

Open

Cabinet

Agenda

6pm
Wednesday, 16 September 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 Monday 28 September 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

Documents referred to in this agenda may be viewed on the Council's website - www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/meetings/main.htm

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At the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

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By entering the meeting room and using the public seating area, you are consenting to be filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and or training purposes.

If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should sit in the Stourport and Bewdley Room where they can still view the meeting.

If any attendee is under the age of 18 the written consent of his or her parent or guardian is required before access to the meeting room is permitted. Persons under 18 are welcome to view the meeting from the Stourport and Bewdley Room.

If you have any queries regarding this, please speak with the Council's Legal Officer at the meeting.

* Unless there are no reports in the open session.

Wyre Forest District Council

Cabinet

Wednesday, 16 September 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 9 July 2026 and the Minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 12 August 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 7 September 2026. (See front cover for contact details). No requests for public participation have been received.	

7.		
7.1	Councillor T Onslow Review of Public Space Protection Orders and Level of Fines for breaching a Public Space Protection Order or Community Protection Notice To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive: Regeneration and Commercial that outlines the results from the consultation process regarding the dog control Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) and the restriction of alcohol consumption in Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn PSPOs and outlines the implementation process if the PSPOs are agreed to be extended for a further three-year period from 1 October 2026. <i>The appendices to this report have been circulated electronically.</i> Also to consider recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 3 September 2026.	15 22

8.		
8.1	Councillor D Morehead Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal To consider a report from the Director of Housing and Planning that presents the Draft Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal with proposed boundary change and seeks agreement that it be consulted upon. <i>The appendices to this report have been circulated electronically.</i>	23

9.		
9.1	Councillor D Ross Budget and Performance Monitoring First Quarter 2026-27 To consider a report from the Director of Resources that briefs members on the Council's financial and other performance at the end of Quarter 1 ending 30th June 2026 and presents the emerging budget pressures and known variances that are likely to have an impact on the outturn position for the 2026-27 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 3 September 2026.	28 55
9.2	Contract for the Supply of Electricity To consider a report from the Director of Commercial Services that seeks approval to use the West Mercia Energy framework to enter a contract for the supply of electricity as required by the Contract Procedure Rules for services over the value of £170,000.	56

9.3	Consultation on potential changes to council tax reduction scheme for 2027-28 onwards To consider a report from the Director of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services to consider whether to consult on potential changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2027-28 onwards. Also to consider recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 3 September 2026.	60 70
9.4	Disposal of land at Clensmore Street, Kidderminster To consider a report from the Director of Housing and Planning that Recommends the disposal of land at Clensmore Street, Kidderminster to a Registered Provider (RP) for the provision of affordable housing.	71

10.	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.	
11.	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

12.		
12.1	Agenda Item 9.4 – Disposal of land at Clensmore Street EXEMPT Appendix 2 – Valuation EXEMPT Appendix 3 – Housing Infrastructure Bid extension	
13.	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

9 JULY 2026 (6PM)

Present:

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

Observers:

Councillor: N Martin.

Observed remotely: Councillors: H E Dyke and F M Oborski MBE.

CAB.11 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CAB.12 Declarations of Interests by Members

As recorded later in the minutes, Councillor F Oborski MBE declared in respect of agenda item 7.1 – Shared homelessness and rough sleeper strategy 2026-31, that she is the Chair of the Trustees of the HELP charity.

Councillor M Hart declared in respect of agenda item 8.2 – Disposal of part of Burlish Country Park, that he is a season ticket holder at Kidderminster Harriers Football Club and has been for circa 25 years, and he has family members that were also season ticket holders. He also declared that for many years he was a trustee of the Kidderminster Harriers Football in the Community Trust, however he had resigned from that position in November 2025. He declared that he spoke and voted at the last meeting of full council when there was a notice of motion that supported the club and congratulated them on their success.

He declared that his son is a member of the Burlish Park Bike Park, which is within the Burlish Park Nature Reserve. Both he and his son are regular users of the nature reserve. He has visited the Country Park and is a regular user of public open space the length and breadth of the district.

Councillor N Desmond declared in respect of agenda item 8.2 – Disposal of part of Burlish Country Park, that he is a season ticket holder at Kidderminster Harriers Football Club, and has supported the club with his son for many years. He also declared that he was a regular user of Burlish Country Park, as he has walked his dog on that particular area for many years.

Councillor D Morehead declared in respect of agenda item 8.2 – Disposal of part of Burlish Country Park, that he is a regular dog walker on Burlish.

Councillor T Onslow declared in respect of agenda item 8.2 – Disposal of part of Burlish Country Park that members of her family are season ticket holders at Kidderminster Harriers Football Club. She also declared that her son plays for a football team in Arley Kings and they have a connection with the Kidderminster Harriers Academy.

Councillor F Oborski MBE declared in respect of agenda item 8.2 – Disposal of part of Burlish Country Park, that she was a previous season ticket holder and a previous player sponsor at Kidderminster Harriers Football Club.

Councillor M Hart declared in respect of agenda item 8.3 - Disposal of playing pitches to Worcestershire Football Association, that his son had been in a team that has played at the pitches at both Brown Westhead Park and Habberley Road Sports Field. He does not play there regularly; however, the declaration was made for transparency purposes.

Councillor N Desmond declared in respect of agenda item 8.3 - Disposal of playing pitches to Worcestershire Football Association, that his son has regularly played football on a Saturday and Sunday at the pitches at both Brown Westhead Park and Habberley Road Sports Field.

Councillor T Onslow declared in respect of agenda item 8.3 - Disposal of playing pitches to Worcestershire Football Association, that her son has played football at the pitches at both Brown Westhead Park and Habberley Road Sports Field, and other football pitches across the district.

CAB.13 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 June 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.14 Call Ins

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

CAB.15 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.16 Public Participation

In accordance with the Council's scheme for public speaking at meetings of Cabinet, one member of the public had registered to speak in respect of agenda item 8.2 – disposal of part of Burlish Country Park.

The Leader welcomed the registered speaker to the meeting and invited her to address the Cabinet.

Linda McKenzie spoke about statements published and promoted by the Football Association (FA) regarding protection of biodiversity across all FA venues, and Wyre Forest District Council regarding the conservation,

restoration and enhancement of biodiversity across the district. She said that both organisations' statements rang hollow when they are looking to build artificial grass pitches on an important habitat, that cannot be replicated anywhere else in the County and is rare in parts of the Country. She advised that tonight was an opportunity to ask Kidderminster Harriers to build their pitches elsewhere within the district.

The Leader thanked the speaker for her contribution.

CAB.17 Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

A report was considered 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.

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 local authorities were required to publish the strategy every five years, detailing plans for preventing homelessness and ensuring adequate support for those at risk. He added that the previous strategy, approved in September 2022, had been extended whilst awaiting a new government strategy that was aimed at reducing homelessness through a focus on prevention.

The Leader seconded the proposals.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor N Martin presented the recommendations from its meeting on 2 July 2026.

Councillor F Oborski MBE declared her interest at this point, 6.17pm.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2 July 2026:

The Cabinet:

- 1.1 NOTED the outcome of the consultation process.**
- 1.2 ADOPTED the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the Homelessness Review 2026-31.**

CAB.18 Budget Monitoring Fourth Quarter 2025-26 (PROVISIONAL OUTTURN)

A report was considered from the Director of Resources that briefed members on the Council's financial performance at the end of Quarter 4 ending 31st March 2026. The report also presented the provisional draft (pre audit) outturn position for the 2025-26 financial year.

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.

The Cabinet Member was pleased to report that the projected year end outturn position was £674k better than forecast in the 2026-2029 medium term financial strategy (MTFS). He added that the total income, including regulatory income was £8,342,994, which was a record for the authority. He said that the results reflected the hard work across all areas of the Council and the dedication of Officers together with the support of the administration.

The Leader seconded the proposals.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the recommendations from its meeting on 2 July 2026.

Decision: The Cabinet APPROVED:

1.1 The fully funded increase to the capital programme for the chewing gum removal machine to match the final grant allocation (£27,500 increase).

1.2 The Capital Programme slippage.

The Cabinet NOTED:

1.3 The provisional outturn position, budget variations, virements and comments within the report and appendices 1 to 4.

1.4 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).

1.5 The recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2nd July 2026.

CAB.19 Disposal of part of Burlish Country Park

A report was considered from the Director of Commercial Services that sought agreement to the principle of the disposal of part of Burlish Country Park to Kidderminster Harriers Football Club.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. He thanked the Director of Commercial Services for the report and both her and the Deputy Chief Executive: Regeneration and Commercial for their assistance in the preparation of his presentation.

The Cabinet Member gave a comprehensive summary of the background and

key issues set out in the report. He gave a detailed breakdown of the size of the zones that make up the entire area, and the total expenditure across the Country Park, and associated nature reserve and conservation area.

The Cabinet Member explained that the matter before Cabinet related to the Council's landowner function and was not a planning determination. He added that a decision regarding disposal would not grant planning permission, alter planning policy or fetter the discretion of the Local Planning Authority in determining any future planning application.

The Leader seconded the recommendations.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the recommendations from its meeting on 2 July 2026, which were supported by the majority of the Committee. She thanked the three registered public speakers for their participation at the meeting.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2 July 2026:

- 1.1 The Cabinet AGREED the principle of disposal of part of Burlish Country Park to Kidderminster Harriers Football Club (plan in appendix 1) on the following basis:**
 - 1.1.1 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**
 - 1.1.2 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**
 - 1.1.3 subject to planning permission being obtained by KHFC for its proposed development.**
- 1.2 Cabinet NOTED 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.**

CAB20. Disposal of playing pitches to Worcestershire Football Association

A report was considered from the Director of Commercial Services that sought agreement to the principle of disposal of Brown Westhead Park and Habberley Road Sports Field to Worcestershire Football Association (WFA). The report also set out the next steps for negotiation and completion of the transaction.

Councillor N Martin left the meeting at 7.31pm.

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 explained that the disposal of the land would be enacted in accordance with s123 of the Local Government Act 1972 which included the obligation to advertise for two consecutive weeks and to allow for any objections to the disposal to be lodged.

The Leader seconded the proposals.

The Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor F Oborski MBE presented the recommendations from its meeting on 2 July 2026.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2 July 2026:

1.1 The Cabinet AGREED 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:

1.1.1 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;**

1.1.2 DELEGATED 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.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.37pm.

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER
12 AUGUST 2026 (6PM)**

Present:

Councillors: M J Hart (Chairman), T L Onslow and C Rogers.

Observers:

Councillor: N Martin.

CABSC.01 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CABSC.02 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

CABSC.03 Bewdley Neighbourhood Development Plan Regulation 16 consultation response

A report was considered from the Director of Housing and Planning to agree the Council's representations on the neighbourhood plan.

On behalf of the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda, the Leader presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval.

The Leader gave a summary of the background and key issues set out in the report. He explained that as the Local Planning Authority, Wyre Forest District Council had a statutory duty to support the preparation of neighbourhood plans.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being seconded the proposals.

Decision: The Cabinet AGREED that:

- 1.1 The formal consultation response to the Draft Bewdley Neighbourhood Development Plan, as set out in Appendix A of the report, is approved for submission to Bewdley Town Council as part of the Regulation 16 Consultation process, in accordance with the consultation deadline of 21 August 2026.**
- 1.2 Delegated authority is granted to the Director of Housing and Planning to undertake the necessary procedural steps following the Regulation 16 consultation, including arranging for the independent examination of the Bewdley Neighbourhood**

Development Plan and appointing an independent examiner.

CABSC.04 Development loan proposal from the capital projects fund

A report was considered from the Deputy Chief Executive: Regeneration and Commercial about a proposal to grant a temporary loan to a third party that supports the corporate priority of regeneration and economic development, utilising the existing Capital Projects Fund allocation in the approved capital programme.

On behalf of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio, the Leader presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval.

The Leader gave a detailed summary of the background and key issues set out in the report. He explained that the Council was a member of the Stourport Sports Club Limited (SSC), which is a company limited by guarantee incorporated on 16 August 1995.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being seconded the proposals.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee, Councillor N Martin, presented the recommendations from its meeting on 12 August.

The Leader thanked Councillor Martin and her sub-committee for considering the report. He confirmed that the Cabinet welcomed the additional recommendation put forward by the sub-committee and was happy to support it.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee from its meeting on 12 August 2026:

The Cabinet AGREED:

- 1.1 The proposal to grant a temporary loan up to £50,000 from the Council's Capital Projects Fund to Stourport Sports Club Limited for the purposes set out in Appendix 2 of the confidential report.**
- 1.2 To delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive Regeneration and Commercial, in consultation with the Director of Resources, the Director of Legal and Governance, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio to issue the loan subject to the completion of the final legal and financial due diligence, including ensuring that all conditions for sanctioning the loan are met in full, and the entering into the necessary security documentation.**
- 1.3 In the case that Stourport Sports Club comes back to ask for more money, they should return with a business plan, as well as a request for the money.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 6.17pm.

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET
16 September 2026**

Review of Public Space Protection Orders and Level of Fines for breaching a Public Space Protection Order or Community Protection Notice

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Tracey Onslow, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Arts and Community Safety
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Ostap Paparega, Deputy Chief Executive: Regeneration and Commercial
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kathryn Underhill, Community & Strategic Projects Manager
APPENDICES:	Appendix One: Summary of Consultation Responses Dog Control Appendix Two: Summary of Consultation Responses Alcohol PSPO Stourport, Bewdley & Kidderminster Appendix Three: Formal responses from Bewdley Town Council and West Mercia Police Appendix Four: List of consultees Appendix Five: Maps Dog Control PSPO Map of Specified Area (District wide) Dog Control PSPO Map of Specified Area (QEII Jubilee Gardens) Dog Control PSPO Map of Specified Area (Kidderminster Cemetery) Dog Control PSPO Map of Specified Area (Hurcott Pool) Dog Control PSPO Map of Specified Area (Stackpool) Alcohol PSPO Map of Specified Area – Bewdley Alcohol PSPO Map of Specified Area – Kidderminster Alcohol PSPO Map of Specified Area – Stourport-on-Severn

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline the results from the consultation process regarding the dog control Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) and the restriction of alcohol consumption in Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn PSPOs and to outline the implementation process if the Public Space Protection Orders are agreed to be extended for a further three-year period from 1 October 2026.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is asked to DECIDE that:

- 2.1 A Public Space Protection Order regarding dog controls, within the specified area, outlined in Appendix Five, is extended for a further three-year period.**
- 2.2 A Public Space Protection Order to restrict the consumption of alcohol within the specified area of Bewdley, outlined in Appendix Five is extended for a further three-year period.**
- 2.3 A Public Space Protection Order to restrict the consumption of alcohol within the specified area of Kidderminster, outlined in Appendix Five, is extended for a further three-year period.**
- 2.4 A Public Space Protection Order to restrict the consumption of alcohol within the specified area of Stourport-on-Severn, outlined in Appendix Five, is extended for a further three-year period.**
- 2.5 With effect from the date on which section 4 of the Crime and Policing Act 2026 comes into force, the maximum Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) that may be issued for a breach of a Public Spaces Protection Order or breach of a Community Protection Notice shall increase from £100 to £500.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A Strong Leader report, on 17 June 2026, approved the undertaking of a review of the district wide Dog Control PSPO and PSPOs restricting alcohol consumption in Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn and to commence consultation.**

4. KEY ISSUES

4.1 Consultation Process

Having reviewed the findings of the evidence gathering exercise, Cabinet approved the launch of a consultation process for each PSPO. The consultation proposed to extend the four existing PSPOs for further three-year period.

The formal consultation process was launched on 2 July 2026 and closed on 3 August 2026. The Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 does not specify what constitutes appropriate consultation. However, it is clear that the local authority must consult with the following:

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

A wide range of stakeholders were contacted directly, and the surveys were made available on the Council's website. The list of consultees contacted directly with an invitation to participate in the consultations, is at Appendix Four. Press releases and social media messages were issued during the period to elicit further responses.

Written formal responses were received from Bewdley Town Council and West Mercia Police, and these are at Appendix Three.

4.2 Key Consultation Findings

Surveys were conducted on proposed district-wide dog control orders and restrictions on alcohol consumption in Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn. A summary of the consultation results is provided in Appendices 1-3. The Dog Control Order consultation received 279 responses, compared with 278 responses to the equivalent consultation in 2023. The alcohol-related consultations received 136 responses compared with 103 responses to the equivalent alcohol-related consultation in 2023. Overall, response levels were broadly consistent with, or higher than, those received during the 2023 consultations.

Dog Control Order Proposals

The consultation on the district wide Dog Control Order proposed to continue the same offences as currently in the order.

Offence to be covered by the PSPO (continuation from the 2020 & 2023 Order)	Percentage agrees with the current order
Failure to pick up dog faeces when in control of dog	89.09% (245/275)
Means to pick up	88.48% (169/238)
Failure to keep a dog on a lead in a designated area (Kidderminster Cemetery, Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Gardens, the Stackpool at Springfield Park and the area around the Hurcott Pools)	76.45% (198/259)
Failure to exclude dogs from specified areas, including fenced off or enclosed children's playgrounds	90.69% (224/247)
Walking more dogs than is permitted at a time	72.36% (178/246)
Failure to give name and address when required to do so	92.98% (225/242)
Gives a false or inaccurate name or address in response to a requirement to provide name and address	

Alcohol Restriction

The consultation on the Alcohol Restrictions Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) for Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn proposed the continuation of the existing restrictions, powers and boundary areas. The consultation results indicate that all proposals received majority support from respondents, as summarised in the table below.

Consultation Question / Proposal	Agreement (%)	Responses
PSPO Boundary Areas		
Agree with the Bewdley boundary	63.97%	87
Agree with the Kidderminster boundary	68.38%	93
Agree with the Stourport-on-Severn boundary	66.18%	90
Disagree with the Bewdley boundary	9.56%	13
Disagree with the Kidderminster boundary	11.76%	16
Disagree with the Stourport-on-Severn boundary	9.56%	13

Note: Percentages are based on the 136 respondents who answered each boundary proposal question. Respondents were able to provide views on more than one boundary proposal; therefore, percentages should not be aggregated and do not sum to 100% across all proposals.

Alcohol Control Measures within the boundary areas	Percentage agrees with the current order
The PSPO is in place to stop people continuing to drink alcohol when asked to stop by an officer in the areas shown on the maps	91.11% (123/135)
The PSPO requires a person to hand over alcohol at the request of an officer in the areas shown on the maps	94.85% (128/135)

4.3 Legal Conditions

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

The first condition is that –

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

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

- is or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature,
- is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable, and
- Justifies the restrictions imposed by the notice.

4.4 Creating a Public Space Protection Order

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

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

- Evidence gathered by the Council itself and from other partners and associated agencies including the Analyst and Intelligence Team at West Mercia Police, which

provided an anti-social behaviour report that was considered as part of the delegated decision to go ahead with consultation.

- Results from the consultation process.

4.5 Implementation

To meet the legislative requirements of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 we must publish the order as made, extended or varied on our website.

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

Each order will take effect for a three-year period commencing from 1 October 2026, unless the Council decides to discharge an order during this time.

4.6 Boundaries

A map showing the boundaries of each PSPO is included at Appendix Five. Consultation responses indicated strong support for retaining the existing boundaries across all PSPOs, a position that was also supported by West Mercia Police and Bewdley Town Council.

