

Open

Cabinet

Agenda

6pm
Thursday, 9 July 2026
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster



Cabinet

The Cabinet Members and their responsibilities:-

Councillor M Hart	Leader of the Council & Strategy
Councillor D Ross	Deputy Leader & Finance & Capital Portfolio
Councillor C Rogers	Housing, Health and Well-being
Councillor D Morehead	Economic Regeneration, Planning & the Green Agenda
Councillor T Onslow	Culture, Leisure, Arts & Community Safety
Councillor N Desmond	Operational Services

Scrutiny of Decisions of the Cabinet

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

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

The deadline for "calling in" Cabinet decisions is 5pm on Tuesday 21 July 2026.

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

Urgent Key Decisions

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

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.

Where a matter affects the NRI of a Member or co-opted Member, the Code of Conduct sets out the test which must be applied by the MEMBER to decide whether disclosure is required. Again please ensure you have spoken in ADVANCE to the relevant legal officer and determined whether it is appropriate to declare the NRI and leave.

For further information

If you have any queries about this Agenda or require any details of background papers, further documents or information you should contact Louisa Bright, Principal Committee and Member Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF. Telephone: 01562 732763 or email louisa.bright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

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* Unless there are no reports in the open session.

Wyre Forest District Council

Cabinet

Thursday, 9 July 2026

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.	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.	
3.	Minutes To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on the 10 June 2026.	7
4.	CALL INS a verbal update will be given on any decisions which have been "called in" since the last meeting of the Cabinet.	
5.	Items Requiring Urgent Attention To consider any item which, in the opinion of the Chairman requires consideration at the meeting as a matter of urgency.	
6.	Public Participation In accordance with the Council's Scheme for Public Speaking at Meetings of Full Council/Cabinet, to allow members of the public to present petitions, ask questions, or make statements, details of which have been received by 12 noon on Monday 29 June 2026. (See front cover for contact details). One member of the public has registered to speak in respect of agenda item 8.2.	

7.		
7.1	Councillor C Rogers Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026-31 To consider a report from the Director of Housing and Planning to consider the consultation responses regarding the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2026-31) and to adopt the strategy. <i>The appendices to this report have been circulated electronically.</i> Also to consider recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2 July 2026.	11 To follow

8.		
8.1	Councillor D Ross Budget Monitoring Fourth Quarter 2025-26 (PROVISIONAL OUTTURN) To consider a report from the Director of Resources that briefs members on the Council's financial performance at the end of Quarter 4 ending 31st March 2026 and presents the provisional draft (pre audit) outturn position for the 2025-26 financial year. <i>The appendices to this report have been circulated electronically.</i> Also to consider recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2 July 2026.	16 To follow
8.2	Disposal of part of Burlish Country Park To consider a report from the Director of Commercial Services to agree the principle of disposal of part of Burlish Country Park to Kidderminster Harriers Football Club. Also to consider recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2 July 2026.	38 To follow
8.3	Disposal of playing pitches to Worcestershire Football Association To consider a report from the Director of Commercial Services that seeks agreement to the principle of disposal of Brown Westhead Park and Habberley Road Sports Field to Worcestershire Football Association (WFA) and sets out the next steps for negotiation and completion of the transaction. Also to consider recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2 July 2026.	49 To follow

9.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Director of Legal & Governance 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.	
10.	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

11.		
11.1	Agenda Item 8.3 - Disposal of playing pitches to Worcestershire Football Association EXEMPT Appendix 2a: Exempt Draft Heads of Terms for Brown Westhead EXEMPT Appendix 2b: Exempt Draft Heads of Terms for Habberley Road Sports Field	
12.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Director of Legal & Governance 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.	

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

10 JUNE 2026 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: M J Hart (Chairman), D Ross (Vice-Chairman), D Morehead, T L Onslow and C Rogers.

Observers:

Councillor: N Martin.

CAB.01 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor: N J Desmond.

CAB.02 Declarations of Interests by Members

Councillor M Hart declared in respect of agenda item 8.2 – Housing enforcement policy 2026, that he is a private landlord. The declaration was made as the report mentions the Renters' Rights Act 2025.

Councillor T Onslow declared in respect of agenda item 8.2 – Housing enforcement policy 2026, that she is a private landlord. The declaration was made as the report mentions the Renters' Rights Act 2025.

CAB.03 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 8 April 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.04 Call Ins

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

CAB.05 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.06 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

CAB.07 Performance Monitoring Quarter Four 2025-26

A report was considered from the Director of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services on the Council's performance at the end of quarter four

ending 31 March 2026.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval.

The Cabinet Member gave a summary of the background and key issues set out in the report. He was pleased to report that work on the frontage of Bewdley Museum was completed on time and under budget; following a public consultation regarding Bridge Street, Stourport work was progressing to the next stage; and work on the Pavillion in Brinton Park was nearing completion and the other enhancements to the park were in the final stages of completion.

The Leader seconded the proposals.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor N Martin presented the recommendations from its meeting on 4 June 2026.

Decision: The Cabinet NOTED:

1.1 The performance against measures and actions as set out in the report at Appendix 1.

1.2 The recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 4 June 2026.

Councillor T Onslow left the meeting at 6.15pm and returned at 6.17pm.

CAB.08 Update to Housing Assistance Policy 2026

A report was considered from the Director of Housing and Planning that updated the council's Housing Assistance Policy on the use of the Better Care Fund and other resources for the provision of disabled facilities grants (DFG) and other forms of financial assistance for property repair, adaptation and improvement.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. He thanked the Director of Housing and Planning for providing the report.

The Cabinet Member gave a summary of the background and key issues set out in the report. He explained that the revised policy aimed for a countywide approach to align with county partners to support a smooth service delivery across Worcestershire, and to adjust to potential local government reorganisations.

The Leader seconded the proposals.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the recommendations from its meeting on 4 June 2026.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 4 June 2026:

The Cabinet ADOPTED the Wyre Forest District Council Housing Assistance Policy 2026.

CAB.09 Housing Enforcement Policy 2026

A report was considered from the Director of Housing and Planning that updated the council's Housing Enforcement Policy to reflect the introduction of the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and reflect national guidance on levels of civil penalties.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. He thanked the Director of Housing and Planning and her team for the report.

The Cabinet Member outlined the background and key issues detailed in the report. He explained that the revised policy built on the 2020 framework. He added that the policy also incorporated additional enforcement powers mandated by the new legislation which required councils to monitor housing standards and enforce specific landlord regulations.

The Leader seconded the proposals.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the recommendations from its meeting on 4 June 2026.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 4 June 2026:

The Cabinet ADOPTED the proposed Wyre Forest District Council Housing Enforcement Policy 2026.

CAB.10 Removal of permitted development rights for smaller houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) (confirmation of Article 4 direction)

A report was considered from the Director of Housing and Planning that provided the Cabinet with information and outcomes of the public consultation on the Non-Immediate Article 4 Direction that was carried out between 20th of February and 6th of April 2026, and to confirm the Direction.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. He thanked the Director of Housing and Planning and her team for providing the report and working through the consultation responses.

The Cabinet Member gave a detailed summary of the background and key issues detailed in the report. He explained that the consultation demonstrated a clear level of public support for the proposed Article 4 Direction in Kidderminster. He said that of the 124 respondents, over 80% expressed support, which indicated a strong preference for the introduction of increased planning control in relation to HMOs.

The Leader seconded the proposals.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the recommendations from its meeting on 4 June 2026.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 4 June 2026:

The Cabinet:

- 1.1 NOTED the outcomes and responses from the public consultation and the general positive support for the non-immediate article 4 direction;**
- 1.2 AGREED that the non-immediate Article 4 Direction is confirmed which will be applied to the area within the whole of the parish of Kidderminster (as amended by The Wyre Forest District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) (Kidderminster, Kidderminster Foreign and Stourport-on-Severn) Order 2026)) to remove permitted development rights for the change of use of dwellinghouses (C3 use) to smaller Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) (C4 use) to come into force on 20 February 2027, 12 months after being made.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 6.40pm.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
9 JULY 2026**Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Chris Rogers, Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Kate Bailey ext 2560
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kate Bailey
APPENDICES:	Appendix One: Shared Homelessness Strategy Appendix Two: Action Plan Appendix Three: Questionnaire responses summary Appendix Four: Responses to comments on the strategy Appendix Five: Homeless Review https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/housing-and-homes/homelessness/worcestershire-homelessness-review-2025-draft-v3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the consultation responses regarding the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2026-31) and to adopt the strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is invited to:

- 2.1 **Note the outcome of the consultation process.**
- 2.2 **Adopt the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the Homelessness Review 2026-31.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Local Authorities have a duty to publish a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (Homelessness Act 2002 as amended by Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) every five years. It must include the local authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for ensuring that sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so. Prior to the publication of new strategies, local authorities must undertake a review of homelessness in their area. The review is a comprehensive assessment of the nature and extent of homelessness, developed by analysing homelessness

data and the views of customers and partner organisations (please see appendix two).

- 3.2 The previous strategy was approved on 13/09/2022 and was extended until the end of 2026 on the 11/11/2025 whilst officers awaited the new Government homeless and rough sleeping strategy. The primary focus was on prevention, intervention and recovery. Further details on the outcomes from the strategy are provided in the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy at 1.1. on page four titled “Achievements of last strategy” (please see Appendix One).
- 3.3 Local Authorities have a duty to improve the health of the people in the local area (Health and Social Care Act 2012) and should therefore be mindful of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The National Plan to End Homelessness, published by the Government in December 2025, is a long-term strategy with the overarching vision that: Homelessness should be rare, brief and non-repeating and that people who do become homeless should receive support quickly and effectively. Local authorities are expected to move from crisis to prevention. A key requirement will involve greater collaboration across government departments. There are five pillars of the strategy –
1. Universal Prevention
 2. Targeted Prevention
 3. Preventing Crisis
 4. Emergency Response
 5. Recovery and Stability
- 4.2 The strategy has aligned its approach to homelessness with these national priorities with a plan to shift from Crisis to Prevention. The Strategy focuses resources upstream, supporting people earlier (before accommodation loss). The shared action plan has measurable targets based on the national outcomes framework which will include six metrics relating to homelessness and rough sleeping that will be reported through the quarterly performance reports to Councillors.
- 4.3 The strategy came before Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet in April 2026 and went out to consultation between the 10 April and 22 May. The Council received 47 responses and one direct response from our Ministry of Housing, Local Government and Communities homeless specialist advisor.
- 4.4 The full breakdown of the responses received are included in Appendix Three and Four. The majority of respondents were members of the public/residents (nearly 70%) but of those that had responded nearly 40% had experienced homelessness and 8.5% were currently using homelessness services.
- 4.5 Just over 70% of respondents supported the strategy as providing a clear and effective framework for ending homelessness with 12% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Members will note there were some comments that specifically related to the Housing Advice services of single councils which may have informed respondents’ views.

- 4.6 In terms of the strategy focusing on the right priority groups there was less overall support (63.8%) but a further 27.7% partly felt this to be the case. In the comments there were no specific comments about missing groups but there were a number of references to people with mental health and drug and alcohol issues which we have responded to in Appendix Four.
- 4.7 In response to the question around agreeing the proposed partnership and governance arrangements are sufficient to deliver the strategy just over 57% felt this was correct but 21% neither agreed or disagreed with this statement and 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed. There were no comments suggesting an alternative arrangement for governance. There were comments made around working in partnership with the voluntary and community sector which we do through the Local Homelessness Forums/ Partnerships and also regarding strengthening the action plan which we have now done to include more specific targets.
- 4.8 From the consultation responses received we have amended the action plan to be clearer on measures and targets we hope to achieve and added additional text to explain some actions were suggested, but not included either because they are included in other action plans (Worcestershire Housing Strategy, Empty Homes Strategies) or a business as usual activity. Other suggestions that require further investigation will inform the future review of the action plan after 12 months as the strategy has now been signed off by some of the other councils.
- 4.9 After the consultation period ended the MHCLG published its guidance to Local Authorities on developing local homelessness and rough sleeper strategies and officers have reviewed our draft strategy in light of the guidance and were confident it met the guidance requirements.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Government is providing nearly £3.5bn funding for homelessness prevention and rough sleeping services from 2026/27–2028/29 and have amalgamated funding streams into a new Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant. Of this funding the Council will receive £812,607 (please note this also includes new burden funding for the Renters Rights Act) in 2026/27 and has been allocated £273k through the Local Government Finance Settlement to contribute to the costs of temporary accommodation.
- 5.2 The consolidation of funding into a single grant over a three year period gives the local authority and its partners greater stability and flexibility to prioritise local needs (e.g., rough sleeping services, domestic abuse related housing support). However, the separation out of temporary accommodation funding and moving it into the LGFS is a potential disadvantage as WFDC actually spent more on prevention than has been assumed by the Government. Officers have worked with the Head of Resources and 151 Officer and her team to ensure sufficient resource is available to maintain current service provision.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There is a legal requirement to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper strategy under the Homelessness Act 2002.

- 6.2 The new funding places some additional requirements on Local Authorities including that local authorities must have an action plan in line with paragraph 2.11 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance which must be published (except where specified below or in guidance) by Autumn 2026 and regularly updated. This will include the requirement to set targets in line with the Local Outcomes Framework.

7. IMPACT AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Screening Assessment has been undertaken <https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/your-council/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/equality-impact-assessments-eia/eqia-homeless-and-rough-sleeper-strategy/> and this indicates there are no adverse effects of this decision on any groups with protected characteristics so a full EIA is not required. The strategy seeks to deliver a range of services for homeless households that will have a beneficial impact on those suffering from health conditions, disabilities and financial disadvantage.
- 7.2 Climate Change: Not applicable.
- 7.3 Health and Wellbeing: the action plan includes services and projects that have a positive impact on health and wellbeing through tackling homelessness and rough sleeping.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 Failure to deliver on the objectives in the strategy, particularly in reducing the reliance on Bed and Breakfast relates to the Corporate Plan Priority: Securing financial sustainability for services communities value and Corporate Risk SR08.
- 8.2 The Council is required to have a strategy in place. Without it, it is likely that more households who are threatened with homelessness, or who are in housing need, will have limited options for support to sustain their accommodation or find alternative suitable accommodation that meets their needs. If they have to make a homeless approach this could lead to the following negative outcomes:
- Increased B&B costs
 - Increased rough sleeping in the District
 - Impacts on physical and mental health, educational achievement, ability to work and similar through increased homelessness

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The new homeless and rough sleeping strategy 2026 – 2031 has been developed by five local authorities in Worcestershire and considers the local homelessness issues in the area, the views of stakeholders and service users and the national homelessness strategy.
- 9.2 The strategy has received 47 responses to the questionnaire and a direct response from the MHCLG which it has considered in updating the strategy and action plan (this is shown in more detail in Appendix Four).

10. CONSULTEES

10.1 CLT.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 National Plan to end Homelessness, December 2025

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-national-plan-to-end-homelessness/a-national-plan-to-end-homelessness>.

11.2 Guidance on writing homeless strategies May 2026 [Toolkit and guidance for developing homelessness Strategies and Action Plans - GOV.UK](#).



Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026 - 2031

Our Vision - to end homelessness and rough sleeping and where it has not been possible to prevent it from occurring, ensure that it is rare, brief and non-recurring

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Foreword

Chair of Worcestershire Housing Board

I am proud to introduce this shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-31 for Bromsgrove District Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Wychavon District Council and Wyre Forest District Council.

Homelessness and rough sleeping remain among the most visible and urgent challenges facing our communities today. They are stark reminders of inequality, vulnerability, and the need for collective action. It is not simply the absence of a home, but the absence of security, dignity, and opportunity. Every child should grow up with the security of a home, and every adult deserves a safe place to live that provides stability and where they have a chance to thrive.

Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping continues to be of utmost importance for each of the councils involved in developing and delivering on this strategy.

Our vision, aligned with the Government's national strategy, will focus on 5 pillars to end homelessness:

Universal prevention: tackling the root causes of homelessness across the whole population.

Targeted prevention: providing tailored support to people who are more likely to face homelessness.

Preventing crisis: early identification of people who need help and putting in place personalised interventions that meet their needs.

Improving emergency responses: to ensure that if people do become homeless, they receive high quality support and that homelessness is brief.

Recovery and preventing repeat homelessness: helping people rebuild their lives with the right support.

This strategy will also take a renewed approach to the support and intervention for families with children in temporary accommodation to minimise the associated risk and long-term impact this has on them.

We recognise that homelessness is not simply a housing issue, but a complex social challenge shaped by health, employment, family breakdown, and wider economic pressures. Tackling homelessness requires collaboration across government, local authorities, health and social care, the voluntary sector, and communities themselves. That is why we have developed this strategy in collaboration with a range of stakeholders, which is essential to the successful implementation of our vision, as well as with the voice of those with lived experience of homelessness.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the organisations and individuals who have contributed towards the development of this strategy.

Governance will sit with the Worcestershire Housing Board- recognising that tackling homelessness not only benefits the individual but also benefits the economy, the health of our population, reduces crime and disorder and reduces costs for the taxpayer.

This strategy will govern our approach for five years and will see us beyond Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). However, given our experiences over recent years in tackling homelessness and the ever-changing landscape, it is vital that it remains responsive and will be kept under constant review.



Vic Allison, Chief Executive of Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils and Chair of the Worcestershire Housing Board

1. Introduction

Our vision is to **end homelessness and rough sleeping and where it isn't possible to prevent it from occurring, ensure it is rare, brief and non-recurring.**

We will tackle homelessness and rough sleeping through our work on the 5 pillars to end homelessness in line with the Government's National Plan to End Homelessness: universal prevention, targeted prevention, preventing crisis, improving emergency responses and recovery.

The district councils collaborating on the development and implementation of this strategy have a proven track record of working closely together to prevent and tackle homelessness across our districts. This is the third shared homelessness strategy to be developed, and the achievements of our last strategy are highlighted below.

1.1 Achievements of the last strategy

The previous Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 - 2025 was developed by all six Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) in Worcestershire and focused on the then three main tenets of the national strategy: *prevention, intervention and recovery* as well as increasing the supply of temporary and permanent accommodation.

- Established a **countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Group**.
- Developed a **Prison Leavers Protocol** and the pre-release homeless panel.
- Developed **stakeholder involvement and People With Lived Experience (PWLE) in reviewing services** through regular countywide meetings, bespoke focus groups, and questionnaires.
- Quarterly **reviews of data collection and deep dives into client groups** to inform decision making and share learning.

Agenda Item No. 7.1 Appendix 1

- **Joint training** in homelessness, Mental Capacity Act, psychologically informed environments, Care Act 2014, Complex Adults Risk Management framework, self-neglect etc.
- Support for those with mental health illnesses through development of **Mental Health Link Worker posts** and non-medical interventions
- **Delivery of the Rough Sleeper initiative** (target 563 p.a):
 - 2024/25 - **637 people supported**
 - 2023/24 - **837 people supported**
 - 2022/23 - **713 people supported**
- **Housing and support plans developed for the Target Priority Group (TPG)** (the most complex rough sleepers)
- **Cost of living plans, welfare assistance and bespoke support** to reduce homelessness developed across the county
- **Safe accommodation units set up for survivors of domestic abuse**
- **Supported provision of domestic abuse support services** including through the Domestic Abuse Support Service (West Mercia Women's Aid), Sanctuary Scheme and Domestic Abuse Coordinator and specialist Housing Officers (all councils)

There are also some actions from the previous strategy that are still underway at the time of writing this strategy including:

- Undertaking a **review of peer support models** in place in some areas of the county to share learning and best practice and explore whether the models could be expanded.
- **Explore opportunities for a greater range of supported and step-down accommodation** available following the supported housing needs assessment and strategy. The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 has yet to be implemented so this action was deferred.

1.2 The current situation: homelessness review

To inform and provide the evidence base for the strategic objectives and actions within this strategy, a homelessness review was undertaken.

The review includes a compilation of homelessness data and trends, mapping of services and analysis of gaps in provision, service provider feedback and the feedback of People With Lived Experience (PWLE). We also held a stakeholder engagement event in September 2025 to gather the views of statutory and voluntary sector organisations and co design the strategy.



1.3 The plan to prevent and tackle homelessness in our districts: long-term vision and short-term priorities

In line with the Government's national strategy, our long-term vision is to end homelessness and rough sleeping and where it isn't possible to prevent it from occurring, that it is rare, brief and non-recurring.

Our strategy and action plan are centred around the 5 pillars to end homelessness as set out in the national strategy:

1. Universal prevention: tackling the root causes of homelessness across the whole population.
2. Targeted prevention: providing tailored support to people who are more likely to face homelessness.
3. Preventing crisis: early identification of people who need help and putting in place personalised interventions that meet their needs.

4. Improving emergency responses: to ensure that if people do become homeless, they receive high quality support and that homelessness is brief.
5. Recovery and preventing repeat homelessness: helping people rebuild their lives with the right support.

The action plan defines our priorities over the next 5 years to achieve our vision, and contains short-, medium- and long-term priorities.

1.4 Strategy structure

The strategy firstly explores the local issues that need to be addressed against each of the five pillars in the national strategy, based on the Homelessness Review undertaken in 2025.

Secondly it defines how we will take action to address local issues through the Strategy Action Plan, the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Group and local homelessness partnerships, and comprehensive governance arrangements under the Worcestershire Housing Board.

Finally, it outlines the funding and resource available to implement the strategy and deliver services.

1.5 Partnership working to codesign the strategy

The LHAs recognise the role our statutory and voluntary sector partners play in supporting the work we do, and how they go beyond the delivery of our statutory services through providing complimentary statutory and non-statutory services. However, this strategy is focused primarily on the role of LHAs and in meeting their legal responsibilities. It is a legal obligation of the LHAs to have a strategy in place and for it to be compliant with the Homelessness Act 2002. In developing the strategy, we have followed the legislative and good practice guidance and reviewed homelessness strategies from across the country.

2. Pillar 1: Universal prevention – tackling the root causes of homelessness

2.1 Increasing the supply of social and affordable housing

The Worcestershire Housing Strategy 2023-40, developed by the six Worcestershire LHAs and partners provides a long-term housing strategy for Worcestershire centred around four priority areas:

- Economic growth and jobs
- Quality and standards
- Health and wellbeing
- Net zero carbon and climate change

Specifically in relation to housing growth, the focus is on developing a 5+ year public sector pipeline of development sites, and the development of housing delivery capacity e.g. the exploration of direct delivery housing models for those LHAs who do not currently have this capacity.

There are two established delivery groups working to implement Housing Strategy actions and these are overseen by the Worcestershire Housing Board, which also oversees the implementation of this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. This arrangement will ensure synergy between the two strategies.

In terms of permanent housing all the councils collaborate with developers and registered providers to deliver market and affordable housing across the county. This work is underpinned by the councils Local Plans which identify a wide range of tenures and types of housing including low-cost home ownership and social/ affordable rent properties.

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There is a shortage in the supply of housing, particularly in the provision of affordable housing with an annual requirement of all housing tenures of approximately 1,911 per annum across the districts that share this strategy.

Local Plan numbers are informed by a combination of the standard methodology requirement, Housing Market Assessments and Housing Needs Surveys to determine the required mix of housing.

2.2 Making the best use of existing housing and that it is allocated to those who need it most

All LHAs sharing this strategy have their own allocations policies to ensure that much needed affordable housing is allocated to those who need it most. In each LHA area, the demand for affordable housing far outstrips supply. At the time of writing, Local Government Reorganisation could see the abolition of all six district councils in Worcestershire and the introduction of one or two unitary authorities and with it the requirement to develop new allocations policies for the new organisation(s).

Feedback from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Stakeholder Event indicated that partners felt that the “managed move” process whereby Registered Providers (RPs) move households within their own stock and therefore negating the need for a homelessness approach could be an area to try to seek consistency on. This would mean less upheaval for households and reduced service demand on local authority housing teams.

The councils also collaborate with registered providers to ensure best use is made of existing stock including tackling under occupation and low demand schemes.

Whilst evictions from social housing are relatively low locally as they are nationally, there are more opportunities to prevent homelessness from social housing tenancies at an earlier stage through the establishment of pre-eviction panels and improved collaborative working. The government references a new toolkit in the National Plan to End Homelessness to provide advice for providers and councils on strengthening tenant engagement to reduce homelessness risks.

2.3 Supported housing

As with general needs affordable housing, the demand for supported housing is far higher than the supply locally and nationally. People need supported accommodation for a range of reasons e.g. young people needing support with life skills, people with mental health needs, people with substance misuse needs, survivors of domestic abuse. Some cohorts of homeless households will need more than just a housing solution to lift them out of homelessness and will require a sustainable, supported, and appropriate environment.

The Government's new Social and Affordable Homes Programme includes new flexibility for accommodation where the level of design and adaptation results in higher costs and calls on providers to produce ambitious bids for new supported housing.

The Worcestershire Housing Strategy delivery groups are exploring opportunities with RPs to deliver supported housing.

To improve standards across existing supported accommodation and tackle rogue landlords the government is introducing a new licensing regime following the consultation on the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023. As part of the implementation of this Act, the councils will be required to develop a Supported Housing Strategy by 31st March 2027.

2.4 Private rented sector accommodation

The Renters Rights Act seeks to give more security to tenants by abolishing section 21 'no fault' evictions which has been a significant cause of homelessness across the districts. The Act also brings with it a range of other measures to strengthen tenants' rights e.g. empowering tenants to challenge unreasonable rent increases, bringing an end to rental bidding and reducing barriers to accessing private rented accommodation such as outlawing discrimination against prospective tenants with children or who receive benefits, and preventing landlords from charging high rent in advance payments.

Making sure both tenants and landlords understand their rights under the Act will play an important part in reducing the risk of homelessness.

For the first time, the Act also includes the provision for councils to issue civil penalties against landlords who evict their tenants illegally.

Whilst the local authorities sharing this strategy welcome the intention of this legislation, there remains concern that the Act will lead to private landlords exiting the market prior the major implementation milestones e.g. no-fault evictions being removed in May 2026, which may lead to a spike in homelessness. Measures to mitigate this situation are considered within the strategy action plan.

As there is not enough social housing to meet demand, helping people to access private rented accommodation remains a priority across the districts - through rent deposits, bonds and private sector leasing schemes.

The councils will also be considering as part of this strategy how they can build relationships with private landlords to both improve access to private rented accommodation and prevent homelessness from private rented accommodation e.g. by encouraging landlords to work with the councils if they have a tenant who is at risk of homelessness.

Work with private sector landlords and letting agents also enables councils to meet some housing needs in parts of the county, although local housing allowance rates do make this challenging. The councils have been innovative in attracting landlords to provide accommodation through landlord forums, the use of rent bonds and deposits, social letting agencies and private sector leasing schemes, and this will continue during the lifetime of the strategy.

It should be noted that in some areas of the county, there are particular pressures on private sector accommodation with both Home Office and criminal justice providers looking to purchase/lease private rented sector accommodation for asylum seekers and prison leavers. In some cases, this has led to homelessness situations as existing tenants are served with notice and has led to reducing private sector accommodation available to homeless households.

2.5 Maximising income, financial inclusion and welfare assistance

Supporting low-income households to be able to pay their rent and other essential living costs to sustain their accommodation is critical to preventing homelessness. Recent years funding from the Household Support Fund, and Discretionary Housing Payments have led to some positive outcomes locally in the face of the cost-of-living crisis. It is expected that the new Crisis Resilience Fund will build on this bespoke approach.

Some councils involved in this strategy also have specialist Financial Inclusion Officers who work directly with people making homeless approaches due to rent arrears who are struggling with the cost of living. Their role is to ensure that their income is maximised

through ensuring they are receiving correct benefit entitlements, assistance to apply for benefit back payments and working with local services to increase their income through quality employment. Help is also provided by tenancy sustainment or support workers on issues like budgeting and maximising benefit entitlement,

Continuing to provide discretionary welfare support to ensure low-income households do not become homeless is a key priority for this strategy and action plan.

3. Pillar 2: Targeted prevention – targeted support for people at risk of homelessness

3.1 Collaboration to prevent homelessness

The LHAs and partner agencies have a proven record of working collaboratively to prevent homelessness. The Worcestershire Housing Board comprises of senior officers from across sectors who oversee the implementation of housing and homelessness strategies. A countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy Group has been in existence for many years comprising of LHAs, MHCLG, statutory and voluntary sector partners.

Feeding into the countywide group, each LHA has a local homelessness partnership. This arrangement will continue to provide assurance that the strategy action plan is implemented, outcomes are achieved against the strategy targets - and that people that are at risk of homelessness are identified early and linked into the right housing and support services.

The government intends to introduce a new ‘duty to collaborate’ requiring public services to work together to prevent homelessness and support those at crisis point. Locally we developed a ‘commitment to refer’ which goes beyond the existing ‘duty to refer’ which requires certain public bodies to notify the LHA should they identify a household who may become homeless within 56 days. This is in recognition that there are many partners who will identify a potential homelessness situation and not just those included in the legislation.

It is the intention of this strategy to scrutinise adherence to the duty to refer locally and prepare for the new ‘duty to collaborate’.

3.2 Addressing barriers to accessing services

Some groups of people face barriers to accessing services because they may not be delivered in a way that meets their needs. For example, an action in the previous homelessness strategy was to understand the barriers for women rough sleepers in accessing services that are often communal provisions for both male and female rough sleepers. This work is ongoing at the time of writing this strategy. We also know that young people, care leavers, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled people and LGBT+ people also face barriers.

For young people and care leavers the LHAs and Children’s Services work closely together and have developed a longstanding Care Leavers Protocol and a 16/17-year-old Protocol to clarify joint working arrangements. Each district has supported accommodation for young people, which in recent years has been at risk due to a change in funding structures and has meant LHAs have needed to meet the shortfall in County Council funding. It is a priority for supported accommodation to be in place for homeless young people in order for them to have a safe and supported environment for them to develop the necessary life skills needed to live a successful future life. In 2021 Wychavon District Council bought and refurbished a 10-room property to provide supported accommodation for young people and have also committed to purchasing a further property in its latest council plan.

Locally we also know that people with a physical disability can find it hard to access adapted temporary accommodation due to the lack of availability. This can then lead to extended stays in hospital and a delay in discharge. Wyre Forest District Council opened a new temporary accommodation facility in 2025 which includes a small number of fully adapted rooms. Our intention is to explore opportunities to work with colleagues across the health system to increase the availability of adapted temporary accommodation.

We also know locally that people with multiple and complex needs face barriers to accessing accommodation, for example those that are using drugs and alcohol and with mental health support needs. Worcestershire Public Health have developed a Memorandum of Understanding between services to address this issue.

Working with People With Lived Experience (PWLE) of homelessness and accessing services is also a priority for this strategy as it is critical that we design accessible, inclusive and culturally sensitive, trauma informed services.

We already regularly undertake lived experience engagement with certain groups, for example survivors of domestic abuse and rough sleepers. However, we are seeking to go further with this strategy and ensure PWLE are contributing to, and overseeing, the strategy actions and performance via the Countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Group.

3.3 Interventions to prevent homelessness for higher risk groups

There are many challenges that affect the higher risk groups and these include a severe housing shortage, silting up or undersupply of supported accommodation especially for those with complex needs and some poor-quality supported accommodation.

3.3.1 Single people

Single homeless households make up 57% of all housing register applicants across the districts, with the largest group being single adults aged 35-65 (26%).

Between 2022-2025, 54% of applicants owed a homeless duty were single adults:

65% were already homeless (relief duty)

37% were threatened with homelessness (prevention duty)

Single homeless people often face multiple needs: mental ill health, substance misuse, social isolation, and barriers to employment. Many do not qualify as having a priority need under legislation, limiting access to settled housing and statutory support. They are overrepresented among rough sleepers and those in insecure arrangements (e.g. sofa surfing), leading to poor health, social exclusion, and instability. Even those without vulnerabilities struggle due to unaffordable rents and precarious finances.

This homelessness strategy aims for early intervention, clear routes to housing, and multi-agency collaboration (local authorities, housing providers, health, probation, voluntary sector).

The LHAs use national homelessness funding to provide both accommodation-based and floating support, rent deposits and rent in advance to help access accommodation and No First Night Out/No Second Night Out provision and access to furniture.

3.3.2 Prison leavers

A small but significant number of homeless applications are from those leaving prison. We hold fortnightly prison meetings to ensure that where a Duty to Refer has been made, individuals are provided with a homelessness assessment prior to release wherever possible.

