for higher risk groups of people. The Worcestershire Orange Button scheme and associated training have also been widely promoted. Orange Button Community Scheme Worcestershire County Council

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Promotion of mental health and wellbeing campaigns and local support available	Activities / communication of campaign messages and support.	Key campaigns include: World Suicide Prevention Day World Mental Health Day Mental Health Awareness Week Mental Health Foundation These will be promoted to WFDC staff through the Health and Wellbeing group and more widely through our external communication channels and networks.	Promotion to staff via Wyred Weekly and health bulletins, activities e.g. mindfulness sessions, walks, health fairs. Campaign promotion through Wyre Forest Collaborative and newsletters.
Support for/ promotion of the Family Coach Pilot Project.	Numbers of families supported and outcomes achieved as per pilot project monitoring.	Partnership pilot project between Onside, NHS and WFDC. Provide support for families who have one or more children who are under/overweight, families who are not able to access existing weight management services in their area, and families who may experience other inequalities. Children & Families - Family Coach :: Onside Advocacy, Worcestershire (onside-advocacy.org.uk)	c. 70 families supported through the project, which has now ended in WF. Support provided re weight management and healthy lifestyle advice (diet, exercise – under and over weight), fussy eaters, food phobias, mental health support (low self-esteem, low confidence, body image)
Support for/ promotion of postural stability pilot classes	Attendance at pilot classes and feedback received	Pilot project with classes held at to community venues.	Held at St Peters and Holy Innocents church hall venues- 25 sessions were, held with 20 regular attendees.
Support for/promotion of activities for children and young people	Attendance at/feedback from youth services commissioned by WFDC and at Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) activities.	Funding provided by Worcestershire County Council for commissioning of youth services and for HAF activities for children over the main school holidays: HAF Worcestershire (haf-it.co.uk)	Youth Services commissioned through Kidderminster District Youth Trust, Bewdley School and Stourport Youth Direxions. Average of 634 monthly attendances across all three providers.
Winter Warmth promotions	Numbers of residents supported via the helpline/ at energy advice surgeries. Attendance at fuel poverty training.	In partnership with Act on Energy, promotion of energy advice and support Energy efficiency Wyre Forest District Council (wyreforestdc.gov.uk)	Ongoing cost of living communications includes promotion of energy efficiency and fuel bill support through Act on Energy. In 2023/24, Act on Energy received 1168 calls to their helpline from Wyre Forest residents. Their outreach advisors also carried out 21 home visits in

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			Wyre Forest to provide more in depth support to these residents. Support is provided through information and advice, referrals for grants for energy efficiency schemes and through the HSF.
Warmth on Prescription project	Numbers of people supported, and health outcomes achieved	Funded through the Household Support Fund. Collaborative partners identify and support vulnerable residents with health conditions exacerbated by the cold.	57 Wyre Forest vulnerable householders with health conditions supported with additional heating bill support on winter 2023/24.
Delivery of the Asset Based Community Development Project	Impact report to show outcomes achieved.	WFDC funded through Public Health to deliver asset based community development activity in 4 areas of the district.	Wide range of activities supported in the ABCD areas including social/activity groups such as breakfast and lunch clubs, parent and toddler groups, Warm Welcome Spaces, exercise classes, litter picks, community fridge set up, gardening and craft projects, applying for external grant funding. Benefits for physical and mental health and wellbeing, tackling social isolation and loneliness.
Celebrating Community Stories Project	Five creative case studies produced	Public Health funded project to celebrate community stories and demonstrate the health and wellbeing outcomes achieved.	Completed through projects at Burlish Bike Park, St Peter's music groups, Wolverley Reaching Out, Wheely Different Theatre Company and Holy Innocents' Church Community Stories
Homeless Health Charter implementation	Update meetings held with Wyre Forest Health partnership	Ongoing project to improve access to health and housing services to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	The Housing team have flagged up homeless service users with unmet health needs to GP practices and supported homeless clients in accessing health services. The WF Health Partnership has improved access through measures such as giving patients an option to register their address as their GP practice to receive letters relating to their health and social care and ensuring continuity of care with one named GP, with double

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			appointments for complex needs. Working together on this issue means the GP practices are now aware of the Commitment to Refer (CTR) their service users who are at risk of homelessness to WFDC for support, and clinicians are now active on the WFDC Homelessness Forum.
Showcase of Services for 50+ events	Number of events/ attendees Feedback received	Aim is to hold an event in each of the 3 main towns.	4 events in 2024: Bewdley St Anne's Church 25 th April and 10 th October. Stourport Civic 17 October. Kidderminster Youth House 22 October. Approx. 400 attendees across all events with positive feedback received.
Support for active travel through the Wyre Forest Cycle Forum	Quarterly meetings held	Cycling in Wyre Forest Wyre Forest District Council (wyreforestdc.gov.uk)	Quarterly meetings held and supported by WFDC. Liaison with Highways on cycle improvements, contribution to development of forthcoming Local cycling and walking infrastructure plan, development of leaflets to promote local cycle routes.
Information and resources	Monthly health and wellbeing newsletter produced	Sign up link at Wyre Forest news Wyre Forest District Council (wyreforestdc.gov.uk)	Ongoing.
Promotion of Dementia Wellbeing support	Numbers attending training	Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire Dementia Wellbeing Service	Training for 30 WF Collaborative and WFDC staff on dementia wellbeing support. Age UK Herefordshire and Worcestershire closed in Sept 2024 but the local Age UK Bromsgrove Redditch and Wyre Forest branch continues to support residents locally. Welcome to Age UK Bromsgrove, Redditch & Wyre Forest

Wyre Forest Health Action Plan 2025

The current priority themes for the Wyre Forest Collaborative are:

Theme	Topics to include:
Population Health Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and wellbeing. • Obesity (including diabetes and pre-diabetes). • Frailty.
Vulnerable Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Light approach to tackling vulnerabilities. • Drug related deaths. • Homeless health. • Domestic Abuse.
Community Connectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Based Community Development. • Taking services out to communities. • Sharing resources and information.
Best Start in Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy pregnancy. • Children's mental health.
Health Inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Disabilities. • Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Community.
Health Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing review and risk assessment.

Wyre Forest District Council will support these themes through the following actions, carried out in partnership with Wyre Forest Collaborative partners:

Action	Indicator	Notes/Information	Collaborative themes supported
Promote uptake of the Healthy Start voucher scheme.	Percentage of eligible Wyre Forest residents taking up the scheme.	Healthy Start is a Government Scheme that provides weekly vouchers to eligible pregnant women and parents of children under four. These vouchers can be spent on milk, fruit and vegetables and also includes coupons for free vitamins. See https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/	Best Start in Life Population Health