4.7 Enforcement and Communications

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

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

West Mercia Police suggested that officers from the Kidderminster Business Improvement District (BID) be authorised to enforce the PSPO, including powers to seize alcohol and report breaches. While legislation allows certain enforcement functions to be delegated beyond the Council and Police, officers do not consider this appropriate in this case. PSPO enforcement requires specialist knowledge of the legal framework, evidential standards and governance arrangements. Extending these powers to an external organisation would create challenges around training, oversight, accountability and consistency. It is therefore considered appropriate that enforcement powers remain with authorised Council officers and the Police.

BID officers can continue to support the PSPO by gathering and sharing intelligence, observations and evidence. This information can then be assessed by authorised officers and used, where appropriate, to support enforcement action. This approach ensures clear accountability, consistent enforcement and lawful, proportionate use of powers.

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

5. COMMUNITY PROTECTION NOTICES

- 5.1 Community Protection Notices (CPNs) are flexible powers designed to address persistent and unreasonable behaviour that has a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the local community. Under the *Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014*, there is no prescribed list of behaviours for which a CPN may be issued. Local authorities, police forces and registered social landlords can use CPNs to address a wide range of environmental, residential and commercial nuisances.
- 5.2 Section 4 of the *Crime and Policing Act 2026* amends section 52 of the *Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014* and increases the maximum Fixed Penalty Notice that may be issued for a breach of a Community Protection Notice from £100 to £500. The legislation provides local authorities and police forces with greater flexibility to increase financial penalties where appropriate, strengthening the deterrent effect of enforcement action against persistent anti-social behaviour. Section 4 is yet to be brought into force.
- 5.3 The current £100 maximum FPN is considered to have limited deterrent value, particularly in relation to repeat offenders and more persistent forms of anti-social behaviour. Increasing the maximum level to £500 provides the Council with greater flexibility to apply proportionate enforcement measures and reflects the seriousness of repeated non-compliance with a CPN. The recommendation is that the penalty should increase to the maximum of £500 with effect from the date when section 4 of the 2026 Act comes into force.
- 5.4 The 2014 Act (as amended by the 2026 Act) will provide the legal basis for increasing the maximum fine level for breaches of Community Protection Notices. A breach of a Community Protection Notice remains a criminal offence, with an FPN offered as an alternative to prosecution where appropriate.
- 5.5 It is proposed that with effect from the date that section 4 of the *Crime and Policing Act 2026* comes into force, the maximum FPN for breaching a Public Spaces Protection Order is increased from £100 to £500. A higher penalty is expected to provide a stronger deterrent to offending and reduce repeat incidents, supporting the Government's approach to tackling anti-social behaviour.
- 5.6 Authorised officers may issue an FPN as an alternative to prosecution where a PSPO breach is identified. If the penalty is not paid, the original offence may be referred to the Magistrates' Court for prosecution.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Costs associated with the implementation of the PSPOs will be met from existing Operational Services budgets. Existing signage will be replaced and updated to reflect the increased maximum Fixed Penalty Notice tariff of £500.

7. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 When making a PSPO the Council must have particular regard to the rights of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly set out in the European Convention on Human Rights.

- 7.2 Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998: implications with regards to the duty of local authorities to consider the impact of their decisions and actions on crime and disorder in the local area.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Needs Assessment Screening has been completed and determined that the proposed changes are not expected to have an adverse impact on any protected characteristic groups, as they apply consistently across all individuals. [EqlA -Review of Public Space Protection Orders and Results of the Consultation Process | Wyre Forest District Council](#)

[EqlA - Revised Levels for Fixed Penalty Notices and Community Protection Notices | Wyre Forest District Council](#)

- 8.2 Health – it is considered that the PSPOs, if extended, will have a positive impact on the wellbeing of the local population.
- 8.3 Climate change – not applicable.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

10. CONCLUSION

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

11. CONSULTEES

- 11.1 Corporate Leadership Team
- 11.2 Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Arts and Community Safety
- 11.3 Litigation Solicitor
- 11.4 Head of Operations
- 11.4 Parking and Enforcement Officer

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 Strong Leader Report 17 June 2026
- 12.2 Delegated officer decision 29 June 2026

Appendix One: Consultation Responses Dog Control

Question 1: Do you live in Wyre Forest

Answered: 279 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	96.77%	270
No	3.23%	9
TOTAL		290

Q2: Which of the following best describes your situation?

Answered: 279 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I am a dog owner/ or from a family who owns a dog	64.16%	179
I am a professional dog walker	2.15%	6
I am not a dog owner but I walk other people's dogs as a favour	0.72%	2
I am not a dog owner now but I previously owned one or more dogs	14.70%	41
I am not a dog owner now but I am thinking of getting one in future	0.72%	2
I have never owned a dog	13.26%	37
I have previously been a dog owner/ or from a family who owned a dog	0%	0
Prefer not to say	2.15%	6
Other (please specify) Dog Breeder Professional in other local authority which manages greenspaces I am a dog breeder Owned a dog in the past Sadly our dog passed away in April Animal Welfare Charity	2.15%	6

TOTAL

279

Fouling

The current order states if a dog defecates at any time on land to which this order applies a person who is in charge of the dog at the time must remove the faeces from the land forthwith unless

- he has reasonable excuse for failing to do so; or
- the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to his failing to do so

Q3: Do you agree with the current order?

Answered: 275 Skipped:0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	89.09%	245
No	10.91%	30
TOTAL	275	

Q4: Why do you disagree with the current order on fouling?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 250

RESPONSES
One simple rule that applies in all cases, with no confusion and no misunderstanding.
There should be absolutely no excuses for not clearing up after your dog. You own a dog you are responsible.
It should be picked up. No excuses
'[R]easonable excuse' is vague and subjective
Need to find them hard and hit them with 1k fines
Years ago these over the top measures were not influenced by the moaners
There should be no excuse if you are in charge of a dog it is your responsibility to clear up and dispose in a bin
Dog fouling should be immediately picked up and properly disposed of, without exception.
Everyone who owns or walks a dog should have poo bags to pick up it's poo. There is no excuse.
The order is not being enforced
If it's not on the path, what's the need
Should be one law for the country, no need for all these local and limited variations, duplicating cost / effort
There should be no excuse for not picking up dog mess
you used to have a flick with stick - for areas other than those with heavy use at the outset- like the visitor centre that was a good way of working
It needs to apply to ALL open space, rights of way, pavements and open access land
All dog mess should be picked up, if there's a reason you are unable to then you shouldn't be walking a dog in public
Reasonable excuse opens up a can of worms- there is no excuse - you need to be able to pick up after them to own one

RESPONSES
They should not own a dog or walk it outside if they cannot clean up after it
There should be no excuse for not picking up after your dog. Can't pick up don't have a dog.
If you have reasonable excuse to own or walk a dog, then by definition you have obligatory responsibilities in relation to that dog. We don't say, "you must be in control of your animal unless you have reasonable excuse". This is weak governance, open to exploit. And which areas does this apply to? What about the forest itself or other rural areas?
There is no reasonable excuse not to pick up after the dog you are walking
Dog poo is the owner's responsibility
There is no reasonable excuse for not cleaning your dog mess up!
There is no reasonable excuse. If the owner can't clean up the mess they shouldn't walk the dog in public areas.
I believe the wording of having a reasonable excuse for failing to do so, is way too open. If this is about disability for guide dogs, then it would be better to state that. Are we accepting bad back or headaches as an excuse? For example. It's not clear enough to say if you are walking a dog, you are responsible for cleaning up after it
It should need to be cleaned up regardless. What excuse is there for not cleaning it up? If you can't clean it up, don't have a dog.
What do you consider a reasonable excuse? Possibly sight impairment but, in general the rule should be...you have a dog, you pick up their poop, no matter where it is. Clearer rationale is needed.
It should be picked up at all times, regardless
Because when I'm looking after a friend's dog I walk up Tolley rd and find lots of dog poop in fact whilst walking Birchen Coppice estate it's everywhere and some that bag up the mess just throw it in people's hedges. How are they going to get fined when we don't see any police up here ! I have actual as a non dog owner gone up the road picking it all up as we get mothers with prams which would get all over the wheels and drag into their house. the same with several disabled who use our rd to go to this local shop, it's disgusting for them but who is around to monitor it!! We get lots of dog walkers up here that don't live in the rd to go over the reserve and that's full of dog mess and abandoned dog poop bags and so overgrown I can't walk the blind dog I look after on the odd occasion hence having to walk her on the estate. I reported this weeks ago and nothing has been done about it and I suspect nothing will be done about all the dog mess.

Means to Pick Up

The current order states a person in charge of a dog on land to which this order applies must have with him an appropriate means to pick up dog faeces deposited by that dog unless

- he has reasonable excuse for failing to do so; or
- the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to his failing to do so.

The obligation is complied with if, after a request from an authorised officer, the person in charge of the dog produces, in the opinion of the authorised officer an appropriate means to pick up dog faeces.

Q5: Do you agree with what the current order says about means to pick up?

Answered: 269 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	88.48%	238

No

11.52%

31

TOTAL

269

Q6: Why do you disagree with the current order on means to pick up?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 251

RESPONSES

one simple rule is needed only, and that is to pick it up

Disagree with the challenge clause where an authorised person can ask a member of the public to produce a dog poo bag. I agree, fine someone if you see them fail to pick up after their dog, It's a bit invasive asking to check someones pockets

Everyone should without fail carry dog poo bags no excuse

Which is more important? To have a bag on you or to pick up the mess. If down to last bag this order encourages people to leave mess as more risk being caught without a bag. On way home you might have run out of bags as you have picked up every poo your pet has done & possibly someone else's which was left in middle of path. Yes some of us do pick up after others on occasion

I do not believe anyone other than a police officer should have the right to search me

The obligation is, I believe, complied with only once the mess *has* been removed, and safely disposed of.

We are in a nazi state

Because there is no excuse. If you own or walk a dog. You must carry poo bags to pick up after the dog.

It's an easy excuse for not picking up the mess.

No excuses, a dog owner is responsible for their dog/s or it should be removed/destroyed, little or no deterrent = little or no compliance

My dog once used 6 separate bags during a walk by having 6 different poops. I ran out of bags and had to borrow one. I was at this point breaking this order and didn't mean to

There is no reasonable excuse for not having means to pick up any dog mess - you should be prepared!

It means that people who have used their poo bags can be fined. Literally fining someone holding a bag full of poop is punishing the wrong people and creating ill will

Again it should apply to ALL land

Just because a person has bags does not mean they are complying with picking up the mess. Everyone should be picking up their mess and if they can't shouldn't be walking in public places

It feels more like a police stop and search

Definition of reasonable excuse? Practically and resource/cost of realistic enforcement

I am very particular about cleaning up after my dogs but very occasionally I have been caught out with not having a poo bag; in which case I have sought to move the poo to where it hopefully will not cause a problem to others. Everyone who tries their best should not be penalised when a genuine mistake is made

Same as. No reasonable excuse should be allowed. No bag get a hefty fine

The wording is too subjective because compliance depends on "the opinion of the authorised officer" rather than an objective test. The order does not define what constitutes an "appropriate means" to pick up dog faeces, which could lead to inconsistent enforcement. If the requirement is to carry a means of cleaning up after a dog, the order should clearly define what is acceptable, rather than leaving it to individual officers' discretion.

Can I speed if I have reasonable excuse to do so?

We walk as a group where the dog may be passed from one person to another but primarily the dog poo bags are in a bag hanging on the pushchair so aren't necessarily with the person holding the dog I'm wondering if this would mean we would get into trouble if that person were to be asked to show the bags...?

RESPONSES
Dog poo is owners responsibility
As stated before.....if they can't clear up their pests mess they shouldn't have a dog
Again, the reasonable excuse needs to be specific. Each person walking a dog must be able to produce something of which feaces can be picked up with. Not sure what you're meaning by reasonable excuse not to clean up after the dog(s).
It is unacceptable to challenge responsible handlers asking for proof
I don't think it is the position of authorises to enact draconian measures, this is not a police state. If the dog fouls and it isn't picked up then the penalty should be more harsh to stop it, challenging people to see if they have the measure is only going to cause unnecessary conflict
Because I've lived here for 24 years and never seen anyone to enforce the rule. If I did I'd agree with it

Leads

The current order states a person in charge of a dog on land edged in red in Schedule 2,3, 4 and 5* must keep the dog on a lead

- he has reasonable excuse for failing to do so; or
- the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to his failing to do so.

*Kidderminster Cemetery, Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Gardens, the Stackpool at Springfield Park and the area around Hurcott Pools.

Q7: Do you agree with the current order on leads?

Answered: 259 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	76.45%	198
No	23.55%	61
TOTAL		259

Q8: Why do you disagree with the current order on leads?

Answered: 60 Skipped: 219

RESPONSES
same answer
It's states that dogs are not allowed off their lead anywhere in Springfield Park to me that's too restrictive as there are large amounts of green space that I feel off lead dogs should be able to explore
As long as you have control of your dogs then why shouldn't they be off lead. If dogs is not under control and let off lead then the owner should be prosecuted
Dogs behave better off lead due to natural instincts and pack mentality, and where there is livestock. However there should be exceptions for dangerous dogs and to make owners responsible for being able to restrain their dog. A lot of people have dogs that are to big and heavy and they have no strength to hold them back
Dog should be on leads at all times. My dog, always on lead, has been attacked twice by off lead dogs. Owners both times walking far off unable to get to their dog in time
I do not think dogs should ever be off lead in public areas. Too many people just let their dogs wander off to do their own thing. They are a risk to wildlife, possibly other dogs, or even traffic,

RESPONSES

children etc. My dog is never off lead unless at home or in the paid for dog field. Too many people have no control over their dogs. It's a good excuse for them not to pick their poo up too, as they'll have no idea where the dog has done it. I worry for the safety of my own dog every time I see a dog off lead approaching.

I agree that dog should be kept on leads. However more areas need to be included within your list. I believe all public parks, dogs should be kept on leads.

I believe walking dog on a lead doesn't give the dog freedom to exercise and socialise

Hurcott woods is one of the few large open spaces in the district for dogs to run. Leads only is ridiculous in such a large area

Trained dogs are better behaved than children in these times, you don't see dogs throwing litter onto the floor

So many dogs walk perfect off lead and don't disturb wildlife and just walk by their owners. Exact same as they would if on lead but just have the freedom to walk ahead and sniff etc

All dogs should be kept on leads, anywhere and at all times unless in a designated area. Instead of designating a few areas dogs need be on a lead, designate the areas that they do not need to be on a lead instead. Too many people are not in control of their dogs whilst out walking and if you ask them to keep their dog away, you get a mouthful of abuse from them. Rules for dog owners should be stricter.

I think that dogs should be on leads in ALL public places by default. The Council should designate certain suitable open spaces for "free running" but dogs off leads are as much of a nuisance as dog faeces

Only with the Hurcott Pools one, not sure why that is

As before, 'reasonable excuse' could be said to cover all manner of sins

I frequently walk round Springfield Park with my friend who I'd highly allergic to dogs. Several times excitable dogs have jumped up at her. Dogs which are not under control off a lead should stay on a lead.

Our nazi state again.

If you can trust your dog to walk off a lead you should be able to do so. My dog has excellent recall and would walk beside me if I asked her to without a lead

I agree with the cemetery and the Springfield Park, but not to be on a lead when in and around hurcott wood/pool as the wood is a great place dogs can exercise.

No excuse if asked to put dog on lead dog should be on a lead

Dogs should be kept on a lead at all times in all areas of the Wyre Forest, not just selective areas

I am concerned that the whole area around Hurcott Pools being an 'on lead' area. This area is ideal for controlled dogs to 'run off' some energy, thereby, in my opinion bring less of an aggressive risk, if the dog is prone to that behaviour. The problem with all these control orders is that they punish all dog owners for the actions of the few bad owners, who neither other nor care to train their animals. Picking up the dogs faeces is fine, but there is a dearth of bins in which to place bags afterwards, which can lead to some owners choosing to leave where it is.

Dogs need to run to get sufficient exercise. Walking on a leash doesn't work for all dogs

It should be extended to all built up areas. I see too many dogs being walked off lead in built up areas. These pose a risk to drivers if the dog decides to run across the road. There may be pedestrians out there who are frightened of dogs - we need to remember that although we love our dogs, not everybody has the same view. I see too many people with dogs out of control and off lead in built up areas, this worries me.

The order needs to include a wider range of places

All dogs should be on leads

Designated dog walk areas must be clearly sign posted so that people without dogs can avoid them, dogs out and not within a designated dog walk areas must be on leads.

The owner is responsible for the dog and should know their dog well enough to assess if it can safely go off lead, any problems caused are the owners sole responsibility.

leads are important in high traffic areas and always if dogs are of breed or untrained to be under control but many dogs are not of that nature - these rules lower the prospect of responsible dog training and management in public spaces - visiting an area that is suitable for dog walking should

RESPONSES
be relaxing and enjoyable with respect for others - making rules such as this dumbs down these principles
All dogs should be kept on lead, despite any reasons otherwise. Even the most well trained dog can turn if provoked by other dogs and animals.
The dogs should be on leads at all times everywhere unless in a private dog field. Off lead dogs cause great distress to nervous dogs who are on lead especially when they run up to them.
Leads should be required in more areas
It needs to include all nature reserves for wildlife and all rights of way to protect livestock and wildlife
Just because
All dogs should remain on leads in all areas
I agree that all dogs need to be on leads at all times this needs to be enforced as my husband was bitten by a dog off lead in Springfield park which he sustained an injury which needed treatment and a week of antibiotics police were informed who did nothing
I understand near play areas etc but places like hurcott and areas in Springfield park away from the playground seem overkill
All dogs should be on leads at all times in public spaces, there are plenty of secure dog parks for dogs to run off lead
People just ignore it and let their dogs off anyway.
I disagree that dog should be on a leads at Hurcott wood
Dog should be on leads at all times, in all areas
Practically and cost of meaningful enforcement
A dog's behaviour is not determined by whether it is on or off lead. Many dogs are under excellent control off lead, while some dogs on leads can still behave inappropriately. Existing legislation already deals with dogs that are dangerously out of control or owners who fail to keep their dogs under proper control. A blanket restriction penalises responsible dog owners and well-trained dogs, regardless of the actual risk they pose. Any restrictions should be evidence-based, proportionate, and targeted at specific issues or particularly sensitive locations where there is clear justification, rather than applying to all dogs irrespective of their behaviour.
Hurcott pools are very well fenced off and dogs are not able to access the waters edge, so why insist dogs must be on a lead in this area?
Because not every dog owner should be penalised for an extreme minority who do not keep control their dogs.
Again, it's either a rule or it isn't. The reasonable excuse clause introduces ambiguity and opens up to tedious and costly challenges. Just apply the rule and fine breaches, like with speeding.
Its getting harder and harder to find off lead spaces and opportunities that allow dogs to safely express normal natural behaviour so there needs are adequately met. To support safety, respect and care for the community, and allow dogs freedom off lead, when away from the highway and roads , the bylaw should include, like the countryside act, the terminology no on-lead stipulation but always having close control and not being at large. In other words, control, seen, present, nearby and safe.
I think that well behaved dogs should be able to free roam in certain areas - such as Hurcott
It is impossible to keep and eye on 6 dogs if all are off the leash.
There is no reason not to have dog on a lead if the signage says you must keep your dog on a lead
Should be far more places in every park that are exclusively for people, where no dogs are allowed to allow people and children to walk or run or play football or cricket or other activities without dogs disturbing the activities, places for dogs should be fenced off for the safety of the dogs and the people
The order should include wider area's such as all public parks, town centre(s) defined by a boundary of XYZ, all church land and cemetery's.
No matter how well trained a dog may be, if it is not on a lead it can easily stray onto a road or approach people/other animals who do not want it to, therefore I believe that all dogs should be on a lead when in public

RESPONSES
Again, reasonable excuse needs to be specific. What excuses are you accepting here? They wanted to be free? They are trained well? I thought no kids were around here? The dog is harmless.... Not only that but huncott woods is literally the place that you can guarantee all dogs you meet will be off their leads. I don't think the wording will make any difference of the areas themselves are not signposted to make it clear that dogs are to be on leads there and penalties are enforced.
The impact on wildlife is minimal. More effort should be made with habitat restoration rather than persecution of dog owners
As long as the dog is under control, is not reactive or aggressive and is put on a lead when necessary, I don't feel it is an issue
This needs to be wider, using leads in any situation can reduce the risk of other dogs being triggered into an attack with no control mechanism for either dog. Please keep the dogs safe, keep them on a lead unless they are in an safe space for them to run free... make some safe spaces dogs can use that don't cost a lot of money.
People are not controlling off lead dogs
I have no problems with my dog off the lead, she does not interfere with wildlife people or other dogs. With regards Stackpool Springfield Park, where are the signs to say dogs should be on a lead?
Dogs Trust accept that there are some areas where it is desirable that dogs should be kept on a lead. Dogs Trust would urge the Council to consider the Animal Welfare Act 2006 section 9 requirements (the 'duty of care') that include the dog's need to exhibit normal behaviour patterns – this includes the need for sufficient exercise including the need to run off lead in appropriate areas. Dog Control Orders should not restrict the ability of dog keepers to comply with the requirements of this Act. The Council should ensure that there is an adequate number, and a variety of, well sign-posted areas locally for owners to exercise their dog off-lead.