However, housing options are often limited due to the individual not meeting the priority need threshold under homelessness legislation. With limited supported accommodation available, Community Accommodation Service (CAS3) accommodation has provided a much-needed lifeline for those who otherwise might be released without an accommodation offer which may result in rough sleeping.

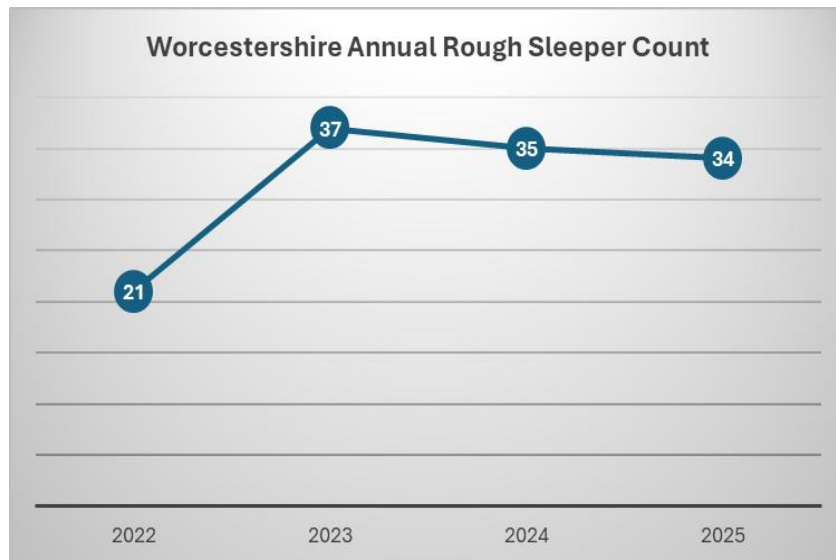
Recalls from this accommodation remain a concern (circa 50%) and a

positive housing pathway from CAS 3 accommodation needs to be explored.

3.3.3 Rough sleepers/those at risk of rough sleeping

Rough sleeping can be a dangerous and isolating experience. People who sleep rough are more likely to be victims of crime and violence. The longer a person remains on the streets, or actively engages in street life culture, the more likely it will have significant implications on their physical and mental health. Female rough sleepers are particularly at risk and may require specialist or women only services to address their needs. Safeguarding is therefore particularly relevant to these groups.

The Worcestershire official street count held each year shows fluctuating levels of rough sleeping across the county, with numbers in recent years remaining fairly static.



Rough sleeper data is collated each week improving our local intelligence of the flow, return, and stock of individuals and the reason behind their homelessness. Regular rough sleeper/prevention meetings and multi-agency meetings are held at a local level enables

the co-ordination of services and information sharing to develop partnerships with all organisations and individuals committed to ending rough sleeping and homelessness. This includes a consideration of any safeguarding issues that need to be flagged with partners or referred to the Adult Safeguarding Team. All five councils have rough sleeper outreach teams providing intensive support and routes into accommodation such as No First / No Second Night Out, Housing First/Led and other services.

Progress has been made in tackling health inequalities with increased access to health services and countywide drug and alcohol support, including harm reduction teams. Outreach teams have strengthened their practice by signing up to Homeless Link's outreach principles and undertaking learning and development.

Although Supported Housing providers in Worcestershire work within a trauma informed, person centred approach, those clients with substance misuse, serious mental health conditions and/or a history of arson may find themselves waiting for a suitable placement due to stringent accessibility criteria. There is also limited availability of rapid access supported accommodation resulting in an individual's only accommodation option being outside of the county.

We will also expand the multi-agency work on Target Priority Group rough sleepers and expand the Mental health and Homelessness Group so that multi-agency working is consistent across all districts and there is effective cross boundary working.

Therefore, the strategy will continue to promote collaborative working with health partners, housing providers and other organisations to improve access to services for rough sleepers including early intervention for those at risk and accommodation for those with complex needs.

3.3.4 Young people and care leavers

Homelessness for young people remains significant issue. This includes from people aged 16-17, Care Leavers and young parents. Many young people will have support as well as accommodation needs as they leave home for the first time.

Changes to the benefits system together with the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, and the number of young people in low paid work, has seen a rise in the number of those at risk of homelessness.

For young people the data indicates that the most common causes of homelessness in Worcestershire are family or friends being no longer willing to accommodate, the loss of private rented accommodation and relationship breakdown with partner (non- violent breakdown).

Whilst services do work closely together, there is still more to be done to prevent young people from becoming homeless. It is a focus of this strategy to enable more upstream homelessness prevention through family mediation and identifying potential homelessness situations at the earliest stage e.g. via schools and other relevant sectors/organisations.

3.3.5 Families with children

Worcestershire continues to be an attractive place to live and work, inevitably leading to high rents and house prices. This means some families are unable to afford to own or privately rent a home. Changes to the benefits system together with the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and the number of people in low paid work has seen a rise in the number of families at risk of homelessness.

We want to prevent homelessness by identifying the key risk factors/triggers in families lives that can lead to a family being at risk of homelessness at the earliest possible stage.

Families in Worcestershire access social housing registers for a variety of reasons, often reflecting both long-term housing challenges and immediate triggers that place them at risk of homelessness. The key reasons include:

- **Relationship Breakdown**
Non-violent relationship breakdowns, particularly involving partners, remain a significant factor. Families in this situation often require alternative accommodation to prevent homelessness or unsafe living conditions.
- **Domestic Abuse**
Domestic abuse is a major reason families seek housing support. Increased awareness of available services and support pathways has led to earlier reporting and engagement with housing services.
- **Loss of Private Rented Accommodation**
The end of an assured shorthold tenancy in the private rented sector, whether due to eviction, rent increases, or landlord decisions, continues to trigger housing register applications.
- **Financial Hardship and Housing Affordability**
Rising rents, high house prices, low wages, and changes to the benefits system contribute to families' inability to secure or sustain accommodation.
- **Other Factors**
Other, less frequent reasons include overcrowding, unsuitability of current accommodation (e.g., health/accessibility needs), and the need to move closer to education, employment or support networks.

As of June 2025, there were 4,955 families on the housing registers across the councils' areas which equates to 43% of all applications.

Analysis of trends shows that relationship breakdown, domestic abuse and the loss of private rented tenancies remain the leading immediate triggers for applications, emphasising the importance of early intervention and targeted prevention support.

3.3.6 Survivors of domestic abuse

Domestic Abuse continues to be one of the primary drivers of homelessness across Worcestershire, with a profound and lasting impact on victim/survivors, families, and communities. Since the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, LHAs and Worcestershire County Council have worked collaboratively to strengthen housing pathways, deliver on new statutory duties, and create a coordinated, trauma-informed response using a whole family approach for those fleeing abuse.

The establishment of the Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, a domestic abuse and housing coordinator, specialised domestic abuse housing officers and the provision of safe accommodation has led to more consistent standards of support across the county. Housing teams, alongside commissioned domestic abuse providers, now play a critical role in early identification, prevention, and sustaining safe accommodation for survivors.

Data and Trends

Data highlights that domestic abuse remains a significant cause of homelessness presentations across Worcestershire over the last three years. Of those owed a homelessness duty in 2024/25, 30.8% of households presented due to domestic abuse.

	Prevention (%)	Relief (%)	Total (%)
2022/23	8.3%	18.4%	26.7%
2023/24	9.7%	18.8%	28.5%
2024/25	7.1%	23.7%	30.8%

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In 2024/25 over 10,000 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes were recorded by police in Worcestershire. This total includes both crimes and non-crime incidents. According to Worcestershire County Council’s Operation Encompass page, which summarises West Mercia Police’s Q4 2024/25 Performance Monitoring Report, around 25% of all recorded crimes in the county were classified as domestic abuse related.

While West Mercia Police data for the same period indicates a statistical decrease in domestic abuse incidents across the force area, the figures for Worcestershire demonstrate that domestic abuse remains a significant issue locally.

Despite improved reporting, local insight suggests that many survivors still do not disclose abuse, indicating ongoing unmet need. Across the county, domestic abuse-related approaches accounted for a significant proportion of homelessness applications. The majority were women with dependent children, though a growing number of single survivors, male victims, and individuals with complex needs have been identified.

Sanctuary Schemes and Safe Accommodation

LHAs across Worcestershire, work in partnership to deliver safe accommodation, including, refuge spaces, dispersed units, and sanctuary schemes to enable survivors to remain safely in their homes where appropriate.

Sanctuary Scheme Referrals (September 2024 - August 2025):

District	2024/25
Bromsgrove	3
Malvern Hills	15
Redditch	8
Wychavon	32
Wyre Forest	47

Between 2024-2025 a total of 105 referrals were made to sanctuary schemes across all 5 local authorities. Overall referrals have decreased

across most districts, with some localised increases, highlighting variation in demand and referral pathways.

There has been much progress across the LHAs since the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory duty across LHAs including the expansion of the Domestic Abuse Community Champions network through Worcester Community Trust and West Mercia Women's Aid, delivery of trauma-informed housing training to frontline staff, specialist Domestic Abuse Housing in each council (who have received positive feedback from service users) and strengthened partnership working between housing, police, and support providers through regular MARAC coordination and attendance at DRIVE meetings.

All the housing teams work in partnership with Sanctuary Schemes to help victim-survivors of domestic abuse stay safely in their homes by providing tailored security measures, reducing the need to move.

The introduction of the Domestic Abuse Housing Coordinator role to work closely with Domestic Abuse Housing Officers has ensured training and knowledge remain up to date.

3.3.7 Veterans

Instances of homelessness amongst veterans are low locally, however there is action to be taken to further tackle this. LHAs are currently working with the Worcestershire Armed Forces Covenant team to ensure that there is a good understanding of the Armed Forces Covenant in housing services and ensure that organisational policies reflect the needs of the Covenant e.g. that local connection rights (for the purposes of social housing allocation) are embedded in policy.

3.3.8 Refugees and migrant homelessness

Worcestershire has provided a sanctuary to refugees from Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan through the government's resettlement schemes, including Homes for Ukraine, the [Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme](#) (ACRS) and [Afghan Relocations and Assistance](#)

[Policy](#) (ARAP), as well as a small number of arrivals through the Community Sponsorship Scheme. Accommodation has been provided by a combination of private hosts, the private rented sector and, where appropriate, social housing.

The Home Office is responsible for providing accommodation for asylum seekers, whilst their asylum claims are being processed. Home Office accommodation is provided in Worcestershire in both contingency hotels and dispersal accommodation (usually self-contained family accommodation or houses of multiple occupation). However, asylum seeker numbers in Worcestershire are currently relatively low in comparison to other areas of the UK.

Once asylum has been granted, a refugee is required to leave their Home Office accommodation, with notice to quit currently at 42 days from the date of decision. A process is in place for information to be shared with the local housing authority of notice to quit local Home Office accommodation, to ensure housing advice can be provided.

Homelessness amongst this cohort is relatively low locally due to fewer asylum seeker numbers than other areas of the country and the fact that those placed in Worcestershire often look to relocate to areas where cultural or religious needs are better met or nearer to family members once asylum has been granted. However, it still remains a challenge to be able to respond to the needs of refugees and migrants. We are seeing an increase in approaches for those with No Recourse To Public Funds, where options for support are extremely limited, and LHAs need to work closely with our partner VCSE organisations to respond to this.

3.3.9 Hospital discharge, substance use and Adult Social Care support

“Discharge from hospital into poor quality, insecure housing or, in the worst cases, onto the streets is a deeply harmful outcome. When combined with unmet mental health needs and substance use needs, it can severely undermine people's recovery and increase the risk that

their health deteriorates further and makes them even more vulnerable.” [A National Plan to End Homelessness, MHCLG, 2025.](#)

The government is committed to a target that no one eligible for assistance is discharged to the street after a hospital stay and will be working with the NHS and councils to implement the [Discharging people at risk of or experiencing homelessness guidance published in 2024.](#)

In preparation for this, our strategy will commit to exploring local opportunities with colleagues across the health system to promote early identification of housing issues and planning from admission both for accommodation needs but also any ongoing health and care needs.

The LHAs do not provide any supported temporary accommodation and therefore it is essential that if people do need to access temporary accommodation that the necessary support and care package is provided to reduce the risk of a harmful outcome.

Sadly, district councils have seen a rise in the number of homeless people harming themselves, and others, in temporary accommodation and an increase in the number of deaths in temporary accommodation through people dying by suicide or overdose. Although the numbers are small, they are increasing and this desperately needs to be addressed to safeguard people and prevent this from happening.

At the time of writing this strategy a roundtable event was being organised to bring together senior officers from housing, health, social care, registered housing providers, and safeguarding to focus on the issue of supporting people with complex needs in unsupported accommodation. It is expected that the recommendations from that event will feed into this strategy and the action plan.

3.3.10 Neurodivergence and homelessness

People with a range of neurodivergent needs, including autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, learning disabilities and other cognitive differences, may face additional barriers and challenges when navigating housing services or experiencing homelessness. These barriers often relate to communication differences, difficulties with unfamiliar and changing environments, sensory needs, and the cumulative impact of unmet support needs.

To better support local residents with neurodiverse needs, Local Housing Authorities have introduced training for housing officers to improve understanding of neurodivergence and to help staff recognise when individuals may require tailored approaches, including those who do not have a formal diagnosis. This training aims to ensure that interactions are accessible, supportive, and responsive to individual needs rather than relying on assumptions or labels.

LHAs are also reporting increasing numbers of households requesting additional bedrooms where, for example, children with neurodivergent needs are unable to share bedrooms with siblings. This often reflects genuine challenges relating to sleep, safety, behaviour regulation, or sensory differences. These pressures contribute to growing demand for larger family homes within an already limited social housing stock.

4 Pillar 3: Preventing crisis – helping people stay in their homes

Identifying and preventing homelessness at the earliest possible stage is the best outcome for households, LHAs and the public purse. However, where it has not been possible to prevent homelessness, services need to work together quickly and effectively to ensure that it is as brief as possible.

4.1 Preventing homelessness at the earliest stage

‘Too often, households are known to one service, such as a voluntary or community organisation, without that information being shared with the council or other relevant partners. To deliver truly coordinated and preventative support, everyone must work together, with clear referral pathways and shared responsibility for identifying and responding to risk early.’

[A National Plan to End Homelessness, MHCLG, 2025](#)

Locally as well as nationally, we want to increase the proportion of households who are supported to stay in their own homes or helped to find alternative accommodation - to prevent homelessness and the need for temporary accommodation.

Details of the Government’s new Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant were announced in December 2025 as part of a provisional multi-year settlement. The intent of this grant is to simplify homelessness funding and allow for greater flexibility in spend according to local need.

The provisional 3-year allocations will allow for longer term strategic planning to commission or directly provide homelessness services/initiatives on a longer-term basis, rather than annual allocations in recent years.

To inform this strategy, a mapping exercise was carried out as part of the homelessness review which identified what services are available across Worcestershire and what gaps in provision there might be. A summary of this is contained within the homelessness review and an action within the plan is to explore what services are required to be commissioned or directly provided by LHAs based on the findings of the review.

The LHAs already provide a number of services to help prevent homelessness or to ensure suitable alternative accommodation is available at the prevention stage. This includes access to funding for rent deposits/bonds and rent in advance, welfare assistance, working with landlords and families to resolve issues and mediation for young people and their families.

4.2 Accessing the right support at the right time

It is vital that people get the support that they need, when they need it, to prevent homelessness. Housing and homelessness systems can be complex by the very nature of legislation, geographical location, differences in funding and associated criteria, whether they are provided by statutory or voluntary services and as such it can be challenging for people to navigate them or understand what support is available.

The need to raise awareness of what services are already available was a key theme arising from partners who attended the strategy stakeholder event held in September 2025. The mapping exercise outlined in the previous section will be useful in raising awareness but the LHAs are keen to work with partners to build further on this through improved communication and joint training across organisations and sectors. Joint work with the Adult Front Door and the Community Directory are actions within the strategy action plan.

To proactively identify and predict where households may be at risk of homelessness, we want to improve our use of data to enable us to target high-risk households 3-6 months before they potentially reach crisis point. To address this, we want to explore using a predictive analytics model utilising a range of different data to target our homelessness prevention work.

4.3 Person-centred support to prevent rough sleeping

The councils have worked closely together for many years to tackle rough sleeping and have developed a range of initiatives such as No First Night Out (emergency bed spaces for those that are new to the street), Housing First/Led models (intensive support linked to accommodation), outreach support, bespoke funding and person-centred packages of support. A Rough Sleeper Coordinator has also been in post for several years to oversee the councils' strategic approach to tackling rough sleeping and unblock barriers to accommodation for those with a poor tenancy or offending history.

We will aim continue providing bespoke funding for outreach teams and the Rough Sleeper Coordinator to find a housing solution for those at risk of rough sleeping and rough sleepers.

5. Pillar 4: Improving emergency responses – improving temporary accommodation and making people's experiences better if they do become homeless

Whilst the aim is to prevent homelessness at the earliest possible stage and negate the need for temporary accommodation, it will always be needed as a safety net for households at crisis point.

LHAs have a duty to provide temporary accommodation in certain circumstances to homeless households. They can also utilise a discretionary duty to accommodate others, where no duty is owed but they are accommodated under wider policy initiatives such as No First Night Out/No Second Night Out to prevent rough sleeping or to support rough sleepers coming off the streets.

If temporary accommodation is required then it must be safe, affordable, of a decent standard and stable. B&B accommodation is not suitable for families with children, but we recognise that it may be the only option at crisis point.

Over the previous three years the number of placements ending has steadily declined from 1121 to 734 and the same for placements with children 339 to 235. Which means that households are spending longer in temporary accommodation. This is due to increasing pressure on housing availability impacting on the ability to house people into permanent accommodation. Correspondingly in the five districts the length of stay in temporary accommodation over 12 weeks has risen from 18% in 2022/23 to 26% in 2024/25 and a corresponding increase of length of placements for the longer timescales (or static numbers over the last three years).

For all the councils the most used type of temporary accommodation is Bed and Breakfast but the amount this is used varies from 46% of all

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placements in Redditch to 59% in Wyre Forest in 2024/25. There has been a decrease in use of Bed and Breakfast between 2023/24 and 2024/25 in all of the councils except Bromsgrove where the percentage of placements in B&B have increased from 42% to 48%.

This shows positive work undertaken by many councils to bring other forms of temporary accommodation into use including from Registered Providers and councils' own stock. When considering the use of temporary accommodation for households with dependent children, WFDC and MHDC still mainly use Bed and Breakfast (53% and 72% respectively). However, both WDC and BDC use more temporary accommodation provided by Registered Providers than B&B (39% and 56% respectively) and RBC mainly use their own housing stock (61%).

The availability of different types and numbers of temporary accommodation differs across the county and can range from ad hoc used of emergency accommodation such as Bed and Breakfast to accommodation owned and managed by the Councils directly. See the table below for more information on temporary accommodation across the districts.

Placements into:	22/23	23/24	24/25
TA within RP Stock	89	89	72
TA within your own stock	113	115	98
Any other type of TA	27	28	76
Made own arrangements for TA	36	13	3
Other nightly paid, privately managed accommodation	165	92	69
Private sector TA leased council / Registered Provider	29	43	12
Bed & Breakfast	633	578	395
Temporarily remains in property	5	3	3
Other: e.g refuge	24	13	6

The new government strategy has a strong focus on households in temporary accommodation and particularly those with dependent children. There is now a body of research around the health impacts of temporary accommodation on people's health including infant mortality and councils are expected to reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast style accommodation for families over the lifetime of this parliament.

All the LHAs have support workers who can provide additional support to households in need, but the resource is limited and it is critical that the councils utilise other support and care providers where relevant.

LHAs want to increase the amount of good quality self-contained accommodation, which will provide a better experience for homeless households but is also better value for money and less expensive than nightly paid accommodation.

We will work with education providers and GPs to ensure they are aware and can support those households in Temporary Accommodation where appropriate.

6. Pillar 5: Recovery and preventing repeat homelessness – ensuring people don't experience homelessness more than once and halving long term rough sleeping

With the right support people can rebuild their lives after experiencing the trauma of homelessness and break the cycle of repeat homelessness.

6.1 Ensuring people don't experience homelessness more than once

Preventing repeat homelessness is achieved through a variety of ways depending in part on the client group. Ensuring households are supported through the transition from temporary into permanent accommodation and working with households to make them tenancy ready whilst in temporary and supported accommodation has proved beneficial.

Some repeat homeless can arise through households not being able to access health interventions when needed. Locally some LHAs have funded Mental Health Link workers to work with housing teams and households approaching for homelessness assistance. This has proved a valuable resource to enable homeless households to access mental health support and assisting them to access existing mental health services at the right time.

Through regular meetings, agencies collaborate on policy development, share data and good practice, and coordinate funding opportunities. This joined-up approach strengthens the county's ability to deliver sustainable solutions and improve outcomes for those at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness.

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Further work needs to be done to better understand why repeat homelessness for survivors of domestic abuse and larger families with complex needs is high and we will work with those with lived experience to see if we can develop workstreams to tackle this.

6.2 Tackling long term rough sleeping

The Government's funding programmes have enabled LHAs to implement a number of service offers for rough sleepers including Housing First/Led, No First/Second Night Out, outreach workers and access to personalised budgets. This approach has supported the most entrenched rough sleepers, some of whom had previously been on the streets for many years, to maintain social housing/private rented tenancies. Through the use of personalised budgets for meaningful activities and engagement opportunities councils have been able to help rough sleepers and former rough sleepers to sustain their accommodation, make their property a home, build positive routines and strengthen community connections.

By offering bespoke interventions, the personalisation budget helps to break the cycle of homelessness and reduce the likelihood of individuals returning to the streets. It empowers frontline staff to respond quickly and creatively to barriers faced by rough sleepers, ensuring that support is not only practical but also person-centred.

This strategy is committed to maintaining this robust approach to tackling and reducing rough sleeping.

6.3 Access to specialist health services: mental health, physical health & substance use

"What needs to be considered is the traumatic experience of being homeless. And that doesn't stop the moment you come out of homelessness... Even if you didn't have mental health issues going into homelessness, you are guaranteed 100 million percent [to have mental health issues after experiencing homelessness]. I have no doubt in my mind at all that everybody goes through a homelessness journey will experience trauma if being homeless and that needs to be considered because even if you've got no recovery to deal with, no official mental health diagnosis or

any compound need, you are going to have an adjustment and, you know, adjustment from that trauma”

MHCLG (2025) Lived Experience Forum Report, recommendations from people with lived experience for the cross-Government homelessness strategy, Revolving Doors, Groundswell, Justlife Foundation

Project Bright Path supports people who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping and experiencing mental health challenges, both diagnosed and undiagnosed. The programme provides rapid, relational and trauma-informed support through short-term, focused interventions and better connection into mainstream services. Its purpose is to help people stabilise at times of crisis and access the right mental health and housing support at the right time. A key development during the year was the appointment of two Band 7 mental health practitioners, one based in Herefordshire and one in Worcestershire. Their specialist clinical input has already made a difference, supporting people with complex needs, helping unlock access to formal mental health assessments and diagnosis, and strengthening the ability of frontline workers to navigate mental health systems.

The project also delivers a training programme which is delivered in partnership with a wide range of organisations, including LHAs, housing providers, rehabilitation centres and voluntary sector partners. Content has continued to evolve, with additions including trauma-informed approaches, neurodiversity awareness and clearer pathways for mental health and homelessness support.

In developing this strategy, housing and health colleagues have been engaging in more detailed discussions around the links between mental health, physical health and homelessness and what could be done locally to address poor health and inequalities via the countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy group, the Worcestershire Housing Board, the Housing and Health Group, the district health collaboratives, and the Health Inequalities Prevention Personalisation Care Board. This strategy is committed to ensuring access to specialist services for homeless

households and specific actions will be defined in conjunction with housing and health.

6.4 Community support and services

The LHAs recognise that peer support can be invaluable in tackling and preventing homelessness. Those that have lived experience will often be able to engage complex homeless households more effectively as they know first hand what it is like to experience homelessness and disadvantage.

Homelessness peer support models are in place in some areas of the county and there remains a commitment from the previous strategy to review peer support models and identify good practice with a view to potentially increasing or upscaling peer support.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy Group continues to learn from those with lived experience of homelessness through ongoing feedback, workshops and questionnaires.

The service mapping exercise carried out as part of the Homelessness Review and the [Community Services Directory](#) are also useful to highlight the community support services available. Ongoing discussions on how to harness community support continue to take place at local homelessness forums.

We will continue to engage with other services that can support households into education, employment and training and those that assist people with managing finances such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.

7. Governance arrangements

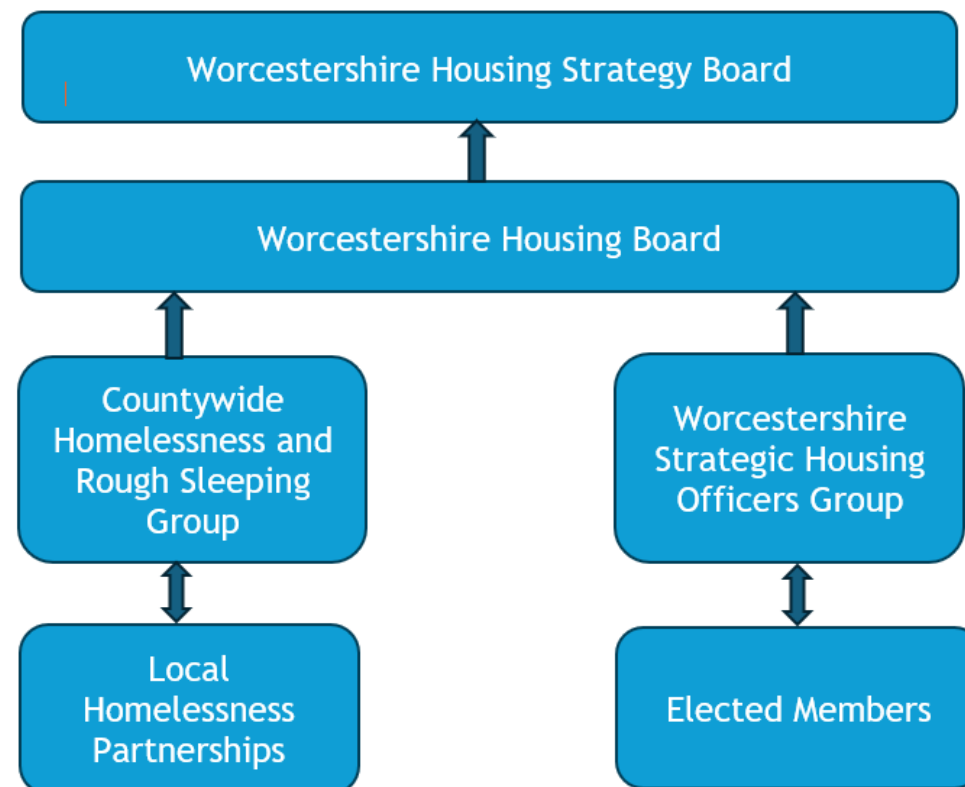
7.1 Oversight, delivery and monitoring

Worcestershire Housing Board is responsible for ensuring that the commitments within the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy are realised. The partnership is a multi-agency and cross-sector partnership, ensuring delivery of the strategy is supported across relevant organisations. The Housing Board reports to the Housing Strategy Board comprised of Chief Executive or senior officers from LHAs, Registered Providers, NHS and Public Health.

The Strategy will be overseen by the Countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Group, a public and voluntary sector partnership that brings together statutory agencies, housing teams, health services, and community partners to ensure a coordinated response to homelessness across the county. The chair of that group will attend the Housing Board regularly to report on outcomes achieved and progress against actions.

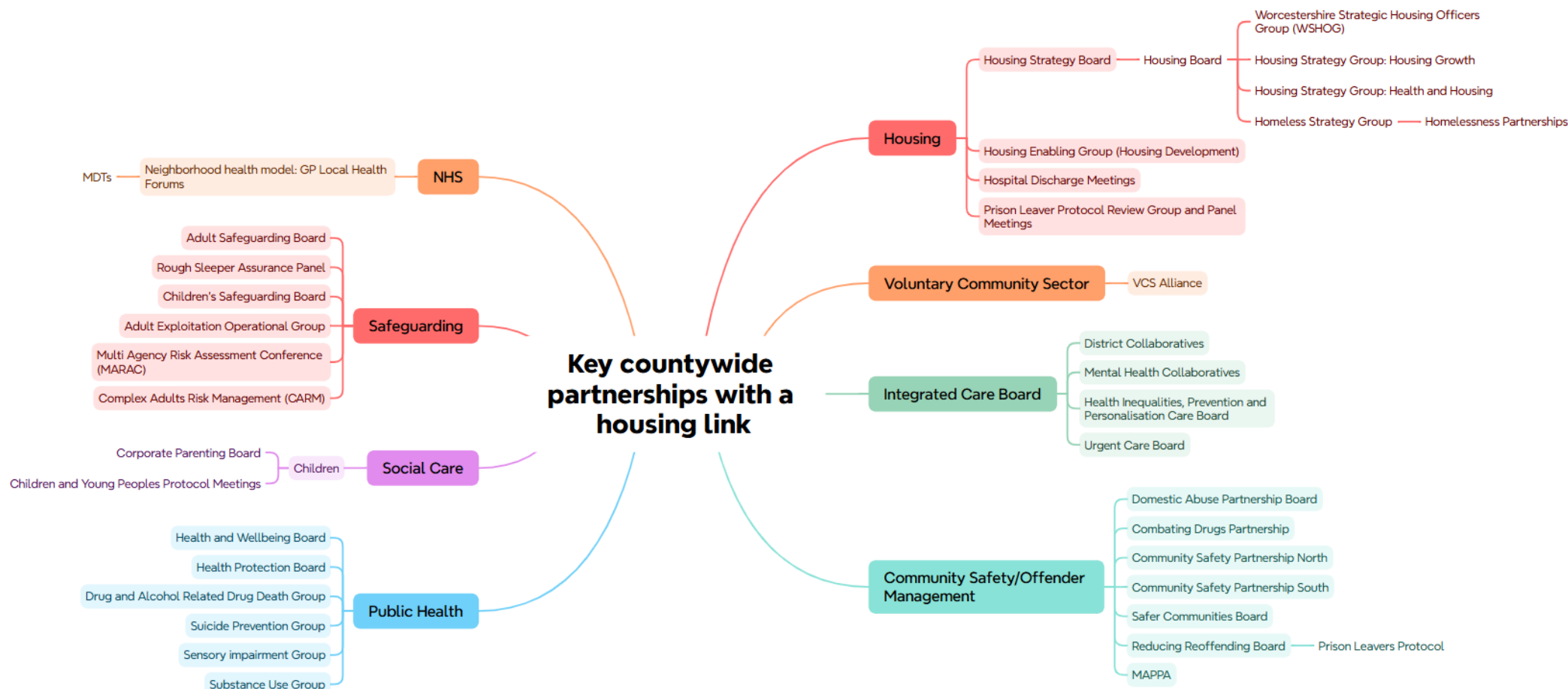
Each LHA has its own local homelessness partnership, consisting of local statutory and voluntary partners which will oversee and deliver on homelessness services and the strategy at a local level and feed into the Countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Group.

The LHAs are responsible for meeting their own statutory duties in relation to preventing homelessness. The Worcestershire Strategic Housing Officers Group (WSHOG) will be responsible for the operational delivery of the LHA elements of the strategy. Each LHA will have their own separate mechanism for reporting back to elected members on outcomes and progress including committees and member briefings to ensure there is political oversight on the delivery of the strategy and services.



8. Partnerships

Partnerships are essential to the delivery of the strategy as many organisations have a role to play in tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in the wider context.



This is not a definitive or exhaustive list of all partnerships but highlights some key groups and inter-relationships. There are also localised partnership and strategic groups within each LHA that are not included in this section.

ICB and health partnerships

The advent of the Integrated Care Boards and review of the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board has led to a new way of working within the health, social care and wider partnerships including greater district level working with Primary Care Networks.

Integrated Care System - Taking collective action to tackle health inequalities.



Reducing Re-offending Group & MAPPA Strategic Management Board

The Reducing Re-offending Board oversees the development and delivery of the criminal justice pathway and protocol across the county, following on from work commissioned by Public Health and the LHAs. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) were introduced in 2001 under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 and subsequently strengthened by the Criminal Justice Act 2003 as the statutory arrangement for managing sexual and violent offenders. It provides a mechanism whereby the agencies involved can better discharge their responsibilities and protect the public in a coordinated way. The responsible authority for MAPPA in each criminal justice area consists of the police, probation, and prisons. LHAs have a duty to cooperate with MAPPA arrangements in assessing and managing the risks posed by MAPPA-eligible offenders and the Board oversees the process.