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Promote Children's Mental Health Week	Activities/ communications during the Week.	Children's Mental Health Week (childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk) takes place in February 2025	Best Start in Life Population Health
Co-ordinate Mental Health and Wellbeing Showcase events in local High Schools	Number of events held/ number of attendees. Feedback results.	Showcase events are held in local high schools, bringing together organisations providing mental health and wellbeing support for children and young people.	Best Start in Life Population Health
Promotion of local voluntary opportunities and the mental health benefits of volunteering.	Activities/ communications during Volunteering Week. Support for funding bid to increase infrastructure support for voluntary sector.	Volunteers Week takes place annually in June. https://volunteersweek.org/	Population Health
Co-ordination of the Wyre Forest Suicide Prevention Group	Bi-annual meetings held. Activities (e.g. events, training) delivered.	The Wyre Forest Suicide Prevention group supports local delivery of the Worcestershire Suicide Prevention Plan Suicide prevention and support Worcestershire County Council	Population Health Best Start in Life Health Inequalities
Promotion of mental health and wellbeing campaigns and local support available	Activities / communication of campaign messages and support.	Key campaigns include: World Suicide Prevention Day World Mental Health Day Mental Health Awareness Week Mental Health Foundation These will be promoted to WFDC staff through the Health and Wellbeing group and more widely through our external communication channels and networks.	Population Health Best Start in Life
Support for/ promotion of Wyre Forest Park Yoga	Numbers attending and feedback	Partnership pilot project between Onside, Public Health, Park Yoga and WFDC.	Population Health Health Inequalities
Support for/promotion of activities for children and young people	Attendance at/feedback from youth services commissioned by WFDC	Funding provided by Worcestershire County Council for commissioning of youth services.	Population Health Health Inequalities Best Start in Life

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Winter Warmth promotions	Numbers of residents supported via the helpline/ at energy advice surgeries. Attendance at fuel poverty training.	In partnership with Act on Energy, promotion of energy advice and support Energy efficiency Wyre Forest District Council (wyreforestdc.gov.uk)	Population health Health Inequalities
Warmth on Prescription project	Numbers of people supported, and health outcomes achieved	Funded through the Household Support Fund. Collaborative partners identify and support vulnerable residents with health conditions exacerbated by the cold.	Population health Health Inequalities
Delivery of the Asset Based Community Development Project	Impact report to show outcomes achieved.	WFDC funded through Public Health to deliver asset based community development activity in 4 areas of the district. Project ends on 31 March 2025.	Community Connectedness Population health Health Inequalities
Homeless Health Charter implementation	Update meetings held with Wyre Forest Health partnership	Ongoing project to improve access to health and housing services to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	Population health Health inequalities
Health and Housing project	Workshop held and numbers attending	Aim for more joined up working/ awareness of services and referral pathways between the sectors.	Frailty
Showcase of Services for 50+ events	Number of events/ attendees Feedback received	Aim is to hold an event in each of the 3 main towns.	Population health
Support for active travel through the Wyre Forest Cycle Forum	Quarterly meetings held	Cycling in Wyre Forest Wyre Forest District Council (wyreforestdc.gov.uk)	Population health
Information and resources	Monthly health and wellbeing newsletter produced	Sign up link at Wyre Forest news Wyre Forest District Council (wyreforestdc.gov.uk)	Community Connectedness
Promotion of Dementia Wellbeing support	Numbers attending training	Awareness about current support in place	Population health

Report of: Richard Jennings, Principal Planning Team Leader

Thursday 5 December 2024

Open

Agenda Item No. 8 – Wyre Forest District Council Local Enforcement Plan

Summary

Attached is a draft of a Cabinet report from the Head of Strategic Growth on the WFDC Local Enforcement Plan which has been updated, which Cabinet is expected to consider on 18 December 2024.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the report and provide recommendations to Cabinet.

Officer contact details

Name: Richard Jennings
Title: Principal Planning Team Leader
Contact number: 07872423016

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
12 NOVEMBER 2024**Wyre Forest District Council Local Enforcement Plan**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Dan Morehead, Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Kate Bailey, Head of Strategic Growth
CONTACT OFFICER:	Richard Jennings, Principal Planning Team Leader
APPENDICES:	Appendix One: WFDC Local Enforcement Plan and flowchart

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present a report on the Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) Local Enforcement Plan which has been updated to include a process flowchart.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is invited to:

2.1 approve the adoption the amended Local Enforcement Plan.**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Local Enforcement Plan (LEP) was updated and approved by Members in March 2023. Further work has now been undertaken by officers in the Planning Team to incorporate a flowchart to explain the enforcement process and provide suggested timeframes for taking enforcement action depending on the different scenarios presented to the Enforcement Officers.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Enforcement Team are currently handling an unprecedented high number of cases. As of 10/10/2024, there have been 185 enforcement cases opened this calendar year. 138 cases have been closed with 123 pending. Of these 123 cases, 67 are in the rural outskirts of the district compared with 56 within the 3 towns. 826 new enforcement cases have been opened since the start of 2020, with 2023 seeing 195 new cases. 2024 is expected to exceed last year's total.
- 4.2 The new Local Enforcement Plan has now been updated to include a flowchart setting out the processes to be followed by Enforcement Officers and the approximate timeframes to be adhered to depending on the type of issue being investigated. The chart is divided into 3 zones – green where the aim is for 50% of

cases to be determined within 8 weeks and remedial work to be completed within 20 weeks; amber where a retrospective application is made or it is decided that formal action is not expedient – officers aim to resolve such cases within 6 months and red where an Enforcement Notice is served or an appeal is lodged. These enforcement cases may take a number of years to resolve depending on Planning Inspectorate timeframes.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The existing staffing costs are met through the base budget and the additional planning application fees.
- 5.2 Enforcement work is a discretionary service and the merits of undertaking enforcement action will be considered in light of the LEP on a case by case basis. Therefore, not all enforcement work will result in formal court action however, the costs of undertaking enforcement can be significant.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Policy Guidance state that enforcement action is discretionary. The process of taking enforcement action is complex and can be costly so the Council will only take enforcement action where it meets the objectives within the Local Enforcement Plan.

7. IMPACT AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- 7.1 Equality – an equality impact assessment was undertaken in 2023 when the LEP was previously reviewed. The addition of a flowchart does not make it necessary to update the screening work.
- 7.2. Health – not applicable
- 7.3 Climate Change – not applicable

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 It is hoped the amended LEP will help to reduce demand on officer time by setting out clear processes and timeframes for their Enforcement caseload for the public to view and understand.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The amended Local Enforcement Plan clearly sets out expectations of the action required for different types of enforcement action. It gives clear guidance to both the public and Members of the procedures and timeframes for handling cases of planning contravention.

10. CONSULTEES

10.1 CLT

10.2 Planning Manager, WFDC

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Not applicable.

WFDC Local Enforcement Plan 2024

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Introduction

The purpose of the planning system is to deliver sustainable communities, ensuring that development occurs in the right places and makes a positive contribution to people's lives. This means providing homes and jobs in the right locations, allowing people to extend their homes and businesses when it is appropriate to do so and enhancing the quality of life. The planning system must also protect and enhance the natural and historic environment and conserve the countryside and open spaces, that are important to everyone.

To have an effective planning system in Wyre Forest and to ensure the public has confidence in the planning system, the local planning authority must ensure they are ready to take effective enforcement action when it is expedient to do so in the public interest.

Enforcement action is discretionary and, depending on the degree of harm, it may not be expedient to take enforcement action.

Examples of enforcement action that WFDC has taken can be found on our planning webpages of the WFDC website.

Policy and Legislative Context

National Legislation and Guidance

The key legislative and statutory instruments relevant to enforcement are:

- The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
- The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012.
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended, or any Order amending, revoking and/or re-enacting that order with or without modification)

Government guidance and regulation is also provided in the following:

- The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (or any future amendment)
- Planning Practice Guidance

This Local Enforcement Plan has been prepared in accordance with the guidance set out in paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework - Revised, February 2019 (NPPF), which states:

"Effective enforcement is important to maintain public confidence in the planning system. Enforcement action is discretionary, and local planning authorities should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control. They should consider publishing a local enforcement plan to manage enforcement proactively, in a way that is appropriate to their area. This should set out how they will monitor the implementation of planning permissions, investigate alleged cases of unauthorised development and take action where appropriate."