Leads by order

The current order states a person in charge of a dog on land to which this order applies must comply with a direction given to him by an authorised officer of the Authority to put and keep the dog on a lead unless

- he has reasonable excuse for failing to do so; or
- the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to his failing to do so.

An authorised officer may give a direction under this order if such restraint is reasonably necessary to prevent a nuisance or behaviour by the dog that is likely to cause annoyance or disturbance to any other person, or to a bird or another animal.

Q9: Do you agree with the current order on leads by order?

Answered: 253 responses Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	84.19%	213
No	15.81%	40
TOTAL		253

Q10: Why do you disagree with the current order on leads by order?

Answered: 38 Skipped: 241

RESPONSES
same
Too subjective to judge/enforce
As already stated, in my opinion, dogs should always be on lead
As stated previously
You need to not just have yes or no as your options. I think all dogs should be on leads. You do not say anything about public spaces outside these maps (your first maps may include rural areas but since I cannot zoom in do not know if you include areas outside such as farmland. Upper Arley example dogs chasing sheep and other animals.
See my previous answers about the wording 'reasonable excuse'
See previous answer
The moaners who like to interfere in others win again
Again if the dog can walk off the lead and be trusted that should be enough. Not all dogs need a lead
No reasonable excuse not to have a dog on a lead
If owners were made to keep dogs on a lead at all times the issue of them causing a nuisance to wildlife and people would not arise on the first place.
Already answered. Its all too black or white
It needs extending to include where signs state that dogs must be on leads, usually placed by the farmer to protect livestock. I live in a rural area and frequently see dogs being allowed to run off lead in a field of sheep. When you mention it to the dog owner, they seem to think it's funny.
There aren't enough officers to enforce this order
No excuses, simply compliance or lose the dog.
No reasonable excuse if an officer asks you must put your dog on a lead
It should also be possible for landowners to insist dogs are kept on leads. We have a lovely meadow with nesting skylarks with a public footpath, yet people let their dogs run free where they sniff out the skylarks. I'd rather not have to fence the footpath in, but it may come to that.
I've never seen an officer, but I've seen many off lead dogs causing problems to other dogs on leads and the owner of loose dog is oblivious. All should be on leads so control is there.
Again not extensive enough. Apply to all sites. To many times I have seen livestock attacked, maimed and killed. AW Wildlife depleted on protected sites due to dogs off leads. Eg nightjar and woodlark currently extinct on wfcd sites. I have been scratched and attacked twice in wfcd areas.
All dogs she remain on leads in a public place
Where are the dog wardens to enforce this, all dogs need to be on leads at all times unless in a private area where you have sole use of field
Same as before, all areas bar the the home
There should also be something about respecting others around you. Having dogs run up to a person / dog can be very damaging. They need to be under full control which is rarely the case
Cost and resourcing of meaningful enforcement
If the handler can keep the dog to heel then this should be acceptable. I am a big wildlife supporter and will genuinely always have my dogs in leads in this situation but 2 of my dogs are well trained and will walk to heel off lead and ignore any distractions. However sadly I am aware many owners don't have this control so I understand the need to ask. I thinks it's sad that owners have to be asked to put the dogs on leads, they should already be aware of the need
I don't agree with policing by civil servants
The threshold for requiring a dog to be put on a lead is too subjective and gives authorised officers overly broad discretion. Terms such as "likely to cause annoyance or disturbance" are not clearly defined and could be interpreted very differently by different officers or members of the public. A dog does not have to be behaving dangerously or causing an actual nuisance before the power can be exercised. Responsible owners with well-trained dogs could therefore be required to put their dog on a lead simply because someone is uncomfortable with dogs, even where the dog is under effective control. Any power to require a dog to be put on a lead should be based on

RESPONSES
clear, objective criteria and evidence of actual behaviour that poses a genuine risk to people, livestock or wildlife, rather than vague or subjective concepts such as “annoyance” or “disturbance”.
Because the PSPO officers have more important roles to play within the community such as antisocial human behaviour and littering. Dog rules within the Wyre Forest are disproportionate to the issues that are actually experienced.
You make it optional pending a plausible excuse. You’re making it harder than it needs to be.
I've never seen an officer out and about to give this instruction. Where there is known wildlife ie nesting birds or grazing cattle there should be a rule to automatically put dogs on leads when seen.
Owners are totally responsible for dogs behaviour
Because every dog should be on a lead, except in special areas, which could be fenced off. Dogs will always exercise, where people have to be encouraged Every time I walk in Brinton park, or the other parks , I feel intimidated by all of the dogs around. It can be very frightening
As previous answer
All dogs on lead at all time..... easy rule to understand
Reasonable excuse must be specific. Patrols must also actually enforce this too.
Again persecution of responsible dog handlers
Dogs need to be kept on leads
There is no reasonable excuse

Exclusion Areas

The current order states a person in charge of a dog must not take it into or keep it within a fenced/enclosed children’s play area or water play area, and signed at its entrance(s) as a ‘dog exclusion area’ (whether the sign uses those particular words or words and/or symbols having like effect) which is designated and marked for children’s play unless

- he has reasonable excuse for failing to do so; or
- the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to his failing to do so.

Q11: Do you agree with the current order on exclusion areas?

Answered: 247 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	90.69%	224
No	9.31%	23
TOTAL		247

Q12: Why do you disagree with the current order on exclusion orders?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 257

RESPONSES
same

RESPONSES
It is the parents choice to use these areas, dogs shouldn't be excluded as it forces people to leave dogs in cars
There is no point in having this order if it's being abused on a regular basis. Brinton Park Splash Pad, I'm local and have seen a number of dog owners let their dogs loose in the splash pad if the gate has been left unlocked. I've reported it. It happens regularly. I'd like to know how is this monitored. There needs to be a crackdown on this. Catch people in the act and make an example of them.
There is no reasonable excuse for failing to do so. I see people use kids fenced play areas as areas to let their dogs off a lead. There is no reasonable excuse!
As before.
Nazism again. Lots of rules on what you can't do. Anything on what you can do?
No excuses, simple signage for assistance dogs only and enforce the law
Make it a rule with no reasonable excuse not to do so
I think if a dog is on a short lead, they should be allowed in. Otherwise parents are forced to stand outside or children not be allowed to play
Dogs should be in a lead everywhere in public
All dogs should remain out of play areas and if you are unable to do this then the dog should not be walked in a public area
Again as previous answer all dogs should be on a lead at all times in public spaces,
As some people have dogs and children they should be allowed into the play area with their dog on a lead to supervise their child. The water areas would be great for dogs at certain times later in the evenings when not used by children
Because when my son was small we couldn't visit the play area because there was no facility to tie the dog safely whilst I supervised my son.
Because there are no dedicated dog only zones
Ditto
Parks should be assessed on size and whether a dog run is available - e.g. Baxter Park is too small to allow dogs off lead, given the relatively small amount of grassed land for other park users. There is a dog run so dogs should use that.
These areas after hours, in the winter are under used and wasted. Dog walkers will be able to make use of them appropriately and the space can become a sanctuary for some dog walkers, preventing anti social behaviour with young people if regularly in use.
Should be more restricted area for dogs and no exceptions
Explain what a reasonable excuse for taking a dog into play area would be.
Certain areas' is too vague. Vague terms can be used too easily to exclude dog walkers from all areas.
There's no reasonable excuse

Multiple dog walking

The current order states a person in charge of more than one dog shall be guilty of an offence, if at any time, and at the same time, he takes onto the land to which this Order applies more than six dogs unless

- he has reasonable excuse for failing to do so; or
- the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to his failing to do so.

Q13: Do you agree with the current order on multiple dog walking?

Answered: 246 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	72.36%	178
No	27.64%	68
TOTAL		246

Q14: Why do you disagree with the current order on walking multiple dogs?

Answered: 66 Skipped: 213

RESPONSES
Six dogs is too many for one person to keep under proper control and to give each dog the right level of attention.
should be 2 max
Do not think 1 person can control 6 dogs... 3/4 small dogs max 2/3 dogs maximum
It depends on the size of dog. Small dogs shouldn't need a limit as they can be picked up, but larger dogs need a limit of 2 for 1 person. if more than this amount then there should be 2 people for safety purposes.
If they are on lead it's okish off lead no. Dogs have pack mentality
Should not have that many dogs walking together
Upto 6 dogs is fine, your wording is awful. It says more than the 1 dog is an offence which may or not be the offence or it could be 6. This sounds very devious
I do not think dog walkers should be allowed to walk anymore than 3 dogs at a time. Many times I have seen dog walkers with up to 6 dogs, all off lead, with no clue as to where they are or what they are doing. My daughter is a dog walker and always does solo walks or buddy walks, which is two dogs that get along, walked together. There is no way a dog walker can walk so many dogs together responsibly. It's profit over the dogs care!
That would depend on the person and the ability of that person
Six dogs is way too many for one person to fully have control, this number should be lowered.
I have no issue with multiple dog walking provided they are under control & follow commands
4 dogs with 1 walker is not safe. No matter how well behaved, all dogs act as a pack when there is more than 1.
I agree in principle but as the RSPCA don't actually care about animal welfare and just about money I'm sceptical about anything they have to say
Should be no more than 2
It should be less. 1 person cannot control all 4-6 dogs at any one time
This is a pack of dogs. Most people who walk this many dogs do not own them and the dogs may not be familiar with each other. I often see young women walking a group of dogs and think if

RESPONSES
they had a problem, such as another dog loose approaching them may not be able to control or protect the dogs in their charge.
Six is ridiculous, too many - three or four is the absolute maximum that any single person can properly control
Because all dogs are different in personality and size
As before.
I think it is dependent on the type and size and behaviour of the dogs
Six dogs are too many for one person to control, 4 dogs should be the very maximum that one person should be in charge of.
2 dogs maybe but no more. They can't all be controlled
Let people enjoy dogs as they wish.
Number of dogs a single person is allowed to be in charge of should be much lower than six.
As a dog owner, no one can safely walk 6 dogs on leads, even so-called well trained dogs. I would think that 4 should be the absolute limit
There is no support to say that multiple dogs are an issue
Are you talking about 1/2 dogs or six. Question is not clear
Some organisations now seem to find that organising "pack walks" to be popular. We now have a group of people and a pack of dogs as a large group. Are there any limits on this as again, somebody walking in the opposite direction, may find a large pack intimidating.
Too many dogs allowed to be walked
Many of the business dog walkers have no control over the dogs they release from their vans. How can one person watch where 6 dogs all go to the toilet all while still locking their vans. Also 6 together act differently and a lot run up to dogs on leads. I've had personal experience with this. The limit needs reducing in my opinion or they keep all 6 dogs on a lead. If they want to have 6 off lead then hire a private field.
remove the reasonable excuse not to comply
Should be a maximum of 3
The number of 6 dogs is too high for a person to keep eyes on the dog, top should be 4
I think the number of dogs should be less than 6, for one person to control that amount of dogs is impossible.
Make it 2
They should be a limit on dogs being allowed to be walked at once no matter what the reason
Should be a maximum of 2 dogs, it is very difficult to clean up with multiple dogs
6 is too many
It is not possible for one person to take responsibility for 6 dogs at once. There have been several tragic events where one dog has reacted to a situation and the walker has been unable to control it because they have other dogs to contain. There RSPCA recommends no more than 4 dogs be walked together at any one time.
Depends on how well dogs are controlled- not the actual numbers
It is essential that the handler has control over the dogs that they are walking. Some handlers can't even control 1!! Usually a handler with multiple dogs has them well trained and is easier to walk past than someone with a difficult single dog
Would do anything the RSPCA say. I've had 5 dogs in the past and walked all 5 together with absolutely no problems. Penalise the ones doing wrong not the who are considerate
I do not agree that there should be a blanket limit on the number of dogs a person may walk at one time. The ability to safely manage multiple dogs depends on the individual circumstances, including the experience and competence of the person in charge, the temperament and training of the dogs, and the environment in which they are being walked. A responsible and experienced owner or professional may be perfectly capable of safely managing more than six dogs, whereas a person with fewer dogs may still fail to keep them under proper control. The focus should be on the behaviour of the dogs and whether they are causing a nuisance or risk to other people, animals or wildlife, rather than imposing an arbitrary numerical limit. Any restrictions should be based on evidence of actual problems caused by multiple dog walking, rather than assumptions about the number of dogs being walked.

RESPONSES

The RSPCA, Dogs Trust and dog insurance companies do not recommend 4 dogs. The limit is more. There is absolutely no reason for there to be a limit and this matter was clearly and reasonably presented during the initial stages of implementing the limit. The people in the County who completed the original survey made it clear there should not be a limit but this was completely ignored by councillors and the council management team and has been unfairly voted for by being the only option the subsequent surveys have included. A petition asked for the limit to be rescinded and this was blatantly ignored.

My reasonable excuse is that I have ten dogs. So that makes it alright?

If multiple dogs are off lead, they miss poop as they are usually not watching. They also used to run up to my nervous dog and were not able to control all of them. 4-6 is too high.

If the walker is in full control then there is no need for a limit

Should be less than 6. 4 max

6 dogs is way too many for a person to control and have eyes on. Maximum should be 3.

Because as an experienced dog owner I think six dogs is too many. I see dog walkers with this number and it is not possible to keep an eye on all of them, to pick up after all of them and keep them closely observed. Whilst the walker is distracted by some of the dogs others will defecate without being noticed. I also don't think the quality of care is provided that the animals need when one person is handling six dogs.

The RSPCA recommendation of a maximum of four dogs is ample

I think the maximum number of dogs should be reduced to 4.

No more than 4 dogs should be walked as you will have a pack situation likely. I am a dog owner but too many dogs can be difficult to control as are children

Too many dogs for anyone to keep under control and be aware of what each dog is doing

Six is too many. I do not believe any one person however professional can effectively control that many dogs. If they want to walk that many at one time they should take them to a designated area where they book and pay. If professional walkers they can include the cost in their charges

More than two dogs is too much for one person to handle, certainly not 4 or 6

I have frequently been pushed off paths by people walking multiple dogs I think 2 or 3 should be maximum as with more than that do not have control of the animals

I think 6 dogs are too many. I have seen people in Brinton Park let up to 7 dogs off their leads. They scattered. There is no way the walker could have monitored them all to pick up the mess they deposit. 6 dogs together can be quite intimidating to other users of public areas. Too many dog owners think everyone loves their dogs. "He won't hurt. He's just being friendly." Are not acceptable to people who don't want dogs jumping up at them and leaving mud or saliva over their clothes. Furthermore dogs should not be allowed on sports fields. It is no joke to fall on a pile of dog faeces when engaged in sport or have to cope with the ensuing laundry. I would like to see dogs limited to 2 per person but I know this will not be found acceptable to dog owners. Certainly 4 are more than enough for one person to control.

A person cannot control 6 dogs at once

People own more than one dog

4 only and always on a lead

Please explain and be specific what a reasonable excuse is. Wording is more confusing than it needs to be. Says more than 1 dog then says 6. If there are different tiers, such as for dog walkers, explain that.

Walking of six dogs is not a problem if common sense is used. For example avoiding contact with people

One person in control of 6 dogs is not safe. A maximum of 4 regardless of insurance should be the limit. Even that should depend on breed and behaviour of the dog. If they are large and unpredictable, you would hope people have the sense to take just one, but sense is uncommon at the moment.

I think it's dependant on the dogs, their training etc.

Should be a limit of 3 per person

Failure to give correct details

If an authorised officer proposes to give a person a fixed penalty notice under any part of the PSPO, the officer may require the person to give him his name and address.

A person commits a criminal offence under clause 2 of this Order, if

- a) he fails to give his name and address when required to do so; or
- b) he gives a false or inaccurate name or address in response to a requirement to provide his name and address.

15. Do you agree with the failure to give correct details?

Answered: 242 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	92.98%	225
No	7.02%	17
TOTAL		242

16. Why do you disagree?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 262

RESPONSES
Not answered
This section isn't clear. Whose details need to be given. The owner of the dog or the people walking it
Your not police, your officers don't treat people as people. They are just robots making money for yourselves. There is a difference between educating and enforcing and enforcing when needed.
Unsure what this actually means
I refuse to give my details to anyone apart from a police officer
These jobs worth people enjoy spoiling others enjoyment.
Some of your officers can be quite belligerent
You are not the police
I think a warning is quite sufficient and I value my personal details should remain confidential
Proof needs to be given as it's easy for someone to lie about there name and address to prevent fine
Maybe give officers scanners so scan the dogs microchip to get correct address
I don't agree with anyone other than the law, applying the law. British Law should be used not Local Authority employees
Whilst I understand that authorised officers need to obtain accurate details where a person has committed an offence and a fixed penalty notice is being issued, this power must be balanced with appropriate safeguards. The order should make clear that a request for personal details can only be made where there is a reasonable basis to believe an offence has occurred and where the officer is genuinely proposing to issue a fixed penalty notice. There should also be clear guidance and accountability around the exercise of this power to avoid unnecessary requests for personal information where no offence has been established.
Dogs should be taken away
Persecution of dog owners/handlers
There needs to be a proper person of authority, these current "persons of authority" are just not he right people to be doing this kind of service.

RESPONSES

Detained until proof of identity is obtained

17. Any other comments

Answered: 114 Skipped: 165

RESPONSES

None

No other comments.

seems fair

The conservation area at Britannia Gardens is obliterated with dog faeces. No bins present. Dog walkers allow their dogs off lead when the swans are present on the pond

Too many people not being able to control their dogs and spoiling it for others.