Adult Safeguarding Board and the Assurance Panel

The main purpose of Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB) is to promote wellbeing and reduce the risk of harm for people with care and support needs. Rough sleepers specifically are overseen by an Assurance Panel. The LHAs are represented on the Board and Panel at Senior Officer level.

Corporate Parenting Board (CPB)

The CPB provides leadership and a governance structure for corporate parenting to drive forward the outcomes for looked after children and care leavers. It oversees the Board's strategy and promotes the voice of

children and young people. It also provides challenge and scrutiny to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for children in care and care leavers. LHAs are represented at CPB by officers from WSHOG.

Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (DAPB)

The DAPB consists of key partners with an interest in tackling domestic abuse and supporting victims, including their children. The DAPB has been created to support Worcestershire County Council in meeting its duty under Part IV of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and to expand upon the wider community-focused work of the Worcestershire Forum against Domestic Abuse.

Appendix 1 – Action Plan (see separate document)

Appendix 2 - Funding the strategy

Homelessness Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant, & New Burdens Funding for Renters Rights Act

Our targets are based on national targets to create a step change in our approach to work upstream and prevent homelessness wherever possible. These are to:

- increase the proportion of people who are supported to stay in their own home or helped to find alternative accommodation when they approach their local council for support
- eliminate the use of B&B accommodation for families, other than very short-term use in emergencies
- halve the number of people sleeping rough long-term

Total Three Year Funding Allocation 2026-2029

Local Authority	Homelessness Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant	Of Which, funding for Homelessness and Rough Sleeping	Funding for Renters Rights Act 2025 New Burdens	Funding for Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Grant
Bromsgrove	£ 1,636,130.00	£ 1,474,318.00	£ 50,497.00	£ 111,315.00
Malvern Hills	£ 1,414,759.00	£ 1,310,533.00	£ 42,799.00	£ 104,226.00
Redditch	£ 2,477,421.00	£ 2,294,301.00	£ 72,088.00	£ 111,032.00
Wychavon	£ 2,627,008.00	£ 2,552,442.00	£ 76,082.00	£ 104,565.00
Wyre Forest	£ 2,485,740.00	£ 2,307,923.00	£ 70,660.00	£ 107,157.00
Total	£ 10,641,058.00	£ 9,939,517.00	£ 312,126.00	£ 538,295.00

The Local Authorities will utilise the funding strategically to meet deliver on our targets and respond to local need. We will measure the outcomes below with a view to improving performance year on year.

- number of households with children in temporary accommodation
- number of families in B&B over 6 weeks
- percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved
- percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved for those with 3 or more support needs
- number of people sleeping rough on a single night
- number of people sleeping rough over the month who are long-term

We will ensure that we have a policy in place for ensuring suitability of temporary accommodation, following an assessment, including procuring sufficient units of temporary accommodation and allocating them.

Domestic Abuse Act Funding for Domestic Abuse Housing Officers 2025/6

Housing Authority	Grant (£)
Bromsgrove District Council	33,666
Malvern Hills District Council	33,666
Redditch Borough Council	33,666
Wychavon District Council	33,666
Wyre Forest District Council	33,666

Funding for domestic abuse services is essential to ensure the provision of dedicated, specialist officers who can effectively respond to victims and survivors. These officers play a critical role in early intervention, risk assessment, safeguarding, and multi-agency coordination. Sustained investment will allow for improved response times, consistent victim support, enhanced offender management, and better outcomes for families affected by domestic abuse. Funding will support recruitment, specialist training, and retention of officers, ensuring victims receive trauma-informed, timely, and effective protection while reducing repeat incidents and long-term harm within communities.

Household Support Fund (2025/26)

HSF 7 Allocation April 25 - March 26

District Council 12 month allocation	General allocation	Food/warm space allocation	Total
Bromsgrove	£171,321.39	£18,000.00	£189,321.39
Malvern Hills	£235,312.23	£18,000.00	£253,312.23
Redditch	£329,900.14	£18,000.00	£347,900.14
Wychavon	£230,918.03	£18,000.00	£248,918.03
Wyre Forest	£328,625.52	£18,000.00	£346,625.52
Total	£1,296,077	£90,000.00	£1,386,077

The Household Support Fund (HSF) is intended to provide targeted financial assistance to vulnerable households who are struggling to meet the cost of essential living expenses. The fund aims to prevent crisis, reduce hardship, and support households to maintain stability.

Discretionary Housing Payments (2025/6)

Housing Authority	Grant (£)
Bromsgrove District Council	62,332
Malvern Hills District Council	75,651
Redditch Borough Council	79,296
Wychavon District Council	112,099
Wyre Forest District Council	110,242
Total	439,620

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) provide short-term financial assistance to households who require additional help with housing costs and are in receipt of Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit. The fund aims to prevent homelessness, sustain tenancies, and support households during periods of financial difficulty.

Appendix 3 - Glossary of terms

CAS3 : Community Accommodation Service	11
DAPB: Domestic Abuse Partnership Board	24
DRIVE: A domestic abuse partnership that protects victims by disrupting, challenging and changing the behaviour of those who are causing harm.....	14
LGR: Local Government Reorganisation	2
LHAs: Local Housing Authorities	4
MHCLG: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government.....	9
MARAC: Multi agency risk assessment conference.....	14
PWLE: People with Lived Experiencee	4
RPs: Registered Housing Providers	6
TPG: Target Priority Group (most complex rough sleepers).....	4
WSHOG: Worcestershire Strategic Housing Officers Group.....	26

Appendix 1 – Action Plan

The Action Plan below sets out the actions that specifically relate to preventing and relieving homelessness, however, in recognition of the Government’s commitment to build 1.5 million homes backed by £39 billion investment, and consistent with the national homelessness strategy and wider housing policy, the local authorities recognise that local prevention efforts must be supported by sufficient affordable housing and effective allocation of social stock. Without this, demand for crisis interventions and temporary accommodation will continue to rise. The councils will ensure alignment with the Worcestershire Housing Strategy in order to support the increase in the supply of new affordable and high-quality homes and to address the need for greater diversity in the housing stock through the development of the supported housing strategy. Performance against delivery of new build housing is monitored through the Worcestershire Housing Board.

Pillar 1: Universal Prevention - tackling the root causes of homelessness

Action	Measure	Target	Lead	Timescale
1.1 Prevent homelessness from private rented sector tenancies by building relations with landlords to identify those at risk of homelessness at an earlier stage, utilising funding where appropriate and available and take action to sustain tenancies.	Homelessness arising from the ending of private rented sector tenancies are reduced through measures including; - Landlord forum and prevention panel established. - “Help to Stay” scheme established in areas without one. - Tenancy Sustainment Officers in place (funding dependent). - Utilise funding such as the Crisis Resilience Fund and homeless funding to sustain tenancies	- Collect the number of evictions for rent arrears in 2026/27 to establish the baseline in year one - Increase the number of cases taken to prevention panels/Housing Advice teams for rent arrears from Landlords by 20% in year 2	- Housing Advice Team Leaders - Housing Strategy Officers - Private Sector Housing Teams	Year 1 / 2
1.2 Ensure more legal support is available for tenants facing eviction by expanding partnerships with organisations who already undertake this work so that services have sufficient resource, knowledge, expertise and capacity to robustly defend evictions based on grounds under Renters Rights Act.	The teams are able to advise and refer households for support around the Renters Rights Act; - Training on Renters’ Rights Act undertaken for LHA staff. - Established referral mechanisms are in place with the Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service	- Collect the number of evictions for rent arrears in 2026/27 to establish the baseline in year one - Increase the number of cases taken to prevention panels/Housing Advice teams for rent arrears from Landlords by 20% in year 2 - 5% increase in tenancies sustained for twelve months in the private rented sector following intervention.	- Housing Advice Team Leaders - Housing Strategy Officers - Private Sector Housing Teams	Year 1 / 2
1.3 Develop an integrated tenancy sustainment approach , bringing together housing, community organisations/hubs, employment and financial	- “Tenancy at Risk” protocol with Registered Providers is explored.	- Collect the number of evictions for rent arrears	- Housing Advice Team Leaders/Housing Strategy Officers	Year 2

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inclusion partners and develop stronger links to online support, to identify tenancies at risk and deliver coordinated support.	- Coordinated support packages in place including income maximisation, debt advice, financial literacy training, and flexible crisis prevention/ discretionary welfare funding.	in 2026/27 to establish the baseline in year one. - Increase the number of cases taken to prevention panels/Housing Advice teams for rent arrears from Landlords by 20% in year 2	- Community Services	
1.4 Review the Duty to Refer data and prepare for the new Duty to Collaborate to ensure that any potential homeless cases are referred to the local housing teams by partner agencies at the earliest opportunity.	Referrals from mandatory duty to refer organisations is increased where there is a low number currently.	- 10% increase in the number of Duty to Refer referrals from organisations with low referral levels. - 10% increase in the proportion of cases approaching for homelessness assistance at prevention stage/ earlier from wider partner agencies included in the Duty to Collaborate.	- Housing Strategy Officers/All statutory agencies required to refer	Year 2 Year 3
1.5 Use data and lived experience to track and evaluate progress against the strategy (and inform service delivery) using key performance indicators and regular reviews. Consider how we can implement “big picture” reporting to demonstrate and understand homelessness prevention activity across all sectors/organisations.	Improved opportunities for learning from data and those with lived experience and People With Lived Experience (PWLE) attending/providing feedback to the Homelessness Strategy Group.	- Summary reporting mechanism developed to show homelessness prevention work across all sectors/organisations. - Data dashboard and baseline statistics developed and monitored at countywide homelessness strategy meetings. - Minimum of 2 lived experience sessions held a year.	- Research and Intelligence Officer - Housing Strategy Officers	Year 2
1.6 Improve shared understanding of the work of all partner agencies in preventing homelessness through promoting the Community Services Directory, and joint training and awareness sessions.	Customers are able to access information and know where to go if they are in housing difficulties. All homelessness prevention services are	- Promote the CSD at min of one homelessness forum in each district, explore what services are	- County Council, - Housing Advice Team Leaders/Housing Strategy Officers	Year 2

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	signed up to the community services directory	available and allow for the identification of any gaps in services. - Districts organise one joint training session per annum with the VCSE and/or stat orgs for increased awareness of roles and responsibilities	- Homelessness Partnerships	
1.7 Develop and implement clear referral guidance and processes between agencies (housing, health, education, social care) for early identification of at-risk individuals.	Referral guidance and process defined and promoted and this supports a reduction in the number of individuals are released from institutions into homelessness.	- 10% increase in the number of Duty to Refer referrals from health and social care settings. - 10% reduction in homelessness from institutions	Housing Strategy Officers, Health, Education and Social Care Leads	Year 3 Year 4
1.8 Explore opportunities to develop and deliver homelessness education programmes in schools	To improve the level of understanding of young people around homelessness and how to prevent it.	Service offered by Nightstop in WF are reviewed and roll out across other district (funding dependent)	Housing Strategy Officers	Year 3
1.9 Make better use of existing social housing by exploring opportunities to better match disabled households with adapted housing and by tackling under occupation of larger properties	The councils make best use of existing stock including fully utilising adapted housing	- Current adapted stock within RP provision is mapped - Identify current levels of demand for adapted homes - Consider how the stock is identified and prioritised for those who need those adaptations following best practice	Housing Strategy Officers	Year 2

Pillar 2: Targeted Prevention - targeted support for people at risk of homelessness

Action	Measure	Target	Lead	Timescale
2.1 Explore the feasibility of a predictive homelessness risk model that pulls data from a range of sources to identify and target support to people at greatest risk of becoming homeless before they reach crisis point.	Developing a business case for funding to develop a predictive homelessness risk model to increase homeless preventions and decrease the number of temporary accommodation placements required.	1. Stakeholder mapping with a multi-disciplinary steering group including adult social care 2. Completion of a Data protection impact assessment (DPIA)	Research and Intelligence Officer	Year 3

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		3. Data inventory and matching across partners 4. Business case for delivery if there is a feasible solution.		
Rough sleepers and single homeless households:				
2.2 Review and strengthen the rough sleeper support/accommodation options (All services and interventions that tackle rough sleeping) and commission or directly deliver services required utilising the new multi-year homelessness funding arrangements. Ensuring safety, accessibility and positive move on options.	A fully implemented, trauma informed rough sleeping pathway that increases successful tenancies and ensures rough sleeping is not recurring.	- Complete a cross sector review of all current provision, - Carry out a needs assessment and develop a Supported Housing Strategy - Re-allocate funding or remodel services based on findings	- WSHOG - Housing Advice/strategy Teams, - Outreach Services, - Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator	Year 2
2.3 Investigate the ability to provide bespoke funding for RS and single homeless Outreach teams and the Rough Sleeper Coordinator to develop tailored solutions for individuals who have previously been unable to secure or maintain accommodation, subject to funding.	- Reduction in rough sleeping through the use of interventions and meaningful activities. - Overcome the barriers into housing so more Rough Sleepers are accommodated through building relationships with Registered Providers	- Number of individuals housed through the funding - Tenancy sustainment 6 months + - Number of individuals supported through the funding to address unmet needs - Reduction in repeat rough sleeping of 10%	- Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator - Outreach Services - Housing Advice/Strategy Teams	Year 2 (pending funds)
2.4 Expand the online multi-agency work on Target Priority Group rough sleepers Implement outreach and support services TPG online group across all districts to improve cross-boundary coordination and case management. Learning from good practice and promoting joined up working.	Cross-boundary cases are successfully resolved through online multi-agency TPG group working effectively across boundaries+.	- Reduction in the number of TPG rough sleepers. - Increase in TPG rough sleepers accessing services and accommodation - All districts consistently using the TPG platform	- Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator/Housing Advice Teams	Year 1
2.5 Extend the Mental Health & Homelessness Group to all districts to enable discussion/referrals into mental health services for those at risk of or experiencing rough sleeping	Mental Health and Homelessness group expanded across all districts to ensure consistent access to mental health services and a joined up approach in those with mental health issues facing homelessness which leads to an increase	- Districts holding a minimum of 2 Mental Health and Homelessness groups per annum in each area.	- Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator	Year 1

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	in access to mental health support for rough sleepers			
2.6 Understand factors leading to returns to rough sleeping Using data to identify repeat patterns, implement targeted interventions, and redesign support offers, subject to funding.	Have an enhanced support offer in place for those who return to rough sleeping including through tenancy sustainment to enable them to access housing.	- Reduction in repeat rough sleeping of 10% - Number of individuals receiving enhanced support - Reduction in number of people refused social housing due to poor tenancy history with Registered Providers (baseline established in Year One)	- Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator - Outreach Services - Housing Advice/Housing Strategy Teams	Year 2
2.7 Set up a Lived Experience involvement process to ensure people who have experienced rough sleeping or homelessness are able to put forward ideas or feedback. Use this feedback to make changes to services and improve everyday practice, subject to funding.	People with lived experience are involved in service development and improvement with their feedback collected and recorded.	- Number of people with lived experience taking part (in a way that meets their needs) - Minimum of 1 RS lived experience session held a year.	- Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator - Outreach Services - Research and Intelligence Officer	Year 1
Children, young people and care leavers:				
2.8 Support the pilot(s) of the “Upstream” model in partnership with schools, specialist youth and family support services e.g. Centrepoin model (should funding be available). This would include a review of family intervention and mediation services. Initial pilot to commence in Wyre Forest and Bromsgrove.	The causes of youth homelessness and what interventions can be made to sustain accommodation and positive relationships with family/friends are better understood and prevention initiatives developed across the Councils leading to a reduction in youth homelessness.	- Number of secondary schools actively participating. - Percentage of identified ‘at risk’ students successfully engaging with family mediation or respite services to maintain stable housing.	- Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - WF & SW Nightstop - The Basement Project - Children’s Services - Youth Services - Schools	Year 2
2.9 Review the Care Leavers Protocol in light of new legislative requirements that state that care leavers will no longer be deemed intentionally homeless in the case of accommodation breakdown.	Care leavers protocol updated to ensure positive pathways into accommodation avoiding a homelessness route through a bespoke approach to meeting their needs which will include options to stay put and access to higher education	5% reduction in number of Care Leavers being accepted under the homeless duty.	- Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - Children’s Services	Year 1
2.10 Agree a Memorandum of Understanding/Protocol with providers of young persons supported accommodation to facilitate movements to alternative supported accommodation	Memorandum of Understanding/Protocol in place across providers to respond to potential homelessness situations where the relationship with and between	- Number of positive moves or sustained accommodation as a	- Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders	Year 3

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where relationships between residents have broken down	residents has broken down to lead to fewer crisis situations in which a suitable move cannot be found.	result of utilising the MofU/protocol	- Supported Housing Providers	
2.11 Work with partner organisations (e.g. DWP) to explore services provided to address youth unemployment and ensure they can be connected with prevention/mediation/budgeting/debt advice services.	More young people managing their money and able to live independently through accessing education, employment and training opportunities	- 10% Reduction in youth homelessness	- Housing Advice Team Leaders - DWP	Year 2
2.12 Work with partners to understand the links between homelessness and neurodiversity in young people and how homelessness prevention services can meet their needs.	Officers trained to ensure that neurodivergence is recognised and services are adapted to meet needs.	- 10% Reduction in youth homelessness where neurodivergency is a significant factor	- Housing Advice Team Leaders - County Council	Year 1
Families with children:	-		-	
2.13 Identify the key risk factors in families that lead to homelessness to ensure targeted intervention at the earliest stage	Review and utilise best practise around early intervention and prevention for families including risk factor identification to increase homelessness prevention where data is available.	- Increase in the percentage of successful outcomes at preventing or relieving homelessness (5%)	- Housing Advice Team Leaders /Housing Strategy Officers - Research and Intelligence Officer	Year 2
Homelessness and health:				
2.14 Commission a homelessness and health audit to understand the health needs of homeless households, reduce health inequalities for rough sleepers and improve life expectancy.	The health needs of homeless households are understood and services commissioned or adapted to meet need and prevent homelessness. Health inequalities experienced by rough sleepers are reduced and life expectancy is increased.	- Undertake a homeless and health audit and consider implications from this for future actions.	- WSHOG	Year 1
2.15 Improve joint working across housing, health and social care to: (i) Prevent unnecessary hospital admissions for those who are homeless/at risk of homelessness (ii) remove barriers to hospital discharge for those who cannot return to their home or who are homeless (iii) Develop and implement the Duty to Collaborate for hospital admission, discharge, and step-down care that ensure a housing plan is in place before discharge.	Improved pathway into accommodation to ensure that discharges are planned in partnership with housing options services and that appropriate support is in place.	- No individuals discharged from hospital to the street. - Reduction in avoidable hospital admissions/ readmissions among the homeless cohort. - Reduced delays in hospital discharge for homeless households	-WSHOG -Integrated Care Board -NHS - Hospital discharge team / officer	Year 2 Year 3

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2.16 Explore opportunities to provide a flexible approach to medical appointments with GPs to meet the needs of those with complex needs/chaotic lives and ensure follow up care is provided- example of health care worker in local day centres.	All rough sleepers have access to a GP and substance use services where appropriate.	Adopt a formalised, flexible healthcare access protocol that reduces missed appointments and ensures continuity of treatment. Ensure housing officers check with all Households entering temporary accommodation that they are registered with a GP	-WSHOG -Integrated Care Board -NHS - Housing Advice Team Leaders	Year 1
2.17 Enhance the collaborative approach with partners to effectively manage the risk to those with complex and multiple needs in temporary accommodation.	Greater understanding of service user needs and risks and management of these in collaboration with other agencies to reduce the number of serious incidents in unsupported TA/housing. Existing support and ongoing care and support processes are reviewed.	- 100% of residents with complex needs in temporary accommodation are identified and risk assessments completed - A co-produced multi agency safety plan in place within five working days of placement.	- Worcestershire Housing Board - WSHOG	Year 2
2.18 Integrate mental health services more deeply into homelessness prevention and intervention strategies. E.g. outreach teams should have improved access to mental health professionals to provide immediate support to those in crisis, and ongoing support is provided for those in unsupported temporary accommodation.	Improved access to mental health services for those in Temporary Accommodation through the mapping of current mental health services (and their capacity) with, gaps identified. If gap identified secure funding to meet needs.	- Develop dual diagnosis outreach screening tool - Number of joint casework reviews undertaken for high risk individuals	- Housing Advice / Outreach Teams - Mental Health Services	Year 3
2.19 Develop more fully accessible permanent and temporary housing through Disabled Facilities Grant, Health funding and Homes England Funding (dependent on funding)	An increase in healthy and accessible new build and temporary housing to meet needs.	- % increase in number of accessible temporary accommodation units from Year one baseline. - Number of new build social rent properties meeting M4(3) accessibility standard	-WSHOG -Worcestershire Housing Adaptations Service - Planning	Year 4
2.20 Investigate the ability to provide flexible budgets to prevent homelessness families and single people facing severe mental health issues.	Increase in homelessness prevention for this cohort to inform future service delivery.	Feasibility report, data collection on what works and pilot evaluation carried out which establishes a framework for	-Housing Advice Team Leaders/Housing Strategy Teams	Year 4

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		funding.		
Domestic abuse				
2.21 Sustain and expand safe accommodation options (funding dependent) to eliminate the use of inappropriate B&B for DA survivors.	The use of inappropriate B&B is eliminated for DA victims/survivors	- % increase in the number of safe accommodation options. - % reduction in B&B use for DA survivors.	-DA Coordinator -Public Health -Housing Providers	Year 2
2.22 Review best practice in preventing homelessness due to domestic abuse at an earlier stage through early interventions with households at risk of homelessness due to DA.	Those are risk of homelessness and experiencing domestic abuse approach for homelessness assistance at an earlier stage e.g. prevention stage, not relief/crisis stage and are able to take up preventative options including the Sanctuary Scheme.	- % Decrease in homelessness approaches due to DA - % Increase in the use of Sanctuary Scheme.	- DA Coordinator - DA Housing Officers - Research and Intelligence Officer	Year 1
2.23 Develop a protocol for Registered Providers to access relevant survivor information (with consent) to deliver trauma-informed housing offers and minimise re-traumatisation.	Improved suitability of accommodation offers due to greater understanding of needs and risk.	- % Reduction repeat homelessness for DA survivors (below 30%) - Increased accommodation sustainment for survivors of DA	- DA Coordinator - Registered Housing Providers - DA Housing Officers	Year 2
2.24 Develop dedicated housing pathways for survivors with multiple needs and those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)	Improved partnership working with adult social care, schools and health and holistic support available to whole family.	Reduced homelessness levels due to DA Referral pathway developed for those DA survivors who have NRPF.	- DA Coordinator - DA Housing Officers	Year 3
2.25 Strengthen communication and engagement with schools and health professionals (with consent) to support safeguarding and ensure children affected by domestic abuse are linked to appropriate support services.	Processes are defined and embedded within housing teams, education and health professionals to support early identification.	- Increase in number of children being referred for support into commissioned services by Domestic Abuse Housing Officers (DAHO). - Number of schools engaged with - Number of health organisations engaged with	- DA Coordinator - DA Housing Officers	Year 2
Prison leavers:				
2.26 Review supported and transitional accommodation capacity and barriers to accommodation to ensure that there are pathways into accommodation prior to release.	Reduced homelessness due to leaving prison onto the street or unsuitable accommodation where the prison leaver has a local connection	- Reduction of 10% of individuals with a local connection discharged from custody to the	- Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders	Year 2

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		streets or into unsuitable emergency accommodation.	- Prison and Probation Service	
2.27 Improve data capture: referrals to Prison Release meetings and homeless assessments before release. Understand the accommodation pathways data including CAS3 accommodation.	Improved understanding of housing needs by Housing Teams through improved data collection from Prisons to provide increased accommodation options for prison leavers	- Reduction of 10% of individuals with a local connection discharged from custody to the streets or into unsuitable emergency accommodation.	- Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - Prison and Probation Service	Year 1
2.28 Increase the number of housing assessments undertaken within prisons to identify a housing solution before release.	Increased upstream working to identify accommodation options thereby improving process for prison leavers and reducing homelessness.	- Number of housing assessments undertaken prior to release.	- Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - Prison and Probation Service	Year 2
2.29 Work with partner housing providers to develop a positive pathway from CAS3 accommodation	More individuals moving on from CAS3 into settled or supported accommodation because RPs understand and can meet needs	- Set up joint meeting with RPs to discuss barriers to rehousing prison leavers and ways to overcome them	- Strategic Housing Officers	Year 1
2.30 Review Worcestershire Criminal Justice Housing and Support Protocol	Protocol is updated to reflect current legislation and service provision	- Protocol updated and signed off. - Reduction of 10% of individuals with a local connection discharged from custody to the streets or into unsuitable emergency accommodation.	- Strategic Housing officers	Year 2
Asylum seekers and refugees:				
2.31 Collaborate with community, voluntary, and faith organisations to develop tailored, culturally appropriate information and guidance for asylum seekers, refugees and those with No Recourse to Public Funds, enabling them to access necessary support.	Comprehensive and culturally appropriate guidance developed.	- meetings held with community, voluntary and faith orgs - guidance developed and shared (if relevant) - links from council websites to relevant websites like Shelter /NRPF network	-Homelessness Partnerships	Year 2
Veterans:				
2.32 Continue to work with the Worcestershire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership to ensure that	- Armed Forces Covenant embedded in housing services (where relevant) so	Number of housing staff received training on the	-WSHOG / Armed Forces Covenant Group	Year 1

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there is a good understanding of the Armed Forces Covenant in housing and that organisational policies reflect the needs of the Covenant	there is an improved response to those approaching for housing who are, or have been, armed forces personnel.	Armed Forces Covenant.		
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Pillar 3: Preventing crisis - helping people stay in their homes

Action	Measure	Target	Lead	Timescale
3.1 Use the findings of the Homelessness Review Service Mapping and Supported Housing Needs Assessment to explore funding services required (to be commissioned or directly provided by LHAs) to sustain accommodation.	More homelessness cases are prevented from becoming homeless through tailored response that meets needs funded by the LHAs or funding bids	- Gaps are defined - Business case developed for supported housing (if relevant).	Housing Advice Team Leaders / Housing Strategy Officers	Year 3
3.3 Utilise funding to ensure services such as accommodation, floating support, and help with housing costs are all targeted to reduce homelessness through prevention	-Number of households prevented from becoming homeless increases	Increase in the percentage of successful outcomes at preventing or relieving homelessness (5%)	Housing Advice Team Leaders /Housing Strategy Officers	Year 1
3.4 Make use of the government toolkits to aid prevention of homelessness (when available)	-Number of households prevented from becoming homeless increases	Increase in the percentage of successful outcomes at preventing or relieving homelessness (5%)	Housing Advice Team Leaders /Housing Strategy Officers	Year 2

Pillar 4: Improving Emergency Responses - improving temporary accommodation and making people's experiences better

Action	Measure	Target	Lead	Timescale
4.1 Increase the number of high-quality, self-contained, TA units for families with children through working with Registered Housing Providers and considering options such as leasing or purchasing accommodation (funding dependent). Minimise the use of B&B, and other forms of shared accommodation and out of area placements for families with children.	Increase in the number of suitable self-contained TA units within Districts and homeless prevention undertaken to reduce the use of unsuitable, out of area or long term placements in TA to support families in moving on with their lives as quickly as possible.	- No families placed in shared facility/B&B accommodation for more than 6 weeks. - Increase in No of self-contained temporary accommodation.	Housing Advice Team Leaders / Housing Strategy Officers	Year 2
4.2 Improve the transition of households moving out of TA and into settled accommodation by providing an assessment of support needs and referring families into the appropriate support. This would include sharing the needs assessment with housing providers (with consent) so they can provide a trauma informed housing offer.	Ensure a smooth transition for households between homelessness and being settled permanently.	Number of move-ons from TA sustained for 6 months.	Housing Advice Team Leaders /Housing Strategy Officers	Year 3
4.3 Create family-centred TA solutions: reevaluate the model for families in TA, ensuring that placements consider the impact on children's	Increase in the number of suitable self-contained TA units within Districts and homeless prevention undertaken to reduce	- Review the Temporary Accommodation	Housing Strategy Officers	Year 1

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schooling, health, and support networks and help children, families and young people in TA to maintain connections to services and support networks.	the use of unsuitable, out of area or long term placements in TA to support families in moving on with their lives as quickly as possible.	Procurement and Placement policies. - Reduction of the number of households with children in temporary accommodation per 1000 - Ensure no one is in temporary accommodation for more than 12 weeks by the end of the strategy	Housing Advice Team Leaders Housing Advice Team Leaders	Year 2 Year 1 - 5
4.4 Jointly review social housing allocations policies once government's new guidance is available to try to prevent the need for TA or move people on into settled accommodation more quickly if they do need to access TA.	Increase the number of households directly accommodated into a permanent housing solution to reduce the need for temporary accommodation.	- Reduction of the number of households with children in temporary accommodation per 1000 - Review of social housing policies	Housing Advice Team Leaders	Year 2 Year 4
4.5 Develop a resilience plan to address the impacts of rising temporary accommodation use, accommodation costs, and the anticipated loss of grant funding. This will include a review of block booking contracts, introduce dynamic purchasing and reduce the use of spot purchasing.	Improve the cost effectiveness of temporary accommodation used.	- Reduction in temporary accommodation costs - PWLE feedback from families who have experienced TA is gathered and analysed minimum of once per annum - % increase in number of self-contained units of accommodation	Housing Strategy Officers	Year 2 Year 3
4.6 Work with PWLE to analyse the barriers to accessing temporary accommodation and implement solutions e.g. increased security measures, provisions for pets.	Barriers to TA are understood and action taken to overcome barriers	Collect data and analyse the reasons for rejection of TA offers	Housing Strategy Officers	Year 4

Pillar 5: Recovery and Preventing Repeat Homelessness - ensuring people don't experience homelessness more than once and having long term rough sleeping

Action	Measure	Target	Lead	Timescale
5.1 Take action to tackling long term rough sleeping through reviewing: Accommodation-based and floating support/Rough sleeper outreach and intensive support/Rent deposits	All activities to prevent and tackle rough sleeping locally are reviewed and defined, gaps identified and services commissioned to lead to a reduction in rough sleeping.	- Reduction in repeat homelessness of rough sleepers	- Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders	Year 1

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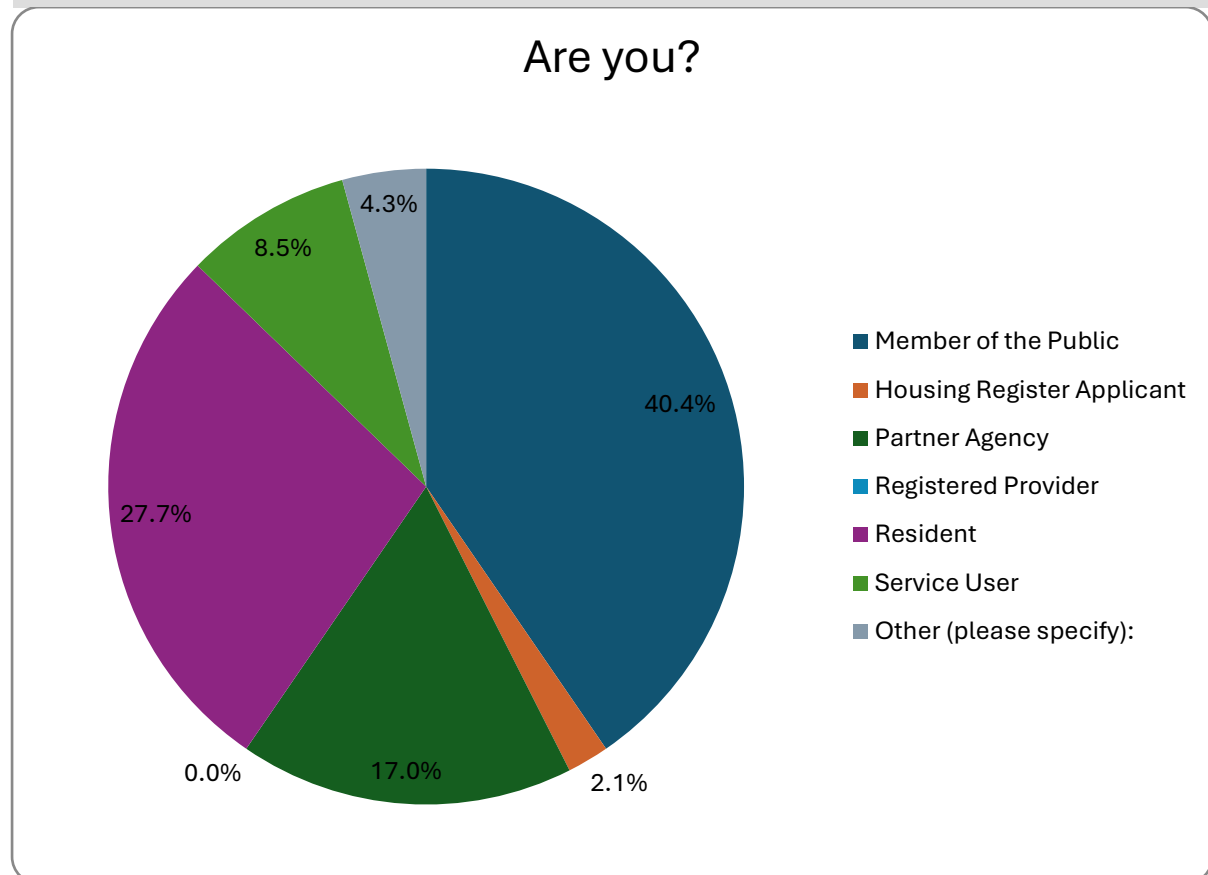
and rent in advance/No First Night Out Accommodation/Furniture projects		- Reduction in the number of people sleeping rough over the month who are long term (10%)	- Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator	
5.2 Review opportunities to develop and implement community and peer support models	To have an increase in tenancy sustainment and the engagement of service users.	- 10% increase Rough Sleepers engaging in services who are currently not engaging. - Reduction in the number of people sleeping rough over the month who are long term (10%)	- Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator	Year 3
5.3 Review opportunities to strengthen advocacy services: increase the availability of independent advocates, particularly for vulnerable groups like young people, those with mental health issues, and DA survivors.	Advocacy services are defined and strengthened to give good quality advice to vulnerable groups.	Meetings with providers in place and pathway to advocacy established.	- Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - Outreach Services - Housing Advice	Year 2
5.4 Investigate with PWLE why there is a high level of repeat homelessness in certain homeless cohorts e.g. DA survivors, rough sleepers, families with complex support needs.	Repeat homelessness is minimised and the drivers of repeat homelessness are understood and minimised	Reduction in repeat homelessness of rough sleepers	- Research and Intelligence Officer	Year 2
5.5 Develop mechanisms for referring temporarily accommodated households (with consent) to medical professionals, schools etc (subject to Government guidance)	Repeat homelessness is minimised and households are safeguarded	More statutory partnerships involved with homeless households.	- WSHOG	Year 1

Stakeholders identified a number of suggestions that are business as usual and as such do not feature in the action plan but will still be delivered. The strategy action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis, and this will include a review of current actions and identification of any new actions required for future years.