The WFDC Local Plan was adopted in April 2022 and sets out the vision and the policies guiding development in the district and is therefore a tool used to guide decision on breaches of planning.

The General Approach to Enforcement - Guiding Principles

Government guidance on enforcement focuses not just on the impact of any breach on the complainant but on the rights of the owner or occupier where the alleged breach is occurring. With this in mind, the Council is committed to acting in a fair and consistent manner. When exercising its enforcement functions the council will act in a way that is:

- Consistent and fair. We will look at past cases and try to take a similar approach, for consistency, where this seems fair and reasonable. Cases will be investigated in accordance with the priorities set out within this plan.
- Transparent and accountable. Members, residents, existing and potential local businesses, complainants, alleged offenders and council staff should understand how we provide the service and the principles that guide it. We will provide an easy-to-access service, where the procedures, level of service provided and the rights of appeal for the alleged offenders are clearly explained and easy to understand.
- Proportionate and targeted

Reporting a Breach

What constitutes a breach?

Planning Enforcement only seeks to regulate the planning system. It does not relate to:

- private civil matters;
- the Party Wall Act 1986;
- pest, noise nuisance and light pollution (where it is not associated with an unlawful development or any other breach in planning control)
- building control structural issues;
- or when there has been no material change in the use of a building or land.

Guidance on how issues about such matters can be pursued is set out on page 8 and in Appendix Two.

Planning Enforcement will investigate the following:

- Unlawful development
- Works to a listed building
- Installing an unauthorised advertisement
- Works to a tree subject to a Tree Preservation Order or located in a Conservation area
- Use of a caravan for permanent residency or stationing of a caravan for permanent residency that is not incidental to a dwelling house and involves the use of land for more than permitted without being located in a park with a camping and caravan permit
- Not building in accordance with the conditions set out in the Planning Permission decision notice or s106 agreement
- Development impacting upon public amenity

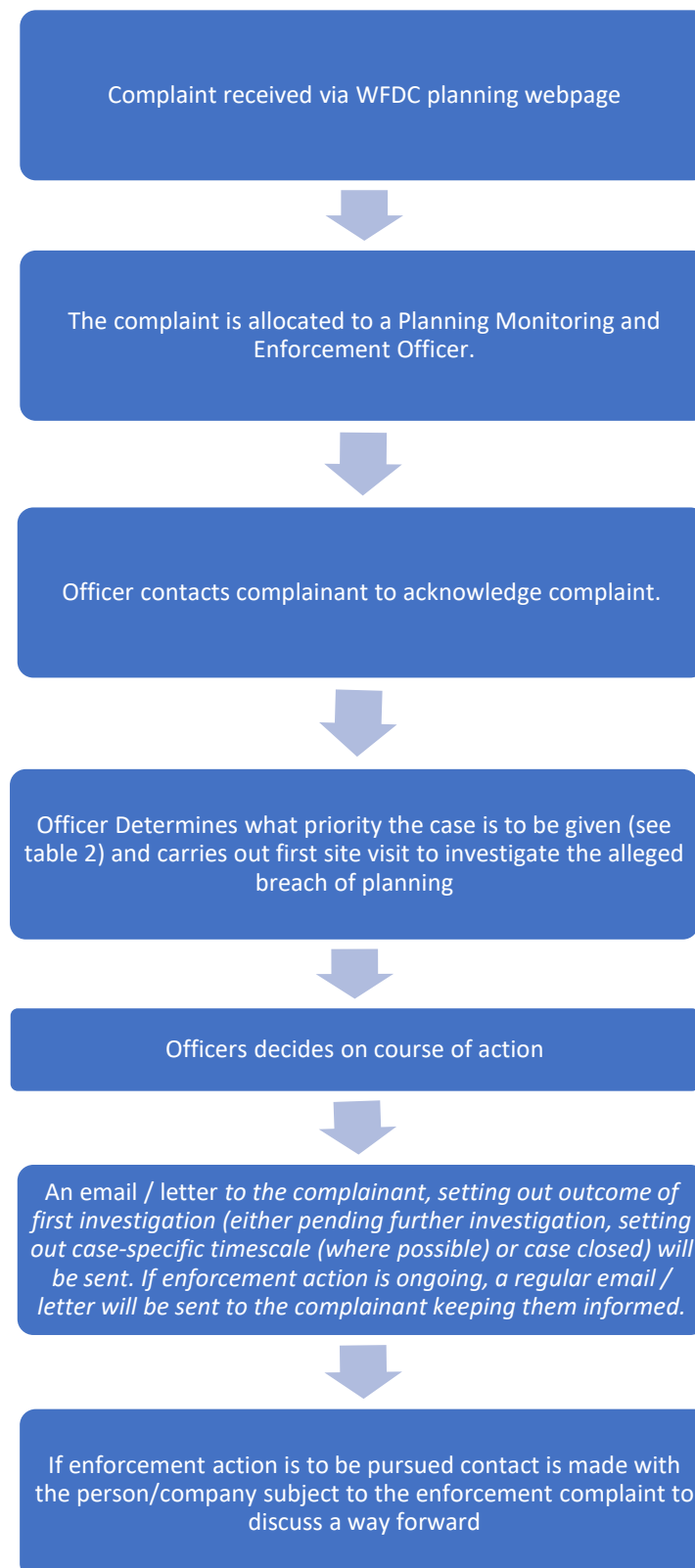
Process for Reporting a Breach

Complaints about alleged breaches of planning control will only be accepted in writing using the council's [enforcement complaint form](#). The form can be provided to the council by:

- submission of an online form
- e-mailing the form to dev.management@wyreforestdc.gov.uk ; or
- posting the form to the Development Management Section.

Anonymous complaints will not usually be investigated unless relating to a matter of public safety. The council determines whether the alleged breach merits investigation. Complainants who do not give their personal details will be advised to contact either their local ward member or their parish council who may then raise their concerns on their behalf. Personal details provided by a complainant will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed unless required as a result of any formal court proceedings.