Needs to be tighter controls on multiple dog walking home, so many places such as the common and Burlish in Stourport, Brintons in Kidderminster and riverside in Bewdley where dogs run off lead and annoy or cause anxious dogs to react this is stressful and should not be allowed and stronger controls need to be in place to protect owners and their dogs from aggressive dogs and responsible owners

We need a lot more poo bins

Maximum 2 dogs (but not large ones). Person walking them must be able to physically restrain them. Dogs must be on leads around livestock and horses. Dogs should be on leads in public places

With the increase in [often multiple] dog ownership do the regulations actually need tightening? [actually surprised that compulsory registration & licencing hasn't returned] We have had periodic bouts of dog fouling on Sutton Park Road, obviously daily by the same owner, have never noticed a dog warden about. Often see loose dogs in the nature reserves despite the notices which must obviously disturb the wildlife even if they only snuffle in the bushes alongside paths. Often though disappear deeper into the undergrowth or into "Wildlife Only" areas. These loose dogs can also run up to other visitors & sometimes jump up which often doesn't even get an apology from the owner. At least fouling isn't an issue with only the odd lump, however we do get doggy bags hanging from trees or just dumped by a gate. Bigger notices may not work, maybe a reminder about these issues should be issued in the council tax paperwork or sent out in newsletter & other social media posts.

I think people failing to pick up their dogs/ dogs under their control is becoming more of an issue. I frequently walk Burlish Top and meadow and Hartlebury common and over the past few years the amount of dog mess is increasing. I have even had dog owners say to me that its woodland and other animals leave their mess so its ok not to pick it up! Often it's on the well-trodden walkways through the land. I have never seen or heard of anyone formally challenging dog owners- and sadly in this day and age if you challenge them yourself you're likely to get a mouthful of abuse, same goes from off lead dogs who come aggressively toward other dogs. We are so lucky to have all this greenspace on our doorstep and thankfully most are responsible dog owners who behave accordingly

I see dog walkers with more than 6 dogs quite often and they let them off to go do their business it needs better policing

Can anything be done about people who bag their dog poo and either leave the bags lying on the floor, or hang them from trees?

Most of it is fine but interpretation is a problem for some of it

Needs to be reviewed and put into actual measures people have asked for if actually needed.

Why is this just about dog walkers? Is it because the council can make money out of it there's a lot of unsociable acts in park areas which they turn a blind eye to let's have it across the board about behavioral issues.

More areas need to be dogs on lead only, especially park areas. Reduce the number of dogs one person can walk at any one time. Playgrounds and especially the splash pad at Brinton Park needs to be closely monitored, dogs are let in if the gate is not locked by their owners for them to run around. Reason I say dogs should be on leads in public parks, I'm fed up of dogs running over and jumping up myself or children, owners don't care and often say they won't hurt you, when it's not

RESPONSES

the point. Personal space is just that, myself and my children are not fond of dogs, why can't we enjoy the park without dogs jumping up on us. Granted it does happen each time we visit the park but it's happened enough for me to mention that this is a problem. Have you actually ever sanctioned anyone for not following dog control rules? If so they should be made an example of. For me and I'm sure others it doesn't feel like anything is enforced or taken seriously.

There needs to be actual enforcement of these orders

Do they exist never seen one

All dog owners must have a lead for each dog.

I would like to see signs requesting that people keep dogs on leads in sensitive areas where there are ground nesting birds from March 1st and August 31st

They do a great job under difficult circumstances at times.

Brinton park is a huge problem for off lead aggressive dogs. They should not be allowed off lead in a park.

I believe dogs should be on leads in all parks as irresponsible dog owners do not control their dogs causing issues for other people

We see a lot of dog fouling on our doorstep and on other people's doorstep. There are people in the area who do not care because there is no enforcement.

I feel all the nature reserves should have stricter signage regarding dogs to be on leads unless under CLOSE control AND a reminder for owners to be considerate to other users in these areas. I have had dogs of various sizes run at me and jump up me, often without apology. I have seen a large dog chase a deer and heard it scream when attacked. Notices about keeping to pathways are sometimes ignored, thereby disturbing wildlife. Dog faeces in bags on the ground or hanging in trees at eye level is also a problem. Some dog owners just don't seem to be aware of or care about their responsibilities. Could there also be occasional leaflet handouts in such areas, as people don't stop to read the notices? Or sent with council tax reminders? Reminding them of responsibilities and consequences, as currently so many people own dogs. I particularly like the National Trust Canine Code for dog walkers which includes: Remember that not everyone is confident around dogs. Some people may be nervous or fear them. If you're visiting with your dog(s), you can help by making sure they don't run up to other people, especially children.

Dog walkers walking dogs in season should be more considerate to owners of complete male dogs.

I believe there should be legislation to stop dog owners allowing their dogs to urinate against people's private property such as their front door on a main street and also against park benches where people are sitting; also allowing their dogs to defaecate in public areas next to where people are having picnics or children are playing.

Whilst I agree with the order to pick up dog mess, dogs are often left to roam freely on Burlish top. They leave huge amounts of faeces all over grassland on paths where people and children walk which is very unpleasant. In addition, when people do pick up after their dogs, there are only 2 bins on Burlish top meaning you have to walk around carrying your dog poo. Many people will either leave the poo or leave the poo bag on side of pathway or hanging off trees. More bins are required scattered around the area for disposal

I think these rules should apply to all areas of Wyre Forest. Maybe they do. If they do your officers are obviously not able to patrol everywhere. In Arley It is commonplace for dogs to be loose on the road and fields and it is commonplace to find dog faeces on the road and paths and hanging off branches in plastic bags for ever preserved. Need dogs on lead signs in Arley

Dog owners should be given on the spot fines like parking tickets. The trouble with the rules is that the people who leave their dogs to run riot and foul everywhere are not caught. I have a neighbour who lets her dogs out loose in the street. They foul and the one dog tries to attack my cats and this happens regularly. She uses a mobility scooter so has a "reasonable" excuse to not pick up after her dogs or keep them under control which is just not good enough. If they can't keep their dogs under control then they shouldn't have them.

There should be some recourse in the hot weather that people who take their dogs out during the hottest parts of the day should be spoken to as the risk to the dogs burning their pads and heat stroke particularly certain breeds are very susceptible. To many people are being irresponsible

I would like to see more dog waste bins, especially in areas of dog walked as I sometime have to carry the dog waste bag around till I get back home. I think this would also encourage people to

RESPONSES
see the importance of cleaning up after your dog. And has there seems to be some what more dogs around since Covid.
What recourse is there if false details are given?
I've never seen a PSPO. So difficult to say they do a great or poor job. They have no physical presence in Wolverley. Maybe because it's deemed a low impact or risk area. Wolverley playing field has been destroyed by a person with two dogs who are allowed to dig significant holes all over the field (go look by the children's park....its horrific)
Lots of owners let dogs off lead, defecate and leave it or bag it and throw the bag on Lea castle village
I have a dog but I never see any PSPO walking in places where dog fouling is very heavy, e.g. Lorne St, Lea St, Offmore Rd in Kidderminster
It is not being monitored sufficiently well - in Jubilee Gardens there is obvious fouling which is not picked up and some people remove their dog's lead.
I agree with all these - what I do not agree with is the failure to implement them - especially the issue of dog fouling, which is appalling throughout the area, and is not punished in any way, as no-one ever follows up complaints.
Fine them heavy as a lot don't pick up their Mess left by dog
Dogs should be on a lead in ALL AREAS of the district, not just selected areas. Many dog owners allow their dogs off the lead in Severnside, and they are a nuisance.
I live near burlish top nature reserve and walk my dog there every day. I think the reserve would benefit from more bins (there are currently 2, 1 at the entrance of Gould avenue and 1 on the Kingsway car park) I think more bins (1 at the entrance to burlish meadows near the bench and 1 at the viewpoint looking down onto the rifle range/severn valley) would encourage less general littering and dog fouling.
Everyone should be able to enjoy walking in the Wyre Forest area without fear. Numerous people don't feel safe when confronted with off lead dogs, regardless of how well controlled they may appear to be. No owner can guarantee an off lead dog will not cause concern to others. They are also a nuisance to landowners and a danger to wildlife. As a landowner who has a public footpath crossing my land off lead dogs are a constant nuisance and owners are becoming more abusive when spoken to. I believe dogs should be kept on leads at all times in the whole Wyre Forest area, especially if someone is walking multiple dogs.
Why you have chosen 'he' throughout to refer to the dog walker/owner, I've not seen women made invisible in this way for a long time
Problem is that the PSPO is rarely enforced. Springfield Park - regularly see dogs off lead around the pool, chasing wildfowl. One person walks more than 6 dogs. Faeces all over the pathways. In 5 years I've only been asked once if I have poo bags. Lack of signage around the pool - how are people meant to know that dogs should be on a lead? Burlish Meadows dogs off lead in bird nesting area - all the time. Dogs in the pool.
Dog off lead areas should not be extended unless a real reason for wildlife
Dogs should be kept on leads on all public footpaths. As a land owner who has public footpaths running through land we are constantly faced with owners allowing dogs to run free which disturbs wild life and constitutes trespass. Often met with abuse and angry reaction when politely requested to keep dogs on leads. Official signs on entrance to public footpaths across private land would be helpful.
Lot more 'dog bins' needed. What training of dogs and dog behaviour will your Officers and worse 'Contractors' be given.
I don't see any dogs terrorising the neighbourhood by tearing round in balaclavas on noisy bikes, ebikes and escooters. They don't get drunk and fight outside pubs. They don't shoot and maim wildlife with catapults. They DO encourage exercise and a healthy wellbeing.
Need the orders to be enforced otherwise what's the point of having an order
The County Council has done some joint working with Wyre Forest DC and also Worcestershire Wildlife Trust on responsible dog ownership over the past year.
My previous dog was attacked by the dog of a person which is notorious for attacking other dogs. They were served a community order which meant they had to keep their dog leashed and muzzled at all times but have failed to comply with this order multiple times. If there are repeat incidents people should be barred from owning dogs.

RESPONSES
They need to stop issuing warnings and actually give out tickets. If they don't, why bother paying for their roles?
Should be consistent policy for country, avoiding this needless duplication of cost and effort.
I think that the areas where dogs have to be kept on leads should be increased - there are far too many places where out of control dogs are allowed to run loose
Nearly every section has the 'reasonable excuse option' this is an unnecessary 'get out of trouble' card - I am in favour of NO excuses unless the dog is a 'guide dog' or recorded 'helper dog'
Generally, I would like to see more enforcement. All these controls rely on council officers to enforce them, the chances of seeing a council officer actually checking people have poo bags with them on a country footpath are minimal.
Whilst there are specific designated on lead dog areas, there are no designated off lead areas. It would be great to have some of these where only dogs who are safe off lead (and therefore friendly with both other dogs and people) are allowed. This would allow owners to let their dogs run without the worry of potentially reactive/ aggressive on lead dogs. This is currently an issue where it can be hard to have your dog off lead due to other people's dogs.
Set up easy accessible link for public to inform council of problem areas and people that don't comply with the rules. Also, when dogs are suspected of being dangerous and banned breeds it would be helpful if there was an easy way to inform.
I think we all understand that the minority undermine the enjoyment of the respectful majority - please ensure that any rules and sanctions are based around the majority - I walk my dog but I also ride horses and I rarely come across anyone who is anything other than respectful while ensuring their dog is under control
None
Support and expand wardening. In time with enforcement behaviours will improve
The orders are pointless when they are not enforced. Wyre forest is covered in dog mess and uncontrolled dogs.
More dog bins especially over White wickets and signage regarding fines ect. We have just come back from Ireland. every dog bin we walked past has a slot for free dog poo bags. This was a great idea and should be considered by Wyre Forest District Council.
In areas that are used a lot by dog walkers i think they should be monitored & the rules & regulations should be in force.
More on patrol
I have not seen any enforcement officers in my area for many years now. The path to Springfield Park from Broadwaters is disgusting.....dog faeces everywhere
Hopefully service dogs are allowed in children's play areas
Dogs should be kept on leads in more places unless they are well trained not to interfere with other people or animals
In response to your feedback request in the Kidderminster Standard regarding your anti social behaviour measures, my initial thoughts are that you all (whoever all is) must have your heads in the sand! Lets just start with illegal parking. Severn Side South frequently has 30+ extremely noisy motorbikes parked on double yellow lines, blocking the walkway, forcing pedestrians (including children) into the road and oncoming traffic. This is a regular occurrence, not a one-off and is very unpleasant to have to listen to bikers revving their engines to full volume in some kind of ritual. My suspicion is you already know this and simply choose to look the other way. Also, where are the enforcement officers? My guess is they are too scared to do what they are paid to do rather they prefer to ticket unsuspecting car owners as this is easy money and less confrontational. So why bother having enforcement officers if they don't do what they are paid to do? Moving on to dog fouling. I have personally captured CCTV footage of offenders and tracked them down to where they live only to be told by [REDACTED] there was insufficient evidence. What a waste of my time, never to be repeated. The message is call the clean-up team at great expense rather than fine the offender...more tax payer money wasted. I can assure you when [REDACTED] was in charge was not shy of issuing penalty notices to offenders. So again, why have an enforcement team when they are too scared to do their jobs and why ask the public for support when nothing ever comes of it? My favorite subject is the ever-increasing number of licensed premises in Bewdley. 30 drinking establishments in walking distance. For the older generation, Bewdley has become a no-go town on Friday and Saturday nights. No surprise there are drunken yobs falling all over the

RESPONSES

place when the pubs like The George and Arches are open to the early hours. The town smells like a toilet on a weekend, not to mention the noise from Arches and the trail of sick and broken glass.....well done whoever gives out these licenses. I bet they don't live in the town! Furthermore, where are the police to manage all of this antisocial behaviour. I can tell you they are nowhere to be seen. My own experience dealing with the police when a wheelie bin was thrown over my 8ft wall onto my car (causing thousands of pounds of damage) was a waste of time. Despite sharing CCTV in the hope they would track down the offenders PC [REDACTED] and his/her merry mob did nothing....it was too much trouble to get off their butts and do some real police work. They would rather push paper around a desk and complain how under paid they are. I just hope one day they ask for my help... I sense you know all of this. I don't expect anything to change, just the usual claims of not enough funding to increase resources etc.... [REDACTED]

Public spaces should require dogs on a lead at all times, most parks in the area have dogs running loose and people are less likely to clean up after them if the dog is not near the owner, for example places like brown westhead park where there is always a large amount of dog mess not picked up, same with white wickets park.. There have been numerous complaints where kids playing football are getting covered in it.. Massive health issues for kids including potential blindness if they get the bacteria in their eyes

The PSPOs are good but there aren't enough officers to enforce them.

I am not aware of any action being taken against individuals who break the rules. Dog fouling on the streets doesn't appear to be being tackled. Dog owners should be responsible and pick up after there dog which I do. Unfortunately I have never seen any officer doing anything

Need more dog waste bins around stourport

There should be more designated secure areas for dogs where they can be let off leads and free to roam

Yes - we really need to do a lot more about responsible dog ownership. The number of out of control dogs, dog faeces and lost dogs in recent years has sky-rocketed

The authority should consider issuing licences /permits to dog walkers to enable them to walk up to 4 dogs together. Other authorities do this.

Am concerned about the cost and resources needed to enforce these policies. Also irresponsible owners will nor be deterred by the possibility of being caught.

Although I have not agreed with all the measures, when I see the lack of control by some dog owners I understand their need. Owning a dog is sadly still too easy, too many owners do not understand and embrace the commitment they have made.

In the 40 or more years of living in Wolverley I have never once come across an enforcement officer. Not even at events such as the annual carnival. I am frequently picking up dog faeces left by irresponsible owners. I have asked about stencilling the pavements as they do in Gheluvelt Park. Have never had a reply. It is all very well reviewing your rules but, if you don't have the human resources to enforce them, it all seems rather pointless. Just a tick box exercise to demonstrate you have held a consultation.

There should be more officers out and about especially around Cookley where I live. The amount of dog poo on pavements and the footpaths around this village is terrible. There should also be some way of enforcing bagging and throwing which is also very prevalent in Cookley.

Use British Law and keep out of it. Concentrate on providing core services.

Can something be done about bags of dog poo being dropped or left to "pick up later", which never happens. This is as much of a risk as exposed faeces.

I would like to see more restrictions to prevent off lead dogs intimidating on lead dogs and people, and enforcement on their owners

There is a lot of dog poo not being picked up at Burlish top, and a lot poo bags just being left on the floor

Professional dog walkers have no problem with 6 well behaved dogs. It is often the single dog owners that have uncontrollable dogs. I believe professional dog walkers should have qualifications to be able to walk more than 4 dogs at a time or a free license to do so

As a dog walker, I would like it to remain a limit of 6 dogs. My usual number is aorund 4, but if I have calm and well behaved dogs I will take out 6. I make sure to give other MOPs space and keep to quieter areas. I am more than happy for dog walking to be more regulated by the council, though will stress that six well behaved dogs can be safely walked just as easily as one or two. If

RESPONSES

the number of dogs allowed is up for contention, I would ask the council to seek consultation with local dog walkers. Thank you!

I totally agree with everything. I do have an environmental concern however I'm led to understand that poop bags - there is no law in place to ensure they are made from sustainable and biodegradable materials? I am also hearing that the contents of waste bins are often incinerated, which of true would be very concerning for the air we breathe and the wider environment. I feel that it's great to keep areas clean, but I feel there is a shorter sightedness on how water is collected and disposed of.

I have witnessed dogs being walked on the highway without a lead (or sometimes collar) recently. It would be good to reinforce that this is unacceptable.

I recognise the importance of tackling irresponsible dog ownership, particularly dog fouling, and support proportionate measures aimed at those who fail to act responsibly. However, I am concerned that some of the proposed controls are overly broad and risk penalising responsible dog owners rather than targeting the minority who cause genuine problems. Restrictions should be evidence-led, proportionate and based on actual nuisance or harm, rather than assumptions about dog ownership. Many dogs are well trained and safely managed off lead, and many owners are capable of responsibly managing multiple dogs. Blanket restrictions and subjective enforcement powers risk creating unnecessary conflict between responsible dog owners and enforcement officers. Where enforcement powers are retained, clear guidance should be provided to ensure consistent application and to avoid decisions being based on individual perceptions of what constitutes annoyance, disturbance or an appropriate level of control. The focus should remain on the behaviour of dogs and owners, rather than imposing restrictions on responsible people who are complying with their obligations. I would also encourage the Council to focus resources on education, engagement and targeted enforcement against irresponsible owners, particularly in relation to dog fouling, rather than introducing wider restrictions that affect the majority of responsible dog owners.

It is illegal in this country to not pick up dog mess. There are also laws about dog control and this PSPO is unnecessary and totally disproportionate and always has been and it's about time the council listened to the constituents of Wyre Forest who take the time to complete these surveys instead of using their own narrative. The PSPO officers should use their time to tackle the real issues in this area such as antisocial behaviour and littering which has a much bigger detrimental effect on the community.

Eliminate the 'reasonable excuse' clauses unless you're ready to blow council tax money on futile court cases.