Appendix Three - Consultation responses summary – Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy

Question One

Are you:			
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Member of the Public	40.4%	19
2	Housing Register Applicant	2.1%	1
3	Partner Agency	17.0%	8
4	Registered Provider	0.0%	0
5	Resident	27.7%	13
6	Service User	8.5%	4
7	Other (please specify):	4.3%	2
answered			47
skipped			1

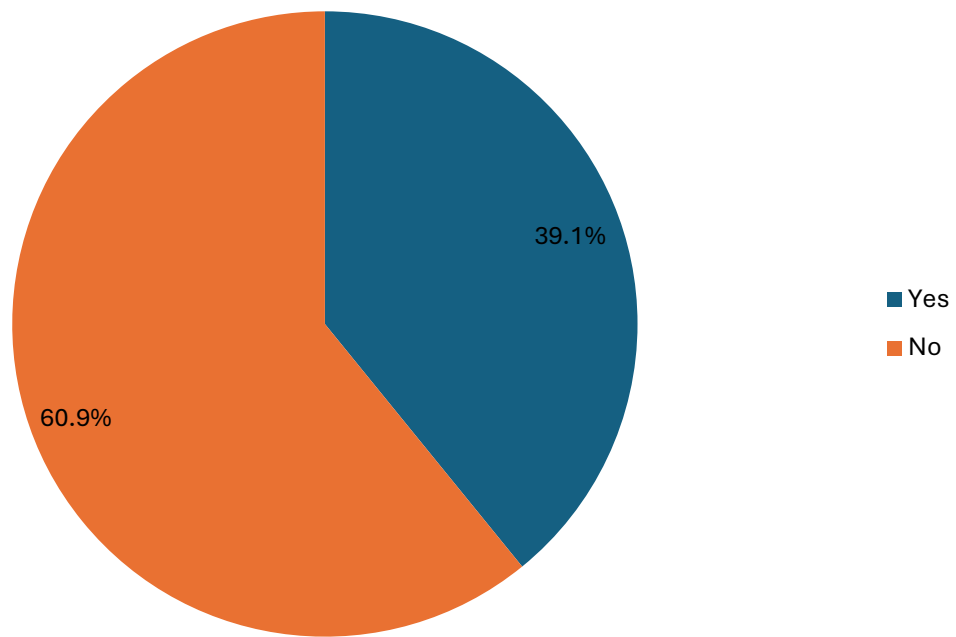


Question Two

Have you ever experienced homelessness?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	39.1%	18
2	No	60.9%	28
<i>answered</i>			46
<i>skipped</i>			2

Have you ever experienced homelessness?

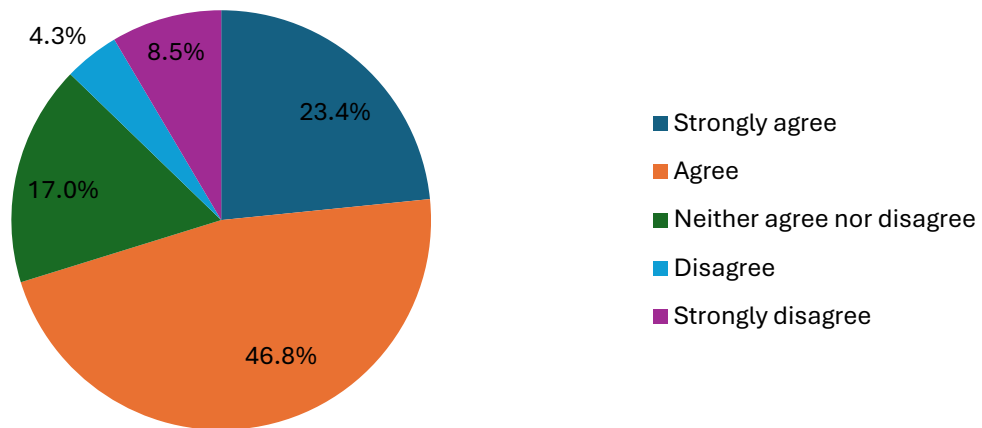


Question Three

To what extent do you agree that the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy provides a clear and effective framework for ending homelessness within the districts Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Wychavon and Wyre Forest?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	23.4%	11
2	Agree	46.8%	22
3	Neither agree nor disagree	17.0%	8
4	Disagree	4.3%	2
5	Strongly disagree	8.5%	4
<i>answered</i>			47
<i>skipped</i>			1

To what extent do you agree that the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy provides a clear and effective framework for ending homelessness within the districts Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Wychavon and Wyre Forest?

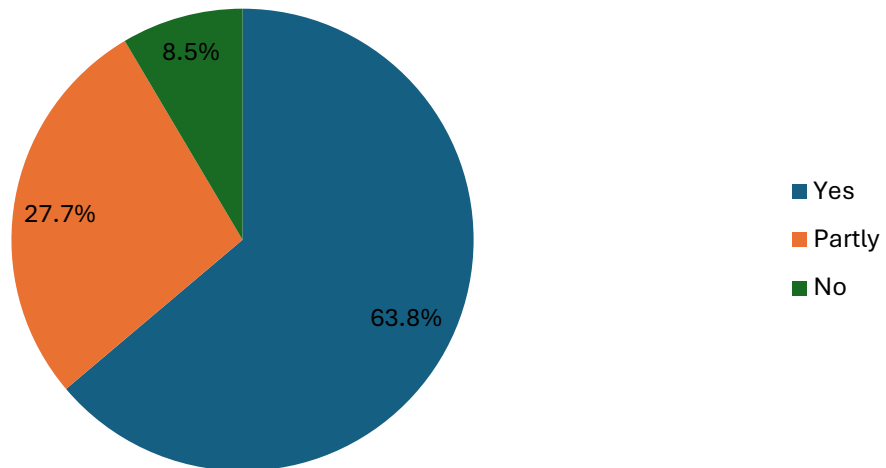


Question Four

Do you feel the strategy focuses on the right priority groups (e.g. single adults, young people, victims of domestic abuse, families with dependents, care leavers, prison leavers, rough sleepers, people with complex needs)?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	63.8%	30
2	Partly	27.7%	13
3	No	8.5%	4
answered			47
skipped			1

Do you feel the strategy focuses on the right priority groups (e.g. single adults, young people, victims of domestic abuse, families with dependents, care leavers, prison leavers, rough sleepers, people with complex needs)?

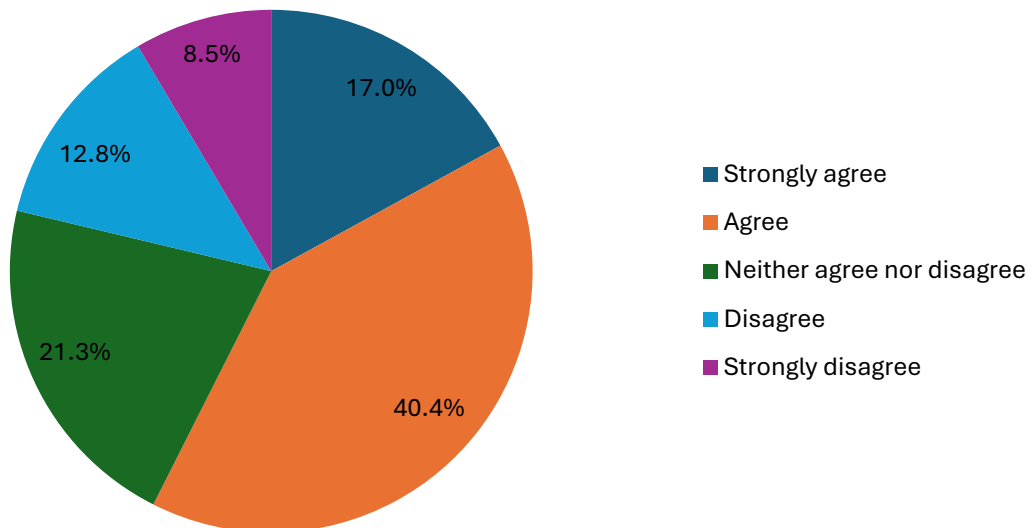


Question Five

Do you agree that the proposed partnership and governance arrangements are sufficient to deliver the strategy?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	17.0%	8
2	Agree	40.4%	19
3	Neither agree nor disagree	21.3%	10
4	Disagree	12.8%	6
5	Strongly disagree	8.5%	4
		answered	47
		skipped	1

Do you agree that the proposed partnership and governance arrangements are sufficient to deliver the strategy?



Summary of consultation responses			
	Comments	You Said (summarised theme)	We Did/Our Response
1	Homelessness is not being prevented in a positive and safe manner. Instead to meet targets homelessness is being met with bare minimum which impacts the rest of the local society, including residents, businesses and local town reputation. More should be done to create safe homeless prevention rather than a few nights in a guest house where it's easily accessible for homeless to use drugs. Staff need to be better trained in how to deal with the complexities of homelessness and service users, rather than offering a "lifeline" which is nothing more than a strategy to set them up to fail so they tick the boxes to say they tried but the service user failed. Shame on WFDC.	Expressed concern about the suitability of temporary accommodation, particularly for those using substances.	Thank you for your comments. Feedback will be provided to the County Council who commission drug and alcohol support services. The councils focus is on prevention services as highlighted in the national and local strategy and many of the councils prevent homelessness for more than 50% of the households they owe a duty to. Whilst the councils can provide temporary accommodation for homeless households (in certain circumstances) and outreach support, they are not able to provide specialist supported accommodation due to their remit and funding constraints. Services like No First Night Out are discretionary and rely on grant funding being available. The councils will be commissioning the development of a Supported Housing Strategy which will identify the needs of those requiring supported accommodation - this must be in place by April 2027.

2	Nowadays many families use food banks, get into debts, become homeless because cost of living becoming higher and higher. Could council provide more p(l)aces where elderly, children could come up for a couple of hours to have hot drink, snack and meet others. Especially during winter months. Also, under occupancy of social housing should not be allowed. Some people live in properties much more bigger for their needs while others struggle for quiet corner. I suppose it is going to be harder to find people who want to downsize, so maybe some incentives would be needed (flooring/decorating vouchers). Maybe if people were encouraged to move to smaller property, one and two bedroom flats would not be seen as places for junkies	Feedback that more foodbanks/spaces for people to receive food/drinks and meet others - especially during cold weather should be provided. Concern about underoccupancy of social housing and people living in larger properties than their families need. Suggestion about incentives to assist people to downsize.	Thank you for your comments. There are a wealth of these initiatives already in place across the county but it does flag the need to raise awareness of what is available. There is an action in the draft homelessness strategy action plan around encouraging community services to be uploaded the county council's Community Services Directory and so this will assist with raising awareness of how people can access food and support. There is an action in the draft homelessness strategy action plan to "Make better use of existing social housing by exploring opportunities to better match disabled households with adapted housing and by tackling under occupation of larger properties"
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3	More understanding & housing provision for families with SEND children. Shared temporary accommodation isn't appropriate.	Concern that shared temporary accommodation for families with SEND children is not appropriate.	Thank you for your comments. Shared temporary accommodation for any family is emergency accommodation and councils work to prevent homelessness and the need for temporary accommodation at the earliest stage. No councils want to see families going into emergency accommodation but in some cases it is unavoidable. We recognise that emergency shared accommodation is not suitable for families but we are limited to what we can provide at crisis point. Councils prioritise families in B&B accommodation for move on into self-contained accommodation or a more settled housing solution and always make best endeavours to avoid B&B but are limited due to the supply of affordable housing. Councils will assess a families housing and support needs in a holistic way and will make appropriate referrals into support agencies.
4	No mention of newly granted refugees. I understand it's politically sensitive but this group needs to be acknowledged as one of the highest support needs.	Concern around the support needs of those being granted leave to remain - and how these needs are being met.	Thank you for your comments. The draft action plan contains an action to "Collaborate with community, voluntary, and faith organisations to develop tailored, culturally appropriate

			information and guidance for asylum seekers, refugees and those with No Recourse to Public Funds, enabling them to access necessary support."
5	Homelessness happens at weekends and after 4pm . It is not acceptable to tell people to try on Monday . More than one no first night out rooms should ne booked. Its always full	Concern around flexibility of services if homelessness occurs at weekends or out of office hours. Concern around availability of No First Night Out accommodation	Thank you for your comments. Each council operates an emergency out of hours homelessness service and details are available on our websites. Whilst councils would like to increase the number of No First Night Out spaces this does rely on council having sufficient resource. There is an action in the strategy action plan to "Review and strengthen the rough sleeper support/accommodation options
6	Think domestic abuse victims should be priority on housing register and being a domestic abuse victim recently and feeling like there's lack of support in this area and also to be housed where the victim has the support network is crucial like family or friends.	Concern that there is a lack of support for domestic abuse survivors.	Thank you for your comments. There is a wide range of support for Domestic Abuse survivors across the county and so this highlights the need to raise awareness about the support that is already available. Survivors of domestic abuse are prioritised on housing registers to apply for social housing - again this is about raising awareness of housing allocations policies. Worcestershire County Council commission Domestic Abuse services currently provided by West Mercia Womens Aid and Worcester Community Trust.

7	We need drop in centres where people can ask for help from support workers to prevent evictions but also after homelessness people need help setting up bills etc so that they can live in their new home without the mental stress, almost everyone who is facing eviction or has been through homelessness find everything difficult so by taking away the stresses of moving this allows the person to think clearer and know someone is looking out for them	Feedback that drop in centres are needed where people can access support to prevent eviction and set up/sustain accommodation.	Thank you for your comments. There are a wealth of these initiatives already in place across the county but it does flag the need to raise awareness of what is available. There is an action in the draft homelessness strategy action plan around encouraging community services to be uploaded the county council's Community Directory and so this will assist with raising awareness of how people can access food and support.
8	Think housing needs to be based on a local connection. Within local area. A hub need to be set up where people can go and see someone f2f	Comments around social housing and local connection criteria. Concerns around being able to speak to someone about face to face about housing/homelessness	Thank you for your comments. All allocations policies set out local connection criteria. Allocations policies are available on all councils websites. All councils will offer face to face homelessness appointments.

9	The strategy is well aligned with national best practice and has a strong emphasis on prevention and partnership working. However, to be fully effective, it would benefit from greater specificity, stronger accountability, and a few additional focus areas. A key improvement would be the inclusion of clear, measurable targets and timelines. There should also be a more detailed focus on the private rented sector, which is a major driver of homelessness locally. Expanding landlord engagement, tenancy sustainment, and eviction prevention measures would significantly improve early intervention. While the strategy recognises the importance of health, stronger integration with mental health and substance misuse services is needed, particularly for individuals experiencing repeat homelessness. Embedding support within housing services and improving joint commissioning with health partners would help address this. Given the multi-district approach, clearer systems for consistency are important. A shared triage process, aligned policies, and better data sharing would reduce the risk of residents experiencing different levels of support depending on location.	Feedback that the strategy is well aligned with national best practice and has a strong emphasis on prevention and partnership working - but would benefit from - fewer focus areas, clarification on accountability and the addition of measurable targets and timelines There should also be a more detailed focus on the private rented sector. Feedback that the strategy recognises the importance of health, stronger integration with mental health and substance misuse services embedding support within housing services and improving joint commissioning with health partners would help address this.	Thank you for your comments. The draft action plan will be updated to include measurable targets and timelines following the publication of the government's homelessness strategy action plan toolkit. Focus areas will be split out across the lifetime of the strategy to ensure specific in year focus. There are several actions in the action plan about tackling and preventing homelessness from the private rented sector under Pillar 1. Each of the councils fund a Community Mental Health Link worker to help homeless households access mental health and other support. Drug and Alcohol services are commissioned by Public Health at WCC and they work closely with health colleagues for those where mental health and drug/alcohol is an issue. The councils will always consider opportunities for joint work or joint commissioning where appropriate and where there is funding available however we are currently separate councils with local differences and separate
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	The strategy could also strengthen its approach to key transition points, such as prison release, hospital discharge, and care leavers, where the risk of homelessness is high. More explicit protocols and accountability in these areas would improve prevention. In addition, there should be a clearer and more detailed plan for reducing reliance on temporary accommodation, alongside stronger measures to prevent repeat homelessness through ongoing tenancy support. Finally, the strategy would benefit from greater recognition of rural homelessness, improved use of data for early intervention, and a more formal role for people with lived experience in shaping and reviewing services.	Feedback on some operational issues around different levels of support access depending on location. Feedback that the strategy could also strengthen its approach to key transition points, such as prison release, hospital discharge, and care leavers, where the risk of homelessness is high. Feedback that the strategy would benefit from greater recognition of rural homelessness, improved use of data for early intervention, and a more formal role for people with lived experience in shaping and reviewing services.	administrations. Local Government Reorganisation will be opportunity to change this approach. The strategy action plan contains actions to prevent homelessness from prison release, amongst care leavers and those being discharged from hospital. Actions around early intervention, temporary accommodation and lived experience informing services and actions are already featured in the strategy and actions. The strategy was written to reflect both urban and rural homelessness as that reflects the mix of councils involved, we believe the action plan will tackle homelessness regardless of where it arises as it has been designed to ensure that we meet the needs of all of our communities.
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10	There has been a proposal for pods to be provided in Malvern and I support this as a way of providing somewhere warm, dry and safe. However the lack of genuinely affordable accommodation is a massive problem and the number of properties lying empty only makes things worse.	Comment that pod or modular style accommodation would be welcome in some areas. Concern that there is a lack of affordable housing, and concern around empty homes.	Thank you for your comments. As part of the actions around providing more suitable temporary accommodation each council may consider pods/modular option but this is heavily caveated that it is dependent on resources and available and suitable land. Please refer to the Worcestershire Housing Strategy for the strategic approach to developing affordable housing. Local councils all have an approach already in place to tackle empty homes, some have published strategies, grant assistance and specific officers in place to focus on empty homes.
11	The way people are treated by homeless teams particularly in Redditch needs looking into The attitude seems to be that it is the claimants fault and they have to prove otherwise!	Some comments provided about homelessness service delivery and how it can be improved.	Thank you for your comments. All housing officers are trained in customer service and in a trauma informed way. To address this concern the strategy will include an action to ensure that lived experience groups look into this issue and advise on how they think services could be improved. Each council has a complaints process .
12	I wondered whether there might be benefits in some cross-over with other initiatives, for example, the program to reintegrate empty housing back into use might very well be helpful in a situation where additional accommodation is hard to source.	Comments around utilising empty homes to tackle homelessness	Thank you for your comments. WDC & MHDC have Empty Homes Officers, Empty Homes Strategies and are about to launch an Empty Homes grant scheme - any opportunities to bring

			empty homes back into use are explored. WFDC, RBC and BDC also have an Empty Homes Strategy and can offer assistance with owners that want to bring properties back into use for homeless households.
13	Co-operation with housing groups to provide single person accommodation seems to sadly lacking in most if not all local residential development. In some cases if more places could be provided for senior residents multi bedroom social housing could be freed up.	Concerns about lack of new affordable housing for single person households. Query around whether larger accommodation could be freed up - downsizing.	Thank you for your comments. New build requirements are based on housing need derived from housing waiting list information and the evidence base upon which local plans are developed e.g. the Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment for the South Worcester Development Plan/ Wyre Forest Local Plan/ Bromsgrove District Plan/Borough of Redditch Local Plan No4. Property types are also dependent on negotiations with housing developer with one bed units not being as financially viable as larger homes. There is an action in the draft homelessness strategy action plan to "Make better use of existing social housing by exploring opportunities to better match disabled households with adapted housing and by tackling under occupation of larger properties"

14	The strategy currently fails to address the primary driver of homelessness locally, systemic failure in early intervention, housing management, and safeguarding. In practice, individuals are being left in unsafe and unstable situations for prolonged periods despite known vulnerabilities. I am aware of a case where an individual with a known heart condition was left sleeping in a vehicle due to an unnecessary and unacceptable lack of timely intervention. This individual subsequently suffered a heart attack, this was not an unavoidable outcome, it was the result of delay, poor coordination, and failure to act on known risk. When accommodation was eventually provided, it was located outside of the individual's established support network, increasing isolation and stress, and undermining recovery. The exact stress factor claimed to be the "only" stress at the time. There continues to be pressure to move this individual further away from their support base into unsuitable accommodation. This demonstrates a system that prioritises process over people. There is also a significant but unrecognised form of homelessness affecting existing tenants whose accommodation is not fit for purpose. Where Category 1 and Category 2 hazards are present, particularly where they impact vulnerable occupants, those tenants are effectively homeless in practice. However, despite the existence of HHSRS frameworks, hazards are not being consistently identified, assessed, or acted upon in a timely manner. Where	Concerns around standards in private rented accommodation Concerns around impact of poor health on homelessness and homelessness on health. Concerns around temporary accommodation being provided away from people's networks	Thank you for your comments. We believe the strategy does emphasise prevention and early intervention and from an operational perspective many of the councils prevent homelessness for more than 50% of the households they owe a duty to. With the exception of Redditch BC the councils are not stock holding and don't have responsibilities for housing management. Councils have duties to provide temporary accommodation to those with a priority need and work hard to identify such cases as soon as possible however supply of accommodation is limited so we follow the code of guidance around offers of temporary accommodation to ensure suitability. All council allocations policies recognise properties with hazards and will allocate a band accordingly dependent on the disrepair. All councils have Private Sector Housing Teams who are undertaking HHSRS assessments to establish risk and remedial action and enforce where necessary. The new Renters Rights Act
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enforcement action should result in decanting or urgent intervention, this is frequently delayed or not pursued. As a result, existing tenants are being left in unsafe accommodation or are deemed homeless due to conditions within their property, yet this is not being properly recognised or addressed within current homelessness frameworks. This represents a failure of application and enforcement. It leaves children of Awaab's (Awaab's Law) age in almost exactly the same danger The strategy refers to prevention, but current practice often results in managed decline rather than meaningful intervention. Cases are maintained administratively while risk escalates. Key amendments are required: - Formal recognition of disrepair, unsafe housing, and delayed intervention as direct causes of homelessness - Recognition of Category 1 and Category 2 hazards as a trigger for immediate homelessness prevention action, particularly where vulnerable tenants are affected - Evidence based assurance that HHSRS is being applied consistently, including audit, oversight, and measurable outcomes - Mandatory escalation where vulnerable individuals are identified, particularly where health conditions are known - Clear accountability and time bound intervention standards		enhances councils investigatory and enforcement powers. These are operational matters and already covered by Council's Housing Enforcement Policies, Allocations Policies and their statutory duties. The strategy action has actions around the links between health and homelessness, and in particular the commissioning of a homeless and health needs audit and actions around working with the private rented sector but other matters identified in this response are picked up through the Councils wider remit and strategies/policies and therefore not applicable to this strategy.
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	across councils and housing providers - A requirement to prioritise maintaining individuals within their existing support networks unless there is a justified safeguarding reason not to There is sufficient capacity and resource within the system to prevent many of these outcomes. The issue is not solely supply, but decision making, coordination, and accountability. Without addressing these structural failures, the strategy will not achieve its stated aim of making homelessness rare, brief, and non recurring.		
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15	This is a waste of time , the questions are too narrow and do not address the problems The homeless team in Redditch are not supporting or helping the 'hidden homeless'		Thank you for your comments Redditch Borough Council will always offer advice and assistance but the Council wouldn't always have a duty to provide temporary accommodation or longer term housing where there is no vulnerability (priority need). All of the councils have housing registers that can be accessed to apply for social housing in their areas.
16	more housing benefit to move into private housing.	Concerns about levels of benefits that can be awarded to access private rented accommodation.	Thank you for your comments Local Housing Allowance is controlled by central government and not within local councils ability to change. However each councils revenues and benefits team will operate a discretionary housing payment to assist for a certain amount of time.
17	The only comment I have is around including the identifying of elderly people on fixed, state pensions who are renting but have not taken up pension credit.		Thank you for your comments which are noted but this is not relevant for the homelessness strategy. Many Councils Financial Inclusion Teams and partners like the CABs offer assistance with making benefit claims

18	The Corporate Opinion of Droitwich Spa Town Council for this Consultation was resolved at the Full Council meeting of 27th April 2027 as follows. > To commend Councillor Rick Deller for his work and contribution in taking this important Initiative forwards. > Fully supportive of the three principles - protecting young people at risk of homelessness, prohibiting unsuitable temporary accommodations such as bed & breakfast premises and fully supporting of proper and fit for purpose "safe place community designated accommodation". Overall to develop a focus on caring, support networks , partnership working and positive intervention towards the prevention of homelessness scenarios in the Community.	Feedback that there should be more of a focus on caring, support networks , partnership working and positive intervention towards the prevention of homelessness scenarios in the Community.	Thank you for your comments Councils have built close relationships with the voluntary and community sector - but are keen to see if more can be done. specific community support for families in temporary accommodation is included in 4.2 .There are also links to the action already defined in the action plan around the Community Services Directory.
19	Support has to be put in place to help people with mental health issues and drug and alcohol issues. mental health services are in crisis and so are organisations that provide help and support for people struggling with addictions. if MHDC genuinely wants to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping then services to help people with mental health issues and drug and alcohol issues must be greatly improved and waiting lists for this type of support must be reduced. people also need ongoing tailored support to manage tenancies when they find somewhere to live. without proper support when moving to a new home people will be unable to manage a tenancy successfully.	Increased support for those with mental health and substance misuse required.	Thank you for your comments Each of the councils fund a Community Mental Health Link worker to help homeless households access mental health and other support. County Council have the responsibility for commissioning Drug & Alcohol services and Mental Health services are funded by County Council and mental health services and have the associated funding. However Local Housing Authorities will be undertaking a supported housing needs assessment and supported housing strategy and will be working closely with support services on this piece of work.

20	Provide living Caravans on decent sites with piped water, Toilet/shower facilities for homeless people and people that have been thrown out of their rented accommodation. To alleviate the problem of housing them. [REDACTED]	Suggestion around using caravans to accommodation homeless households/ Comment received in respect of offering housing to persons arriving in the country through unofficial routes.	Thank you for your comments. The Worcestershire Housing Strategy seeks to maximise affordable housing delivery. We have redacted the second part of these comments. Asylum seekers are initially accommodated by the Home Office and as such fall out of scope with this strategy.
21	My son was failed by you on many occasions over many years !! I feel young males are completely overlooked		Thank you for your comments which are noted. It is difficult to make any further comment without knowing the full details. However where the individual doesn't have a priority need we always offer advice and assistance but wouldn't have a duty to provide temporary accommodation or longer term housing.

22	Consider the volatility of some of the VCSE's in terms of continuity of funding; where they meet service needs and facilitate gaps. This is an area of increasing expertise, statutory expectation and decreasing funding. Further thoughts around expanding housing led support - consider the availability and pathways to accessing the right resource at the right time, relational consistency is key to sustained stability. MH and Homelessness Group - the theme around co-occurring substance use and mental health continues to need a more detailed look, in relation to all, but in particular a cohort of entrenched, rough sleepers, experiencing reoccurring homeless. There remains limited support during crisis, when a person is unsafe and / or others are unsafe due to their behaviour, and they are under the influence. Collaborative working should consider a framework for preventing crisis but also for managing crisis when it happens - that is reliable. Strategic service mapping should identify core objectives, funding terms and risks, how to access services and outcomes. Appreciate that mobilisation of collaborating on service design is a strategy core objective in it's own right.	Comments around the volatility of some VCSEs in terms of funding - need to consider funding to meet service needs and overcome gaps in service provision. Suggestion to expand housing led support. Suggestion that a more detailed exploration of those with co-occurring mental health and substance misuse and how to safeguard when people are under the influence.	Thank you for your comments. There is an action in the action plan to "Review and strengthen the rough sleeper support/accommodation options (All services and interventions that tackle rough sleeping) and commission or directly deliver services required utilising the new multi-year homelessness funding arrangements. Ensuring safety, accessibility and positive move on options." This would consider the important role of VCSE organisations in this area of work and whether there are potential funding opportunities. Also understand that the county council is developing/reviewing the protocol around access to commissioned services for those who are using drugs/alcohol.
23	We need more supported housing and one bed flats		Thank you for your comments which are noted.

24	As a community partner supporting residents and dealing with them every day with all issues, homelessness, poor mental and physical health, loneliness & isolation there needs to be better communication and partnership awareness between the councils and community sector. Council teams need to be more aware of the services and support available in the community for the residents they are supporting but also we need to find out more about the procedures, eligibility and processes.	The response deals with improving communication and partnership awareness between the councils and community sector. Council teams need to be more aware of the services and support available in the community for the residents they are supporting but also we need to find out more about the procedures, eligibility and processes.	Thank you for your comments. Each council has a Homelessness Partnership/Forum to undertake this function. There is also an action in the action plan around raising awareness of what all agencies and community partners do, and joint training awareness sessions.
25	You prioritise more affordable housing being built, and better use of social housing. We need more social housing! Many people are nowhere near being able to buy - increase social housing!	Comment around need for more social housing	Thank you for your comments. The Worcestershire Housing Strategy recognises the need to increase the development of affordable housing. There are a range of affordable housing tenures and this includes social housing.
26	Zero homelessness for everybody regardless of the cost		Thank you for your comment which is noted.