The Enforcement Process at Wyre Forest

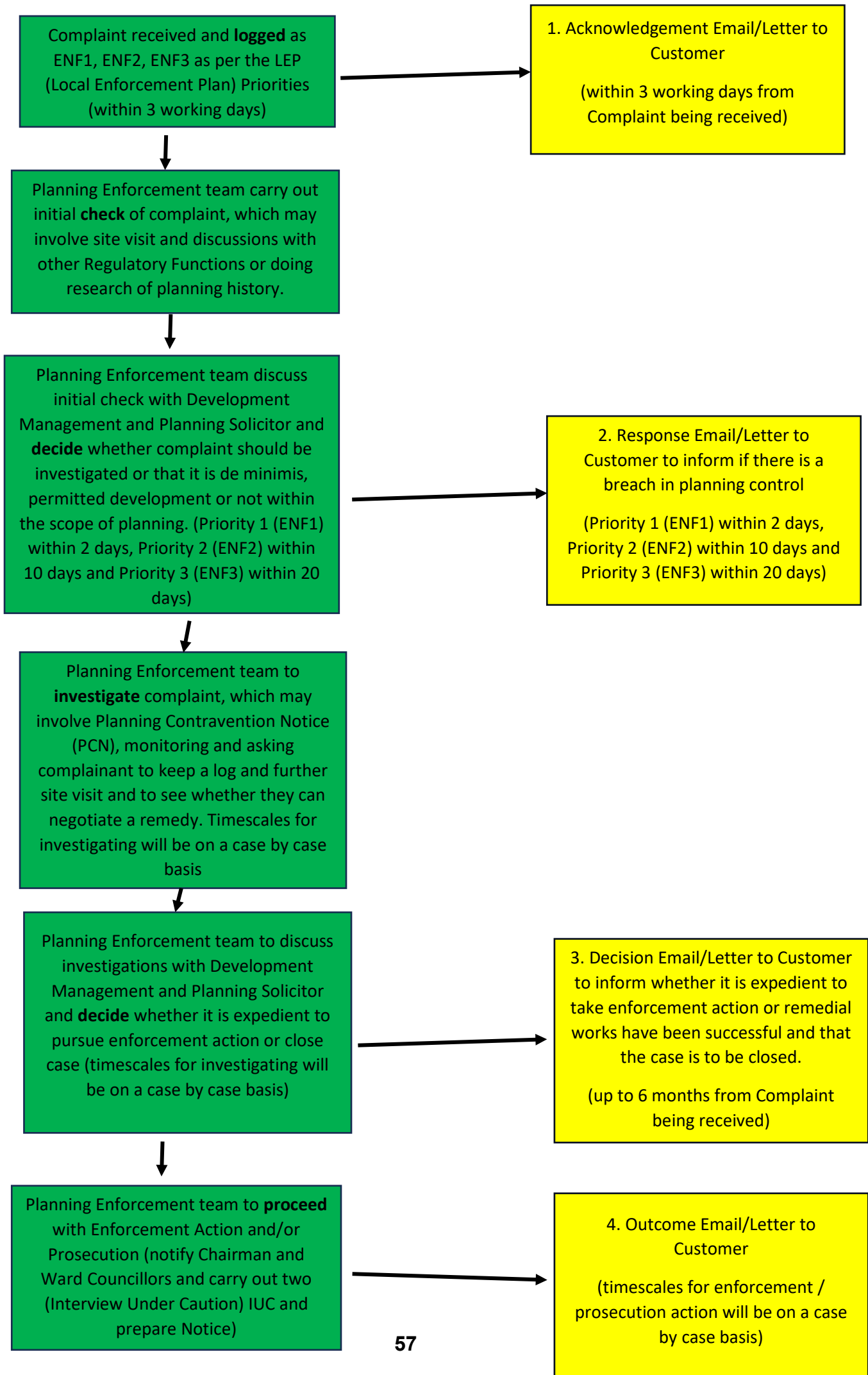


The Council has a planning monitoring and enforcement team, consisting of two dedicated enforcement officers as part of the wider Planning Team and will endeavour to meet the timescales outlined below in accordance with the seriousness of the alleged breach. The priority will be decided by the council following receipt of the complaint but may be subject to change following a site inspection or when further information comes to light.

Timescales for First Investigation (including site visit where necessary) following receipt of a planning breach:

Priority One Severe Irreversible Harm	Priority Two Harm to amenity or risk to public safety	Priority Three No significant harm
<u>Investigations</u> will commence and a <u>site visit</u> will take place, wherever possible, on the same working day or failing that the working day after receipt (subject to Monitoring and Enforcement Officer availability)	<u>Investigations</u> will commence within <u>5 working days</u> of receipt; <u>a site visit</u> will take place within <u>10 working days</u> of receipt (subject to Monitoring and Enforcement Officer availability)	<u>Investigations</u> will commence within <u>15 working days</u> of receipt; <u>a site visit</u> will take place within <u>20 working days</u> (subject to Monitoring and Enforcement Officer availability)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaches of listed building control (which include damage to or demolition of listed buildings) • Works to trees which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders/within Conservation Areas • Damaging works to SSSIs • Demolition of building in a conservation area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public risk from breaches of condition • Unauthorised encampments on private land • On-going building works, including extensions where there is continuous harm or danger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverts • Domestic structures such as extensions, sheds, and fences • Breaches of planning conditions that have little or no harm

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It is important to note that, just because there may be a breach of planning control, this in itself is not sufficient reason to take enforcement action. The council must firstly decide, having given regard to policies contained within the Development Plan, guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and all other material planning considerations, whether or not it is 'expedient' to take formal action.

Generally expediency means an unauthorised development that is causing serious harm, rather than it being a minor or technical breach of planning control. The matter of 'expediency' covers a range of matters upon which a judgement needs to be based. A key issue is whether the breach would unacceptably affect public amenity or use of land that should be protected in the public interest. Any enforcement action should be proportionate to the breach so, for example, it would be inappropriate to take formal action against a trivial or technical breach. Examples of harm resulting from a breach of planning control, include;

- harm to amenity
- highway safety issues
- noise nuisance
- loss of daylight or privacy.

This is not an exhaustive list of 'harm' but indicates that there must be recognisable harm in planning terms.

If the development is causing a degree of harm then WFDC will start procedures to require the landowner who carried out the development without permission, or who is in breach of planning, to 'undo' the development or stop the carrying out or continuation of the development which is in breach of planning. WFDC will also seek to remedy the planning breach, which may involve several site visits, meetings and duration since receiving the initial complaint. If this occurs officers will ensure the complainant is kept up to date of the procedure being undertaken.

Works to a listed building or to a TPO tree or the installation of advertisements without permission are criminal offences and will lead to immediate enforcement action.

If the development falls within Permitted Development Rights, which allows homeowners and businesses to enlarge and alter their homes/buildings subject to meeting specific conditions/criteria without requiring planning permission, then the enforcement case is likely to be closed.

If the development does not fall within permitted development rights but the degree of harm is not serious, then the Council will invite a retrospective planning application to be submitted.

The planning enforcement team will not investigate the following:

- neighbour disputes or other civil issues including boundary disputes or enforcement of covenants. In these matters, complainants need to contact their solicitor or local Citizens Advice Bureau
- the use of or development on adopted highways, pavements or highway grass verges. These matters should be addressed to Worcestershire County Council as the Highways Authority
- dangerous structures. These matters should be addressed to the council's building control team <https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/building-control/>

- fly-tipping, litter and fly posting on public places. These should be addressed to the council's waste and street scene service <https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/streets-and-parking/street-care-and-cleaning/>

What happens if the complaint is against you?

If a complaint is received that affects you then the first thing that will happen is either you will be contacted (where your details are known to the council) or the site in question will be visited by an officer. The purpose of this visit is to establish the facts of the case and whether there is any basis to the allegations made. The officer will, where necessary, take measurements and photographs of the development or activity taking place. This site inspection may be undertaken without any prior notification.

If there is a breach of planning control you will be advised of the details of the breach and what steps need to be taken to rectify the breach or regularise the situation. If you have no involvement with the identified breach no action will be taken against you.

You will be given a reasonable period of time (subject to the nature of the breach) to resolve any breach of planning control. If compliance is not secured through amicable negotiations or the submission of a retrospective planning application formal action may be instigated.