Insufficient enforcement Please consider detailed assessment of parks for whether dogs should be kept on lead/minimum under control

These views are my own personal views, but I work for a large animal welfare charity and run the Blue Cross Responsible Dog Ownership Course. We have more than 40 police and local authority partners using the course, West Midlands and West Mercia police being two of them. The course is an out of court educational intervention that works to promote safer more harmonious relationships with dogs, people and communities. I'd be happy to discuss this more as support for cases where incidents require more prevention and education. Please visit: bluecross.org.uk/rodc or email me bluecross@bluecross.org.uk

I would like to know when an officer last issued a fixed penalty notice to a dog walker, from what I can see on my regular walks some people do ignore the requests to clean up after their dog, personally I have never seen an authorised officer on duty

There needs to be an increased provision of bins for dog waste. Brinton's park has several that have been removed over the years and not replaced, specifically near the benches at the back of the tennis court and near the skate park. There also needs to be better provision near the new pond.

I would like to see all dogs on leads in public places. People often let their dogs off without proper control of them.

People who own dogs have enough to contend with not being able to take them into shops which is not covered in law, I believe. I think children should be restricted along with dogs so perhaps you should make these laws with the two interlinked as throwing down of rubbish, bad behaviour is not just down to dogs.

RESPONSES
4 dogs not 6
If a dog bites a person or attacks another animal it should be a reportable offence to a designated officer.
Fines for people who's dogs keeps attacking other dogs
I walk in the wyre forest alot 3 times a day and I find most of the dog waste is when people come for the day and not locals
Just get the wording right to cover all offences
Yes parks are for people primarily and for lots of us it is the only option to go to I am so frequently subject to inconsiderate people with dogs, and feel excluded from many places in the parks because of this it is very frightening to have dogs that run at you and bark and often have walked in Dog faeces because it's not been properly cleaned up. There is also no respect for wildlife and ground nesting birds
Where are the officials who are going to enforce this regulations? I have never seen any. You can make whatever rules you like but they are useless if there is no one to enforce them.
Reduce the number of dogs per walker to 3
2 dog maximum in town/city centres
Needs specific clear rules, too many areas where there seems to be a rule then a - unless they have an excuse... Which makes it so open to misinterpretation or then difficult for anyone to actually follow up on the rules or enforce them. In addition to this, unless patrols and clear signage is applied to each of these areas, it doesn't even matter if this wording exists. You need to ensure that people around here know what these rules are. Go and visit hurcott woods and see how much dog poop you find and if you can spot any dogs on leads there.
I think the enforcement of fouling is very important but the overt persecution of responsible owners totally unacceptable. If this happened to any other sector of the community there would be an outcry. In general dog owners are responsible people and an easy target.
Not strong enough wording, dogs should be on a lead every where at all times especially in farmer's fields, unless in a designated dog run area
Need to be removed and replaced with a more authoritative / Police presence
No point having these bi-laws without continuous enforcement. Pavements and parks have dog mess everywhere
Dog fouling around wyre forest area is a major issue that requires tackling I have visually impaired child that attends school walking and has stepped on foul on several occasions and he's refused to attend school walking. Walking is a method encouraged for children and parents when attending school however with dog fouling everywhere it has become extremely difficult. In regards to dogs being let of lead I have come across this several times this is dangerous too as I have heard of incidents of children being bitten by a dog and chased which encourages fear in children of dogs owners are always saying the dogs are good however they can never guarantee this.
I never see any of these PSPO's
Dogs on Lead by Direction Order: Dogs Trust enthusiastically support Dogs on Leads by Direction orders (for dogs that are considered to be out of control or causing alarm or distress to members of the public to be put on and kept on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised official). We consider that this order is by far the most useful, other than the fouling order, because it allows enforcement officers to target the owners of dogs that are allowing them to cause a nuisance without restricting the responsible owner and their dog. As none of the other orders, less fouling, are likely to be effective without proper enforcement we would be content if the others were dropped in favour of this order. Taking more than a specified number of dogs onto a land: The behaviour of the dogs and the competency of the handler need to be taken into consideration if considering this order.

Appendix Two: Consultation Responses Alcohol

Question 1: Do you still agree with the boundaries of the PSPOs? See Bewdley boundary map. See Kidderminster boundary map. See Stourport-on-Severn boundary map.

Answered: 312

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes – I agree with the Bewdley Boundary	63.97%	87
Yes – I agree with the Kidderminster Boundary	68.38%	93
Yes – I agree with the Stourport Boundary	66.18%	90
No - I disagree with the Bewdley Boundary	9.56%	13
No – I disagree with the Kidderminster Boundary	11.76%	16
No – I disagree with the Stourport Boundary	9.56%	13
TOTAL		312

Note: Percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered each individual boundary question. Respondents were able to provide views on more than one PSPO boundary area; therefore, percentages are presented separately for Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn and do not add up to 100%. The total of 312 represents all responses recorded across the three boundary questions.

Q2: If no, what you would change?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 112

RESPONSE
Extend the areas
Leave it as it is
The Bewdley one should include roads up towards Hopleys Camping site as a lot of people walk to and from there.
I would like it extend a bit further up the Birmingham road to Chester rd north
Extend to include Comberton Hill up to the train station
Remove Riverside Gardens
It would not let us see the map clearly as interactive not working. Should be one for Upper Arley. Why don't you consider smoking cannabis in the same way
I agree with the map. I can't say I have ever seen any physical presence of PSPO in Kidderminster centre. It's perhaps because there is very few shops actually open in Kidderminster anymore. Part of the homeless issue is that there are more shop premises closed than open. So people sit/lie around in what looks like a socially deprived area.
Does not cover Cookley or Lea castle
I don't understand the relevance of boundaries and just want the social problems in Kidderminster to be dealt with
make it larger

RESPONSE
Include Comberton Hill to the railway station bridge
We used to have a Alcohol Free Zone in Bewdley years ago!
The areas need extending
Law enforcement should be equally applied to all of a country and equally to all peoples
I would include the bridge and area on Areley Kings around The Beams
In response to your feedback request in the Kidderminster Standard regarding your anti social behaviour measures, my initial thoughts are that you all (whoever all is) must have your heads in the sand! Lets just start with illegal parking. Severn Side South frequently has 30+ extremely noisy motorbikes parked on double yellow lines, blocking the walkway, forcing pedestrians (including children) into the road and oncoming traffic. This is a regular occurrence, not a one-off and is very unpleasant to have to listen to bikers revving their engines to full volume in some kind of ritual. My suspicion is you already know this and simply choose to look the other way. Also, where are the enforcement officers? My guess is they are too scared to do what they are paid to do rather they prefer to ticket unsuspecting car owners as this is easy money and less confrontational. So why bother having enforcement officers if they don't do what they are paid to do? Moving on to dog fowling. I have personally captured CCTV footage of offenders and tracked them down to where they live only to be told by [REDACTED] there was insufficient evidence. What a waste of my time, never to be repeated. The message is call the clean-up team at great expense rather than fine the offender...more tax payer money wasted. I can assure you when [REDACTED] was in charge was not shy of issuing penalty notices to offenders. So again, why have an enforcement team when they are to scared to do their jobs and why ask the public for support when nothing ever comes of it? My favorite subject is the ever-increasing number of licensed premises in Bewdley. 30 drinking establishments in walking distance. For the older generation, Bewdley has become a no-go town on Friday and Saturday nights. No surprise there are drunken yobs falling all over the place when the pubs like [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are open to the early hours. The town smells like a toilet on a weekend, not to mention the noise from [REDACTED] and the trail of sick and broken glass.....well done whoever gives out these licenses. I bet they don't live in the town! Furthermore, where are the police to manage all of this antisocial behaviour. I can tell you they are nowhere to be seen. My own experience dealing with the police when a wheelie bin was thrown over my 8ft wall onto my car (causing thousands of pounds of damage) was a waste of time. Despite sharing CCTV in the hope they would track down the offenders PC [REDACTED] and his/her merry mob did nothing....it was too much trouble to get off their butts and do some real police work. They would rather push paper around a desk and complain how under paid they are. I just hope one day they ask for my help... I sense you know all of this. I don't expect anything to change, just the usual claims of not enough funding to increase resources etc.... [REDACTED]
Would extend the boundaries
Kidderminster - include up to the train station on Comberton Hill. Lots of ASB up there with street drinkers
Drinking should only be allowed at pubs or pub gardens. Public areas should remain safe places for people, children, pets and family's and not a NO GO place during social drinking times. Public streets should not be an extension of the pub with drinking and smoking and no provision for cleaning up after drinkers. I actively avoid these places because of the anti social behaviour drinking brings to public areas.
I would make the Stourport one bigger, we have a lot of pubs just out of the town centre and it would make sense to consider the areas around these too
Why are you trying to remove the freedoms of people
Needs to include local parks.

Question 3: The PSPO is in place to stop people continuing to drink alcohol when asked to stop by an officer in the areas shown on the map. Do you agree with this?

Answered: 135

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	91.11%	123
No	5.93%	8
Don't know	2.96%	4
TOTAL		135

Q4: The PSPO requires a person to hand over alcohol at the request of an officer in the areas shown on the map. Do you agree with this?

Answered: 136

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	94.85%	129
No	5.15%	7
TOTAL		136

Q5: What impact do you think the PSPOs have had on...

Answered: 136

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	NO IMPACT	NOT SURE	TOTAL
People living in the towns	47.06% 64	1.47% 2	34.56% 47	16.18% 22	135
People working in the towns	46.32% 63	2.21% 3	28.68% 39	22.79% 31	136
People visiting the towns	47.06% 64	4.41% 6	27.94% 38	19.12% 26	134

Q6: In the past 12 months have you been affected by any alcohol related anti-social behaviour in Bewdley, Kidderminster or Stourport-on-Severn?

Answered: 135

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	38.52%	52
No	61.48%	83
TOTAL		135

Q7: Please tell us where this happened... (e.g. town, street name, park name)

Answered: 45 Skipped: 91

RESPONSE
Kidderminster town. Youths drinking and swearing smoking cannabis
Bewdley, Dog Lane
Riverside Stourport on Severn by the Tontine.
Stourport, Bewdley and Kidderminster
I have not been threatened however the impact is in terms of the amount of drinks cans and bottles (many of which are from alcoholic drinks) which are left on the streets.
Kidderminster canal path
Under the McDonald's bridge by matalan
There are regularly groups of people consuming alcohol in Kidderminster Town centre in the daytime. This makes me feel uncomfortable and unsafe so I avoid the town shopping centre and certainly wouldn't walk my child through the town. Most moms I know feel like this
New Road, Kidderminster. Drunk and disorderly people shouting and swearing in the street. It is outside Blunts Shoes where they serve children.
Load street
Underpasses by canals
Load street, Severn side and jubilee gardens
I notice that groups gather in Kidderminster openly drinking and being loud and boisterous, especially in the area outside the heart foundation shop by the bullring
Felt intimidated by groups of people drinking outside the old Lloyd's Bank in Kidderminster & on the canal by Sainsbury's. Have never seen an officer in the town.
Outside the George pub while waiting for friends
Town centre, anywhere where there is seating
Kidderminster town centre
Bewdley hill
Vicar street people constantly sat there drinking and swearing taking drugs
Seen youths abusing passers by in Stourport high street. Youths on question are known to police but police seem to fail to act
Kidderminster Town centre and the underpass at the bottom of Coventry Street
Bewdley St George's car park
Kidderminster town
Many different occasions and places. It seems to be the norm now. Drunk and unpredictable people everywhere
bar
Kidderminster new road

RESPONSE
Kidderminster town centre middle of the day man leaning against a wall basically wetting himself in front of myself and my child police in attendance left him to it walked past the police had gone he was then sitting in his own urine
Offmore Road/Albert Road/Lea Street/Comberton Hill
I currently work in [REDACTED] in Kidderminster town every morning and every night the drunks and drug addicts on the bench right outside ee that I have to walk pass it makes me feel unsafe. Often the group get in to some sort of argument about something or other. The police often appear and then leave for 10 mins and come back. Working in town I literally see people walk around them everyday it's not one in a while it's everyday
Vicar Street, Kidderminster
Kidderminster...to the left of the old Lloyds Bank. There always people drinking here and being loud, foul mouthed and abusive. The litter, smell and dreadful bad behaviour is appalling.
Witnessed general yobbish behaviour and feeling unsafe around street drinkers
Bewdley millennium green park
People hanging out on the bridge shouting abuse as I went past
Imber Road, Kidderminster
In response to your feedback request in the Kidderminster Standard regarding your anti social behaviour measures, my initial thoughts are that you all (whoever all is) must have your heads in the sand! Lets just start with illegal parking. Severn Side South frequently has 30+ extremely noisy motorbikes parked on double yellow lines, blocking the walkway, forcing pedestrians (including children) into the road and oncoming traffic. This is a regular occurrence, not a one-off and is very unpleasant to have to listen to bikers revving their engines to full volume in some kind of ritual. My suspicion is you already know this and simply choose to look the other way. Also, where are the enforcement officers? My guess is they are too scared to do what they are paid to do rather they prefer to ticket unsuspecting car owners as this is easy money and less confrontational. So why bother having enforcement officers if they don't do what they are paid to do? Moving on to dog fowling. I have personally captured CCTV footage of offenders and tracked them down to where they live only to be told by [REDACTED] there was insufficient evidence. What a waste of my time, never to be repeated. The message is call the clean-up team at great expense rather than fine the offender...more tax payer money wasted. I can assure you when [REDACTED] was in charge was not shy of issuing penalty notices to offenders. So again, why have an enforcement team when they are to scared to do their jobs and why ask the public for support when nothing ever comes of it? My favorite subject is the ever-increasing number of licensed premises in Bewdley. 30 drinking establishments in walking distance. For the older generation, Bewdley has become a no-go town on Friday and Saturday nights. No surprise there are drunken yobs falling all over the place when the pubs like [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are open to the early hours. The town smells like a toilet on a weekend, not to mention the noise from [REDACTED] and the trail of sick and broken glass.....well done whoever gives out these licenses. I bet they don't live in the town! Furthermore, where are the police to manage all of this antisocial behaviour. I can tell you they are nowhere to be seen. My own experience dealing with the police when a wheelie bin was thrown over my 8ft wall onto my car (causing thousands of pounds of damage) was a waste of time. Despite sharing CCTV in the hope they would track down the offenders PC [REDACTED] and his/her merry mob did nothing....it was too much trouble to get off their butts and do some real police work. They would rather push paper around a desk and complain how under paid they are. I just hope one day they ask for my help... I sense you know all of this. I don't expect anything to change, just the usual claims of not enough funding to increase resources etc.... [REDACTED]
Hales Park
Vicar street kidderminster
Drunk/drugged individuals around Kidderminster town
Kidderminster Bullring area - hoards of street drinkers arguing & fighting with each other. Kidderminster Comberton Hill area - street drinkers/rough sleepers ASB
Anti social behaviour from drinking is a real problem. Many out of town people think that they can do what ever they want. The pubs are overcrowded and people are allowed to drink all along the river fronts and in the towns. There is no policing at all and the drinking is allowed to 2-3am. The towns are turning into no go places because of all the drunks. I live here and will not venture into town after 8pm. The towns are disgusting, the towns are like an open refuse sites. I have seen

RESPONSE
large gangs of men openly doing drugs in the street in convoys of vehicles. They are using these areas as they know they are a soft target. If nothing is done soon many residents will be moving from the area. You are attracting the wrong type of visitors to the area. Nobody is going to benefit from this in the long run.
Walking back from Tesco towards the park area by the canal in Stourport.
Kidderminster brintons park and high street kidderminster
No
Springfield Park

Q8: How did it affect you?

Answered: 45 Skipped: 91

RESPONSE
Hate going into town
After midnight shouting and screaming, cant sleep.
Drunken travellers tried to steal my bike whilst I was riding it, clearly intoxicated!
Part of drinking culture isn't it, man up and walk on
It is very sad to see people disrespecting public spaces
No longer walk the path
It didn't directly affect me however it was just a bit disturbing
As above.
Frightened to walk outside. Scared to call anyone or say anything in case they retaliate. Affecting my work as customers are scared to come in.
Someone got aggressive towards my partner because he had to much drink
I was frightened
Shouted at. Forced to walk in road. People stepping into road in front of car.
It didn't really affect me I just keep a wide berth, especially as I have a nervous dog. I can imagine it's not pleasant for old or vulnerable as they can be quiet intimidating. They are not hard to spot and hang out in same area pretty much daily so I don't understand how this fits with the policy.
Felt intimidated by large groups of drunk people. Very poor image of the town.
I got very anxious and wanted to leave
I have to walk past the feral underclass drinking booze at the expense of those mugs like me that work. Drunken anti social behaviour- Peruvian style death squads should sort it.
Made me feel uncomfortable walking through the town
Drunk and disorderly. Damage to property
I have to walk this way to work not very nice to see.
Disturbing and uncomfortable. People reluctant to intervene for fear of reprisal
Under age kids in a gang. Drinking cans of lager from god knows where and cans of monster. They are intimidating. They call you names and throw their rubbish on the floor. Groups of kids should be kept out of the town centre too, especially during the school holidays.
I was annoyed and disgusted that these people were ignoring the rules
Idiots drug and drugged up in town swearing and begging
Makes me want to stay inside and not go to town centre
Too many occasions to list Publicly urinating, fights, bad language, crowds gathering in road, blocking pavements.
Drunk people leaving beer bottles in the street
It's disgusting
Late night noise and drug activity. Kids whizzing around on electric scooters and bikes
It makes me feel unsafe in the morning and evening as I walk and leave work
Ended up with spit on my trainer dure to drunks sat outside bank.
Made me rather sad! Also the council can sit in their offices thinking up all these policies, get the tick in the box and then move on!
Felt unsafe. Put off coming into town again
Youths drinking and riding electric motorcycles shouting and being antisocial

RESPONSE
The pavement is narrow so it is quite intimidating as there are no alternative routes to cross the Severn
Intimidating presence of a group of people gathered together. Litter left behind. Fear of going outside into my private garden.
Bewdley is a no-go town after 8.00PM on weekends. I certainly would not take my family into town unless for an early meal or drink. After 8.00PM the drunks just get louder and louder
Broken glass all over street from vodka bottles. Unsafe for animals and vehicles. Had to carry my dog to prevent getting glass in paws.
A man shouting out about my walking ability as i use a stick as i refused to give money
It does not feel safe walking in the town centre especially after shops close but earlier too.
Felt vulnerable
I avoid going out!
Several younger people sitting on the benches being rude and aggressive to passers-by. Not physical, but intimidating, lots of drunken gesticulating and posturing that I could see caused concern.
There is always drunk and disorderly people in both areas causing disruption and shouting at people. It's very intimidating and nothing is done about it
It didn't
Noise and rubbish left behind.