27	Need to ensure that people know about the help available - provision of a help line for people in poor housing (advice), people who are homeless or vulnerable and members of public worried about apparently homeless people or people who look vulnerable (drugs/alcohol) and publicising this would be helpful	Comments around how people can access support	Thank you for your comments. This will be picked up under the action around raising awareness as this is already in place.
28	The strategy has a strong overall direction and a positive shift towards prevention; however, it would benefit from clearer KPIs, measurable targets and defined accountability to ensure success can be properly monitored and reported. There is some duplication across the pillars, particularly around early intervention and data-led prevention, which could be streamlined for clarity. More detail is also needed on funding sustainability, housing supply constraints, landlord engagement and how the proposed 3–6 month risk prediction model will operate in practice. The inclusion of mental health, domestic abuse, veterans and prison-release support is particularly positive, and an annual public performance dashboard would strengthen transparency and accountability.	Comment around how KPIs, targets and responsibility needs to be more defined in the action plan.	Thank you for your comments. KPIs, targets and responsible people/groups are now identified in the action plan.
29	Incentives for employers to give quality employment, especially for young people so they are not on UC.	Comments around provision of quality employment for young people required	Thank you for your comments. There is an action already in the action plan "Work with partner organisations (e.g. DWP) to explore services provided to address youth unemployment and ensure they can be connected with prevention/mediation/budgeting/debt advice services."

30	Yes I think you also need to identify law changes that could help deliver the strategy. For example raise the age of a care leaver in uni to 25 years so they can complete their degree unfettered by the worry of having to leave the system during exam periods with trying to find somewhere to live. When the join the workforce they then get the housing support you suggest. Second point focus on accountabilities for the young on their own in specialist teenage homes so learn about pride, Consequences and contribute to family life. Keep young adults on their own away from those who can manipulate. Focus more on the range of undiagnosed SEND people - particularly the older people who haven't had the benefit of what is known now.	Comments around the challenges care leavers have whilst they are in higher education/uni and potentially faced with homelessness Comments around the need for suitable supported accommodation for young people. Comments around meeting the needs of those with SEND - or undiagnosed SEND	Housing and the care leavers team work collaboratively to prevent this from happening where possible. This feedback will be fed back to the care leavers team. The needs of young people in terms of housing and support will be identified through the development of the Supported Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy to be developed by 31/3/27. Holistic housing and support assessments are carried out by housing teams and referrals into specialist support - however these comments have also been fed back to the SEND team at county council
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31	VIEW 1: YES. i) While Maggs Day Centre supports the overall vision, priorities and direction of the strategy, we believe a small number of amendments and additions would strengthen its ability to effectively prevent and tackle homelessness across Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Wychavon and Wyre Forest. ii) In particular, the strategy would benefit from clearer and more explicit recognition of open-access, low-threshold services such as day centres and street outreach as core infrastructure within the homelessness system. Many people within the identified priority groups, especially single adults, people with complex needs, rough sleepers and those disengaged from services, do not initially access statutory pathways. Trusted, voluntary sector provision is often the first point of contact before crisis and plays a crucial role in early intervention and prevention. iii) The strategy could also be strengthened by more clearly embedding voluntary and community sector organisations within delivery and governance arrangements. Frontline services bring daily operational insight and real-time understanding of emerging risks (for example around temporary accommodation, safeguarding and disengagement) and should be routinely involved in shaping implementation, commissioning decisions and ongoing review. iv) Finally, we recommend a stronger emphasis on engagement-first prevention, recognising that effective early intervention often happens outside formal referral mechanisms. Sustained investment in relational, person-centred support is essential to preventing rough sleeping, reducing harm, supporting people placed in temporary accommodation and avoiding repeat homelessness. v) These additions would help ensure	Comments that the strategy would benefit from clearer and more explicit recognition of open-access, low-threshold services such as day centres and street outreach as core infrastructure within the homelessness system. Comments that the strategy could also be strengthened by more clearly embedding voluntary and community sector organisations within delivery and governance arrangements. Comments recommending a stronger emphasis on engagement-first prevention, recognising that effective early intervention often happens outside formal referral mechanisms.	There is an action in the strategy action plan to "Review and strengthen the rough sleeper support/accommodation options" and the mapping undertaken fully recognises the role of the voluntary sector in supporting statutory services. The Voluntary and Community sector are involved through Local Homeless Partnerships/Forums and these inform homelessness work and service provision but it would be inappropriate to involve voluntary sector partners who could bid for works in the commissioning process beyond soft market testing and similar forms of discussion and engagement. Funding has now been agreed for three years from the MHCLG which hopefully contributes to sustainability of services
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	that the strategy's strong framework translates into practical, inclusive and effective outcomes for people experiencing homelessness across all five districts. VIEW 2: a) The strategy provides a strong and positive framework, particularly in its focus on prevention, partnership working and supporting people to rebuild their lives. b) From a delivery perspective, it would be helpful to see greater emphasis on how services will be sustainably resourced, particularly given increasing demand and the complexity of need across the system. c) There is also an opportunity to strengthen the role of community-based organisations within the strategy, recognising the value of flexible, person-centred support that often sits outside of statutory provision but is critical to engagement and long-term outcomes. d) Finally, continued focus on early intervention and joined-up pathways between housing, health and support services will be key to ensuring that homelessness is not only prevented, but not repeated.	Sustained investment in relational, person-centred support is essential to preventing rough sleeping, reducing harm, supporting people placed in temporary	Thank you for your comments which are noted.
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32	Yes, section 3.3.8 on refugees is incorrect, single people do not want to relocate f(o)r cultural reasons, they have no choice but to go to supported housing in Birmingham because there is very little chance they can find affordable housing in area. If bham clamp down on supported housing there will be far higher number of homeless refugees. In addition all emergency housing for all people should be self contained and big enough for the family size, when they have to spend 12 months on one room for 4 people with a shared kitchen it is unacceptable.	Comments of refuges and the types of accommodation used.	Thank you for your comments This part of the strategy was included based on information provided to the Councils indicating that people want to be able to access support networks and services not necessarily found in rural areas but we agree that for low income single people with no priority need the only housing available may for accommodation in the more urban areas but people will always be given advice and assistance around local connection and housing options (please see action 2.31). Unfortunately it isnt possible to use self-contained temporary accommodation exclusively but there is an action to reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast style accommodation for families.
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33	Stating that asylum seekers largely prefer to move to urban areas is not based on real experience. Some do, some have no choice due to not meeting priority need criteria and a lack of realistic alternative options locally but many prefer to stay in this area where they have established support networks. Some return to this area at a later date having discovered that city life is not safe or satisfying for them.	Concern around lack of choice in where people settle to live.	Thank you for your comments and please see response above. Each council operates a choice based housing allocations system allowing those eligible for housing to have an element of choice as to where they are allocated housing. Specifically in relation to asylum seekers who have been granted leave to remain they can approach for social housing in the area to which they have a local connection. However for those seeking asylum it is the Home Office who control where households are located. Asylum seekers who are granted leave to remain are given 42 days to leave Home Office accommodation which means that at short notice, housing options are limited.
34	More resources need to be made available so that those requiring emergency accommodation can stay locally and not be sent away and sometimes families are split up. More care and understanding needs to be expressed towards people when there are interactions with Council, charities and government agencies.	Concerns around emergency accommodation being located away from the area people have been residing in. Comment that peoples need more care and understanding during interactions with agencies.	Thank you for your comments Pillar 4 and actions within the action plan aim to make people's lives better should they reach crisis point and need to access temporary accommodation - and ensure the correct support is put in place. Larger households may have limited choices when accessing temporary accommodation but housing teams prioritise families in this situation for move on into more suitable

			accommodation or settled housing. Housing officers are trained to use a trauma informed approach.
35	I think that a view that people who are from different countries and cultures will benefit from moving to places where there are denser populations of those cultures and nationalities is wrong. Each case is individual, and many such people would choose to remain in mixed communities where they can learn and benefit from. Worcestershire benefits from the diversity of cultures and backgrounds, and it always has. Let people choose where they would like to settle. Do not make them move to urban areas.	Concern around lack of choice in where people settle to live.	Thank you for your comments and please see earlier comment. Each council operates a choice based housing allocations system allowing those eligible for housing to have an element of choice as to where they are allocated housing. If this comment is specifically in relation to asylum seekers who have been granted leave to remain they can approach for social housing in the area to which they have a local connection. If this is about those seeking asylum - it is the Home Office who controls where households are located. Asylum seekers who are granted leave to remain are given 42 days to leave Home Office accommodation which means that at short notice, housing options are limited.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET****9TH JULY****Budget Monitoring Fourth Quarter 2025-26 (PROVISIONAL OUTTURN)**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor D Ross, Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Director of Resources
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APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 - Wyre Forest District Council Revenue Budget Requirements Appendix 2 – Draft Outturn Variances Appendix 3 - Capital Programme Appendix 4 – Glossary <i>The appendices to this report have been circulated electronically and a public inspection copy is available on request. (See front cover for details.)</i>

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to brief members on the Council's financial performance at the end of Quarter 4 ending 31st March 2026 and to present the provisional draft (pre audit) outturn position for the 2025-26 financial year.
- 1.2 The deadline for finalising and publishing the draft (pre audit) outturn position for the 2025-26 financial year is 30th June 2026.
- 1.3 The report sets out income and expenditure against budget for 2025-26 for revenue expenditure and against the Capital Programme approved by Council on 25th February 2026. In addition, the report provides key information relating to estimates of the Council's reserves position for the next three years.

Revenue – after application of risk and contingency reserves the year-end outturn position is expected to be **£674k** better than the position forecast in the 2026-29 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This is an improvement upon the projected outturn position (£39k) estimated at the end of quarter 3 largely due to prudent investment income assumptions (additional £143k, improved income position across depot services £259k, improved regulatory income from planning applications £149k and savings on operational expenditure relating to the council's fleet £132k).

Capital – the actual capital expenditure for 2025-26 is £11.649m against the approved Capital Programme for 2025-26 of £16.666m. £4.916m will be slipped to future years, with the remaining balance of £101,129 being small underspends & a £100k Evergreen Investment Fund budget that is no longer required. An additional grant of £27,500 for a chewing gum removal machine was approved in excess of the revised budget, this was fully funded by capital grant.

- 1.4 The report also briefs members on current progress against the savings and efficiency targets in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The 2025-26 Wyre Forest Forward target of £195,000 has been fully achieved.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to Approve:

- 2.1 **The fully funded increase to the capital programme for the chewing gum removal machine to match the final grant allocation (£27,500 increase).**
- 2.2 **The Capital Programme slippage.**
- 2.3 **The Cabinet is asked to NOTE:**
- 2.4 **The provisional outturn position, budget variations, virements and comments within this report and appendices 1 to 4.**
- 2.5 **That in line with the recommendation approved by Council on 25th February 2026, the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio, has allocated £300k of the Final Account savings to the General Risk Reserve and has increased the working balance by £200k to £2m (paragraph 6.1).**
- 2.6 **The recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meetings on 2nd July 2026.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Budget projections are reviewed regularly and reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet on a quarterly basis. The 2025-26 Original Budget was approved as part of the 2025-28 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) by Council on 26th February 2025. The 2025-26 Revised Budget was approved as part of the 2026-29 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) by Council on 25th February 2026. The revised budget updates the base position for the 2026-29 MTFS. The provisional outturn shows a net underspend against the Revised Budget and the latest approved MTFS of **£674k**.
- 3.2 The balanced budget approved by Council focuses on ensuring that the Council optimises the full range of income sources that affect its overall budget including Council Tax and Business Rates revenue, Government funding and other external specific grants, fees and charges and other elements of income from activities including returns from property and treasury investments.
- 3.3 Wyre Forest District Council was a member of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire business rates pool in 2025-26 and receives a share of any growth in rateable value achieved. Any gain is shared between Worcestershire County Council, the Fire authority, the Herefordshire unitary authority (Herefordshire Council) and the 6 District Councils in Worcestershire.

- 3.4 In year total income from business rates payers is ahead of the position previously estimated. Collection rate losses were off-set by growth in the rating list and business rate appeal provisions being reduced. The appeals adjustment is carried forward in the Collection Fund to future years and will be reflected in the 2027-30 MTFS. The pooling gain from being a member of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire business rates pool is reflected in the current year.
- 3.5 The collection rate for Council tax is slightly ahead of that achieved in the previous year and in-line with that achieved in 2023-24.
- 3.6 The 2026-29 Medium Term Financial Strategy makes prudent assumptions about the income stream that is expected to be generated from the Capital Portfolio Fund properties that were debt financed. The uncertainty and ongoing risk inherent in this income stream is recognised and the properties are actively managed to minimise any risk to Council Tax payers. We continue to work to ensure that current financial performance of the fund, specifically the impact on the MTFS, is clearly presented.
- 3.7 The best value theme, centred around use of resources in the Best Value Standards and Intervention guidance, highlights that dependency on high-risk commercial income for service delivery and balancing budgets is one of the indicators of potential failure. All business cases are subjected to due diligence checks, give a full appraisal of risks and a prudent view of likely income arising with appropriate sensitivity analysis presented to aid decision making. Lessons have been learnt from the Covid pandemic from over reliance by District Councils on demand led income streams.
- 3.8 A revised Capital Strategy 2026-36 was approved by Council on 25th February 2026. The revised Strategy covers all capital expenditure and sets out reporting and planning for financial risk implications in relation to non-treasury investments.

4. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

4.1 Revenue Overview

The Revenue Summary shows net expenditure by reporting group and where some costs are funded by reserves this is incorporated. The following table details the draft (pre audit) outturn position with variances against both the original budget and the MTFS assumptions (revised budget) approved by Council on 25th February 2026:

Table 1: Quarter 4 Revenue Budget variances and Draft (pre audit) Outturn 2025-26

SERVICE REPORTING GROUP	Original Budget £000	Revised Budget £000	Draft Outturn (Q4) £000	Variance to Original Budget £000	Variances to MTFS Assumptions /Revised Budget £000
Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council	3,002	3,054	2,985	(17)	(69)
Community and Environment	6,255	6,583	5,900	(355)	(683)
Economic Development and Regeneration	564	452	471	(93)	19
Resources	1,945	1,569	1,881	(64)	312
Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services	1,904	1,901	1,941	37	40
Strategic Growth	2,619	2,590	2,442	(177)	(148)
WFF Savings target*	(195)	0	0	195	0
Services Total	16,094	16,149	15,620	(474)	(529)
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	1,584	1,499	1,499	(85)	0
External debt Interest	1,115	803	803	(312)	0
Investment Interest	(1,036)	(1,236)	(1,379)	(343)	(143)
Capital Account (Other)	(2,072)	(1,913)	(1,915)	157	(2)
Total Capital account	(409)	(847)	(992)	(583)	(145)
Grand Total	15,685	15,302	14,628	(1,057)	(674)

- 4.2 **Capital programme** – progress of spend against capital programme is summarised below:

Table 2: Quarter 4 (Full Year) Provisional Capital Spend and Slippage 2025-26

2025-26 Capital Programme	Revised Capital Programme 2025-26	Q4 Draft Capital Outturn 2025-26	Draft Slippage/ Reprogramming to future years at Q4
	£	£	£
Community and Environmental Services	2,331,980	1,532,427	699,553
Resources and Revenues, Benefits & Customer Services	514,930	437,476	77,454
Strategic Growth	4,344,580	2,756,103	1,588,472
Economic Development & Regeneration	6,804,160	6,732,793	71,367
Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewal Schedule	2,670,440	189,941	2,479,375
Total	16,666,090	11,648,740	4,916,221

Supply and inflationary pressures continue to be a significant risk for the Council's capital programme, increasing the likelihood of cost overruns for construction projects and equipment renewals. Full detail of scheme progress is provided in the Major Capital projects update at section 8 and Appendix 2 to this report.

The majority of the Council's Capital Programme is financed from either borrowing or capital grants, while some of the programme is funded directly from revenue or from capital receipts. There are revenue implications from capital expenditure funded from borrowing through interest charges and the statutory Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP).

5. **RESERVES POSITION AND FUNDING GAP**

Local authorities are required by law to have a balanced budget i.e., a plan based on sound assumptions which shows how income will equal spend over the short and medium term. Plans can take account of deliverable cost savings and/or income growth strategies as well as useable reserves. A budget is considered not to balance where increased uncertainty leads to budget overspends of a level which reduces reserves to unacceptably low levels. Any significant alteration in either expenditure or income may result in an unbalanced budget. Factors affecting a budget could include:

- Natural disaster
- sudden policy change
- demographic pressures
- unexpected funding pressures
- failure to realise planned savings or income growth

To avoid an unbalanced budget the council needs to be financially resilient to ensure that finances can withstand unexpected pressures. A large part of our financial resilience is secured via the adequacy of our general and earmarked reserves.

General Reserves

- 5.1 The table below provides key information relating to the draft (pre audit) outturn position. It presents the reserves position projected forward across the 3 years of the published MTFS and takes into account the impact of new and emerging cost pressures and savings that have resulted in variances presented in this report.

Table 3: Reserves statement adjusted for Draft Outturn

Reserves Statement	Revised Budget 2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
	£	£	£	£
Reserves at 1st April	4,968,940	5,435,731	5,331,361	4,591,181
MTFS assumed contribution to/(from) Reserves	293,060	(404,370)	(1,340,180)	(1,340,180)
Budgeted Release of Earmarked to Unallocated (General) Reserves		300,000	600,000	600,000
Outturn variance	673,731			
Proposed increase in working balance	(200,000)			
Proposed increase to General Risk Reserve	(300,000)			
Contribution (from)/to Reserves	466,791	(104,370)	(740,180)	(740,180)
Reserves as at 31st March	5,435,731	5,331,361	4,591,181	3,851,001

- 5.2 The Council's expenditure plans exceed its funding position, resulting in a financial gap. Each year of the 2026-29 MTFS is balanced by a contribution from reserves. The reserves position is reported after consideration of current savings targets and income growth projections. The Cabinet and officers are working towards implementing further savings and efficiency measures and exploring additional income generation proposals in line with the Commercial Strategy being progressed by the Transformation and Commercial board.

Earmarked Reserves

- 5.3 The Council's earmarked reserves held at 1st April 2026 totalled £16.242m. The balance includes Business Rates reserves held in respect of the time lag inherent within the current Business Rates Retention (BRR) system, revenue contingency risk reserves to support the major grant funded schemes in the capital programme and reserves set aside to fund Capital expenditure plans (Direct Revenue Financing DRF). The contingency reserves balance includes the addition of investment income achieved in 2023-24 arising from the grant funding from Government paid in advance. The reserve is being applied to support price escalation due to inflationary pressures and to meet any revenue items of expense that can't be met from the capital grants.
- 5.4 A General Risk Reserve is held to meet one-off unexpected costs and to manage most future operational risks. Allocations against the reserve are approved by the Corporate Leadership Team. Following in year allocations and top-ups the current level of the General Risk Reserve is £1.339m.
- 5.5 A key element in managing the council's earmarked reserves is regular review to ensure that if they are no longer required they can be released to general reserves or reallocated towards strategic priorities. A review of reserves held was undertaken as part of the 2025-26 accounts closedown process.

Table 4: Earmarked Reserves latest balances

Earmarked Reserves	Reserves b/f at 01/04/25	Spend 31/03/26	Release to General Reserves	New Reserves Added	Commitments outstanding	Balance available
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
External Funding	(1,598)	378	0	(1,985)	3,205	(0)
Shared Service	(93)	37	0	(37)	93	(0)
WFDC Budget	(7,532)	1,217	0	(1,296)	5,531	(2,080)
Innovation Fund	(1,540)	40	0	(150)	955	(695)
General Risks	(1,969)	225	0	(200)	605	(1,339)
Sub Total	(12,733)	1,897	0	(3,668)	10,389	(4,114)
Business Rates (timing)	(1,333)	18	0	(141)	1,456	0
Capital Programme	(289)	6	0	0	283	0
Total	(14,355)	1,921	0	(3,809)	12,128	(4,114)

- 5.6 Reserves are very useful for balancing unexpected expenditure in the short term. However, CIPFA's advice is that they are replaced when the short term need has passed and that the use of reserves must be very measured. Application of the General Risk Earmarked Reserves to meet day to day recurring operational expenditure would put the financial viability of the Council at risk.

Information and Analysis – Financial Performance Summary

6. REVENUE DETAIL

- 6.1 The Final Accounts Outturn position for 2025-26 shows a positive variance of £674k (underspend) against the revised budget in the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy. The saving in the cost of services after funding variations but before the level of reserves and balances is considered was **£529k**, with an additional variance arising from additional investment income due to slower than anticipated base rate cuts and other capital account variances (**£145k**). Full details of all service variances are provided in Appendix 2. Achieving a reduction in the cost of services has been achieved by prudent budget management, some income growth from fees and charges, and prudent active management of the council's treasury balances. The saving will be used to increase the working balance by £200k to reflect the additional financial risk exposure arising from hosting the shared Worcestershire Homes Adaptation Service, a sum of £300k will be added to the general risk reserve to meet potential litigation claims where no insurance covers are/were in place with the remainder being transferred to General Reserves.
- 6.2 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy was updated in February and the 2026-29 MTFS forecasts a funding gap of £1.5m by 2027-28 unless the savings targets in the MTFS are achieved and further savings identified. Meeting these targets will need significant transformation in the way services are delivered. The increase in General Reserves and the increase in the working balance will help to support the council's financial resilience.
- 6.3 Included within Appendix 2 is the identification of the significant variances against the Revised Budget for 2025-26. These variances include:
- i) **Community Well-being and Environment – favourable variance of £683k**
There are a number of favourable variances across these services including £259k improved income position, reduced cost of vehicle maintenance arising from new strategy for garage services £132k and other cost savings of £319k including £133k from depot management due to vacancies and a restructure and £56k from premises related expenditure. Details of all major variances are set out in Appendix 2.
 - ii) **Resources – an adverse variance of £312k**
The overall adverse variances is a result of an unbudgeted increase to the insurance earmarked reserve set aside to meet insurance excesses, and any claims arising whilst the Council was insured by MMI (£150k), the additional cost of Employers National Insurance is being met from vacancies arising in year rather than a transfer from contingencies, audit fees being higher than expected (£16k), the increase in bad debt provision being lower than expected (£84k) and various other small variances. Details of all major variances are set out in Appendix 2.
 - iii) **Additional external treasury investment interest of £143k.** Additional interest on treasury investments has resulted from longer durations, robust treasury management of funds, and delays to previously anticipated interest rate cuts.

iv) Strategic Growth – positive variance of £148k

Largely due to an overall positive variance from Development Management and Planning Policy Formation of £94k and various other small variances. Details of all major variances are set out in Appendix 2.

6.4 Demand led cost pressures

Services are still seeing an increase in demand as residents continue to struggle with household budgets:

Homelessness Support – Emergency Accommodation. The Housing Advice team is continuing to see a high demand in the numbers of people needing to be accommodated in temporary accommodation due to homelessness. The two workstreams that the Housing Advice team engage in, to both reduce the need to place households in emergency accommodation and where this can't be avoided to reduce the time spent in emergency accommodation, have successfully mitigated the associated financial pressures arising from significant and sustained growth. Demand for this service is not expected to reduce, in part due to the unintended impact of other government policies that reduce the supply of private rented sector housing in the area including the ongoing provision of accommodation for asylum seekers and the implications of the Home Office's early release scheme to address capacity issues in the prison estate. Emergency Housing cost pressures have eased in 2025-26 (£20k budget saving) following the opening of Millpond House, the new temporary housing facility in Kidderminster despite caseloads increasing and the reduction in available affordable housing.

6.5 Emerging Cost Pressures

This report draws attention to new and emerging budget pressures that are likely to have a significant impact on the council's ability to deliver services within the approved budget envelope in the medium term. High inflation is likely to continue to result in cost pressures as the impact on long term (3 year plus) contracts fall due for renewal.

The April 2026 pay award – The NJC employers have offered staff a rise of 3.30% on all pay points and allowances which is above the allowance made in the 2026-29 MTFS and would constitute a budget pressure of circa £50k. UNITE, UNISON and GMB members have rejected the offer and we are awaiting further updates from NJC employers on the next steps.

Growth in not for profit specified accommodation providers – council officers are aware of a growing number of charitable/Community Interest Company (CIC) providers establishing supported housing in the district. The accommodation is not solely for the use of local residents although any housing benefit subsidy penalty implications fall as a cost to this council. Council officers are in discussion with providers to limit the potential impact on local council taxpayers wherever possible. The subsidy loss for 2025-26 was £116k.

The following new and emerging cost pressures arising from government policy change will need to be carefully assessed as more information emerges and where possible be managed to mitigate the impact on the 2026-29 MTFS. Council officers will continue to lobby for fair and equitable funding for new burdens:

- Asylum seeker dispersal – the impact of this is twofold through reducing the supply (and increasing the cost) of private rented sector accommodation that would otherwise be available and through potential statutory homeless duties owed to all those dispersed here if their asylum application is successful.
- Devolution and Local Government reorganisation (LGR). LGR introduces high-level financial operational and cultural risks, the key impacts include increased risk of budgetary overspends, service disruption, corporate capacity and staff retention issues and failures to achieve intended efficiencies. Significant risks arise from merging IT systems, harmonising HR policies and inconsistencies in data.

- Restoring councillors' access to the local government pension scheme from April 2026
- Renters Rights Act 2025 – projected demand for private sector housing team case work and homelessness support has been factored into budget estimates. The budget assumes that new burdens funding will meet the full cost of implementing the Act but there is a risk that costs will exceed the funding being made available.
- Council tax – from April 2027 payments for council tax will be defaulted to 12 monthly payments rather than the traditional 10 months which will have a negative impact on cashflow and incur additional administration in handling requests to stay on 10 monthly instalments.

Council Tax Base - The level of Council Tax discounts and awards continues to be carefully monitored together with the impact of Council tax banding changes following awareness campaigns by consumer advice groups. There is a risk that the tax base will grow at a slower rate than assumed with a consequential reduction in funding from Council Tax. There has been an increase in the number of people approaching the Council for discretionary support as more people struggle with household budgets and more people are opting to pay over 12 months.

7 REVENUE DETAIL - External Income

7.1 External Income is an important element within the finances of the Council, it affects the level of resources available to fund services and makes an important contribution to a balanced budget. The summary budget and draft outturn position is shown in the table and graphs below. Overall, performance is ahead of the target in the 2025-28 MTFS approved by Council in February 2025 by £383k and ahead of the projected outturn assumed in the 2026-29 MTFS by £472k.

7.2 The table below details the Council's main revenue income sources.

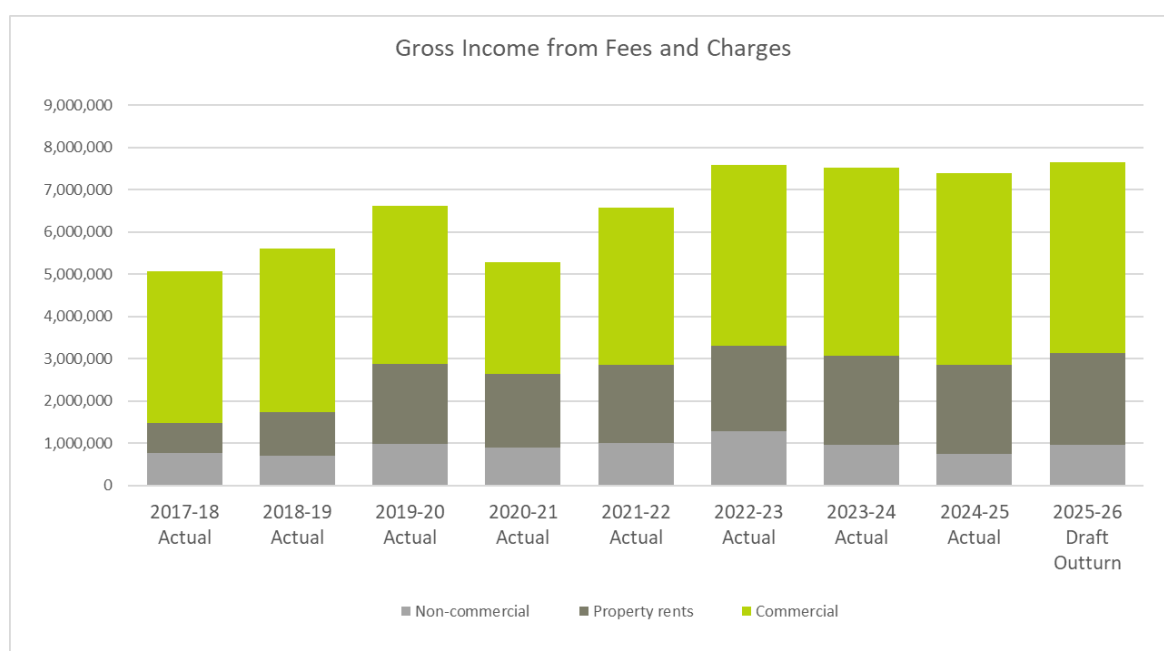
Table 5: Quarter 4 Income variances and Draft Outturn 2025-26

Source of Income	2024-25 Outturn	2025-26 Original Budget	2025-26 Revised Budget/ 2026-29 MTFS assumption	Month 12 Provisional Outturn	Estimated Full Year Variance to approved budget
	£	£		£	£
Car Parks and Enforcement	-1,496,350	-1,302,540	-1,307,540	-1,375,138	-67,598
Wyre Forest Leisure Centre	-659,610	-659,610	-682,830	-682,830	0
Waste	-1,614,580	-1,764,790	-1,670,000	-1,726,720	-56,720
Garage	0	-15,270	-4,000	-7,789	-3,789
Arboricultural and Grounds Maintenance	-192,360	-170,000	-218,960	-241,169	-22,209
Parks and Green Spaces	-161,150	-145,940	-150,900	-152,709	-1,809
Street Cleansing	-118,010	-144,560	-140,000	-153,102	-13,102
Bewdley Museum	-164,130	-141,180	-150,380	-182,493	-32,113
Cemetery	-57,760	-54,660	-54,660	-71,598	-16,938
Property Rental	-2,101,140	-2,189,020	-2,117,510	-2,177,195	-59,685
Land Charges	-52,500	-52,500	-52,500	-48,533	3,967
Professional and Business Services	-301,950	-297,890	-299,320	-321,429	-22,109
Regulatory Income	-994,440	-1,022,220	-1,022,590	-1,202,289	-179,699
Total	-7,913,980	-7,960,180	-7,871,190	-8,342,994	-471,804
Variance to Original				-382,814	

Income is shown as a negative (-), and income growth is shown as a negative (-) variation. The table includes Professional and Business Service external income and Private Sector licensing income that hasn't traditionally been captured by the Commercial Strategy and is therefore excluded from the graphs at paragraph 7.6 below to facilitate a like for like comparison and examination of trends.

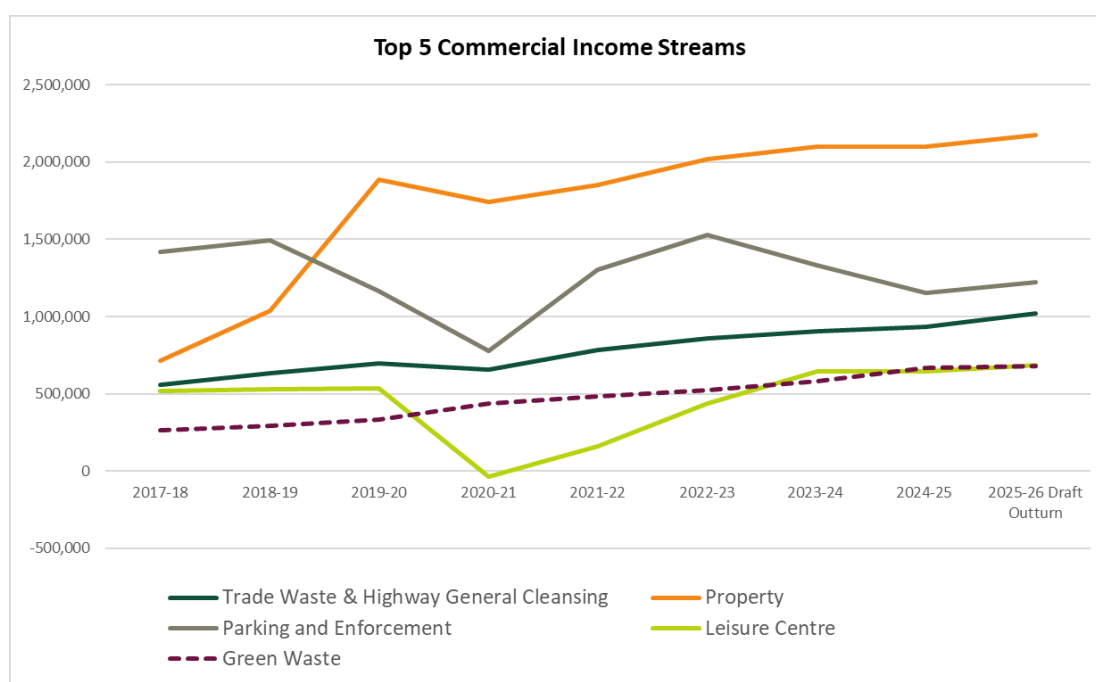
- 7.3 This positive performance against in year target and MTFS assumptions is primarily driven by demand led income streams, most notably planning and car parking. In addition, waste services, particularly garden waste and trade income, have performed strongly, reflecting continued customer growth and effective service delivery. Property rental, and parking enforcement also performed above target.
- 7.4 The Planning fee income growth was partly due to a rise in pre-application enquiries and a high than expected number of applications for windfall housing developments. The demand assumptions built into the target had assumed that the increase in householder planning fees would deter people from making applications, but this has not been the case. The government introduced a structural increase to householder planning application fees in England on 1 April 2025, fees for a single home rose by 105% from £258 to £528.
- 7.5 Overall income across services covered by the Commercial Strategy grew by 3.39% above that achieved in 2024-25 on a cash basis against an annual CPI rate of 3.3% in the 12 months to March 2026. The largest growth in percentage terms was our non-commercial regulatory income which showed a strong bounce back from a disappointing year in 2024-25 delivering 29.58% growth. Overall, a year on year comparison shows that our commercial income streams performed on a par with that in 2024-25 although there were some notable high performers (bulky waste +7.69%, leisure centre +5.98%, Parking and Enforcement +5.85% and Trade waste & Highways +5.65%).
- 7.6 The previous success of the commercial income generation work, the impact of Covid and subsequent stagnation is shown in the graph below.