The Government's Planning Policy Guidance states that:

"The provisions of the [European Convention on Human Rights such as Article 1 of the First Protocol, Article 8 and Article 14](#) are relevant when considering enforcement action. There is a clear public interest in enforcing planning law and planning regulation in a proportionate way. In deciding whether enforcement action is taken, local planning authorities should, where relevant, have regard to the potential impact on the health, housing needs and welfare of those affected by the proposed action, and those who are affected by a breach of planning control."

Therefore, WFDC will give regard to this when considering enforcement action.

Proactive Compliance and Monitoring

In addition to the service's role in reacting to complaints regarding alleged unauthorised developments or breaches of condition, the council provides a proactive approach to ensure compliance with planning permissions and other consents. It should be noted that it is the responsibility of individual developers to comply with the conditions imposed on any planning permission or consent or with any terms identified in legal agreements, such as Section 106 agreements.

In order to be proactive the council must operate a risk based approach in deciding which cases are to be investigated or monitored. In so doing the resources available must be provided in a targeted and focussed way.

Priority will be given to monitor the following developments:

- All developments over 10 dwellings;
- All commercial developments over 1000sq metres floor area;
- All proposals which have trees which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders;
- Where there has been a history of non-compliance; or

- Significant works to Listed Buildings.

Any other developments may be inspected on a random basis at any time to ensure compliance.

Complaints about the Service

If you are unhappy about the level of service you have received or how the process has been managed, then you may firstly discuss your concerns with the Principal Planning Team Leader or take it further through the council's 'Let us know what you think' procedure ([Let us know | Wyre Forest District Council](#)) If you remain unhappy then you may write to the Local Government Ombudsman who may investigate your concerns in certain circumstances. More information is available on [their website](#).

Appendix One: Enforcement Powers

There are a number of enforcement actions that WFDC can take. These are set out in the next table.

Type of Action	Detail
No formal action	Guidance from Central Government is that enforcement action should be a last resort and that Councils are expected to give those responsible for a breach of planning control the opportunity to put matters right or to seek to regularise the breach before resorting to serving a formal notice. Any such service of a formal notice must be proportionate and commensurate with the breach of planning control.
Retrospective Planning Application	A retrospective application will be invited where it is considered that there is a reasonable likelihood that planning permission may be granted in line with local and national planning policies or where a development may be made acceptable by way of the imposition of conditions.
Request for Information	Section 16(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables a notice to be served requesting details to be provided of any owners, occupiers or any other persons with an interest in the land
Planning Contravention Notice	Section 171(c) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables the service of a notice requiring persons to provide information in relation to land or activities on land where a breach of planning control is suspected
Enforcement Notice	Section 172 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables the service of a notice which requires specific steps to be undertaken to remedy the breach of planning control
Planning Enforcement Order	Where a person deliberately conceals unauthorised development, the deception may not come to light until after the time limits for taking enforcement action (section 171B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) have expired. A planning enforcement order enables an authority to act in relation to an apparent breach of planning control notwithstanding that the time limits may have expired.
Stop Notice or Temporary Stop Notice	Section 183 and Section 171(e) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables the service of a notice requiring the cessation of unauthorised activities. A Stop Notice may only be served in conjunction with an Enforcement Notice referred to above
Breach of Condition Notice	Section 187(a) enables the service of a notice to secure compliance with conditions imposed on a planning permission
Injunction	A local planning authority can, where they consider it expedient for any actual or apprehended breach of planning control to be restrained, apply to the High Court or County Court for an injunction to restrain a breach of planning control (section 187B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).
Rights of Entry	Local planning authorities and Justices of the Peace can authorise named officers to enter land specifically for enforcement purposes (sections 196A, 196B and section 196C of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

	This right is limited to what is regarded as essential, in the particular circumstances, for effective enforcement of planning control.
Listed Building Enforcement	The listed building enforcement provisions are in sections 38 to 46 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 , and the enforcement provisions relating to the demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area (“relevant demolition”) are in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
Untidy Land	The service of a Section 215 Notice under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables the service of a notice requiring the proper maintenance of land and buildings.
Discontinuance Notice: Unauthorised advertisements	Section 225A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) allows local planning authorities to remove and dispose of any display structure – such as an advertisement hoarding – which, in their opinion, is used for the display of illegal advertisements. This provision does not apply to a structure in a building to which the public have no right of access and cannot be seen publicly.
Enforcement and protected trees	<p>Anyone who contravenes an Order by damaging or carrying out work on a tree protected by an Order without getting permission from the local planning authority is guilty of an offence and may be fined.</p> <p>The local planning authority may also impose a condition requiring replacement planting when granting consent under an Order for the removal of trees. The authority can enforce tree replacement by serving a ‘tree replacement notice’.</p>

The council will comply with the provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 when interviewing persons suspected of a criminal offence and with the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996 and Section 222 of the Local Government Act 1972, when carrying out prosecutions.

The Government’s Planning Policy Guidance recommends that local planning authorities keep a record of their enforcement decisions and actions, including no further action and informal action (Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 17b-010-20140306, PPG: enforcement and post-permission matters).

Appendix Two: What is a Breach of Planning Control?

Breach of Planning Control	Matters <u>not</u> a Breach of Planning Control
Unauthorised erection of a building or extension to a building	Internal works to a non-listed building
A material change of use of land	Obstruction of a highway or public right of way (PROW). Obstruction of the highway is dealt with by the police. Obstruction of a public right of way such as a public footpath should be reported to the county council.
The display of unauthorised advertisements	Parking of commercial vehicles on the highway or on grass verges. This is a matter for the county council as highways authority.
Unauthorised works to Listed Buildings	Parking caravans on residential driveways or within the curtilage of domestic properties as long as they are incidental to the enjoyment of the property
Unauthorised works to trees subject of a tree preservation order (TPO) or in a conservation area	Running a business from home where the residential use remains the primary use and there is no adverse impact on residential amenity
Unauthorised demolition within conservation areas	Land ownership disputes or trespass issues. These are private matters – you should seek advice from a solicitor or Citizens' Advice Bureau.
Breaches of conditions attached to planning permissions	Covenants imposed on property Deeds. This is a matter on which to seek advice from a solicitor.
Not building in accordance with the approved plans of planning permissions	Any works that are deemed to be 'permitted development' under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)
Untidy land where it affects the amenity of the area	Advertisements that are excepted from deemed or express consent under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007
Unauthorised engineering operations, such as raising of ground levels or earth bunds	Dangerous structures or other health and safety issues. If these could affect the safety of the public – such as a wall that might fall onto a road or footpath – it should be raised with the council's building control team who can be contacted via https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/building-control/
Failure to comply with a Section 106 agreement	High hedge disputes – these are dealt with by the Development Management team but under Part 8 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 dev.management@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Deliberate concealment of unauthorised building works or changes of use	Any noise, pest control, traffic or rubbish complaints, these should be directed to Worcestershire Regulatory Services. <give link or email address>
Unauthorised encampments	

Glossary

Development: Is defined as the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land.

Expedient: In general terms this means where an unauthorised development is causing serious harm, rather than it being a minor or technical breach.

Material Change: A change in kind, for example a change from a house to a shop, is material but a change in degree is material only if the change is substantial and it has resulted in a change of character of the land or building. For example, a family dwelling where the owner/tenant has taken in lodgers does not in itself constitute a material change so long as the main use of the house remains that of a private residence.