Q9 If you have any further comments regarding the PSPOs please let us know

Answered: 42 Skipped: 94

RESPONSE
We need more visible policing and a zero tolerance of rowdy disruptive behaviour. Our town loves visitors but not to the detriment of our quality of life!
I have never seen anyone patrolling these areas so it's pointless!
Not visible outside office hours
I think drinking on the streets should be banned completely not just when asked to hand over alcohol. PSPOs can't patrol 24/7.
Pretty pointless when they're not actioned or enforced, make some signs, produce a policy, make a survey, hours of b***** wasted when there's no enforcement. Pen pushers and box tickers you lot. Unless there's a fine involved.
Need to be far more present and impose fines to parents of children to try and prevent future issues
Enforce them. Regular drinkers in Kidderminster during the day. Don't allow it.
Never see any PSPOs or even Police operating in Stourport, especially during times when alcohol intake is potentially at its highest (weekends, during the world cup recently and during hot sunny weather)
Antisocial behaviour is also caused by drug use- fighting & shouting. Staff in the bank have to close the doors. The area at the bottom of the High St Kidderminster is not supervised enough
I love seeing the police about the town
It's not just drinking its drugs and persistent antisocial behaviour usually from children on electric scooters and the like, people won't come into a town centre of vape and charity shops and that is what Kidderminster Town centre has become!
No
Not really seen any around.
See previous comments. The psपो does not appear to be being enforced in the centre of town. I can understand that it may be harder to enforce closer to the boundaries but the town centre should take priority
They need to be in town every day
There is a problem with smoking cannabis with pedestrians and people driving cars

RESPONSE
If the officers are finding that it's the same people time after time that they need to move on, then I think some sort of further help needs to be offered or fine depending on the circumstances. As if not then it will just keep happening.
I am sure they do a great job. In difficult circumstances. I can't say I have ever physically seen one or seen any activity undertaken by them.
I've only seen them hanging around in twos
Wyre Forest PSPOs + Enforcement Active PSPOs • District-wide Dog Control PSPO • Alcohol Control PSPO – Kidderminster town centre • Alcohol Control PSPO – Bewdley town centre • Alcohol Control PSPO – Stourport town centre Enforcement Stats • 2024: 0 PSPO fines • 2025: 0 PSPO fines • Council uses warnings, not penalties • No private enforcement contractors (main reason fines = zero) WHATS THE POINT IN HAVING IF THERES NO ENFORCEMENT
Sort out the scum and drug dealers
Please come down harder on social problems. There needs to be a police presence and there needs to be help for people who are causing the problems
You should police Bewdley more and also look at the irresponsible ways licenced premises sell alcohol to be consumed in PUBLIC outside space, namely [REDACTED].
It's not enforced enough
I dont think they are being enforced
I don't feel it does anything for Kidderminster I, the dunks just drink in front of the sigh regardless.
Is there a means that it can also include drugs? This has become a bigger issue since COVID and is becoming very open.
Too many people still loitering and drinking most days at all manner of times. Never seen anyone of these being challenged or moved.
All very well if we had someone to police them
Good idea if they were to be policed. Which they aren't. Street drinking should be banned across the district completely. Again, needs to be policed robustly though
I'm not affected as I don't go into town. I don't go because of the clientele that get drunk and cause trouble
Stop the electric scooters and motorcycles as well as the drinking please
Penalty offers no deterrent, any crime should be liable for the full cost of detection, processing and management of the criminal/s. Re non-adults, parents/guardians should be equally accountable for those they are responsible for.
In response to your feedback request in the Kidderminster Standard regarding your anti social behaviour measures, my initial thoughts are that you all (whoever all is) must have your heads in the sand! Lets just start with illegal parking. Severn Side South frequently has 30+ extremely noisy motorbikes parked on double yellow lines, blocking the walkway, forcing pedestrians (including children) into the road and oncoming traffic. This is a regular occurrence, not a one-off and is very unpleasant to have to listen to bikers revving their engines to full volume in some kind of ritual. My suspicion is you already know this and simply choose to look the other way. Also, where are the enforcement officers? My guess is they are too scared to do what they are paid to do rather they prefer to ticket unsuspecting car owners as this is easy money and less confrontational. So why bother having enforcement officers if they don't do what they are paid to do? Moving on to dog fowling. I have personally captured CCTV footage of offenders and tracked them down to where they live only to be told by [REDACTED] there was insufficient evidence. What a waste of my time, never to be repeated. The message is call the clean-up team at great expense rather than fine the offender...more tax payer money wasted. I can assure you when [REDACTED] was in charge was not shy of issuing penalty notices to offenders. So again, why have an enforcement team when they are to scared to do their jobs and why ask the public for support when nothing ever comes of it? My favorite subject is the ever-increasing number of licensed premises in Bewdley. 30 drinking establishments in walking distance. For the older generation, Bewdley has become a no-go town on Friday and Saturday nights. No surprise there are drunken yobs falling all over the place when the pubs like [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are open to the early hours. The town smells like a toilet on a weekend, not to mention the noise from [REDACTED] and the trail of sick and broken glass.....well done whoever gives out these licenses. I bet they don't live in the town! Furthermore, where are the police to manage all of this antisocial behaviour. I can tell you they are nowhere to be seen. My own experience dealing with the police when a wheelie bin was thrown over my 8ft wall onto my

RESPONSE
car (causing thousands of pounds of damage) was a waste of time. Despite sharing CCTV in the hope they would track down the offenders PC [REDACTED] and his/her merry mob did nothing....it was too much trouble to get off their butts and do some real police work. They would rather push paper around a desk and complain how under paid they are. I just hope one day they ask for my help... I sense you know all of this. I don't expect anything to change, just the usual claims of not enough funding to increase resources etc.... [REDACTED]
I think drinking in children's play areas needs to be banned completely
Just make people adhere to the rules
Some people need support in restricting their alcohol limits and the public shouldn't have to be affected by anti sociable behaviours.
Council reps come across as jobs worths and are not friendly
Have a thought for the people who have to clear up after the mess that is left from street drinkers. The areas along the river bank should be nice areas for visitors and families. Instead they are just extensions to the pubs along there. You cant even walk along the path in some areas of Bewdley but in the road with traffic?
It should be enforced
This is the start of a Police state & the withdraw of people's freedoms
More enforcement needed, by Police, etc. see drinking in Kidderminster and the Police, etc only go and ever talk to them. Never take their drinks away, arrest them or move them on. They should not be allowed to sit outside the shops for hours. When seen told to move out of town centre. If still there arrest them.

Q10: Please select which of the following group best describes you...(one only)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Member of the public	95.35%	123
Ward Councillor	0.78%	1
Parish councillor	0%	0
Community group	0.78%	1
Business owner	1.55%	2
Representative/employee in alcohol licensed trade	0%	0
Other Family of business owner and member of public I work in retail	1.55%	2
TOTAL		129

Q11: Where do you live?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I live in Bewdley	20.16%	26
I live in Kidderminster	50.39%	65
I live in Stourport-on-Severn	20.93%	27
I live in Wyre Forest but not within Bewdley, Kidderminster or Stourport	8.53%	11
I live outside Wyre Forest district	0%	0
TOTAL		129

Appendix Three: Formal responses from Bewdley Town Council and West Mercia Police

Sent by Email 29/07/26

Consultation Response – Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)

Bewdley Town Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to Wyre Forest District Council's consultation regarding the review of the Public Space Protection Orders relating to Town Centre Street Drinking and Dog Control.

The consultation was considered by the Town Council's Finance and Facilities Committee at its meeting held on **27 July 2026** under minute reference **F-607**. Following discussion, Members were satisfied that the existing Public Space Protection Orders are operating effectively within Bewdley and continue to provide appropriate powers to address anti-social behaviour and irresponsible dog ownership where necessary.

The Committee noted that:

- the current Town Centre Street Drinking PSPO provides an appropriate balance between protecting the public from alcohol-related anti-social behaviour whilst not restricting responsible social activity;
- the existing Dog Control PSPO continues to promote responsible dog ownership and supports the cleanliness, safety and enjoyment of the district's public spaces;
- no concerns or suggested amendments were raised by Members in relation to the operation of either Order within Bewdley.

Accordingly, Bewdley Town Council supports the continuation of the existing Public Space Protection Orders in their current form and has no additional comments or proposed amendments to submit as part of this consultation.

The Town Council thanks Wyre Forest District Council for providing the opportunity to comment and looks forward to continuing to work in partnership to promote safe, welcoming and well-managed public spaces across the district.

Kind regards



Sent by email 13/07/26

Consultation Response - Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)

For Kidderminster we would strongly support having BID staff as nominated persons to enforce the PSPO in terms of alcohol seizures and reporting breaches. The BID is the most present in the town centre and are keen to help with this to make the town a better place, this in turn would help take some of the pressure off civil enforcement officers. The current Bewdley PSPO conditions are appropriate as they are from a police perspective.

Thanks,

Wyre Forest Safer Neighbourhood Team Inspector
West Mercia Police

Appendix Four: List of Consultees contacted directly to participate in the PSPO consultations

Type / Organisation	Role
Community Housing	Chief Executive
West Mercia Police	Safer Neighbourhood Teams & Prevention Superintendent for Herefordshire & Worcestershire
	Safer Neighbourhood Teams Chief Inspector for North Worcestershire
	Safer Neighbourhood Teams Inspector for Wyre Forest
West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner	Police and Crime Commissioner
Worcestershire County Council	Chief Executive
	Head of Safer Communities (Public Health)
	Countryside Service
Worcestershire County Council Councillors	Bewdley
	Chaddesley
	Cookley, Wolverley & Wribbenhall
	Kidderminster - St Barnabas
	Kidderminster - St Chad's
	Kidderminster St George's
	Kidderminster - St John's
	Kidderminster - St Peter's
	Stourport - Areley Kings & Riverside
	Stourport - Mitton

Type / Organisation	Role
Worcestershire Regulatory Services	Director
Wyre Forest District Council Councillors	Aggborough and Spennells
	Areley Kings
	Bewdley & Rock
	Blakebrook and Habberley
	Broadwaters
	Foley Park and Hoobrook
	Franch and Habberley North
	Lickhill
	Mitton
	Offmore & Comberton
	Wribbenhall & Arley
	Wyre Forest Rural
Museum	Bewdley Museum
Town & Parish Councils	Bewdley Town Council
	Kidderminster Town Council
	Stourport-on-Severn Town Council
Parish Councils	Broome
	Chaddesley Corbett
	Churchill and Blakedown
	Kidderminster Foreign
	Rock
	Rushock
	Stone
	Upper Arley
Community Housing	Wolverley and Cookley
	Chief Executive
Friends of Parks Groups	Brinton Park
	Springfield Park

Type / Organisation	Role
North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership	Bromsgrove District Council
	Community Safety Cabinet Members from the local authorities
	Hereford and Worcester Fire & Rescue Service
	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
	Redditch Borough Council
	The Probation Service
	West Mercia Police
	Worcestershire County Council
	Worcestershire Regulatory Services
	Wyre Forest District Council
	Victim Support
Other Organisations	Dogs Trust
	Kidderminster Business Improvement District
	RSPCA
	Severn Trent
	The Kennel Club

Appendix Five: Maps

Dog Control PSPO Map of Specified Area (District wide) [Wyre Forest District PSPO - Dog controls | Wyre Forest District Council](#)

Dog Control PSPO Map of Specified Area (QEII Jubilee Gardens) [Wyre Forest District PSPO - Dog controls | Wyre Forest District Council](#)

Dog Control PSPO Map of Specified Area (Kidderminster Cemetery) [Wyre Forest District PSPO - Dog controls | Wyre Forest District Council](#)

Dog Control PSPO Map of Specified Area (Hurcott Pool) [Wyre Forest District PSPO - Dog controls | Wyre Forest District Council](#)

Dog Control PSPO Map of Specified Area (Stackpool) [Wyre Forest District PSPO - Dog controls | Wyre Forest District Council](#)

Alcohol PSPO Map of Specified Area – Bewdley Town Centre [Bewdley Town Centre PSPO - Alcohol consumption | Wyre Forest District Council](#)

Alcohol PSPO Map of Specified Area – Kidderminster [Kidderminster Town Centre PSPO - Alcohol consumption | Wyre Forest District Council](#)

Alcohol PSPO Map of Specified Area – Stourport-on-Severn [Stourport-on-Severn PSPO - Alcohol consumption | Wyre Forest District Council](#)

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

Wednesday 16 September 2026

Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 3 September 2026

Review of Public Space Protection Orders and Level of Fines for breaching a Public Space Protection Order or Community Protection Notice.

The Committee considered a draft of a Cabinet report from the Deputy Chief Executive: Regeneration and Commercial.

The Head of Operations presented the report and outlined the key issues. The Committee fully scrutinised the report and were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

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

- 1.1 A Public Space Protection Order regarding dog controls, within the specified area, outlined in Appendix Five, is extended for a further three-year period.**
- 1.2 A Public Space Protection Order to restrict the consumption of alcohol within the specified area of Bewdley, outlined in Appendix Five is extended for a further three-year period.**
- 1.3 A Public Space Protection Order to restrict the consumption of alcohol within the specified area of Kidderminster, outlined in Appendix Five, is extended for a further three-year period.**
- 1.4 A Public Space Protection Order to restrict the consumption of alcohol within the specified area of Stourport-on-Severn, outlined in Appendix Five, is extended for a further three-year period.**
- 1.5 With effect from the date on which section 4 of the Crime and Policing Act 2026 comes into force, the maximum Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) that may be issued for a breach of a Public Spaces Protection Order or breach of a Community Protection Notice shall increase from £100 to £500.**

Background papers:

See the report on page 68 of the pdf at this link:

https://forms.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/docs/doc61592_20260903_o_and_s_committee_agenda.pdf

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

16 SEPTEMBER 2026

Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Dan Morehead, Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Kate Bailey, Director of Housing and Planning
CONTACT OFFICER:	Jamie Richards, Conservation Officer
APPENDICES:	Appendix One: Draft Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal Appendix Two: Statement of Consultation

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present the Draft Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal with proposed boundary change and agree that it be consulted upon.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is invited to:

- 2.1 To agree for a further period of consultation regarding the proposed boundary change between the 21 September and 18 October 2026

AND

- 2.2 To note current responses and approve all current proposed changes agreed from the initial Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal consultation

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The current Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA) dates from 2001 (other than a partial update in 2015 to reflect changes to national and local policy) and requires updating to reflect the latest guidance from Historic England.

- 3.2 The updated Bewdley CACA has been prepared through a detailed review of the existing appraisal, combined with site surveys and an assessment of changes that have occurred within the Conservation Area since the previous document was produced. This included reviewing buildings, streetscape features, public realm works and recent developments, as well as considering completed projects such as flood defence works and building restoration schemes. The document has also been updated to reflect current national planning policy and guidance, including that produced by Historic England.
- 3.3 The draft appraisal was subject to public consultation between 13 April and 10 May 2026. A total of 25 representations were received from residents, local organisations and statutory consultees. The majority supported the draft appraisal and proposed minor factual or editorial amendments.

A significant number of responses supported extending the Conservation Area boundary to include the entirety of Maypole Piece. Representations identified its contribution to the historic setting of Bewdley, its prominence in key public views, its role as part of the valley-side landscape framing the town, and its historic association with Wribbenhall.

Following assessment against the statutory test set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, officers consider that Maypole Piece makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Bewdley Conservation Area. It is therefore proposed that the boundary be amended to include the full extent of this historic landscape unit. As this constitutes a material change to the draft appraisal, a further period of consultation is required.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 In accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, it is necessary to review the extent of Conservation Areas to ensure that their boundaries accurately reflect areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
- 4.2 The Bewdley Conservation Area is 42.8 hectares in extent and is made up of a wide variety of buildings dating from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Historic streetscape and vernacular architecture in Bewdley represents some of the most significant within Wyre Forest.
- 4.3 The area has suffered from flooding historically and has undergone a significant programme of works to defend against this. Moreover, there has been restoration work to buildings within the area which is not reflected in the current appraisal.
- 4.4 It is proposed that a four-week consultation be held between 21 September and 18 October 2026 specifically on the proposed boundary change. The following measures will be taken to publicise the consultation:

- Displaying information on the District Council's website
- Press release
- Targeted consultation with Bewdley Town Council and Bewdley Civic Society
- Providing electronic or hard copies of the consultation document in the WFDC offices.

- 4.5 The proposed amendment seeks to extend the Conservation Area boundary to include the remainder of Maypole Piece and its associated slopes and ridgeline, which together form a single coherent historic landscape unit.

The proposal has been assessed against the statutory test set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires designation to be based on special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The assessment concludes that Maypole Piece makes a direct contribution to the significance of the Bewdley Conservation Area.

This contribution arises from the following factors:

- it forms part of a long-established historic valley-side landscape associated with the development and setting of Bewdley and Wribbenhall;
- it plays an important role in defining the steep-sided topography that frames the historic town;
- it is a prominent feature in key public views from within the Conservation Area and in approaches from the east;
- it reinforces the historic relationship between Bewdley and its surrounding rural landscape; and
- it forms a continuous landscape with land already included within the Conservation Area, with the current boundary dividing a single coherent landform.

Whilst other areas of open space within and around Bewdley were considered during the review, these were not found to demonstrate the same combination of historic significance, contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area, prominence in key views, and continuity with land already designated.

The proposed amendment is therefore site-specific and based on demonstrable historic and townscape significance. It should not be interpreted as a precedent for the inclusion of open space more generally.

- 4.6 As the proposed amendment represents a material change to the draft Conservation Area boundary, a further four-week period of public consultation is recommended prior to adoption of the Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

Consultation will be undertaken between 13 July and 16 August 2026 and will focus on the proposed boundary amendment to Maypole Piece.

- 4.7 Following the consultation the report will come back to Cabinet in December 2026 and then adopted.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The costs of reviewing the Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal are minimal and mostly relate to staff time. These will be met by existing budgets.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATION

- 6.1 The document has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Equality – an Equality Impact Screening Assessment has been undertaken and concluded that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.
- 7.2. Health – it is considered that the management recommendations included in the Character Appraisal will, if enacted, have a positive impact on the well-being of the local population
- 7.3 Climate Change – n/a

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The existing Character Appraisal needs updating to reflect the latest guidance and changes to policy. Also, the current document does not contain any management recommendations or assess the significance of the Conservation Area.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The draft Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal was subject to public consultation in April and May 2026. A number of responses supported the proposed document, including a significant representation requesting extension of the Conservation Area boundary to include the entirety of Maypole Piece. Officers have reviewed this request against the statutory test for designation and consider that the proposed boundary amendment is justified. A further period of consultation is therefore required prior to adoption.
- 9.2 Members are requested to agree to a 4-week consultation on the draft document and boundary change between 21 September and 18 October 2026.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 CLT
- 10.2 Planning Manager
- 10.3 Members of the Public, Bewdley Town Council and Bewdley Civic Society.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 N/A

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This appraisal concerns the Bewdley Conservation Area, located in the town of Bewdley, Worcestershire. The Conservation Area was first designated in 1968 and subsequently reviewed in 1976. It extends across approximately 42.8 hectares (105.7 acres) and includes the town centre, adjoining residential streets, sections of the River Severn and its riverfront landscapes, as well as part of the historic settlement of Wribbenhall. The built character largely reflects development from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, although the origins of settlement in the area are earlier.

Comments within this appraisal cover both Enhancement Sites and Neutral Sites, which provide a snapshot of conditions at the time of writing, while other observations on the overall character of the Area are intended to remain more enduring.

A map at the end of this document illustrates the Conservation Area boundary along with key features referenced in the text.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The legal definition of a Conservation Area is set out in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as:

“an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”

Under this legislation, local planning authorities have a duty to designate areas which meet this definition and to ensure that their special character is protected through the planning process.

Section 72 of the Act places a further statutory duty on local planning authorities, requiring that in the exercise of planning functions within a Conservation Area:

“special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”

This duty is central to the planning system's approach to the historic environment. It requires decision-makers to give careful consideration to the impact of development proposals on the character and appearance of a Conservation Area and to ensure that these qualities are preserved or enhanced wherever possible.