Summary Income Performance 2017-18 to 2025-26

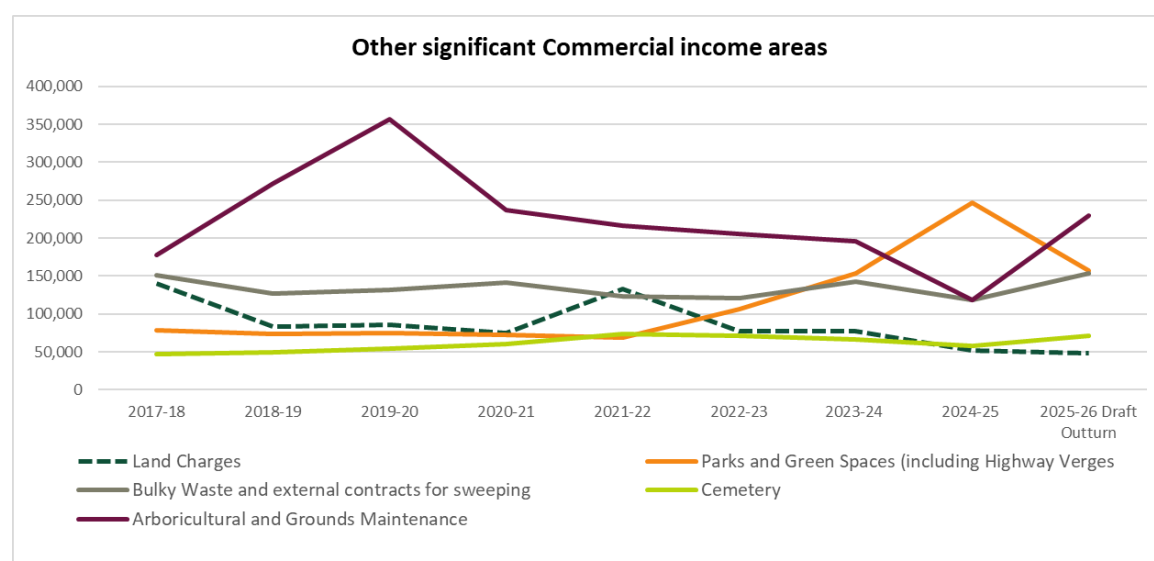


- 7.7 The graphs below detail performance for the income streams that fall under the Commercial Strategy.

Gross Commercial Income 2017-18 to 2025-26 – Top 5

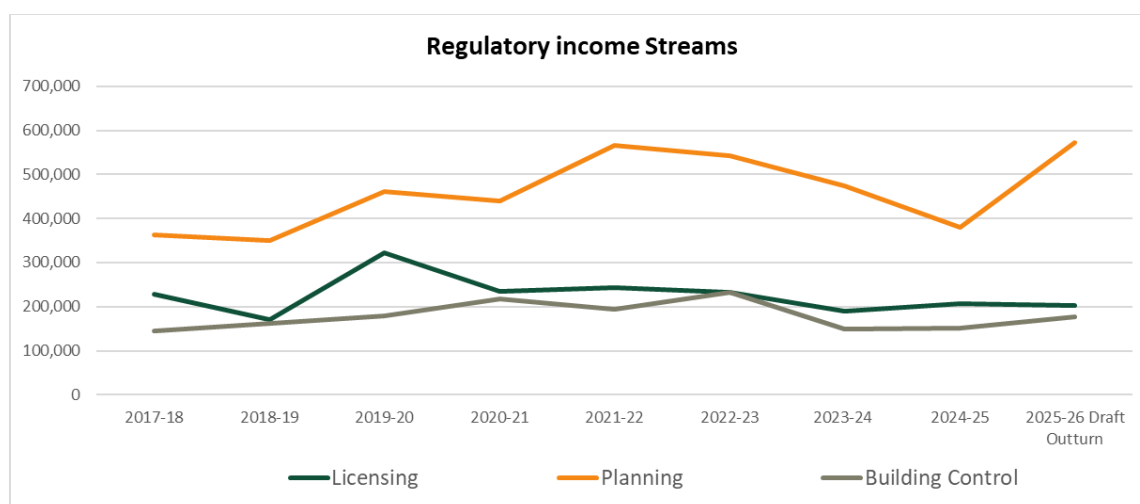


Gross Commercial Income 2017-18 to 2025-26 – Other



- 7.5 The viability of all commercial income activity covered by the strategy is examined by the Transformation and Commercial Programme Board. The Board was established to consider not only gross income performance but also the net return to the Council after marginal costs are considered.
- 7.8 The graph below presents the level of Regulatory Income received each year. In general Council's must not make a profit from regulatory functions and any surplus (or deficit) is ring fenced and carried forward to future years. The planning fee income achieved in 2025-26 is above the target in the 2025-28 MTFS, partly due to a rise in pre-application enquiries, a higher than expected number of applications for windfall housing developments and householder planning applications.

Regulatory Income Sources



- 7.9 **Capital Portfolio Fund** - The Capital Portfolio Fund was established to support regeneration, economic growth and housing. It is allied to the Council's income generation/ commercialism objectives and is financed from borrowing.
- 7.10 The intended project outputs relate to full-time equivalent jobs either created, safeguarded or facilitated through the investment activity. The intended outputs included vacancy rates of commercial premises, occupancy rates of units or work spaces, business investment and count of active enterprises. All projects were intended to be, as a minimum, cost neutral to the council when costs of borrowing and statutory charges (minimum revenue provision) are taken into account, and most were expected to generate a financial return to support service priorities.
- 7.11 The table below summaries the revenue impact of the Capital Portfolio Fund in 2025-26. The Quarter 4 draft outturn projection shows that overall the target included within the 2026-29 MTFS was over achieved. In general, where budget targets are over or under achieved it is because rents agreed at review are above/below levels originally assumed due to prevailing market conditions and/or the Council's share of service charge expenditure arising from common areas, caps, voids and essential health and safety compliance work varies from expectations. The costs of property management are significantly higher than assumed in the original business cases due to shortages in the labour market. These higher costs were built into the budget in 2025-26 so do not constitute a budget pressure.
- 7.12 Industrial sector and logistics rents have grown since the pandemic across the West Midlands due to supply shortages and high demand for last-mile delivery locations. However, older estates with poor power supplies or tight yards are underperforming relative to prime stock. Market rents in the secondary office and retail sectors have been suppressed due to a flight to quality and changing occupier habits. Many landlords are repositioning or repurposing secondary retail space for mixed-use or service-led functions.
- 7.13 The in-year performance, after operational expenditure and the cost of borrowing is taken into account, was a net overall surplus of £40k and a budget surplus of £88k compared to the approved MTFS target.

Table 6: Capital Portfolio Fund Strategy – Quarter 4 Financial Performance summary

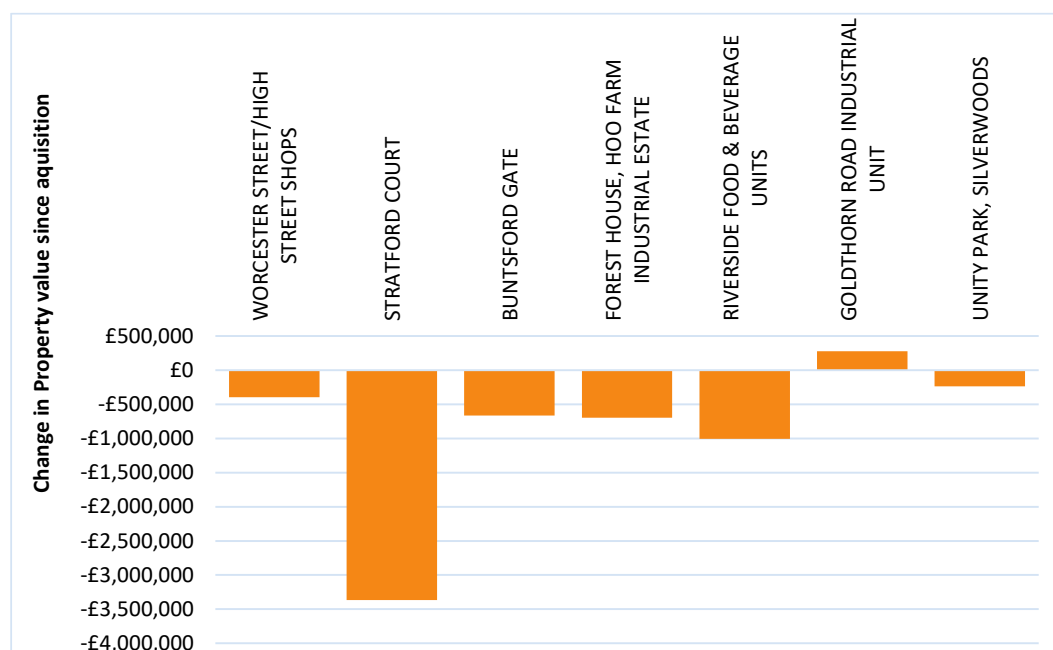
Property Portfolio Fund Net Impact on Council Tax after Statutory Charges		2024-25 Outturn £	2025-26 Original Budget £	Draft 2026-29 MTFS		
				2025-26 Revised Budget £	Draft Outturn £	Outturn to Revised Variance £
R276	High Street/Worcester Street	33,080	25,900	22,200	34,375	12,175
R277	Stratford Court	21,737	38,290	75,170	3,928	(71,242)
R278	Buntsford Gate	46,403	(31,500)	(26,950)	(54,179)	(27,229)
R279	Forest House	51,278	33,520	38,540	38,520	(20)
R280	Riverside	(29,603)	2,530	35,750	27,157	(8,593)
R281	Goldthorn Road	(113,318)	(101,950)	(109,130)	(102,781)	6,349
R282	Unity Park	1,000	7,220	12,550	13,155	605
R275	Property Portfolio Fund Admin account	0	0	0	0	0
Total		10,577	(25,990)	48,130	(39,825)	(87,955)

Income is shown as a negative (-), and income growth is shown as a negative (-) variation

7.14 Change in Capital value

The overall reduction in the value of properties purchased under the Capital portfolio fund strategy, since acquisition, is 34%. The cumulative impairment shown in the Council's accounts is £6.1m. It should be noted that under regulations, impairment is neutralised by a transfer to the capital adjustment account and does not fall as a charge to be met by tax payers and any loss is only realised on disposal of the assets. Due to the cyclical nature of the value of property assets and the link between value and weighted average lease length, the holding period between the date of acquisition and date of disposal is always likely to be a minimum of 5 years. The assets were acquired to meet operational objectives and not for capital appreciation. Capital values will continue to be monitored for transparency.

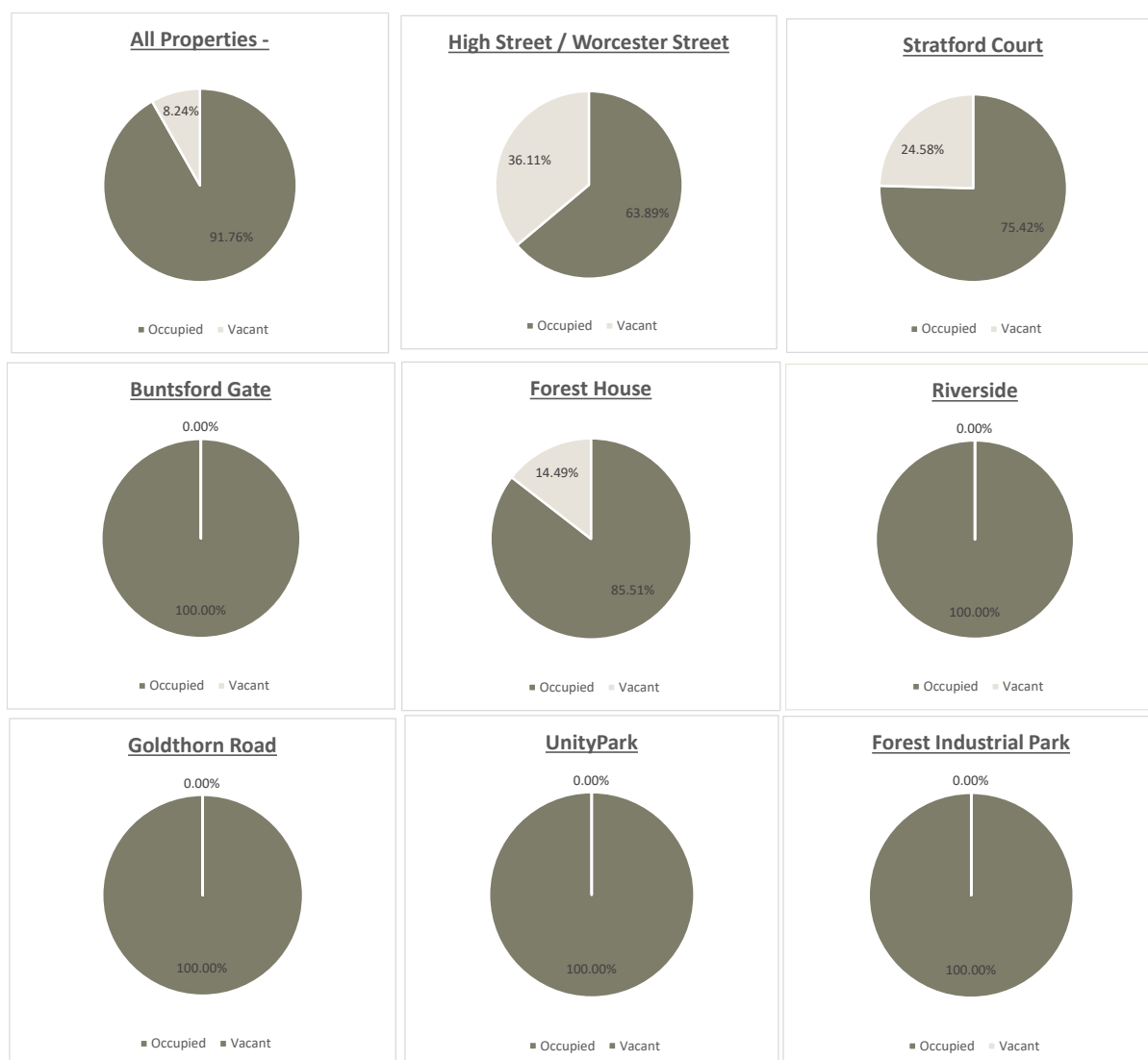
Change in Capital Value for Capital Portfolio Fund properties



7.15 Current Vacancy levels/Voids

There continues to be a churn in leases due to natural breaks and expiries, but overall occupancy, at 92% is high.

Occupancy Rates for Capital Portfolio Fund properties at 31st March 2026



7.16 Investment Income – The statutory guidance on local government investments requires the Council to adopt a prudent investment policy that puts security – protecting the capital sums invested, and liquidity – ensuring the funds invested are available for expenditure when needed, ahead of considerations of yield. The Treasury team seeks to achieve optimal performance (yield) within these constraints. The Council achieved an average in-house return of 4.22% on average cash balances of £32.764m, producing gross interest receivable at the year end of £1.379m. The Treasury team are proactive in managing our daily cash balances and achieved a return of 0.05% above the model benchmark performance calculated by our Treasury Advisors. The draft outturn of £1.379m is £343k above the 2025-26 Original budget in the 2025-28 MTFs and £143k ahead of the 2026-29 MTFs assumptions. Interest rates have fallen gradually throughout 2025-26 but at a slower rate than expected. Any gains in rate of return have been partially offset by lower balances available to invest as prudent use is made of internal borrowing when interest rates are high. Rates are currently expected to increase in 2026-27. Some of our major capital schemes are financed from loans. Increased internal borrowing is

being used in the short term due to the increased cost of loan financing but delays in receiving external grant funding has increased the likelihood of needing to externally borrow early in 2026-27.

8. CAPITAL DETAIL - Major Capital projects

This section of the report provides an update on the significant schemes in the Capital Programme in 2025-26, highlighting the actual spend for the financial year against the programmed spend. Council approved the Capital programme allocations at its meeting on 25th February 2026. The governance arrangements for the FHSF and LUF provide assurance on deliverability of these important schemes.

8.1 Future High Street Fund – Update from Major Capital Projects Programme Board

The programme helps to deliver the Council's strategy to re-balance the town on its west/east axis to improve outcomes for the eastern side of the town. The projects included refurbishment of the former Magistrates' Court on Worcester Street as a new creative and innovation hub, The Old Court (now complete), creation of a new urban park. Talbot Park in the heart of Kidderminster town centre to improve the appearance, access and connection of Worcester Street with Bromsgrove Street and links to the wider Lion Fields development site and ultimately to the railway station as the town's key transport hub.

Project Outputs – creation of temporary jobs, full time permanent jobs and safeguarding permanent jobs, clearance of a brownfield site, creation of new public realm and new pedestrian paths.

Project Outcomes include improvement in air quality and carbon dioxide reduction, improved pedestrian flow and increased patronage of the public transport system.

The programme contributes to Corporate Priority One – Economic Growth and Regeneration and Corporate Priority Three – A Clean, Safe and Green place to Live, Work and Visit.

The total approved capital allocation for the project is £28,996,040 (of which £1.25m is dependent on a viable business case and is currently not being progressed). The programme is funded from Future High Street Fund grant and other capital grants (Brown Field Land Release Fund, UKSPF and LEP Revolving Infrastructure Fund (RIF) (£2.45m)) and a combination of external loan finance, and direct financing from revenue (applying various revenue earmarked reserves). All Council resources have been fully utilised. The Council is meeting the cost of bridging finance pending receipt of RIP (formerly LEP) grant funding currently held by Birmingham City Council of £2.45m.

Risk Assessment

The principal programme risks were key delivery dates being missed and cost over runs. The risks were mitigated by robust programme management and close working with MHCLG. An extension of time was granted – extending the delivery deadline for sums to be contractually committed to 31st March 2025. A revenue risk contingency was held in addition to risk contingencies built into the cost plans. Major Capital Projects programme board meets every 6 weeks to monitor and review progress, discuss issues, risks and action, if appropriate, and to consider any change requests with onward recommendation for approval. The risk is on the Corporate Risk Register and monitored as a key Strategic Risk.

Talbot Park Connectivity Project (Public Realm) – Quarter 4 progress update

Planning permission for the project was secured in December 2023, and demolition of the Worcester Street properties was completed in January 2024. The works contract was awarded to McPhillips (Wellington) Ltd. The contractor completed the site investigation surveys and commenced works on site on 30th September 2024. Handover took place on 30th April 2026, and the completion certificate was issued by the Contract Administrator. The event to launch the opening of the park was held on 2nd May 2026. The capital programme has been reprofiled, and slippage has been included in table below.

Table 10: Quarter 4 Financial Performance summary (Talbot Park/FHSF Connectivity Project)

	Prior Years £	2025-26 £	2026-27 £	Total £
Capital Programme				
Slippage (Revised Budget - Cabinet Dec 2025)	7,118,630	2,823,260		9,941,890
Budget Adjustment (within total FHSF capital approval)		-106,190	106,190	-
Draft Budget spend profile		192,090		192,090
	7,118,630	2,909,160	106,190	10,133,980
2025-26 draft Outturn				
Acquisitions	2,408,914			2,408,914
Prelims and Pre construction	3,625,535			3,625,535
Construction	1,084,181	2,890,223	106,190	4,080,594
Other		229,259		229,259
Contractual costs met from revenue reserves		-365,988		-365,988
Slippage at draft outturn			155,666	155,666
Total	7,118,630	2,753,494	261,856	10,133,980
Slippage to future years at draft outturn		155,666		

The extension of time claim from the project manager for additional project management fees has been verified and charged to revenue to be met from the revenue contingency EMRs held for this purpose. This contingency sum was created from the additional investment income achieved on the capital grant paid in advance during 2023-24.

The Old Court/Creative Hub project (Former Magistrates Court)

The building has been handed over and is operational. The final retention sums due in 2025-26 have been accrued for in the accounts. The action plan for letting the Old Court has resulted in lettings on the lower ground, ground and first floor. The remaining vacant suites are being actively marketed, and a number of enquiries from prospective tenants are in progress. Plans to implement a new system to enable short term bookings are underway and will be implemented in the 2026-27.

Table 11: Quarter 4 Financial Performance summary (FHSF The Old Court)

	Prior Years £	2025-26 £	2026-27 £	Total £
Capital Programme				
Budget Adjustment (within total FHSF capital approval)	17,559,840	244,310		17,804,150
Draft Budget spend profile		-192,090		-192,090
	17,559,840	52,220	-	17,612,060
2025-26 draft Outturn				
Prelims and Pre construction	1,646,080			1,646,080
Construction	14,812,725	225,692		15,038,417
Other	1,101,035	14,994		1,116,029
Contractual costs met from ICT Strategy & revenue reserves		-188,473		-188,473
Total	17,559,840	52,213	-	17,612,053
Slippage to future years at draft outturn		-		

8.2 Levelling up Fund – Update from the Major Capital Projects Programme Board

The Levelling up programme aimed at re-kindling Kidderminster's heritage by making the canal and river a focus, encouraging visitors by making them special, vibrant places with cafes, arts and cultural activities has progressed well and is now complete despite the original programme having to be realigned for all three elements. Wyre Forest was a category one priority area for the LUF, the highest level of need. Kidderminster town centre was identified as a key area in need of regeneration due to high vacancy rates and lack of flexibility and vibrancy in existing uses which had led to a lack of economic opportunities. The LUF programme will directly provide new jobs, both at the regenerated Piano Building and to serve events within the Town Hall, in addition to providing additional economic activity through increased footfall and businesses within the town centre. Whilst contributing directly to delivering economic activity for the wider town centre, the largest mechanism for change will come through the combined impact on the sense of place for the town centre. The combined investment in cultural heritage and the visitor economy provides visible change at the heart of the town, building on previous committed projects by both the Council and MHCLG to reverse the trend for declining socio-economic outcomes in the town. The combined projects are expected to deliver the following outcomes – change in pedestrian flow, change in cycle flow and number of visitors/audience members to cultural events. The programme contributes to Corporate Priority One – Economic Growth and Regeneration.

The programme consists of three projects:

Canal Towpath - improvement of the existing canal towpath to improve the leisure offer of the town centre in combination with match funding from the Emergency Active Travel Fund. The project was delivered on time and within budget. Actual spend at practical completion was £231,148. Installing monitoring equipment was the final stage of this project, all associated works are now complete with an additional cost of £37k.

Kidderminster Town Hall - the repair of the existing Town Hall building, alongside the redevelopment of floorspace within the Town Hall to provide restored and regenerated spaces – programme delivered by Kidderminster Town Council, LUF funding passported as a contribution to total scheme costs. The work is now complete, and the Town Hall has reopened.

Piano Building – the building was acquired in February 2024 and Speller Metcalfe Ltd were appointed to deliver the works contract via the Constructing West Midlands (CWM) framework. In December 2024, Speller Metcalfe completed the PCSA and Enabling works. All pre-commencement planning conditions were discharged in December 2024. The main contract works commenced in January 2025 and is now complete. Creative Retail have been appointed as letting agents for the food & beverage (F&B)/leisure units and GJS Dillon for the office spaces. WFDC, in conjunction with the agencies have produced a marketing brochure for the units and we are actively managing a number of enquiries for the spaces.

The LUF grant allocation and WFDC capital approval, is £17.9m, the balance of funding in relation to delivering the Kidderminster Town Hall project is being met by Kidderminster Town Council.

Risk Assessment

The principal programme risk was key delivery dates being missed resulting in cost over runs. The programme is now complete, subject to final invoices and contract retention. A revenue risk contingency was held in addition to risk contingencies built into the cost plans. A programme board met regularly to monitor and review progress, discuss issues, risks and actions and to consider any change requests with recommendation for approval as appropriate. The risk is on the Corporate Risk Register and was monitored as a key Strategic Risk. The primary mitigation was robust programme management and close working with MHCLG's Discovery team.

Table 12: Quarter 4 Financial Performance summary (LUF Piano Building)

	Prior Years £	2025-26 £	2026-27 £	Total £
Capital Programme				
Slippage (Revised Budget - Cabinet Dec 2025)	5,476,430	3,927,780	-85,000	9,404,210
Draft Budget spend profile			85,000	-
	5,476,430	3,842,780	85,000	9,404,210
2025-26 draft Outturn				
Acquisition	2,932,680			2,932,680
Prelims and Pre construction	729,680			729,680
Construction & Other	1,814,070	3,927,086	85,000	5,826,156
Slippage at draft outturn (retention accounted for in 2025-26)			-84,306	-84,306
Total	5,476,430	3,927,086	694	9,404,210
Slippage to future years at draft outturn		-84,306		

8.4 Brinton Park Heritage Lottery Fund Scheme

A programme of major improvements including a new café and the re-instatement of an historical ornamental pool funded from the National Lottery Community Fund (Heritage Lottery Fund) following the successful award of grant in September 2020. The restoration will help reinstate the 130 year old park's original Victorian Landscape design.

The following project outputs were identified as part of the bid (TBC):

- Public realm improvement
- Public amenities created
- Existing parks/green space improved
- New pedestrian paths
- Trainees gaining certificates

Project Outcomes identified

Heritage will be	People will have	Communities
• better managed	• developed skills	• the local area/community will be a better place to work, live or visit
• in better condition	• volunteered time	• environmental impacts will be reduced
• better interpreted and explained	• learnt about heritage	• more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage
• identified/recorded		

The programme contributes to Corporate Priority Three – A Clean, Safe and Green place to Live, Work and Visit.

The original approved capital allocation for the project is £2,600,000 with an additional £460,000 approved from the Evergreen Investment Fund by Cabinet. The programme is funded from a combination of HLF grant, capital receipts (£460K), S106 contributions and various revenue earmarked reserves. £200k of planned expenditure is to be met from prudential borrowing.

Work is progressing on site with completion expected in the summer of 2026.

Risk Assessment

The principal programme risk is a cost overrun. The risk is mitigated by robust programme management and contractual terms (a fixed price design and build contract). The Council has a Major Projects Programme Board that will regularly monitor and review progress, discuss issues, risks and actions if appropriate and to consider any change requests with recommendation for approval as appropriate.

Table 13: Quarter 4 Financial Performance summary (HLF - Brinton Park)

	Prior Years £	2025-26 £	2026-27 £	2027-28 £	Total £
Capital Programme	242,270	2,817,730	-	-	3,060,000
Slippage (Revised Budget - Cabinet Dec 2025)		-1,117,730	1,037,240	80,490	-
Draft Budget spend profile	242,270	1,700,000	1,037,240	80,490	3,060,000
2025-26 draft Outturn					
Prelims and Pre construction	242,270	13,144			255,414
Construction & Other		1,283,137	1,037,240	80,490	2,400,867
Slippage at draft outturn			403,719		3,463,719
Total	242,270	1,296,281	1,440,959	80,490	3,060,000
Slippage to future years at draft outturn		403,719			

8.5 Capital Slippage

The following capital schemes have been reviewed and reprogrammed into future years to align with forecast programme delivery.

Table 14: Capital Programme 2025-26 Estimated Slippage at Quarter 4

2025-26 Capital Programme Estimated Slippage at Q4 Draft Outturn	Draft Slippage for future years £	Revised Budget to Slip at Q4 %	Comments
Community and Environmental Services			
Improvement to Car Parks (Replacement Parking Machines 2025-26)	150,940	100.0%	Procurement under way but delays with the tender process. Scheme to slip to 2026-27.
Stourport Riverside	36,440	100.0%	Final elements of upgrading play equipment, pathways and introducing additional trees commenced. Balance to slip to 2026-27.
Brinton Park HLF Scheme	403,719	23.7%	Major works under way. Scheme anticipated to complete in summer 2026.
Bewdley Museum - UKSPF	41,575	21.8%	Scheme complete. Small retention will slip to 2026-27.
Innovation Fund - Capital	7,080	8.1%	Food waste vehicle delivered. Balance (committed) slipped to 2026-27.
Community Safety CCTV Upgrade (Grant Funded)	909	20.4%	Final elements of this scheme to be completed during this financial year.
Adaptive Play Equipment	58,890	94.2%	Procurement under way but delays with the tender process. Balance of scheme slipped to 2026-27.
Strategic Growth			
Better Care Fund (BCF) - Disabled Facilities Grants	292,266	16.9%	Scheme ongoing. Balance will slip to 2026-27.
BCF - Energy Efficiency	25,753	25.6%	Scheme ongoing. This fund supplements and provides an alternative to government capital funding where it cannot be applied or homes need additional support.
BCF - Disabled Adapted Units	240,000	100.0%	Awaiting grant of planning permission and finalisation of contract.
Housing Assistance - Private Sector Measures (including Decent Homes Grant)	10,972	73.1%	Scheme ongoing. Review of landlord engagement under way.
Castle Road Development	1,669	1.9%	Scheme complete but balance will be slipped into 2026-27 to cover final costs.
Stourport on Severn Property Conversion	688	6.9%	Scheme under way.
Flood Relief	13,410	100.0%	Potential projects identified but timescales are dependent upon partner agencies including Environment Agency and Severn Trent.
Warm Homes Local Grant	4,702	1.3%	Scheme ongoing. Balance will be slipped to 2026-27.
Future Investment Evergreen Fund	921,203	100.0%	Budget will slip - no business cases proposed in 2025-26.
Acquisition of Land at Horsefair, Kidderminster	49,590	100.0%	Start of project delayed as Registered Provider unable to commit resources at this time. Budget to slip to 2026-27.
North Worcestershire Property Flood Resilience Project	28,219	94.1%	Start of project slightly delayed due to a delay in the release of grant by funding body. Balance to slip to 2026-27.
Economic Development and Regeneration			
Levelling Up Fund	(84,306)	0.0%	Piano Building Scheme now complete. Contract retention will be payable in 2026-27; the retention was accounted for in 2025-26.
Future High Streets Fund - Public Realm/Connectivity	155,673	5.4%	Contract works completed in May 2026. Final invoices and contract retention slipped to 2026-27.
Resources			
ICT Strategy	77,454	15.0%	Various projects underway. Slippage due to fluctuations in project delivery timetable.
Vehicles, Equipment & Systems Renewal Schedule			
Vehicles & Equipment & Systems Renewal Schedule	2,479,375	92.8%	Procurement of refuse freighters is complete and the order has been placed with significant lead times (£1.7m of the total slippage). Deliveries are estimated to commence in July 2026. Procurement of other vehicles is underway with varying lead times; the remainder of these budgets will also be slipped into 2026-27.
Total	4,916,221	29.5%	

9. **TRANSFORMATION AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY SAVINGS PROGRAMME**

- 9.1 The 2026-29 MTFS projects a funding gap at the end of the strategy of £1.5m, any new cost pressures will, in the absence of additional government support, widen the gap further. Against this background it is essential that expenditure is kept within the overall approved budget and that savings and efficiency proposals continue to be developed so that the Council has as much flexibility as possible to meet the challenges that lie ahead.
- 9.2 Achieving financial sustainability is still the most significant challenge facing the Council. Since 2009 the Council has had a track record of continuously identifying opportunities to make savings. The Commercial Strategy sets out a clear programme of work, to be taken forward by four delivery units. The Wyre Forest Forward savings programme was established to review all aspects of the Council to ensure we deliver a balanced budget and services of real value to our residents. Substantial savings have already been achieved. The work stream originally introduced in the 2021-24 MTFS, to review and reassess how we deliver services with the objective of reducing net cost continues as one of the work streams in the new Commercial Strategy. The corporate efficiencies delivery unit will progress the ideas for cost reductions and efficiency savings that have been identified in the

Transformation and Financial Sustainability Plan. Some have already been considered by the Transformation and Commercial Board and the following are being implemented:

- Additional debt recovery officer in revenues
- Potential savings from review of postage and printing
- Smarter procurement
- Exploring all viable areas for capitalisation of costs
- Introducing discretionary charges for planning services
- Establishing a shared service to deliver home adaptations across Worcestershire

- 9.3 The Council has done exceptionally well in generating additional income and implementing efficiency savings but in the absence of additional income, further savings and efficiency measures or additional Government funding to bring its expenditure into line with income, the Council has to balance the budget by drawing on reserves which reduces financial resilience. The current estimates continue to be refined and reviewed as part of on-going detailed work being undertaken by the Finance Team in conjunction with service managers.
- 9.4 Progress has been made in 2025-26 towards achieving the target with some items of a recurring nature and other one-off savings. It is essential that work continues to achieve reductions in the cost of service delivery ahead of Local Government Reorganisation to ensure that the new Council(s) are best place to meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors to the district. The approved targets in the MTFS are summarised in the table below.