Report of: Kate Bailey, Head of Strategic Growth

Thursday 5 December 2024

Open

Agenda Item No. 9 – Warm Homes Local Grant

Summary

Attached is a draft of a Cabinet report from the Head of Strategic Growth which seeks approval to enter into a procurement exercise to appoint a contractor to undertake works required to deliver the Warm Homes: Local Grant (WHLG) and amend the capital programme to include the capital spend related to the works, which Cabinet is expected to consider on 18 December 2024.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the report and provide recommendations to Cabinet.

Officer contact details

Name: Kate Bailey

Title: Head of Strategic Growth

Contact number: 07837779403

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
18 DECEMBER 2024**WARM HOMES: LOCAL GRANT**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Chris Rogers – Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, and Wellbeing. chris.rogers@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Kate Bailey -Head of Strategic Growth 01562 732560 kate.bailey@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
CONTACT OFFICER:	Brent Metcalf- Housing Project Officer- Sustainable Warmth 01562 732759 brent.metcalf@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix One: Evaluation Criteria

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval to enter into a procurement exercise to appoint a contractor to undertake the works required to deliver the Warm Homes: Local Grant (WHLG) and amend the capital programme to include the capital spend related to the works.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is invited to:

- 2.1 Approve the procurement exercise and the tender evaluation model set out in the appendix to this report.

AND

- 2.2 Grant delegated authority to the Head of Strategic Growth, in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council, Head of Resources and the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing to make any non-material amendments to the tender documents and evaluation criteria, evaluate the submissions received from the tender process and to award the contract(s) to undertake the works required.

AND

- 2.3 Amend the capital programme to include up to £3,850,000 for WHLG from financial year 2025-2026 to financial year 2029-2030, in line with the final grant notification.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The WHLG is a government-funded scheme and delivered by Local Authorities. It will provide grants to low income homes for installations of energy efficiency upgrades, such as insulation and solar panels as well as installations of low carbon heating. The scheme will run from April 2025 for three years.
- 3.2 The funding will target those living in private sector homes in England to help reduce both energy bills and carbon omissions. These upgrades will be open to homes of all fuel types, including on gas households (those heated by mains gas), and off gas households (those heated by electricity, oil, coal, or liquid petroleum gas).
- 3.3 Residents on either means tested benefits, with a gross annual household income of £36,000 or less, or living in Income Deciles 1 & 2 will be eligible to apply for the funding if living in a property with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of D, E, F or G.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The government have now announced the programme will be for three years and the Council's expression of interest anticipates that we will assist 308 households over the duration of the project. The maximum spend per property is £15,000 for energy performance and £15,000 for low carbon heat. Projects must meet these cost caps on average by project closure.

PROCUREMENT

- 4.2 Cabinet approval is being sought now in order to allow mobilisation of the scheme for April 1st, 2025. The Council will have applied for funding by 28 November 2024. While the allocation has not yet been confirmed, it is important that procurement of delivery organisations commences in a timely fashion in order to be in a position to award a contract or contracts so that delivery can commence in April 2025. Delay would be caused by waiting for the final grant award notification. Delays to the timeline would reduce our grant award proportionally.
- 4.3 Following an assessment of available routes to procurement it is proposed we procure a principal contractor via the Community Homes Investment Consortium (CHIC). CHIC is a comprehensive framework encompassing a diverse range of services who specialise in the delivery of domestic retrofit projects such as the WHLG.
- 4.4 A procurement framework is a method of buying commonly used goods, services and works. It combines a pre-qualification process for suppliers, similar in effect to a 'select' or 'approved' list, with elements of electronic tendering and aims to streamline the procurement process, reducing the workload and making it more efficient for both buyers and suppliers.
- 4.5 The CHIC is compliant with the advertising requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and requires users to undertake a mini competition between the pre-approved suppliers.

- 4.6 Our aim is to work primarily with one contractor; however, we recognise that one contractor may not be able to offer all the services required. Therefore it may be necessary to contract with other contractors to ensure all works identified and required are carried out. If we are unable to identify a suitable contractor(s) through the mini competition route then we would undertake a direct award based on the same evaluation criteria.

4.7 **Procurement Timeline**

Key Event	Date
Notice Publication	06/01/2025
Deadline for submission of clarification questions	11:00Hrs 07/02/2025
Deadline for Tender submissions	11:00Hrs 14/02/2025
Expected Evaluation Period	17/02/2025 -28/02/2025
Expected date of initial award of Contract	11/03/25
Standstill period	12/03/25-23/03/25
Expected date of award of Contract	24/03/2025
Expected Contract Commencement	01/04/2025

- 4.8 All Tenders will be evaluated against weighted criteria. See appendix 1 for the detailed evaluation criteria and weightings.
- 4.9 Its anticipated the amount of WHLG funding available will not be sufficient to support all properties potentially eligible for the scheme. To ensure the funding is being spent on the properties most in need, officers delivering the project will need to prioritise the allocation of funding. This will be done in the following way:
- 4.9.1 Properties with the lowest EPCs within income decile 1, in receipt of a means tested benefit, will be prioritised first.
- 4.9.2 Properties with the lowest EPCs within income decile 1, with a household income of less than £36,000, will be prioritised next.
- 4.9.3 If funding allocations allow properties with the lowest EPCs within income decile 2 or above will be prioritised second in ascending order of income decile.

- 4.10 The decision to award homes funding will be based on the number of eligible applications received, the terms, conditions, and constraints of the funding, and the amount of funding available. WFDC officers will look to utilise alternative sources of funding to support homes we are unable to support through the WHLG.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council submitted an expression of interest for up to £3,850,000 of grant on 29th November with a grant award notification due in February 2025. The Council is guaranteed funding - this is hoped to be the full amount of £6.2m but could be revised downwards. The Capital Programme will require amendment to include up to £3,850,000 expenditure in respect of the WHLG project. The expenditure is fully funded from external grant income and as such approval to amend the capital programme can be given under the delegation to Cabinet.
- 5.2 Up to 15% of actualised total project spend per year can be used to meet administration and ancillary costs, including for the revenue costs for officers to deliver the scheme. There is not expected to be any additional impact on the Council's revenue expenditure.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The grant is being provided under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, which is a generic power to pay grants to councils. The Council itself will rely on relevant powers, including the general power of competence in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, in order to deliver the scheme locally.
- 6.2 As stated in the Council's Contract Procedure Rules Cabinet Approval is sought for procurement where the value of the purchase is more than £175,000. The successful contractor(s) will be required to enter into a formal contract prepared by the Solicitor to the Council.

7. IMPACT AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- 7.1 This report relates solely to the procurement of a contractor to deliver WHLG for Wyre Forest District Council so there is no requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment. The fundamental principles of no discrimination and transparency relate to all procurement exercises.
- 7.2 Whilst Health and Climate Change impact are not directly affected by the procurement process, if the funding bid is successful there will be positive health and climate change impacts as the grant funding will improve the thermal comfort of properties, benefiting those with cardio-vascular conditions and will look to utilise non-fossil fuel forms of heating where possible.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 By using the CHIC framework risks are reduced as Wyre Forest District Council's gets exposure to pre-qualified, suitable contractors, and will be procured via a compliant procurement procedure. This will allow the Council the ability to provide reliable and fully accredited contractors to complete works. The project has the

benefit of being overseen by officers with experience procuring and delivering similar government funded retrofit projects.