The meaning of “preserve” in this context has been clarified through case law. The courts have established that preservation does not necessarily require improvement; development which leaves the character or appearance of a Conservation Area unharmed can be considered to preserve it. At the same time, the courts have made clear that greater care and stricter control over development is expected within conservation areas than elsewhere.

More recent judgments have reinforced the importance of the statutory duty. In particular, the courts have confirmed that decision-makers must give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area when determining planning applications.

National planning policy supports this legislative framework. The National Planning Policy Framework recognises the historic environment as an irreplaceable resource and requires that heritage assets, including Conservation Areas, are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets when considering development proposals that may affect them.

The National Planning Policy Framework also emphasises that the significance of heritage assets can be harmed or lost through inappropriate development within their setting or

through alterations that fail to respect their historic character. As such, proposals affecting Conservation Areas should demonstrate a clear understanding of their significance and respond positively to the qualities that justify their designation.

Historic England provides further guidance on the designation, appraisal and management of Conservation Areas. This guidance encourages local planning authorities to prepare detailed appraisals in order to identify the features which contribute positively to the special interest of each area. By clearly defining these characteristics, conservation area appraisals provide an important framework for managing change and ensuring that future development respects the historic environment.

This appraisal therefore seeks to identify and describe the key elements which contribute to the special architectural and historic interest of the Bewdley Conservation Area. In doing so, it provides a clear basis for the careful management of change within the area and will inform future planning decisions, conservation policies, and potential measures such as boundary reviews, Article 4 Directions, design guidance, and enforcement action where appropriate.

3.0 MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Bewdley Conservation Area possesses considerable architectural and historic significance, reflecting the town's development as an important crossing point of the River Severn and a prosperous centre of trade from the medieval period through the Georgian period. The quality and coherence of the townscape, together with the close relationship between the built form, the river, and the surrounding landscape, give the area a distinctive and recognisable character. The continued preservation and enhancement of these qualities should therefore remain the principal objective of future management.

The majority of buildings within the Conservation Area remain in good or fair condition and continue to contribute positively to its historic character. However, there remain opportunities to enhance the area where modern alterations, intrusive materials, or unsympathetic developments have eroded the historic qualities of the townscape. Addressing these issues gradually through careful management and sensitive redevelopment will help reinforce the architectural integrity of the Conservation Area and ensure that its special interest is maintained.

One of the more common issues affecting the character of the Conservation Area is the incremental alteration of historic buildings through the introduction of modern materials and features that are not in keeping with their original design. Alterations such as the installation of uPVC windows and doors, inappropriate rooflights, cement-based pointing, and the painting or rendering of previously exposed brickwork can diminish the authenticity and visual coherence of the historic environment. External fixtures such as satellite dishes, modern signage, and other fittings attached directly to historic masonry can also detract from the architectural character of buildings and, in some cases, cause physical damage to the historic fabric. Where opportunities arise, efforts should be made to reverse such alterations and encourage the reinstatement of traditional materials and detailing that reflect the established character of the area.

Commercial frontages within the town centre also present opportunities for enhancement. In some cases, modern shopfronts, fascias, and display windows have been introduced which fail to respect the historic proportions and detailing of the buildings to which they are attached. Over time, the gradual replacement of these features with more sympathetic designs would help to restore the architectural rhythm and visual harmony of the street. Improvements may include the use of traditional materials, appropriate fascia proportions, and detailing that reflects the historic character of the host building and the wider streetscape.

There are also a small number of sites within the Conservation Area that make a neutral or limited contribution to its character. These include certain twentieth-century buildings and utilitarian structures which, while not significantly harmful to the area, do not reflect the historic architectural qualities that define much of Bewdley's built environment. Should

opportunities for redevelopment arise, these locations offer potential for enhancement. Any new development should respond positively to the surrounding historic context through the careful use of appropriate scale, materials, and design.

The public realm plays an important role in shaping the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Elements such as modern street furniture, signage, and extensive areas of standard tarmac surfacing can detract from the historic setting. Opportunities should therefore be explored to improve the quality and appearance of the public realm over time. This may include the introduction of more sympathetic paving materials, improved lighting columns designed with regard to the historic environment, and the rationalisation of unnecessary signage and street clutter. Any such improvements should be carefully designed to complement the historic character of the town.

The landscape setting of Bewdley is one of its defining characteristics. The relationship between the historic town and the River Severn, together with views towards the surrounding countryside and wooded hillsides, contributes significantly to the character of the Conservation Area. The preservation of these views and the protection of open spaces along the river corridor are therefore important considerations in the management of the area. Mature trees and historic planting also make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the town and should be retained and managed appropriately.

Landscape management may also present opportunities to reinforce the historic character of the area. In certain locations, the reintroduction of traditional planting associated with the riverside environment may help to strengthen the historic setting. Equally, care should be taken to ensure that new planting does not obscure important views or alter the historic spatial relationships between buildings and open spaces.

The Conservation Area contains a wide range of historic buildings and spaces that continue to serve the needs of the local community. Ensuring that these places remain accessible, adaptable and sustainable is important to their long-term conservation and continued use. The Council recognises that the provision of improved accessibility and the enhancement of environmental performance can, in some circumstances, present challenges when dealing with historic buildings and places. However, accessibility, energy efficiency and heritage conservation should not be viewed as opposing. Well-designed interventions can often improve inclusivity and environmental performance whilst preserving or enhancing the significance of heritage assets.

In considering proposals affecting buildings and spaces within the Conservation Area, regard should therefore be had to the principle that historic places should be capable of adapting to changing needs whilst retaining those elements that contribute to their special architectural and historic interest.

The Council supports the approach advocated by Historic England, which recognises that improving access to historic buildings and landscapes can help secure their long-term viability. Similarly, measures to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions can contribute to the sustainable use and conservation of historic buildings when carefully designed and appropriately implemented. Applicants, owners and decision-makers should have regard to relevant Historic England guidance, including:

- Easy Access to Historic Buildings.
- Easy Access to Historic Landscapes.
- Historic England Advice Note 18: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency.
- Any subsequent guidance issued by Historic England relating to accessibility, sustainability, climate adaptation and the historic environment.

Proposals should seek to balance accessibility, sustainability and heritage conservation in a manner that preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the significance of any affected heritage assets.

The updated Conservation Area Appraisal will serve as an important tool in managing change within Bewdley. By clearly identifying the elements that contribute positively to the significance of the area, including its historic buildings, street pattern, public spaces, and landscape setting, the appraisal will provide a framework for assessing future development proposals. This will help ensure that alterations, new development, and public realm works respect the established character of the town in terms of scale, materials, and architectural detailing.

Through careful management, sensitive redevelopment, and the gradual removal of unsympathetic alterations, the special architectural and historic character of the Bewdley Conservation Area can be preserved and enhanced. In doing so, the area will continue to reflect the rich history of the town while remaining an attractive and distinctive environment for residents, businesses, and visitors.

4.0 ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER

4.1 Setting and Topography

Several aspects of the setting and topography, both within and adjoining the Conservation Area, contribute significantly to its character:

a) The Conservation Area occupies the historic core of Bewdley, a town that sits within and is partly screened by unspoilt, undulating countryside. The Area covers a substantial portion of the town and, in some places, adjoins open countryside, making the rural setting an integral part of its character. Much of this surrounding landscape was designated in the Worcestershire County Development Plan of the 1950s as an *Area of Great Landscape Value*, and successive Local Plans have continued to recognise its high landscape quality. To the west, north, and south lies the Wyre Forest and its associated landscapes, acknowledged as being of national importance for nature conservation. On the opposite side of the River Severn, the urban fringe is entirely designated as Green Belt. Safeguarding this rural setting is essential to conserving the character of both the town and the Conservation Area, with careful attention given to the interrelationship between the Area and its wider landscape context.



*Rural setting of Bewdley,
looking south from Trimbley Lane*

The River Severn cuts a broad valley through the centre of both the town and the Conservation Area, forming one of its most defining features. Within this stretch the channel varies between about 40 and 55 metres in width. For much of its length, the riverbanks are faced with natural sandstone blocks, historically forming the town's quaysides. The river serves to draw the countryside directly into the heart of the town, particularly where the settlement narrows towards the river to the north and south. With only a single bridge crossing within the town centre and Conservation Area, views up and downstream from the bridge and adjoining quaysides remain open, uninterrupted, and strongly connected to the surrounding landscape.



*Severn Bank House (right) and the Old School buildings (left)
adjoining the south east side of Lax Lane*

Either side of the river lie natural floodplain terraces or shelves. On the south-west bank the terrace extends for roughly 100 metres, and on the north-east side it is slightly wider. These areas were largely developed before the twentieth century to create the historic town centre, while later development tended to occupy higher ground, encouraging the town to grow east–west rather than along the river terraces. As a result, much of the riverside has remained as open meadows, providing immediate and valuable links between the Conservation Area and the wider countryside. From a conservation perspective, it is important to safeguard these areas from further built development, recognising that the zone of character extends beyond the current Conservation Area boundary to include the meadows and riverside footpaths.

The area of interest also encompasses several historic buildings outside the existing boundary. These include properties along the south-east side of Lax Lane, Mill House (formerly Severnside Mill), Springfield Villas and Springfield Place on Riverside North, and No. 21 Stourport Road. The land and buildings at the south-east end of Riverside North form a visually prominent site and play an important role in the immediate setting. Here, late nineteenth-century buildings such as Springfield Villas and Springfield House integrate reasonably well into their surroundings, whereas three late twentieth-century commercial buildings in the same location appear out of keeping and visually intrusive.

Beyond the river terraces the land rises into a series of small hills, significantly higher than the town centre, which provide a strong sense of natural enclosure to the Conservation Area. Key features include:

- **East side of the River:**

- **Maypole Piece:** This largely undeveloped hill is a highly visible feature, especially from the Severn Valley Railway and from the main eastern approach into Bewdley along Kidderminster Road. It is also prominent in views looking north-east from the central bridge, from the northern end of Lax Lane, Severnside South, and Venus Bank. Despite lying well within the modern town boundary, its open, undeveloped character lends a rural quality to the area and helps to separate the eastern edge of the Conservation Area from later development in northern Wribbenhall.

The upper slopes and the land adjoining the northern edge of the Severn Valley Railway Station are characterised by substantial tree and shrub cover, which enhances both the visual and ecological value of the hillside. By contrast, housing development on the lower western slopes, particularly around Maypole Close, integrates poorly with the character of the Conservation Area.

From a conservation perspective it is important to resist any further built development on Maypole Piece and to ensure that existing vegetation is maintained. The area of character interest here extends beyond the current Conservation Area boundary, particularly across the ridgeline and the adjoining slopes to the south-east and north-east.

Clarence Way/Gloucester Way and The Summer House: This partially developed hillside forms a key link to the open countryside to the north-west and is highly visible from multiple viewpoints, including the Severn Valley Steam Railway, the main eastern approach along Kidderminster Road, the central bridge, the River frontages on the south-west bank, and rising ground to the west such as Venus Bank.

The slopes are densely wooded, predominantly with deciduous species, while scattered along the crest are several specimen conifers planted within the grounds of The Summer House, a large, isolated period property that occupies a prominent position on the skyline. Late twentieth-century housing on the eastern side of the slope contrasts with the historic character and integrates poorly with the surrounding landscape.

From a conservation perspective, it is important to maintain the undeveloped nature of the crest and western slopes, as well as the direct visual and physical link to the open countryside to the north-west.



Wooded hilltop associated with the Summer House, from Severnside South, with Beales Corner to the fore

West side of the River:

Venus Bank and Patchetts Hill: This hillside, located to the north-west of the Conservation Area, is partially developed. Development on the lower and middle slopes of Venus Bank generally integrates well with the character of the Area, with many buildings following historic plot patterns and reflecting the scale and style of older properties. By contrast, housing on the upper slopes (particularly off Church View and Woodthorpe Drive) has been less successful in blending with the historic character. Modern houses on Church View appear conspicuous on the skyline when viewed from key vantage points, including the central River bridge.



From a conservation perspective, it is important to preserve the remaining undeveloped land at the south-east end of Church View and off Richmond Road, and to prevent further infill or intensification across the hillside. The area of character interest at this location extends beyond the current Conservation Area boundary to include the undeveloped land at the end of Church View, which contributes significantly to the wider setting and should be retained in its natural state.

Vegetation and Parkland: Mature vegetation is an important element of the Conservation Area's setting and can be seen from a number of vantage points, including the railway station at Wribbenhall, the public car park off Lax Lane, riverside walks, and in views south-east along High Street. These wooded areas link with the historic parkland and gardens of Kateshill House and Winterdyne House, the latter being recognised by the Hereford and Worcester Gardens Preservation Trust as a site of local importance.

The area is characterised by a wide variety of trees, hedgerows, shrubs, and ornamental planting, all of which contribute significantly to its visual interest and landscape character. A further distinctive feature is Red Hill, the narrow road leading to the hamlet of Ribbesford, which for a short section is cut directly into the sandstone bedrock. This cutting is a notable characteristic of the area and adds to its historic and scenic quality.

From a conservation perspective, it is important that this area remains free from further built development, that the existing vegetation is preserved, and that the distinctive character of the roadway is maintained. At this point the area of character interest extends beyond the present Conservation Area boundary, particularly to include Winterdyne House and its associated parkland.

Winbrook: This twisting gully, with a road running along its base, forms the main approach into and out of the western side of the Conservation Area. Its steep slopes and the gradient of

the road create a strong sense of enclosure and movement. Although now within the town boundary, the gully sides retain undeveloped areas both inside and beyond the Conservation Area, which contribute to a distinctly rural character. A narrow, winding footpath runs along the upper northern slope, linking land within the Area to that beyond its boundary.

Retention of these undeveloped areas is important, and they could be considered for designation as Urban Open Space. Several historic buildings and plots of interest also lie just beyond the current boundary in this location, and their preservation is desirable. The area of character interest here therefore extends beyond the Conservation Area, particularly to include the older buildings and open land adjoining the footpath north of Cleobury Road (between the footpath and Cleobury Road) and stretching westwards to the junction with Merricks Lane.

Later expansion of the town: The historic core of Bewdley has expanded over time with suburban development on both sides of the River predominantly along an east–west axis. To the west, this growth largely occurred during the twentieth century, while to the east it took place during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On the eastern side, the area of character interest extends beyond the current boundary to include buildings along both sides of Kidderminster Road, culminating with All Saints Church. Further east, a group of mid-nineteenth-century dwellings located at the south-west end of Habberley Road and along the Kidderminster Road form an important historic gateway corridor into the town.

4.2 Historic Evolution

The Conservation Area encompasses the historic core of Bewdley and its adjoining landscape. While prehistoric and Roman artefacts have been discovered here, the surviving built fabric dates largely from the medieval period onwards.

Bewdley itself is not mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, although Wribbenhall appears under the name “Bailiwick,” recorded as part of the manor of Kidderminster. The earliest surviving reference to Bewdley, then called “Beaulieu,” dates from 1304, when it was associated with a manor on the west bank of the River Severn.

The town’s location has long been shaped by its role as a key crossing point of the Severn, a factor likely central to its origins. A ford probably existed here from an early date, followed by a ferry service first documented in 1336. The first bridge was built in 1447.

During the late 14th and 15th centuries Bewdley expanded, with ferry profits increasing and the number of free tenants rising steadily. The first burgage was recorded in 1367, and in 1376 permission was granted for a market on Wyre Hill. By the mid-15th century, a marketplace had been established in Load Street. Around this time the settlement evolved from a linear village along Wyre Hill and the ford approach into a planned town with a chapel (c.1450) in Load Street, laid-out streets, and gates (now lost). Bewdley’s prestige was enhanced in the 16th century by the presence of Tickenhill, a royal palace built by Henry VII for his son Arthur, where the Court of the Marches often spent summers. A number of timber-framed buildings from this period survive.

The timber bridge of 1447 was rebuilt in 1460, and replaced with a stone bridge in 1483, which remained until the current bridge was constructed in 1798.

By the late medieval and early modern periods, Bewdley had grown into a prosperous inland port, facilitating trade between the Upper Severn Valley, the Black Country, and Bristol. The town also became a focus for nonconformist religious groups, many of whom established chapels tucked away from the main streets in accordance with restrictions of the time. As a market and trading centre, Bewdley supported a wide variety of crafts and industries including cloth, leather, and rope making. The navigable river and nearby Wyre Forest, rich in natural resources, enabled the town to attract trade well beyond what might be expected for a settlement of its size.

By the mid-18th century, Bewdley ranked as one of the country's most important inland ports. Its strategic location made it a centre for the trans-shipment of bar-iron and other goods from Wales and the west, either overland to the growing industries of Birmingham or downstream to Bristol. Prosperity at this time was reflected in an impressive building programme: elegant Georgian houses, remodelled façades, and substantial merchants' residences overlooking the town. Many of these still stand, though often subdivided. While Bewdley's medieval origins remain visible, Pevsner (writing in the mid-20th century) described it as "the most perfect small Georgian town in Worcestershire," underlining the enduring significance of this later architectural legacy.

The town's fortunes declined in the late 18th century with the arrival of canals, particularly the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal (c.1771), which created the rival port of Stourport-on-Severn just a few miles south. Thereafter Bewdley remained a market town but lost its wider trading importance. The arrival of the railway in the mid-19th century, linking Wribbenhall with Kidderminster and Bridgnorth, did little to reverse this. Unlike many towns, Bewdley largely escaped extensive Victorian redevelopment. With reduced commercial activity, it retained much of its historic form into the 19th and early 20th centuries, helping preserve its architectural character.

The town is also notable as the birthplace of Sir Stanley Baldwin, later Earl Baldwin of Bewdley, who served as Prime Minister three times in the early 20th century. His birthplace, 15 Lower Park, still survives, though now divided into flats.

In the later 20th century, the introduction of modern planning controls coincided with substantial suburban growth around both Bewdley and Wribbenhall, much of which failed to integrate with the historic townscape. In 1986 the construction of a southern bypass, including a second crossing of the Severn, eased pressure from through traffic within the historic core, helping to protect the character of the Conservation Area.

4.3 Land Uses

a) Residential – Flats and apartments above shops in Load Street, together with dwellings in all other streets. Many of the larger historic properties have been subdivided into smaller units over time. Notably, a significant proportion of shops are occupied by small independent businesses rather than national chains, which contributes to the town's distinctive local character and interest.



Dwellings in Lax Lane

- b) Leisure, recreation and tourism; including a museum, small hotels, pubs, restaurants and footpaths.
- c) Ecclesiastical buildings in High Street and the centre of Load Street.
- d) Railway station and railway infrastructure dating from the mid-nineteenth century, in Wribbenhall. This is now part of the Severn Valley Steam Railway.

Traditional uses which have now ceased, but for which surviving buildings and structures remain, include:

- a) Riverside quays and warehouses – Examples include Nos. 8–13 Stourport Road and Ricketts Place, which have since been converted into residential flats and dwellings.
- b) Leather tanning in Severnside South (now Telford Court flats).
- c) Rope making in buildings between Westbourne Street and Stephenson Place.
- d) Horn works/workhouse to the rear of No. 64 High Street.
- e) Bakeries and small workshops, including to the rear of properties, for example, to the rear of Nos. 14 & 20, High Street
- f) Court, town jail and foundry, in the current town hall and museum complex, Load Street
- g) Almshouses, which are all still in residential use, for example Burltons almshouses in Park Lane and Cooke's Almshouses in Park Lane.
- h) School buildings in High Street, Lax Lane and Westbourne Street.