Table 13: Quarter 4 Wyre Forest Forward transformation savings summary

Transformation and Financial sustainability savings	2025-26 £000	2026-27 £000	2027-28 £000	2028-29 £000
Cumulative Prior year savings achieved	4,771	4,765	4,774	4,773
Savings achieved 2025-26 (YTD)	195	83	31	33
Prior years achievements adjusted			-58	-58
Total Savings Achieved	4,966	4,848	4,747	4,748
MTFS 2025-28 Savings Targets				
Wyre Forest Forward Efficiency and Transformation	61	43	64	77
Localism	60	80	100	100
Income growth - Property	39	93	90	100
Income growth - General	35	75	115	150
Prior years achievements adjusted			58	58
Savings Target at 01/04/2024	195	291	427	485
Savings achieved 2025-26				
Wyre Forest Forward Efficiency and Transformation				
Smarter procurement (estimate)	50	15		
Customer journey - reduced unavoidable contact (efficiency gain)	2	5	8	10
Service efficiencies and innovation				
- BR appeal	73			
- "Telsolutions" postage and collection rate savings	2	10	10	10
	127	30	18	20
Income growth - Property				
Other Industrial Estates and Other Property - rent review back log	13	13	13	13
	13	13	13	13
Income growth - Commercial				
Commercial Strategy	55	40		
	55	40	0	0
Total Savings achieved in-year	195	83	31	33
Total Budget Savings not yet achieved	0	208	396	452

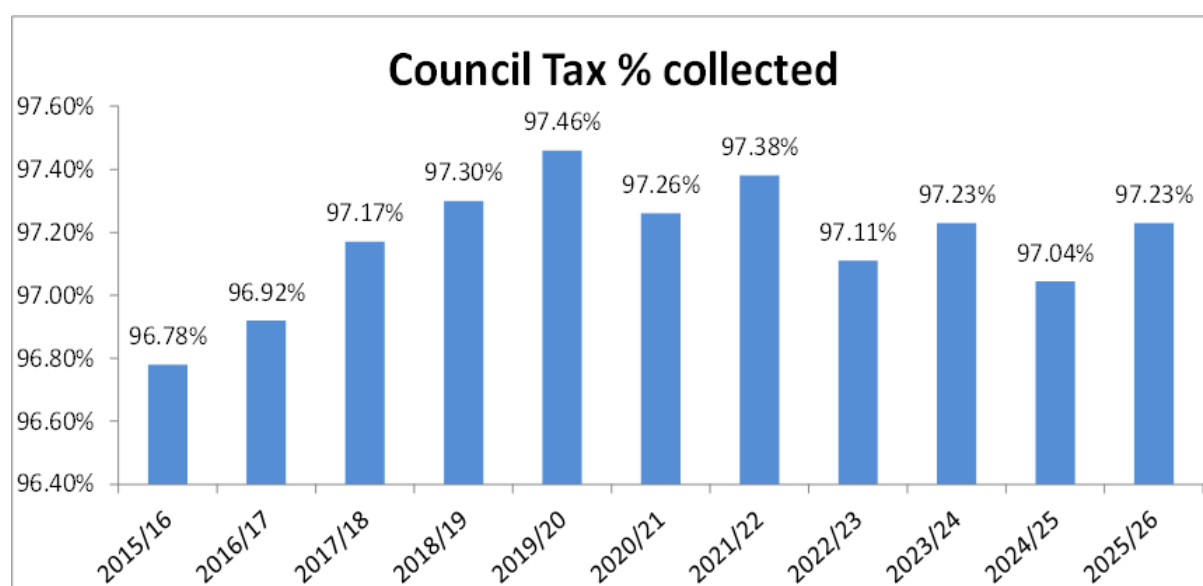
10 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES AND VIREMENTS

- 10.1 Service managers who wish to incur expenditure that falls within approved Council Policy for which either there is no or insufficient provision within approved estimates, may incur that expenditure by transferring from one approved budget cost centre to another or by supplementary estimate, subject to specified conditions as setout in the Financial Regulations – 6.7 and 6.8.
- 10.2 No requests have been received in quarter 4.

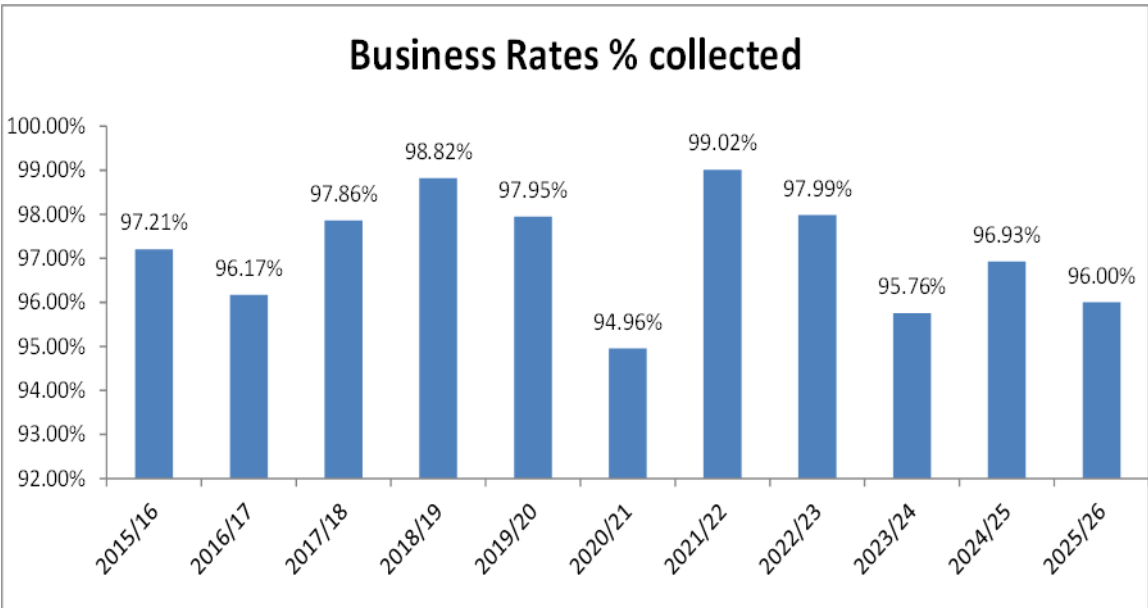
11 REVENUE DETAIL – Central Items Business Rates and Council Tax

- 11.1 **Council Tax** - The level of discounts and awards, together with collection rates, and write-offs are closely monitored throughout the year. Previous monitoring reports have highlighted the risk that assumed growth in the tax base might not be achieved in year due to the slow down in the housing market leading to sites being built out at a slower rate than assumed and also due to greater eligibility to discounts.
- 11.2 **Business Rates** – Officers continue to liaise closely with the Valuation Office Agency to monitor developments in the sector and the progress of check, challenge and appeal applications. The council holds a provision for appeals for the 2023 list. Adjustments to this provision will be met from business rates income in 2026-27 and will be reflected in the 2027-30 MTFS. The pooling gain from membership of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire business rates pool is ahead of that expected.
- 11.3 **Collection Rates**

Council Tax: The year end collection rate at 31st March 2026 was 97.23%, slightly ahead of the 97.04% achieved in 2024-25 and equal to the rate achieved in 2023-24.



Business Rates: The year end collection rate is behind that achieved in 2024-25



There has been an increase in debts being written off due to voluntary bankruptcy orders and petitions, individual voluntary arrangements and debt relief orders. The level of write-offs continues to be closely monitored.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

REVENUE BUDGET TOTAL REQUIREMENTS - DISTRICT COUNCIL PURPOSES

SERVICE	2025/26		2026/27			2027/28			2028/29		
	Original Estimate £	Revised Estimate £	At Nov.24 Prices £	Inflation £	TOTAL £	At Nov.24 Prices £	Inflation £	TOTAL £	At Nov.24 Prices £	Inflation £	TOTAL £
CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL	2,806,520	3,053,830	3,353,840	78,190	3,432,030	3,610,370	140,010	3,750,380	3,520,300	207,650	3,727,950
COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT	6,255,000	6,583,120	7,139,980	259,620	7,399,600	7,653,970	481,180	8,135,150	7,965,550	692,860	8,658,410
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION	564,200	452,190	368,840	51,060	419,900	148,690	98,330	247,020	(170,950)	139,680	(31,270)
RESOURCES	1,945,430	1,568,830	1,142,460	29,500	1,171,960	1,133,810	69,400	1,203,210	1,119,470	105,530	1,225,000
REVENUES, BENEFITS & CUSTOMER SERVICES	1,903,770	1,901,230	1,964,180	68,630	2,032,810	1,985,200	115,760	2,100,960	1,979,130	164,180	2,143,310
STRATEGIC GROWTH	2,619,230	2,589,730	2,719,350	90,620	2,809,970	2,689,550	150,040	2,839,590	2,631,840	208,580	2,840,420
	16,094,150	16,148,930	16,688,650	577,620	17,266,270	17,221,590	1,054,720	18,276,310	17,045,340	1,518,480	18,563,820
LESS: CAPITAL ACCOUNT	627,000	388,800	342,910	3,860	346,770	236,120	6,610	242,730	386,060	9,260	395,320
INTEREST RECEIVED	(1,036,110)	(1,236,110)	(838,350)	0	(838,350)	(780,220)	0	(780,220)	(780,220)	0	(780,220)
TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE ON SERVICES	15,685,040	15,301,620	16,193,210	581,480	16,774,690	16,677,490	1,061,330	17,738,820	16,651,180	1,527,740	18,178,920
CREATION OF EARMARKED RESERVE	0	719,730			600,000			600,000			0
LESS: RESERVES	(90,360)	293,060			(404,370)			(1,441,610)			(1,017,750)
NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT	15,594,680	16,314,410			16,970,320			16,897,210			17,161,170
LESS: REVENUE SUPPORT GRANT	(178,440)	(178,440)			(3,173,940)			(3,191,290)			(3,192,290)
GRANTS ROLLED INTO RSG (included in net budget requirement)	0	0			299,000			299,000			299,000
TRANSITIONAL FUNDING (additional RSG)	0	0			(65,350)			0			0
BUSINESS RATES INCOME	(4,973,800)	(4,973,800)			(2,789,840)			(2,854,000)			(2,911,400)
ADJUSTMENT SUPPORT GRANT	0	0			(332,030)			0			0
RECOVERY GRANT	(400,190)	(400,190)			(400,190)			(400,190)			(400,190)
COLLECTION FUND (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT	239,070	239,070			70,000			0			0
NEW HOMES BONUS	(312,990)	(312,990)			0			0			0
EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY GRANT	(1,021,000)	(1,740,730)			(1,420,000)			(1,200,000)			(1,000,000)
NATIONAL INSURANCE GOVERNMENT FUNDING	(92,330)	(92,330)			0			0			0
GENERAL EXPENSES -											
COUNCIL TAX INCOME	8,855,000	8,855,000			9,157,970			9,550,730			9,956,290
COUNCIL TAX LEVY		250.58			258.08			265.80			273.75
COUNCIL TAX BASE		35,338			35,485			35,932			36,370

Performance Monitoring Report
Major Revenue Variations 2025-26 Draft Revenue Outturn

Total Revised Budget 2025-26 - Net Expenditure on Services

15,301,620

Actual Net Expenditure - pre audit (Draft Outturn)

14,627,889

Reduced Expenditure on Services

(673,731)

Service Area	Month 12 - Revised to Draft Outturn			
	Cost Pressure £	Income shortfall £	Cost Reduction £	Income Growth £
Chief Executive and Solicitor				
Worcestershire Regulatory Services - net income growth				(13,134)
Reduced charges from other directorates			(15,789)	
Misc. other (net)	5,428			
Pay and other staff related variances (net)			(45,331)	
Total Chief Executive and Solicitor	5,428	0	(61,120)	(13,134)
Community and Environment				
Income growth above budget				
Car Parks and Enforcement				(109,776)
Waste				(56,989)
Garage				(3,789)
Arboricultural and Grounds Maintenance				(18,794)
Parks and Green Spaces				(5,996)
Street Cleansing				(13,102)
Bewdley Museum				(34,113)
Cemetery				(16,938)
Cost reductions				
Vehicle/fleet costs			(132,115)	
Depot Management			(132,635)	
Shared Emergency Planning & Business continuity			(35,533)	
National Assistance Act Burials			(6,490)	
Premises related expenditure				
- Public conveniences			(18,921)	
- Car Park maintenance			(21,575)	
- R&M of buildings			(15,565)	
Supplies and Services				
- Software maintenance			(28,636)	
- External training (incl Driver training)			(39,936)	
- Equipment purchase and repair			(38,718)	
- Car parks (other operating expenditure)			(21,616)	
Cost Pressures				
Misc. other (net)	28,039			
Pay and other staff related variances (net)	41,109			
Total Community and Environment	69,148	0	(491,741)	(259,497)
Resources				
Bad debt provision (Increase lower than budget)			(84,880)	
External Audit fees	15,969			
Contribution to Earmarked Reserve - Insurance claims	150,000			
Miscellaneous other	30,753			
Pay and other staff related variances - EMR not released re additional NICs	200,000			
Total Resources	396,722	0	(84,880)	0
Revenues, Benefits and Customer services				
Software - legislation updates	15,645			
Court costs - awards			(59,220)	
Bad debt provision	27,017			
HB Overpayment recovery/DWP subsidy loss	26,398			
Local discount	9,985			
Miscellaneous other			(1,922)	
Pay and other staff related variances (net)	22,232			
Total Revenues, Benefits and Customer services	101,277	0	(61,142)	0
Strategic Growth				
Private sector housing, homelessness advice & access to housing (partly lower costs due to Millpond House)			(30,481)	
Development management and planning policy formation				(112,407)
Misc other Strategic growth	(5,330)			
Total Strategic Growth	(5,330)	0	(30,481)	(112,407)
Economic Development and Regeneration				
Admin buildings - operational expenditure net variances	9,985			
Capital Portfolio Fund	4,290			
Property estate - operational expenditure net variances			(5,191)	
Economic development activities/initiatives	36,464			
Misc. other	40			
Pay and other staff related variances (net)			(27,057)	
Total Economic Development and Regeneration	50,779	0	(32,248)	0
Capital Account				
Investment Interest received				(142,848)
Interest paid - temporary loans				
Capital account (Other)			(2,258)	
Direct revenue Funding				
Total Capital Account	0	0	(2,258)	(142,848)
Grand Total	618,024	0	(763,870)	(527,886)
Net Saving on Services				(673,732)
NET SAVING AGAINST BUDGET BEFORE TRANSFERS				(673,732)
Transfer to General Risk Reserve				350,000
Increase in Working Balance				200,000
NET SAVING AGAINST BUDGET AFTER TRANSFERS				(123,732)

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025-26 - Quarter 4 Draft Outturn Position

APPENDIX 3

Capital Scheme	Corporate Priority*	2025-26 Original Budget including slippage from 2024-25	2025-26 Revised Budget	2025-26 Qtr 4 Draft Outturn	Slippage to 2026-27 at Q4	Progress Notes at Q4 Draft Outturn 2025-26	Total Scheme (all years)	Total spend (all years)	% Complete (Full Scheme)
		£	£	£	£		£	£	
COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES									
Improvement to Car Parks (Replacement Parking Machines 2025-26)	1,2,3	150,940	150,940	-	150,940	Procurement under way but delays with the tender process. Scheme to slip to 2026-27.	594,500	443,560	75%
Stourport Riverside	3	36,440	36,440	-	36,440	Final elements of upgrading play equipment, pathways and introducing additional trees commenced. Balance to slip to 2026-27.	150,000	113,560	76%
Brinton Park HLF Scheme	3	2,817,730	1,700,000	1,296,281	403,719	Major works under way. Scheme anticipated to complete in summer 2026.	3,060,000	1,538,551	50%
Bewdley Museum - UKSPF	1,2,3	190,570	190,570	148,995	41,575	Scheme complete. Small retention will slip to 2026-27. Evergreen Investment Fund allocation no longer required.	190,570	148,995	78%
Bewdley Museum - Evergreen Investment Fund	1,2,3	100,000	100,000	-	-		100,000	-	0%
Innovation Fund - Capital	2	336,330	87,080	80,000	7,080	Food waste vehicle delivered. Balance (committed) slipped to 2026-27.	431,000	174,670	41%
Community Safety CCTV Upgrade (Grant Funded)	2	4,460	4,460	3,551	909	Final elements of this scheme to be completed during this financial year.	24,860	23,951	96%
Food Waste Collection (funded by Defra grant)	2	1,154,900	-	-	-	Unlikely to receive additional Government funding to fully support the introduction of the scheme before April. Budget was slipped to 2026-27 in Q3.	1,154,900	-	0%
Adaptive Play Equipment	3	62,490	62,490	3,600	58,890	Procurement under way but delays with the tender process. Balance of scheme slipped to 2026-27.	100,000	41,110	41%
SUB TOTAL		4,853,860	2,331,980	1,532,427	699,553		5,805,830	2,484,397	43%
STRATEGIC GROWTH									
Housing Strategy:									
Better Care Fund (BCF) - Disabled Facilities Grants	3	4,193,530	1,727,390	1,435,124	292,266	Scheme ongoing. Balance will slip to 2026-27.	Rolling programme 730,000	301,247	41%
BCF- Energy Efficiency	3	173,440	100,440	74,687	25,753	Scheme ongoing. This fund supplements and provides an alternative to government capital funding where it cannot be applied or homes need additional support.			
BCF- Disabled Adapted Units	3	240,000	240,000	-	240,000	Awaiting grant of planning permission and finalisation of contract.	300,000	60,000	20%
Housing Assistance - Private Sector Measures (including Decent Homes Grant)	3	194,030	15,000	4,028	10,972	Scheme ongoing. Review of landlord engagement under way.	2,376,120	2,186,118	92%
Castle Road Development	3	85,640	85,640	83,971	1,669	Scheme complete but balance will be slipped int 2026-27 to cover final costs.	3,860,210	3,858,541	100%
Raven Street Conversion	3	7,150	460	455	-	Scheme complete.	78,010	78,005	100%
Bridge Street Flats Conversion	3	15,910	1,000	1,007	7 CR	Scheme complete. Minor overspend adjusted against Evergreen Investment Fund below.	22,090	22,097	100%
Stourport on Severn Property Conversion	3	130,000	10,000	9,312	688	Scheme under way.	130,000	9,312	7%
Flood Relief	1,3	28,410	13,410	-	13,410	Potential projects identified but timescales are dependent upon partner agencies including Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water.	199,000	170,590	86%

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025-26 - Quarter 4 Draft Outturn Position

APPENDIX 3

Capital Scheme	Corporate Priority*	2025-26 Original Budget including slippage from 2024-25	2025-26 Revised Budget	2025-26 Qtr 4 Draft Outturn	Slippage to 2026-27 at Q4	Progress Notes at Q4 Draft Outturn 2025-26	Total Scheme (all years)	Total spend (all years)	% Complete (Full Scheme)
		£	£	£	£		£	£	
Warm Homes Local Grant	3	265,440	350,440	345,738	4,702	Scheme ongoing. Balance will be slipped to 2026-27.	1,360,000	345,738	25%
Future Investment Evergreen Fund	1,2,3	921,210	921,210	-	921,210	Budget will slip - no business cases proposed in 2025-26.	1,363,090	441,880	32%
Acquisition of Land at Horsefair, Kidderminster	3	49,590	49,590	-	49,590	Start of project delayed as Registered Provider unable to commit resources at this time. Budget to slip to 2026-27.	50,000	410	1%
Capital Projects Fund	1,2,3	8,267,750	800,000	800,000	-	Loan has been repaid in full.	8,267,750	800,000	10%
North Worcestershire Property Flood Resilience Project	3	170,330	30,000	1,781	28,219	Start of project slightly delayed due to a delay in the release of grant by funding body. Balance to slip to 2026-27.	2,300,000	1,781	0%
SUB TOTAL		14,742,430	4,344,580	2,756,103	1,588,472		21,036,270	8,275,719	39%
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION									
Levelling Up Fund	1,2,3	3,927,780	3,842,780	3,927,086	84,306 CR	Piano Building Scheme now complete. Contract retention will be payable in 2026-27; the retention was accounted for in 2025-26.	17,900,000	17,899,306	100%
Capital Portfolio Fund (unallocated)	1,2,3	6,050,830	-	-	-	Scheme slipped to 2026-27	22,805,450	16,754,620	73%
Future High Streets Fund - The Old Court	1,2	244,310	52,210	52,213	3 CR	Scheme complete.	17,612,060	17,612,053	100%
Future High Streets Fund - Creative Hub (Capital Portfolio allocation)	1,2	1,250,000	-	-	-	Budget was slipped to 2026-27 in Q3.	1,250,000	-	0%
Future High Streets Fund - Public Realm/Connectivity	1,2	2,823,260	2,909,170	2,753,494	155,676	Contract works completed in May 2026. Final invoices and contract retention slipped to 2026-27.	10,133,980	9,872,124	97%
SUB TOTAL		14,305,780	6,804,160	6,732,793	71,367		69,761,490	62,188,503	89%
RESOURCES									
ICT Strategy	1,2,3	1,064,930	514,930	437,476	77,454	Various projects underway. Slippage due to fluctuations in project delivery timetable.	6,003,120	5,194,666	87%
SUB TOTAL		1,064,930	514,930	437,476	77,454		6,003,120	5,194,666	87%
VEHICLE, EQUIPMENT & SYSTEMS RENEWAL SCHEDULE									
Vehicles & Equipment & Systems Renewal Schedule	1,2,3	2,867,190	2,670,440	189,941	2,479,375	Procurement of refuse freighters is complete and the order has been placed with significant lead times (£1.7m of the total slippage). Deliveries are estimated to commence in July 2026. Procurement of other vehicles is underway with varying lead times; the remainder of these budgets will also be slipped into 2026-27.	Rolling programme		
SUB TOTAL		2,867,190	2,670,440	189,941	2,479,375				
TOTAL COMMITTED EXPENDITURE		38,247,800	16,666,090	11,648,740	4,916,221				

2025-26 Capital Budgets unspent at Q4 5,017,350

Wyre Forest District Council**Glossary Of Financial Terms****Asset**

Any resource the council owns – for example a building or a vehicle and also cash or money owed.

Asset Register

Each local authority is required to compile a register of all its capital assets (examples include premises, vehicles, equipment and computer systems). Each asset must be professionally valued, generally at replacement cost, at least every five years. Capital charges for the use of assets are calculated on the values contained in the asset register.

Budget

A statement detailing the council's financial policy over a specified period of time.

Capital

This refers to financial assets or financial value of assets, such as funds held in a deposit accounts, as well as the machinery and other physical equipment used in production. It can also include intangible assets like intellectual property.

Capital Expenditure

Expenditure on acquisition, construction, or improvement of assets (property, plant, and equipment) which have a value to the authority for more than one year e.g., Land and buildings.

Capital Programme

The authority's plan of capital expenditure on capital schemes/projects for current and future financial years, including details on the funding of the programme.

Capital Receipts

Income from the sale of capital assets, such as land or buildings, which may also be available to finance other items of capital (but not revenue) expenditure.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)

The professional body for people in public finance.

Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting (the Code)

The code is the framework for publishing local authority statutory accounts based on accounting standards and interpretations issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) and International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee (IFRIC), modified to reflect specific statutory requirements.

Cost Pressures

The factors that increase the expenses the council incurs in its operations. Managing these pressures is essential for maintaining financial health.

Cost Reductions

The factors that decrease the expenses the council incurs in its operations.

Council Tax

A tax collected by the district council which is payable at the same rate by each household in the same valuation band in the area. There are eight council tax bands and how much each household pays depends upon the value of the homes. The majority of council tax income is distributed to precepting authorities (the County Council, the police and fire authorities) and parish and town councils.

Council Taxbase

The council taxbase of an area is equal to the number of band D equivalent properties. To calculate this, the council counts the number of properties in each band and works out an equivalent number of band D properties. For example, one band H property is equivalent to two band D properties, because it attracts twice as much tax.

Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions

Discounts are available to people who live alone or have a severe mental impairment. Council tax is not charged for certain properties, known as exempt properties, such as those lived in only by students.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

A locally determined scheme which sets the system to calculate amounts deducted from the bills of working age council tax payers. The scheme sets the maximum discount that can be given, so there is a minimum percentage of the council tax bill that all taxpayers must pay; currently 10%.

Creditors

Amounts owed by the district council for work done, goods or services received but for which payment has not been made by the end of the accounting period.

Current Asset or Liability

An asset or liability the council expects to hold for less than one year.

Debtors

Amounts due to the district council but unpaid by the end of the accounting period.

Deficit

A situation in which expenses are greater than income during a particular accounting period.

Earmarked Reserves

Amounts set aside for purposes falling outside the definition of provisions.

Expenditure

Cash outflows including expenses that arise in the course of the ordinary activities such as pay, cost of transport, property or supplies and losses such as revaluation of property, plant, and equipment.

Expenditure and Funding Analysis

The expenditure and funding analysis shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources in comparison with those resources consumed or earned in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the council's Service Areas.

Fees and Charges

In addition to income from the council tax, retained business rates and grants from government, local authorities charge for some services for example car parking and green waste collection.

Finance Lease

An arrangement whereby the party leasing the asset has most or all of the use of an asset, and the lease payments are akin to repayments on a loan.

Financial Statements

Another term for the primary statements (Balance sheet, Consolidated Income and Expenditure Account and Movement in Reserves Statement) that are published in the annual statement of accounts.

Government Grants

Payments by central government towards the cost of local authority services. These are either for particular purposes or services (specific grants) or in aid of local services generally.

Housing Benefit (see also note on Universal Credit)

This scheme provides financial assistance towards the domestic rent payments of tenants in registered social landlord or privately owned accommodation, whose incomes fall below prescribed amounts. The district council is reimbursed by the government for 100% of the cost as well as a government contribution towards the cost of administering housing benefit.

Impairment

A reduction in the value of a fixed asset below its carrying amount on the balance sheet arising from obsolescence or physical damage such as a major fire or a significant reduction in market value.

Income

Income includes both revenues arising in the normal operating activities of the council such as from fees and charges or from grants or taxation and also gains such as the revaluation of property, plant, and equipment.

Liability

Something the council owes – for example an overdraft, a loan, or a bill it has not yet paid.

Movement in Reserves Statement (MiRS)

A statement which analyses movements in the council's usable and unusable reserves during the year.

National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

A business tax collected locally by district councils also referred to as Business Rates.

Non-current Assets

A tangible asset which is intended to be used for several years, such as a vehicle or building, previously referred to as fixed assets.

Non-Operational Assets

Council assets not directly used in the provision of services, such as surplus assets.

Operating Leases

This is where the rewards and risks of ownership of the asset remain with the leasing company and the annual rental is charged directly to the revenue account.

Operational Assets

Council owned fixed assets used to deliver services, such as buildings and equipment.

Outturn

Actual income and expenditure.

Precept

This is the amount of council tax income that county councils, police and crime commissioners, fire authorities and parish/town councils need to provide their services. The amounts for all local authorities providing services in an area appear on one council tax bill which is issued by the district council.

Provisions

These are monies set aside to meet any liabilities or losses which are likely or will be incurred, but the amounts or the dates on which they will arise are uncertain e.g., Provision for bad debts.

Reserves

These are monies set aside to meet the cost of specific future expenditure.

Revenue Balances

The accumulated surplus or deficit of income over expenditure.

Revenue Expenditure

This is expenditure incurred on the day-to-day provision of services and consists principally of pay costs, capital charges and general running expenses in respect of the financial year.

Support Services

The provision of services by the central divisions of the council in respect of finance, personnel, legal, policy, administration, information technology and property. Now referred to as Professional and Business services.

Surplus

A situation in which expenses are less than income during a particular accounting period.

Universal Credit (see also definition of Housing Benefit above)

Universal credit is a payment to help low income working age households with living costs and has replaced the following benefits:

- Child tax credit
- Housing benefit (see separate definition above)
- Income support
- Income-based jobseeker's allowance (JSA)
- Income-related employment and support allowance (ESA)
- Working tax credit

No new claims for housing benefit can be made, with the following exceptions:

- Pension age claimants
- Claimants living in specified accommodation (supported housing)
- Claimants moving to temporary housing (homeless)

The existing housing benefit caseload for working age claims is due to be migrated to universal credit with an estimated completion timetable of 2028.

Virement

The authorised transfer of an underspend in one budget area to another.

Valuation Office Agency (VOA)

The Valuation Office Agency is a government body in England and Wales. The agency values properties for the purpose of Council Tax and for business rates. This work is undertaken on behalf of the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
9th JULY 2026

DISPOSAL OF PART OF BURLISH COUNTRY PARK

OPEN	
REPORT AUTHOR:	Faye Parrett, Director of Commercial Services
CONTACT OFFICER:	Faye Parrett, Director of Commercial Services
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor David Ross, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and the Capital Portfolio
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1: plan of Burlish Country Park showing the part proposed for disposal Appendix 2a: KHFC training – Illustrative Section Appendix 2b: KHFC training – Illustrative Masterplan

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree the principle of disposal of part of Burlish Country Park to Kidderminster Harriers Football Club.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to agree the principle of disposal of part of Burlish Country Park to Kidderminster Harriers Football Club (plan in appendix 1) on the following basis:

- 2.1.1 the consideration shall be determined in the light of legal and financial due diligence in order to comply with the statutory duty in section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 not to dispose of land for consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained; **AND**
- 2.1.2 subject to compliance with legislation requiring advertisement of the intention to dispose of open space, with Cabinet considering any responses made as a result of the advertisement and taking the final decision in consideration of those responses; **AND**
- 2.1.3 subject to planning permission being obtained by KHFC for its proposed development.