- 8.2 A full risk register will be active for the delivery of the WHLG project.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Funding is being made available to local authorities through the Warm Homes Local Grant programme.
- 9.2 Due to the value of the contract proposed, authorisation is required to procure for a contractor using the proposed evaluation model in the appendix and the amendment to the capital programme.
- 9.3 The appointment of a suitably qualified contractor(s) will allow for the work that is programmed to be undertaken within the programme time period. The use of the CHIC will ensure that there are suitably qualified companies with experience of undertaking large complex development projects bidding for the work.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 CLT

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Government guidance on Warm Homes: Local Grant.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/warm-homes-local-grant>

Appendix One – Evaluation Criteria

Assessment of Financial Standing

In line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, the Council reserves the right to carry out an Assessment of Financial Standing on the successful bidder prior to awarding the contract. Should the Council not be satisfied that the financial standing of the bidder is sufficient to meet the particular risks of the contract, the bidder may be rejected.

Detailed Evaluation Criteria and Weighting

The evaluation criteria and weighting are shown in the table below;

Table 1: Detailed Evaluation Criteria and Weightings

Criteria	Criteria Weighting	Sub-Criteria	Sub-Criteria Weighting
Quality	70%	Technical specification details	10%
		Organisational set up and management team	15%
		Relevant experience and past performance	15%
		Customer journey and complaints handling	15%
		Sustainability & social value	15%
Price	30%		30%
Total	100%		100%

Evaluation of Quality Criteria

The evaluation process will consider all relevant submitted evidence and written information provided by each Tenderer, in relation to the specific requirements as set out within this ITT and the supporting documentation. There will be an initial check of all Tenders for completeness and compliance with the tendering instructions (including a check that the Tender is a "compliant Tender"). Any submissions that in the opinion of the Council do not meet the requirements set out in this ITT may be rejected as non-compliant and will not be evaluated further.

Each question for quality will be assessed by an Evaluation Panel. The Panel will agree a single overall score out of 10. This score will be multiplied by the weighting for that question (as set out in Table 2) to give a weighted score. The following formula will be used to calculate weighted scores:

$$\text{Weighted Quality Score} = \frac{\text{Awarded Score}}{\text{Maximum Score}} \times \text{Weighting}$$

At the sole discretion of the Council, Tenderers may be invited to present their proposals at clarification meeting and demonstrate details of their submission. The meeting may be used to validate the provisional scores for the Tenderer's written submissions in relation to quality and technical merit. The Council's tender Evaluation Panel may therefore reduce a

Tenderer's provisional score for their written submissions in relation to quality and technical merit where the meeting indicates that a Tenderer's provisional score on the basis of their written submission cannot be justified. Conversely, the Evaluation Panel may increase a Tenderer's provisional score where it considers their written submissions in relation to quality and technical merit did not sufficiently reflect the quality and/or technical merit of their actual delivery proposals for the Contract.

Evaluation of Pricing

Pricing is evaluated using the Standard Differential Model. The Tenderer with the lowest tender price will score the maximum score of 30%. The other tenders will be scored pro rata as a percentage of their tender sum compared with the lowest tender.

$$\text{Weighted Price Score} = \frac{\text{Lowest Submitted Total Price}}{\text{Tenderer's Submitted Total Price}} \times \text{Weighting}$$

Tenderers are required to submit their pricing submission(s) by completing the relevant sections in Appendix B – Pricing Schedule.

Quality criteria questions

Mandatory Pass / Fail Question: (Yes = pass No = fail)	Response
We are able to provide the installation of measures under PAS 2035:2023, PAS 2030:2023 and MCS certification	Y / N
We are able to provide TrustMark lodgement for all measures installed under the scope of works	Y / N
We are able to provide a 2 year insurance backed guarantee for workmanship and all TrustMark lodged measures	Y / N
We are able to provide the retrofit journey as specified in the specification	Y / N

1. Technical specification details	Weighting
<p>1) Please provide data sheets of the system / materials you plan to use to achieve the performance output outlined in the technical specification for each of the measures listed below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cavity wall insulation • Loft insulation • External wall insulation • Internal wall insulation • Room in roof insulation • Flat roof insulation • Underfloor insulation • Park home insulation • Air Source heat pump • High temperature heat pump • ASHP compatible hot water cylinder • Gas/ASHP Hybrid boiler • Oil/ASHP Hybrid boiler • Wet central heating radiator • Digital/smart heating controls • PV battery storage 	10%

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar PV invertor • Solar panel • Double glazing • High heat retention storage heaters 	
<i>Response: There is no page limit on data sheets</i>	

2. Organisational set up and Management Team	Weighting
<p>1) Please provide an organisation chart / organogram showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roles and teams within the organisation and their reporting lines • names of senior leadership, department managers and persons in key roles • the number of installers/contractors within each team with details of the number of teams directly employed and the number subcontracted. i.e. CWI 12 installers (4 direct employed, 8 subcontracted) <p>2) Please provide a summary or CV for the team members who will be assigned to this project demonstrating the skills, experience and qualifications that will contribute to successful delivery of the scheme. As a minimum, please include a summary or CV for the roles below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract Manager or equivalent role • Compliance Manager or equivalent role • Project Manager who will act as the priority point of contact for the scheme • Retrofit coordinator/s • Senior Managers responsible for install teams • Customer Service manager or equivalent role 	15%
<p><i>Response:</i> Q1 - Maximum of 2 sides of A4. Q2 - Maximum of 1 side of A4 for each summary or CV submitted.</p>	

3. Relevant experience and past performance	Weighting
<p>1) Please provide details of previous experience in delivering large scale domestic retrofit projects. Pictures, case studies, press articles and weblinks welcome.</p> <p>2) Please provide details of your process for engaging subcontractors to work for you on this project. As a minimum, please Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of any subcontractors that you intend to engage / have already engaged with for delivery of this contract. • Methods for sourcing appropriate subcontractors. • Methods for vetting subcontractors to ensure they meet statutory requirements and the Authority's stated policies. • Details for managing Subcontractors engaged on this project, including your procedures for performance management, and addressing any failures to deliver to expected standards. 	15%

Response:

Q1 - Maximum 1000 words

Q2 - Maximum 1000 words

4. Customer journey and complaints handling	Weighting
<p>1) Please provide details explaining your proposed customer journey from the point an eligible applicant is referred to you, up to the point of post works handover. As a minimum, please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will own each element of the journey • What will you do to enhance the customer experience and mitigate any potential issues for the resident customer • What the planned timeframes for each part of the customer journey would be <p>2) Please provide details explaining how your company's procedures and the key people you employ to monitor and control quality will ensure the successful delivery of this contract. Ensure you cover, as a minimum, the procedures, and systems you intend to employ to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage quality control for this contract • Avoid defects • Minimise re-work • Avoid repeat failures • Reduce impacts on timely completion & delivery of outcomes <p>3) Please provide details of your procedures for dealing with any complaints that arise during or after installation and include details of any dispute resolution and/or escalation.</p>	15%
<p><i>Response:</i> <i>Q1 - Maximum 4 sides of A4</i> <i>Q2 - Maximum 1000 words</i> <i>Q3 - Maximum 1000 words</i></p>	

5. Social Value	Weighting
<p>1) Please provide details of how will you deliver the social value elements of the specification?</p> <p>2) Please provide details of any additional social value commitments you are willing to make to be included in the contract, please consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic: e.g. generating local employment, training, and work-experience opportunities; increasing spend with local companies. • Environmental: e.g. Reducing your energy use and carbon footprint; Using environmentally friendly goods and services; and minimising Waste. • Social: e.g. supporting local communities. 	15%

Response:
Q1 - Maximum 1000 words
Q2 - Maximum 1000 words

The following matrix illustrates how responses to quality criteria will be assessed.

Score	Judgement	Interpretation
10	Exceptional	Exceptional level of understanding of the subject. An extensive and thorough response, covering every aspect in great detail and going above and beyond to show the bidders expertise.
9	Outstanding	A high level of detail and information provided across all areas. Every area of detail is covered very well and the bidder has a clear understanding of the question.
8	Very good	The response covers all areas of the question in good detail. The understanding of the question is strong and only very few aspects are not completely covered.
7	Good	The bidder has given further detail of most of the points presented in the response. All relevant areas are covered, and the bidder has a good understanding of the requirements being asked.
6	Fair	All key points are covered with detail added into some of the points to demonstrate the bidders ability in regard to the question.
5	Average	Response covers the whole core of the question in a basic level of detail. There is a distinct lack of expansion in the detail.
4	Below average	The response covers a majority of the requirements of the question. The detail is still very limited.
3	Poor	Half of the key points are covered in little detail.
2	Weak	Only little amounts of content, only covering a small number of relevant areas with basic information.
1	Very weak	Minimal content covered, barely reflecting any aspects of the question.
0	Non-compliant	No response submitted.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

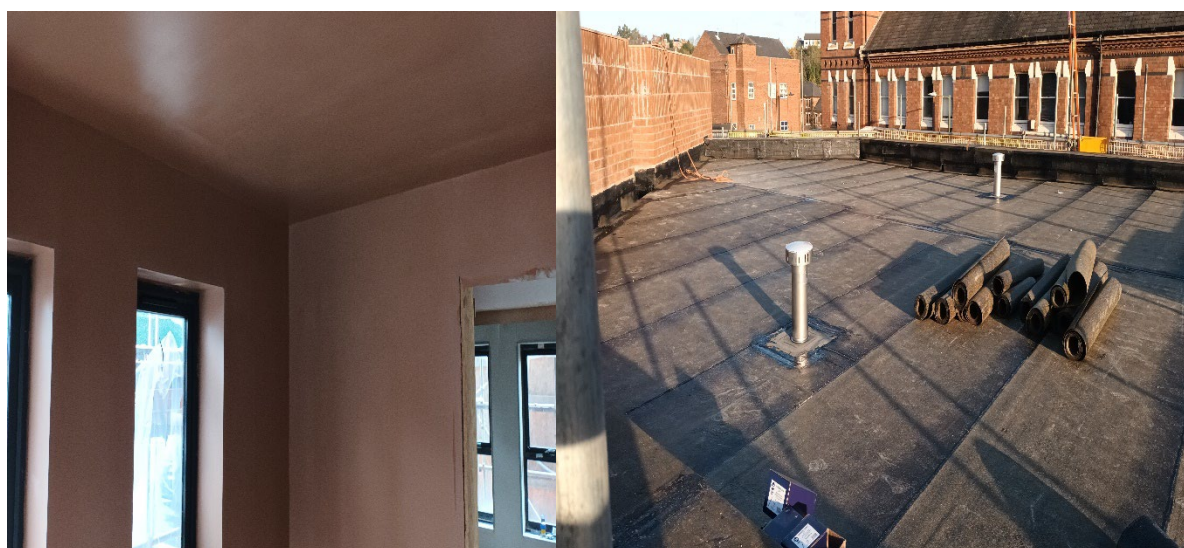
05/12/2024

MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

- 1 This briefing note provides a brief update on the main capital projects.

Castle Road temporary accommodation

The Castle Road Housing scheme contributes to Corporate Priority Three – A Clean, Safe and Green place to Live, Work and Visit. Progress has potentially slipped following delays to the roof laying. Work has commenced internally to plasterboard and skim the ground and first floors. Throughout November work will continue in finalising the roof, including solar panel installations, connecting the site to the mains electricity and plaster boarding all floors.



8A Bridge Street

Work commenced to first floor flats to convert to residential and delays have been previously highlighted. The project is anticipated for completion by December 2024.

Officers have appointed an architect and a planning consultant to undertake the design work for the ground floor. A planning application will be required for altering windows to ensure enough natural light gets into the new configuration of rooms and there will also need to be prior approval for change of use. The architect is due to visit the property next week to commence the design element. A business case for the capital works will then be brought forward.

Brinton Park HLF Project

- HLF approved the tender process and are currently reviewing the overall approved purposes of the project. Officers met the HLF investment manager in November 2024 and are currently awaiting a final decision to allow progress.

- A tender contract to progress all capital works was awarded to building contractors McPhillips in September 2024.
- A re-application for planning permission was necessary due to the original permission running out. This was approved in September 2024.
- Building works are scheduled to be completed within a 12–18-month period.

Piano Building

Speller Metcalfe contractor progressing with enabling works as per programme. Monthly progress meetings are scheduled. The main contract works to commence on 02nd December 2024, with programmed practical completion on 9th July 2025.

Connectivity Project

McPhillips contractor completed the site investigations and commenced works on site on 30th September 2024. Monthly progress meetings are scheduled; with the first one held on 04th Nov 2024. The current practical completion date is programmed on 15th August 2025. Site photos taken in November are shown below.







The Old Court (Creative Hub)

Creative Hub – BAM targeting major works to complete by end of November to allow contractor and client snagging during December. Handover scheduled for 17 January 2025.

Kidderminster Town Centre Feasibility Study (Lionfields, Worcester St, former Crown House and Market St sites)

Additional surveys have been completed and the results will be used to help inform the massing exercise for all the sites.

The housing market review and focus groups have been completed. Final reports will be circulated at the next meeting.

**Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme 2024-2025**

June 2024

Annual review of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership 2023/24
DRAFT Budget and Performance Monitoring Fourth Quarter 2023-24
(PROVISIONAL OUTTURN)
Recommissioning the Home Improvement Agency Service

July 2024 – cancelled due to the general election

September 2024

Budget and Performance Monitoring Q1 update
Empty Property Strategy 2024-29
Wyre Forest District Council Temporary Accommodation Placement and
Procurement Policy
Development Brief (SA.S6) Supplementary Planning Document
Nominations for Treasury Management Review Panel (Chair to be appointed)
Potential topics for the scrutiny review

October 2024

Garden Waste Service Reconfiguration
Potential topics for the scrutiny review

November 2024

Budget and Performance Monitoring Q2 update
Council Tax Reduction Scheme Review 2025-26
Fleet & Garage Service Review
Wyre Forest District Council Air Quality Action Plan
Gilgal Conservation Area Character Appraisal
Major capital projects update
Scrutiny review - interim update
Potential topics for the scrutiny review
EXEMPT - Capital portfolio fund update

December 2024

Cost of Living Action Plan Update
Wyre Forest Health Action Plan Update
Wyre Forest District Council Local Enforcement Plan
Warm Homes: Local Grant
Response to consultation: enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local
authority meetings
Major capital projects update

January 2025

Update - Inclusive play equipment in parks and play areas
Major capital projects update

February 2025

Budget and Performance Monitoring Q3 update

Brinton Park project update
Major capital projects update
Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Action Plan
Air Quality Action Plan
Gilgal Conservation Area Character Appraisal

March 2025

Major capital projects update

April 2025

Major capital projects update