- 2.2 Cabinet note that while the receipt will be added to the Evergreen Investment Fund, it intends to ringfence funds to enhance other green and open public spaces within the district, subject to Cabinet approval.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The owner of Kidderminster Harriers FC approached WFDC in November 2024 and January 2025 to present the vision for the club, including short- and long-term investments in the Aggborough Stadium's facilities, creating new training facilities for their junior teams and delivery of education programmes on land at the Burlish Country Park (former golf course). To achieve their vision, the club have indicated their interest in acquisition of the freehold of a number of sites, including the Aggborough Stadium which was the subject of a Cabinet decision at its February meeting. The disposal proposed in this report, as set out in the plan in appendix 1, is approximately 8.5 hectares out of a total approximately 40 hectares. In turn this represents approximately 21% of Burlish Country Park.
- 3.2 Burlish Country Park (also known as Burlish Meadows Conservation Area) is adjacent to and principally serves communities in both Stourport and Kidderminster. It was formed in 2018 after the closure of the former Wyre Forest golf course and has been managed by the Council's Countryside service since that time. In July 2019, the Cabinet endorsed the Burlish Golf Course vision document as part of the pre-submission consultation on the local plan. Significant investments and improvements have been made to the site to support its use as an area of public open space that also benefits biodiversity. These have included tree-planting, installation of new fencing and gates and the creation of a car park that is accessed from Kingsway and opened in April 2021 and serves the entire park, including the area proposed for disposal. The car park, whilst not part of the disposal (access will be maintained), cost £22k. Other expenditure across the wider site (excluding staff time) totals £135k, of which £58k relates specifically to works on the area of land to proposed to be disposed. It is estimated that approximately 50% of this £58k relates to works that will now be abortive in nature, with the remainder comprising essential repairs and maintenance that would have been required irrespective of the disposal.
- 3.3 The original purpose for taking over the land management of Burlish Meadows as a country park was to help the Council reduce public pressure on Burlish Top Local Nature Reserve, including its very small car park, and the Rifle Range SSSI. The provision of large open expanse of grassland with its own, much larger car park directly benefits the more sensitive sites while providing habitat and public recreation for the local and wider community. With increased development in the close vicinity, more people will be looking for outside space to enjoy. This demand will only increase further under future housing growth targets in the National Planning Policy Framework. For clarity, no part of Burlish Top Nature Reserve is included within the proposed disposal.
- 3.4 This report deals only with the question of disposal of land. There is an entirely separate process governing regulatory decisions on planning matters. In this case, the proposed use of part of the Burlish Country Park would require a planning application to be submitted and approved by the Planning Committee if KHFC's vision were to be able to be implemented.

The recommendations in this report make clear that the disposal will proceed only if planning permission is obtained.

4. KEY ISSUES

General policy considerations

- 4.1 There has been a very long-standing relationship between local government and Kidderminster Harriers - Kidderminster Borough and since 1974 this Council have owned the Aggborough ground throughout its use as the club's ground. The freehold of the ground is in the process of being sold to the club. The Council wishes to see its premier local football club succeed and be sustainable, growing for the future including generating a pipeline of talent for the senior team. The vision document from KHFC sets out the rationale for expanding and improving the training facilities adjacent to its current training ground and identifies the benefits that would flow in terms of wider opportunities for healthy living and community engagement.
- 4.2 The proposal would have benefits for sport and healthy living in terms of increased facilities for football. These would be enjoyed not only by players but by family members and other supporters. Organised sporting clubs are well-known for fostering positive well-being among those involved. They provide a range of volunteering opportunities (e.g. organisational, training and fund-raising roles) which can provide positive life skills and enhance mental well-being and opportunities for social interaction – in addition to improving the physical well-being of those who appear on the field of play. The indicative layout from KHFC in appendix 2b envisages the addition of four full-size pitches, of which three would be artificial grass pitches, and two smaller pitches (73m x 46m) for junior football. The Football Foundation's Local Football Facility Plan (February 2025) identifies the need for eight artificial pitches but zero natural pitches to meet needs in Wyre Forest. The proposed development would therefore address some of the shortfall in artificial pitches.
- 4.3 A meaningful comparison cannot readily be made between the health and wellbeing benefits of the proposed development for those participating in football or associated club activities with the benefits provided by Burlish Country Park to the wider resident population and visitors to Wyre Forest. There is no available data on the number of current users of the country park, the types of activities they undertake, or the extent to which these activities contribute to physical or mental health outcomes. Furthermore, it should be noted that, even if the proposed land disposal proceeds, a substantial proportion of Burlish Country Park would remain accessible as public open space.
- 4.4 Alongside the health and well-being benefits, the proposal would bring investment in new and enhanced facilities. While not quantified in the vision document, this could be expected to include additional jobs during the construction phase and also in the operational phase (given that there would be more pitches and ancillary facilities to maintain, catering etc.).

- 4.5 The corporate plan sets out three priorities. The proposed development of the site could be expected to contribute to “economic growth and regeneration” as outlined above. While provision of additional formal playing pitches would be of value to local communities, the proposed development does not contribute as effectively to “A clean, safe and green place to live, work and visit” because green space that is open access to all would be replaced by privately owned playing pitches that would be used by or visited only by those taking part in or interested in football and their families, and access is unlikely to be free for all, for example because of pitch hire charges.

Planning aspects relevant to the site

- 4.6 The adopted local plan contains strategic policy SP.28 on green infrastructure which refers among other things to safeguarding and implementing a scheme for Burlish Country Park. However, the area of Burlish Country Park also falls within the site allocation policy SA.S17 which relates to the Minster Road Outdoor Sports Area. Policy SA.S17 would also allow development and enhancement of the sports facilities on existing developed sporting sites such as the existing KHFC training ground and Stourport Sports Club. All the area covered by the site allocation policy is designated as Green Belt land. The range of planning issues relevant to the proposed development are ultimately matters to be addressed in considering any planning application, rather than in deciding whether to proceed with sale of land. However, the proposed condition in paragraph 2.1.3 of the recommendations provides that the sale will proceed only if planning permission is obtained.
- 4.7 KHFC has taken pre-application advice from the Council’s Planning Manager, and this has enabled an indication that planning officers are supportive of the proposed development, including the engineering works required to level the site.

Consideration for the site including compliance with the Council’s statutory duty to obtain best consideration

- 4.8 Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides:
*“(1) Subject to the following provisions of this section, ... a principal council may dispose of land held by them in any manner they wish.
(2) Except with the consent of the Secretary of State, a council shall not dispose of land under this section, otherwise than by way of a short tenancy, for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained.”*
- 4.9 Established case law confirms that it is not necessary to use a competitive process, such as an auction or seeking bids by advertising land for sale, in order to establish and secure the best consideration that can be obtained. This is relevant to the proposal because a specific end use is envisaged that involves (and could involve) only the proposed purchaser. It is possible for the Council to negotiate a sale with a single potential purchaser in these circumstances.

- 4.10 The question of what consideration should be payable has not yet been resolved. In order to meet the Council's statutory duty under section 123 and its wider fiduciary duty, full legal and financial diligence is required. This is expected to take some time yet. The measuring stick is not simply the value of the land in its present use.
- 4.11 The Council has well advanced plans as part of the "Wyre Forest Wild" initiative to enhance biodiversity within the district by allocating land that it owns for biodiversity net gain units. While theoretically the part of the park proposed for disposal could be used for selling BNG units, the priority for such activity lies on other sites that would be retained in the Council's ownership.

Compliance with the Council's statutory duties in respect of disposal of open space

- 4.12 Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 stipulates that:
"(2A) A principal council may not dispose under subsection (1) above of any land consisting or forming part of an open space unless before disposing of the land they cause notice of their intention to do so, specifying the land in question, to be advertised in two consecutive weeks in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the land is situated, and consider any objections to the proposed disposal which may be made to them."
- 4.13 This is relevant to the proposed disposal. If the Cabinet approves the recommendations in this report, the Council will advertise its intention to dispose of the open space for two consecutive weeks. The publication of this notice is required by law and does not mean that the sale of any particular piece of land will take place. Any comments following the consultation will be taken into consideration before a final decision on disposal is taken. Paragraph 2.1.2 of the recommendations addresses this and will involve a further formal report to the Cabinet to consider the responses including any objections and to take the final decision on whether or not to proceed with the disposal. Advertisement of the proposed disposal would commence later in July with Cabinet considering any responses at a meeting in the autumn.

Compliance with the Council's statutory duties in respect of biodiversity

- 4.14 The Council is subject to the enhanced biodiversity duty in section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, as amended by section 102 of the Environment Act 2021. The statutory duty bites on the exercise of any function by the Council including the function of disposing of land:

"(A1) For the purposes of this section "the general biodiversity objective" is the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in England through the exercise of functions in relation to England.

- (1) A public authority which has any functions exercisable in relation to England must from time to time consider what action the authority can*

properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.

(1A) After that consideration the authority must (unless it concludes there is no new action it can properly take)—

(a) determine such policies and specific objectives as it considers appropriate for taking action to further the general biodiversity objective, and

(b) take such action as it considers appropriate, in the light of those policies and objectives, to further that objective.”

- 4.15 At this stage, it is not entirely clear how the proposed disposal of the site for KHFC’s proposed development would contribute to the achievement of the general biodiversity objective, given that it would remove an area of 8.5 hectares open space currently managed with biodiversity in mind. The site has strategic significance for biodiversity as it is one of a few locations in the county where it is appropriate and possible to create acidic heathland communities which is historically significant for the district and biodiversity rich, scoring highly for enhancement in the biodiversity net gain metric. The development of part of the country park is likely to have some adverse impact on biodiversity and potentially on protected species (grass snake, slowworm and tower mustard) as well as priority species such as the White-letter hairstreak butterfly at the site. However, mitigation measures would need to be proposed as part of the planning application to address these concerns.
- 4.16 The site currently supports a range of flora and fauna, with further diversification anticipated through its ongoing management as part of the country park. The proposed development would introduce artificial pitches and areas of closely managed grass playing surfaces. As a result, there would be changes to the existing ecological character of the areas proposed for development.
- 4.17 In addition, depending on the detailed design, including any floodlighting and the timing of use for training sessions or matches, there may be some effects on the remaining habitats and species. These matters would need to be carefully assessed as part of any planning application, including consideration of potential impacts on protected and priority species. The Planning Committee would then be responsible for evaluating these impacts, alongside any proposed mitigation measures and conditions, in determining whether planning permission should be granted.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The report identifies that further legal and financial due diligence is required to ensure that, if the land is disposed of, the Council secures consideration that meets the requirements of section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972. Grant and other receipts totalling circa £10,000 have been applied to develop the area of the nature reserve under consideration for disposal. Final due diligence will determine whether this will need to be repaid. Any

sum forfeited will form part of the negotiated contract with the purchaser as part of the sale process. The capital receipt would be transferred to the Evergreen investment fund in line with recommendation 2.2, Cabinet will decide how it is deployed to affordable projects to enhance other green and open public spaces within the district.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Relevant legislation and policy issues have been referred to throughout this report. The question of compliance with national and local planning policies will be considered by the Planning Committee in examining the planning application in due course.

7. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An initial equality impact assessment has been undertaken. Some mixed implications for protected characteristics have been identified. The football facilities would tend to be used by younger people, but not exclusively (albeit that parents and grandparents might attend to watch children playing or be involved in organisation/administration of teams) while the country park is available to everyone to use. The vision document identifies potential benefits for disabled people by ensuring “that new facilities accommodate individuals with disabilities, fostering equal opportunities for participation”. A full assessment will be prepared for consideration by Cabinet alongside the final decision on disposal, after the statutory consultation on disposal has been undertaken.
- 7.2 The report identifies the impact of the proposal in respect of health and well-being, and how it is not currently possible to measure that compared to the health and well-being impact of the use of the land as a country park.
- 7.3 In respect of climate change, if usage for football would generate more car journeys to the site than at present, this could increase emissions.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 There are a number of risks for the Council, some of which may be capable of mitigation, while others are likely to remain. The proposed disposal of approximately 21% of a country park established less than a decade ago, following a vision endorsed by Cabinet in July 2019, may give rise to reputational considerations. There is no precedent at WFDC for disposal of public open space within a park for this type of development. While the adjacent allocated housing site, currently accessible to the public, has been clearly distinguished from the country park and is already subject to a Cabinet decision for disposal, the proposed release of around 7 hectares of parkland for development could prompt a range of public responses. This may include opposition and critical commentary, alongside potential support reflecting the perceived benefits of the scheme. Although steps can be taken to communicate the rationale for the proposal and highlight its benefits, there

remains a possibility that the Council's reputation could be affected, which cannot be wholly mitigated.

- 8.2 The Council's decisions in respect of the disposal and in due course in respect of a planning application may be the subject of close external scrutiny and as with any decision of the Council could give rise to the risk of challenge by way of judicial review. The risk may be heightened in this case because of the nature of the proposed development and its adverse impacts on biodiversity, given the Council's enhanced biodiversity duty. This report seeks to mitigate the risk by ensuring that all relevant policy and legal considerations are clearly identified and addressed, including the procedural requirements associated with the disposal of public open space and the need to secure best consideration for the land.

9. CONCLUSION

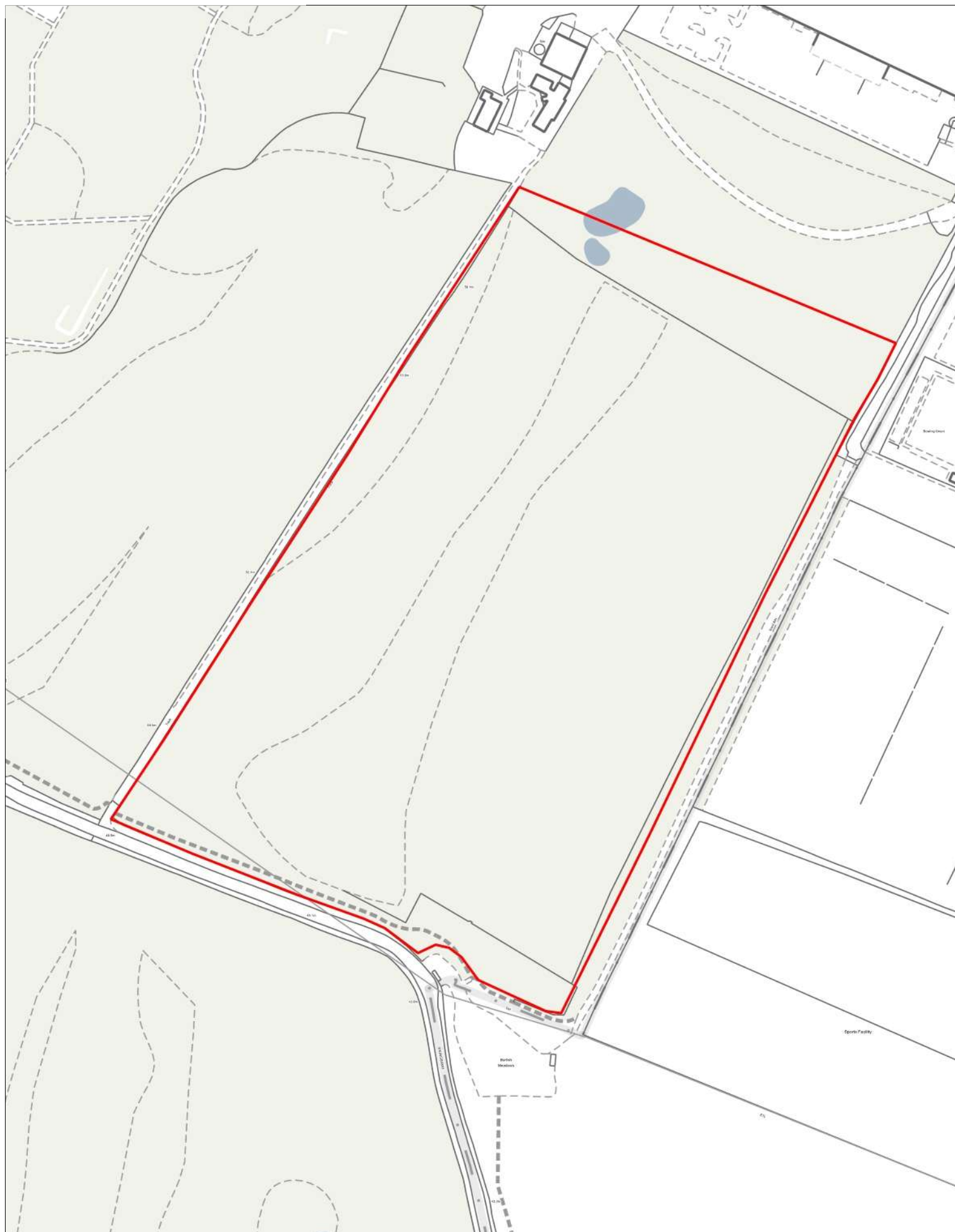
- 9.1 The Cabinet is asked to consider the recommendations in section 2 of this report.

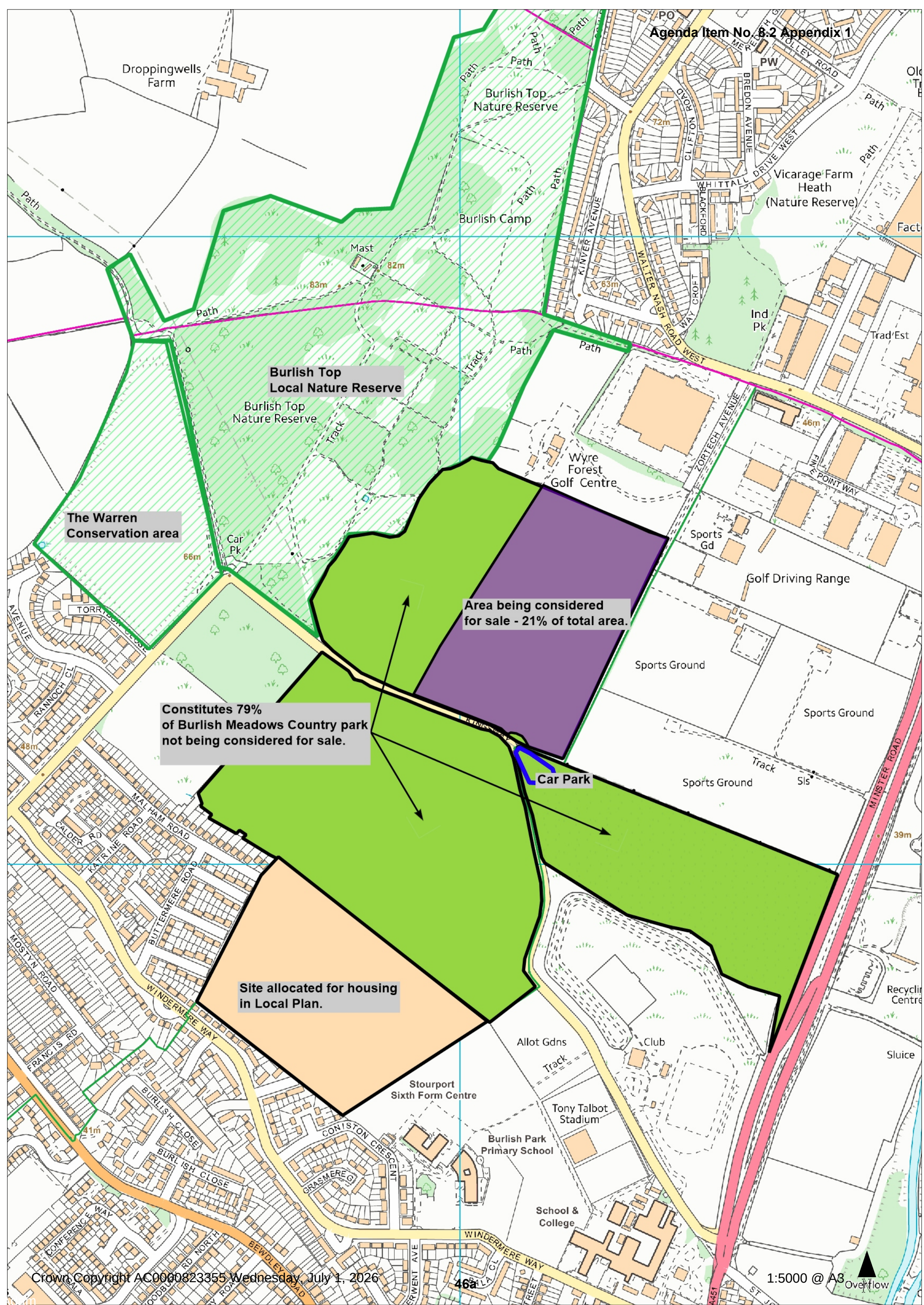
10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Cabinet
10.2 Corporate Leadership Team.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 [Burlish Meadows Conservation Area | Wyre Forest District Council](#)
11.2 Football Foundation's Local Football Facility Plan (February 2025) [Wyre Forest Executive summary](#)





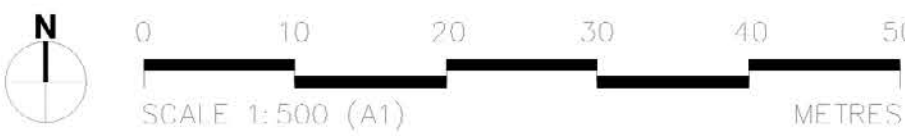
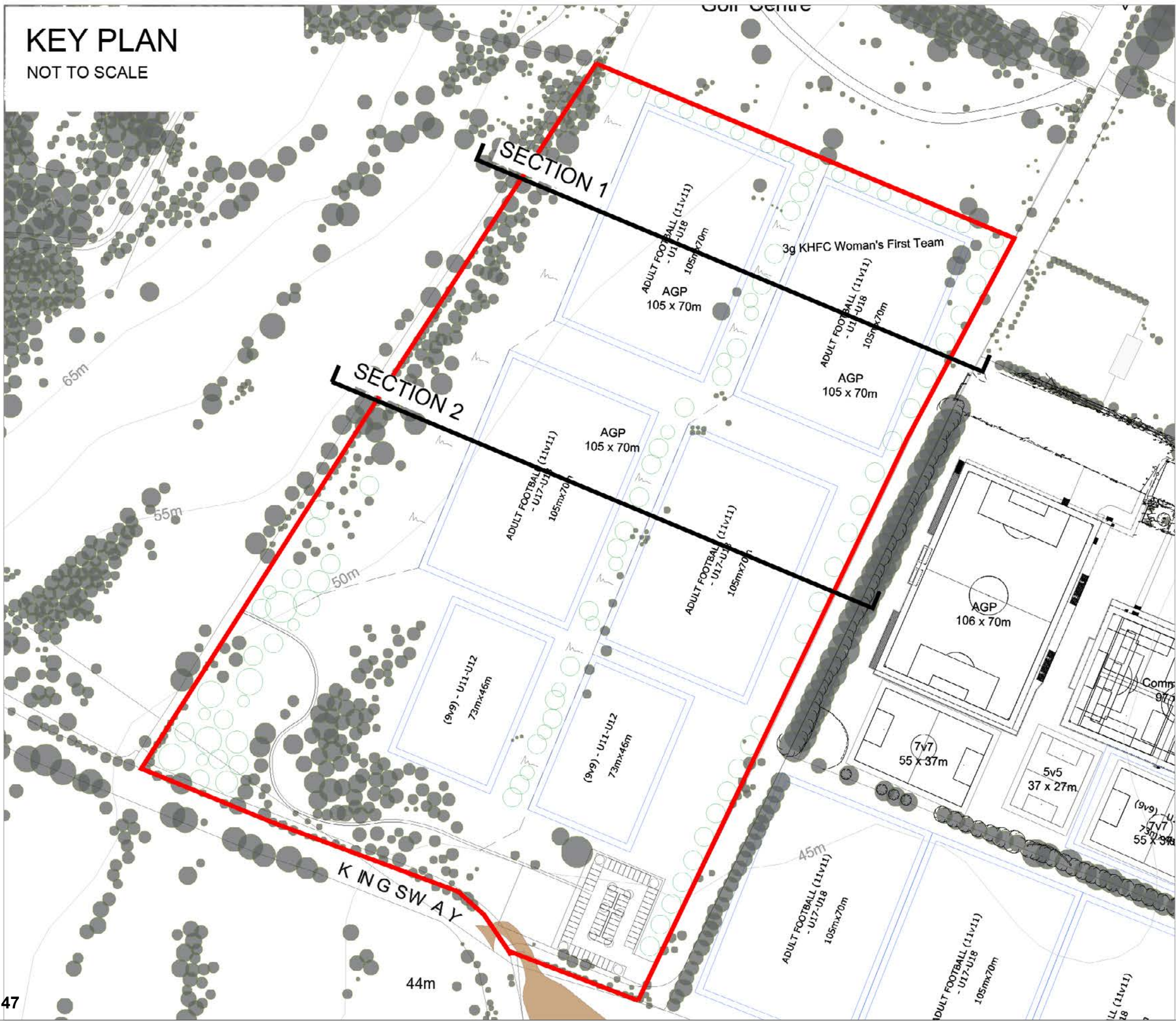
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SECTION 1



SECTION 2



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CHECKED BY : Chris Clifton		POSITION : Associate Director	DATE : 26/06/2026
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REVISION
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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
9th JULY 2026

DISPOSAL OF PLAYING PITCHES TO WORCESTERSHIRE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

OPEN with EXEMPT appendices	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor David Ross, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and the Capital Portfolio
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Faye Parrett Director of Commercial Services
CONTACT OFFICERS:	Faye Parrett Faye.Parrett@wyreforestdc.gov.uk Mark Bieganski Mark.Bieganski@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1: Site plans Appendix 2a: Exempt Draft Heads of Terms for Brown Westhead Appendix 2b: Exempt Draft Heads of Terms for Habberley Road Sports Field

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek agreement to the principle of disposal of Brown Westhead Park and Habberley Road Sports Field to Worcestershire Football Association (WFA), and to set out the next steps for negotiation and completion of the transaction.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to agree the principle of Leasehold disposal on a long lease of Brown Westhead Park and Habberley Road Sports Field to Worcestershire Football Association (plans in appendix 1) on the following basis:

- 2.1.1 Agree that the disposal is subject to:

(a) Agreement of terms that ensure compliance with Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 (best consideration);

(b) A binding covenant restricting the use of the land to playing pitches and associated facilities;

(c) Completion of legal and financial due diligence;

(d) Compliance with statutory requirements relating to disposal of open space, including advertisement and consideration of objections;

2.1.2 Delegate authority to the Director of Commercial Services, in consultation with the Director of Legal & Governance, Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Finance and the Capital Portfolio to:

(a) Enter into negotiations with Worcestershire FA to finalise heads of terms;

(b) Advertise the proposed disposal of open space and consider any objections received;

(c) Conclude the disposal and complete legal documentation, subject to satisfactory negotiation outcomes.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Worcestershire Football Association (WFA), through its subsidiary WFA Sports Facilities Ltd, has occupied and managed Brown Westhead Park and Habberley Road Sports Field since 2014 under informal lease arrangements, previous negotiations have taken place, with the intention of a long-term lease being agreed, however this work did not reach conclusion.

3.2 WFA became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in May 2023, strengthening its governance and long-term ability to manage community sports facilities.

3.3 The Council has previously considered options to formalise WFA's occupation of the sites. This has included:

- The original intention to grant long-term leases;
- Subsequent consideration of a freehold disposal.

3.4 Following further discussions with WFA and consideration of the financial position, and the need to maintain the facilities as playing pitches for the foreseeable future, it is now clear that the best option to secure the future use of the facility is a disposal by way of a long leasehold. WFA does not have the capital resources required to support a freehold acquisition as well as the associated intended investment.

3.5 In light of this, the preferred approach is to proceed with the grant of long-term leases (anticipated to be 99 years) which:

- Provides WFA with long-term security of tenure;

- Enables access to external funding (including Football Foundation funding);
- Secures the continued use of the sites for community sports provision.

3.6 For the purposes of Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, the grant of a lease exceeding 7 years constitutes a disposal of land, and the Council must therefore comply with the same statutory requirements as a freehold sale.

3.7 This report relates solely to the disposal of land. There is no proposed change of use, and any future development proposals would be subject to separate processes where applicable.

4. KEY ISSUES

Strategic and Community Benefits

4.1 Brown Westhead Park is identified as a key site for grassroots football investment and is supported by the Football Foundation. Significant Section 106 funding has been secured (over £1.6m) to support improvements, including development of artificial pitches and associated infrastructure. The WFA have advised they intend to invest further in an additional artificial grass pitch through provision of funding over and above the S.106 monies.

4.2 Transfer of ownership to WFA would:

- Enable access to additional external funding (e.g. Football Foundation match funding);
- Provide long-term security for community sports provision;
- Transfer operational responsibility and financial risk away from the Council.

Approach to Disposal and Negotiation

4.3 The Council has carefully considered the most appropriate mechanism for transferring responsibility for the sites to WFA.

4.4 The option of a freehold disposal was explored in detail. However, this is no longer considered deliverable due to:

- The level of capital investment required both for acquisition and site development.
- The need to secure the future use of the site for community sports provision.

4.5 The proposed approach is therefore to grant long-term leases (circa 99 years), which:

- Achieves many of the same strategic objectives as a freehold transfer;
- Enable WFA to secure external funding;

- Retain a residual freehold interest and control for the Council;
 - Provide greater flexibility should future circumstances change.
- 4.6 Heads of terms have not yet been finalised, and the next stage will involve formal negotiation with WFA, including:
- Lease premium (if any) and/or rent;
 - Repairing and maintenance obligations;
 - Investment commitments;
 - Community access arrangements;
 - Ongoing responsibilities and liabilities.

Best Consideration (Section 123)

- 4.7 Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 stipulates that:

“(2A) A principal council may not dispose under subsection (1) above of any land consisting or forming part of an open space unless before disposing of the land they cause notice of their intention to do so, specifying the land in question, to be advertised in two consecutive weeks in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the land is situated, and consider any objections to the proposed disposal which may be made to them.”

- 4.8 This is relevant to the proposed disposal. If the Cabinet approves the recommendations in this report, the Council will advertise its intention to dispose of the open space for two consecutive weeks. The publication of this notice is required by law and does not mean that the disposal of any particular piece of land will take place. Any comments following the consultation will be taken into consideration before a final decision on disposal is taken. Paragraph 2.1.1 of the recommendations addresses this and will involve a further formal report to the Cabinet to consider any objections and to take the final decision on whether or not to proceed with the disposal.

Covenants and Use Restrictions

- 4.9 The leases will restrict the ability of the WFA to grant subsequent agreements to clubs which may offer a degree of exclusivity to such clubs thereby ensuring the grounds are available to a wider audience including public use which shall include casual sports play, casual (not organised) exercise and walking.
- 4.10 As is the case now, public access will be restricted to the pitches when organised matches and training are under way. In addition, it is expected that when the 3G pitch has been installed at Brown Westhead Park public access will be permanently removed for the area of that pitch in order to protect the playing surface. The leases are expected also to provide for the

ability of WFA, subject to prior consultation and agreement with WFDC, to restrict public access temporarily for other purposes. An example might include holding or hiring the facility to a third party for public events such as spring or sports fairs or other public events including trade and catering stands.

4.11 A restrictive covenant will be applied through the lease terms under Section 33 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 to ensure the land is:

- Retained as playing pitches and associated facilities for sports fields purposes including for example use for football, rugby, cricket and other similar team track and field events, community events and public access (subject to the restrictions mentioned in paragraph 4.9);
- Protected from alternative forms of development.

Existing Tenancies and Rights

4.12 Part of Habberley Road Sports Field is leased to the 8th Wyre Forest Scout Group. The lease is expired and the scouts are 'holding over' pending renewal. It is proposed the lease to the WFA is granted subject to the lease to the scouts and in practical terms the council will offer a lease renewal to the scouts on terms agreed prior with the WFA, and for the WFA to then receive the subsequent benefit of the rental income (peppercorn) as the head lessee for the scouts on the granting of the lease of the whole of Habberley Park to the WFA. The proposed disposal will not affect:

- Existing lease terms
- Statutory rights of renewal
- Access arrangements

Open space requirements

4.13 As the sites constitute public open space, the Council must:

- Advertise the proposed disposal for two consecutive weeks;
- Consider any objections received prior to completion.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The report identifies that further legal and financial due diligence is required to ensure that, if the land is disposed of, the Council secures consideration that meets the requirements of section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

5.2 The Council will benefit from:

- Removal of future potential maintenance liabilities
- Avoidance of future capital investment requirements

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The disposal must comply with:

- Section 123 Local Government Act 1972 (best consideration);
- Section 123(2A) (open space requirements);
- Section 33 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 (restrictive covenant).

6.2 The proposal is consistent with the Council's localism objectives to transfer assets to capable community organisations.

7. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 No significant equality impacts have been identified, given the continued use of the sites as playing pitches

7.2 Positive impacts include:

- Increased and secured access to sports facilities
- Improved community provision

7.3 There is no anticipated adverse impact on climate change or health outcomes due to continuation of existing use.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 Key risks include:

- Failure to achieve best consideration
- Legal challenge if statutory processes are not followed
- Inability to conclude negotiations

8.2 These risks will be mitigated through:

- Legal oversight
- Structured negotiation process

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and the Capital Portfolio recommends that the Cabinet considers the recommendations in section 2 of this report.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Cabinet
- 10.2 Corporate Leadership Team
- 10.3 Property Solicitor

Appendix 1 – Draft Plans

Brown Westhead Park



Habberley Road Sports Field