It is important that historic buildings and structures, such as those noted above, are retained as they provide tangible reminders of the town's evolution. In some cases, sensitive adaptation to new uses may be appropriate, provided that this is compatible with the character and integrity of the original building or structure.



Former warehouse (now flats) adjoining Stourport Road in Wribbenhall

Outside the Conservation Area but within the wider town, there is a notable absence of large-scale industrial premises, major retail units, or other sizeable modern buildings. This absence contributes significantly to the character of the area, helping Bewdley to retain the scale and atmosphere of a small town despite later expansion. Beyond the town, the surrounding landscape remains predominantly agricultural and wooded, reinforcing the historic relationship between settlement and countryside.

4.4 Colours

The principal colours within the Area include:

- a) Black or dark brown timber framing with white or cream infill panels characteristic of 15th–17th century buildings;
- b) Reddish-plum brickwork with white mortar typical of Georgian and later buildings;
- c) White-painted window and door frames;
- d) White or cream rendered walls and painted brickwork;
- e) Red and yellow-green tones of natural sandstone;
- f) Reddish-brown handmade clay roof tiles;
- g) Occasional grey tones of natural slate roofs;
- h) Grey tarmac surfaces of roads and pavements;
- i) Greens of grass, shrubs, trees, and the undeveloped hillsides;
- j) Greys and browns of deciduous trees during their leafless seasons;
- k) Deep greens of scattered coniferous trees present year-round;
- l) Reflected colours on the surface of the River.

Beyond the Conservation Area, dominant colours are those of the wider landscape: vibrant greens of grass and trees in summer, shifting to gold, grey, and brown tones as deciduous trees change with the seasons.

4.5 Climate

Climate exerts several influences on the character and development of the Area:

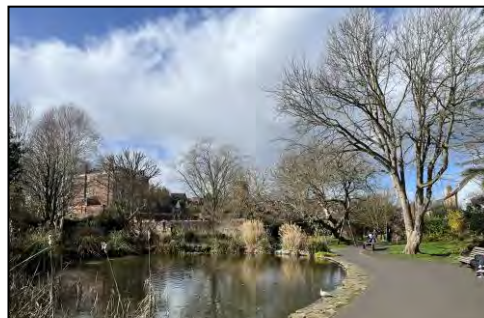
- a) Roofs are typically pitched rather than flat, designed to shed rainwater efficiently. Coping on free-standing walls is often semi-circular to assist drainage and reduce frost damage. Doorways frequently feature pediments or simple pointed canopies, and eaves commonly project slightly, both to deflect rainwater and as a modest decorative device.
- b) There is little evidence of trees being shaped by wind pressure, or of buildings having been deliberately designed with blank elevations to face prevailing winds.
- c) Few buildings appear to have been orientated specifically to maximise sunlight; instead, their alignment follows the established street pattern.
- d) A major and recurring climatic issue for the town is flooding from the River Severn. During winter the river can rise by more than fifteen feet, threatening the lower levels of the town. This may explain why some of the earliest buildings were located on higher ground, such as at Wyre Hill, Winbrook and Welch Gate. However, the convenience of riverside trade meant that many older buildings, including warehouses, were still constructed close to the river's edge.

The problem of annual flooding is now partly addressed through the Bewdley Flood Alleviation Scheme, begun in 2001 and completed in September 2025. The scheme provides a demountable aluminium flood barrier along Severnside North during high-risk periods. While effective, the silver colour of the barrier appears discordant with the Area's traditional palette, and the permanent ground fixtures, bridge fittings and walling on the edge of the Conservation Area are also visually intrusive. Nevertheless, the completed scheme is expected to provide long-term protection for many historic buildings from repeated flood damage.

4.6 Trees

Tree cover within the Area is extensive and makes a significant contribution to its character. Most trees are situated within private gardens or in public gardens and open spaces, while roadside planting is not generally a defining feature.

Some of the most notable concentrations of trees/individual trees include:



*Important trees comprising the woodland
of the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Gardens*

- a) In the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Gardens and the woodland adjoining its southern corner.
- c) In the Lychgate Gardens off Westbourne Street.
- b) Trees between Pleasant Harbour and the eastern end of the central bridge.
- c) Within the majority of domestic gardens, except for those properties located along Load Street.
- d) On the surrounding hillsides and ridgelines—particularly east of Northwood Lane and around The Summer House; to the rear of High Street; around Tickenhill (including its extensive holly boundary hedge); Kateshill and Winterdyne; Maypole Piece; and in private gardens on Venus Bank.
- e) Along Redhill and Kateshill, where the canopy almost completely encloses the roadway, creating a distinctive tunnel-like effect in summer.
- f) Following the watercourses south of Tickenhill. This area has been identified by the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust (and in the District Local Plan) as a Special Wildlife Site.
- g) Copper Beech and London Plane tree next to Dog Lane carpark.
- h) Sweet Chestnut which sits in the land of Kateshill House. This is believed to be one of the oldest of its type in the county.

Smaller clusters of trees and shrubs are often glimpsed from the streets, visible through alleys, archways, and above boundary walls. Whether in small groups or larger stands, their presence is vital in softening the edges of the built form and in enriching the visual character of the Area.

The extensive hillside grounds are largely planted with mature, dense groups of native deciduous species. These provide substantial cover to the slopes, while still allowing important outward views from the houses to remain open. Interspersed within these native plantings are occasional specimen conifers. In winter, these conifers stand out strongly against the bare branches of deciduous trees, adding colour and structure to the views. In summer, the native trees dominate the scene, yet without wholly concealing the conifers.

A number of the most significant trees within the Area are protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

In recent years, there has been a noticeable loss of traditional riverside willow trees along the east bank adjoining the Hillside Court and Severnside Mill housing development. The retention and, where appropriate, replanting of willow trees in this location would be desirable in order to reinforce the historic riverside character of the Conservation Area, enhance biodiversity, and help stabilise the riverbank. Any new planting should be carefully considered in relation to flood defence infrastructure, maintenance requirements, and important views across the River Severn.

By contrast, the area of open embankment in front of Beales Corner remains largely free of trees. This open character should be preserved, as introducing new tree planting here would obscure important views of the Beales Corner buildings when seen from the central bridge and the opposite bank of the River Severn.

4.7 Historic Street Pattern and Movement

Town Plan and Street Pattern

The overall plan of Bewdley is defined by two distinct parts lying on either side of the River Severn and its central bridge, with the historic parish of Bewdley on the north-west bank and Wribbenhall on the south-east bank.

The basic plan of the town centre (on the western bank) is broadly rectangular, its long axis aligned parallel with the river. Within this framework, Severnside South forms the lower riverside route and High Street the higher route above, the two being connected at either end by Load Street to the northwest and Lax Lane to the southeast. Immediately north of this rectangle lies a triangular extension comprising Severnside North, which turns west along Dog Lane to reconnect with the western end of Load Street.

From the north-west and south-west corners of the town's core, a number of roads radiate outward: Dowles Road, Welch Gate, Winbrook, Wyre Hill, Park Lane, and Richmond Road from the north-west, and Lower Park from the south-west, following sinuous routes into the surrounding countryside. To the north-east, the river bridge connects Load Street to a short network of streets and alleys forming Wribbenhall on the opposite bank, which converge towards Kidderminster Road (east) and Stourport Road (south-east).

The Bridge and Early Development

The first bridge across the Severn was constructed in 1447, rebuilt in timber in 1460, and in stone in 1483. The latter collapsed in 1795 and was replaced by the current bridge, designed by Thomas Telford and completed in 1801. Notably, Telford's bridge was aligned with the north-east end of Load Street rather than the slightly more southerly prominence on Severnside South.

It is suggested that the earliest route to the river from the west followed the valley of the Winbrook, with Wyre Hill (formerly High Street) developing as a focus of settlement in the 15th century as the town grew. Wyre Hill and Lax Lane likely formed the principal axes of early habitation prior to the construction of the first bridge. Documentary evidence from 1472 refers to Dog Lane, High Street (now Wyre Hill), Over Street (now High Street), and Lax Lane, along with Bridge Gate, Welch Gate, and Dog Lane Gate (possibly the medieval Welsh Pool Gate). Tinkers Gate or Lax Gate likely also dates from this period.

The formation of the town's street system, therefore, occurred largely in the mid-15th century, linked to Bewdley's rapid development and a shift of focus from the earlier ford and Lax Lane towards the new bridge and riverside quays. Severnside and Load Street likely originated at this time, although they are not recorded in documents until the 1530s.



Central Bridge, designed by Thomas Telford

Medieval and Post-Medieval Development

Medieval Bewdley was enclosed by four gates, Welch Gate, Bridge Gate, Tinkers (or Lax) Gate, and Dog Lane Gate, all substantial timber structures with rooms above. The remains of Dog Lane Gate were uncovered in 1959, though no above-ground remains of any survive today. The curved alignment of Dog Lane may indicate the line of a former town ditch. Richmond Road and Dowles Road are also likely to be of medieval origin.

The route from Bewdley to Ribbesford (now Red Hill) currently passes through land once forming part of the royal park attached to Tickenhill Palace. It is improbable that a public highway would originally have traversed a royal park, suggesting that the medieval route may instead have skirted the park's boundary along the edge of the Severn's floodplain. The street pattern in the post-medieval period represents a natural extension of this medieval framework. Park Lane is first recorded in 1595, though it may be earlier. A market range including the barley market, shambles, and butter cross once stood in the centre of Load Street but was demolished in 1783. Wyre Hill remained the principal western route until 1753, when a turnpike road to Cleobury Mortimer was established along the Winbrook valley. The road south from Bewdley, passing the lodge to Winterdyne, likely postdates the break-up of Tickenhill's medieval park in the late 17th century.

On the east bank, the Kidderminster Road through Wribbenhall probably originated as an old packhorse route between Bewdley and Kidderminster, while the Stourport Road was constructed in 1820.

Historic Footpaths and Routes

Several historic footpaths within the Conservation Area remain important features of its townscape and setting. Some continue to provide access to residential properties, while others link the town with surrounding countryside. These include:

- a) Park Alley, linking High Street with open countryside.
- b) The Racks, running parallel to the north side of Winbrook and Cleobury Road.
- c) The Gob, connecting the lower end of Sandy Bank and Winbrook.
- d) Venus Bank.
- e) The path running parallel to the south-west side of High Street, linking Park Lane with Park Alley.

- f) The path skirting the east and south sides of Tickenhill's current grounds.
- g) The track linking the south-west end of Lower Park with Kateshill and the open countryside beyond.
- h) Three paths leading from High Street, Severnside South and Lax Lane into and out of the Silver Jubilee Gardens.
- i) The riverside walks along Severnside North, Severnside South, and the east bank—linking the town centre with the countryside and incorporating two regional long-distance trails: the Worcestershire Way (west bank) and the Severn Way (east bank). Preserving the character, setting, and views along these routes is particularly important.
- j) Pewterer's Alley in Wribbenhall.
- k) The footpath encircling the northern edge of Winterdyne Park.

With the exception of Load Street, most roads and footpaths within the Area are relatively narrow. Road junctions typically take the form of "T" or "Y" intersections, and there are no roundabouts, either historically or at present. In several locations, the footpaths are slightly raised above the adjoining carriageway, such as at the western end of Wyre Hill, the eastern end of Sandy Bank, along the south side of Welch Gate, and in front of Nos. 72–78 Kidderminster Road.

It is particularly important to preserve the historic street pattern within and adjoining the Conservation Area — including the routes, widths, gradients, junction arrangements and traditional footpath characteristics — all of which form a key part of the Area's special architectural and historic interest.

a) Vehicular Movement

There is a continuous flow of vehicular traffic using the central bridge and, consequently, the streets leading to it. The historic layout of Load Street provides sufficient width to accommodate on-street parking on both sides, while still permitting two-way traffic and a stacking lane for vehicles entering the short-stay car park.

At the upper end of Load Street, the carriageway divides to pass around St Anne's Church. Immediately beyond the church, Load Street meets High Street, Park Lane and Dowles Road in close succession before rising further into Welch Gate. The convergence of these multiple routes creates the point of greatest vehicular congestion within the town centre. This is compounded by the merging of through and local traffic flows towards the bridge and by the proximity of the Dowles Road junction, which serves as the principal access to the main car parks.

On the east side of the river, Kidderminster Road carries the heaviest traffic volumes, with its sharply turning junction with Stourport Road being an occasional congestion point.

b) Pedestrian Movement

Load Street forms the retail and commercial heart of the town, and many local residents access its facilities on foot via High Street, Park Lane, Welch Gate and Kidderminster Road.

Tourist activity is largely concentrated along the riverfront—particularly Severnside North, Severnside South, Beales Corner, the bridge, and Load Street—while Lax Lane, High Street and Welch Gate also attract frequent pedestrian use. The bridge itself, where heavy vehicular flows converge with pedestrian movements from both tourists and residents, can become a point of hazardous conflict.

There are also substantial pedestrian flows between the public car parks (to the rear of Load Street and off Dog Lane) and the town centre and riverside areas.

c) Public Realm Elements

Recent enhancements have included the installation of modern but traditionally styled black-painted metal railings along the riverfronts at Severnside North, Severnside South (part), and Beales Corner. Similarly, traditionally designed metal litter bins have been installed at various locations throughout the Area, including Load Street.

4.8 Night Time Character and Appearance

During the evening and at night, Bewdley retains a lively and attractive atmosphere, enhanced by the interplay of street lighting, the subtle illumination of individual frontages, and the activity generated by numerous small bars and restaurants. This creates a pleasant environment for sightseeing and leisurely evening walks by both residents and visitors, particularly during the summer months.

However, many existing streetlights are of designs and materials that are unsympathetic to the character of the Conservation Area, and most emit a yellow-toned light that produces an artificial glow inconsistent with the historic setting. Wherever street lighting is installed or replaced, it should emit a soft white light that is more sympathetic to the town's period character. Fittings should be of a design appropriate to the historic setting, preferably black-painted metal lamp posts in a traditional nineteenth-century style. In some key locations, the reintroduction of gas-style lighting could be considered, provided modern safety and efficiency standards are met.

a) Town Centre and Riverfront

The town centre and riverside areas experience the highest levels of evening activity. Although Bewdley has no cinema or nightclub to act as a single focal point, the evening economy naturally centres around Load Street, Severnside North, and Severnside South. Together, these areas form a broad focal zone, drawn by the riverside walks and the concentration of public houses, restaurants, and cafés, particularly along Load Street, High Street, and Welch Gate.

Street lighting along Load Street is provided mainly by lamps fixed close to building frontages. These are regularly spaced and produce a modest, even spread of illumination across the pavements. The lighting of individual buildings is generally restrained, with most frontages subtly rather than conspicuously lit. The church tower is gently illuminated, providing a quiet landmark feature.

Along Severnside North and South, traditional-style free-standing lamps contribute to an attractive and distinctive waterfront character, particularly when viewed from the bridge or from Beales Corner. In contrast, the street lighting within Load Street itself is largely modern and unsympathetic in appearance. A number of removable metal poles have also been installed in the pavements to support seasonal flower baskets and Christmas illuminations; while functional, these are not of a design that complements the historic character of the Area.

b) Wribbenhall

Beales Corner is more modestly illuminated than the town centre, with street lamps creating small pools of light that produce attractive reflections on the river when viewed from Severnside South. This softer lighting contributes to the area's charm and reinforces its visual relationship with the river.

However, the adjoining petrol filling station on Kidderminster Road is brashly and intensely illuminated. The brightness of its forecourt lighting overwhelms nearby features and detracts from the otherwise subdued and historic character of the surrounding street scene. Measures to reduce glare and improve visual containment of lighting at this site would significantly enhance the appearance of the area at night.

c) Maypole Piece

Maypole Piece, which remains largely undeveloped and without street lighting, becomes almost completely dark after nightfall. The absence of illumination helps maintain its rural and undeveloped character and contributes to the contrast between the town's lit urban core and its darker, more natural edges.

d) Red Hill

Along Red Hill, free-standing lamp standards are set among mature tree canopies, with the foliage concealing the light fittings and creating regular pools of light along the pavement. In other areas, where the lamps are more exposed and irregularly positioned on either side of

the road, the lighting appears less consistent. Overall, the partially screened lighting along Red Hill complements its verdant, enclosed character and provides an attractive visual effect, particularly in the summer months.

4.9 Views

a) Views into the Area

The surrounding topography of Bewdley, with its undulating hills and wooded slopes, generally limits opportunities for distant views into the Conservation Area. Nevertheless, a number of important vantage points exist — most notably from Trimpley Lane to the south; from the hillsides north of the town, including Northwood and Hill Farm; and from the elevated ground at Blackstone looking northwards.

From these positions, the higher parts of the historic core can be seen, along with the sides of the river valley, the central bridge, and parts of the modern suburbs on the west bank. The wider landscape setting, including the Wyre Forest to the northwest, provides a picturesque and contextually rich backdrop to the town.

b) Views out of the Area

Due to the same topographical enclosure that limits views into the town, long-distance views out of the Conservation Area are also relatively restricted. The most significant outward views are from the central bridge, looking both upstream and downstream along the River Severn. These views take in tree-lined riverbanks and distant wooded hillsides interspersed with open fields and hedgerows, extending several kilometres beyond the Conservation Area boundary. The character and integrity of these distant views are an essential component of the town's historic setting and should be carefully preserved.



Distant views from the central bridge looking south (left) and north (right)

Other views outward are generally limited to the middle distance, constrained by the surrounding hills that frame the town centre. These views typically comprise wooded hillsides, some crowned with substantial period dwellings or more modern residential development—most noticeably on the upper slopes of Venus Bank. The wooded character of both the middle- and long-distance views reinforces Bewdley's identity as a small town set within a predominantly rural landscape. Views to open countryside form an essential part of the Area's character, helping to preserve the impression of a compact settlement nestled within its natural surroundings.

c) Views within the Area:

Almost every street and turning within the town offers a notable view—whether of the riverside, groups of buildings rising along sloping streets, or individual structures of architectural and historic interest. The Severn Valley Railway's steam-hauled trains also

contribute to the town's visual appeal, providing both a distinctive element in outward views and a unique vantage point from which to appreciate Bewdley's riverside setting. The most significant views include the following:

- From the central bridge, there are wide and striking vistas encompassing the building frontages along Severnside North and South, Beale's Corner, and the southern end of Kidderminster Road. Views also extend into Load Street and towards the surrounding hillsides, providing a strong visual connection between the town's historic core, the river, and its wider landscape setting.



*Severnside North (left) and Severnside South (right)
from the central bridge*

- From the quay and river sides on either bank looking directly across the river towards the fronts of buildings and landscape features on the opposite banks, and towards the central bridge.
- From High Street looking north east into and across the Queen Elizabeth II Gardens.
- Within the Queen Elizabeth Gardens looking along the footpaths and outwards towards the backs of surrounding buildings and the tower of St. Anne's Church in Load Street..
- From Bark Hill (off Winbrook) Venus Bank/Church View and the eastern end of the Racks, looking east and south east over the roofscape of the town.

The most significant views within the Area include:

- The vistas along the narrow, enclosed frontages visible from both ends of High Street and



*Redhill and Kateshill,
looking south from the Severn Valley Steam Railway
Station*

ervation Area

Lower Park.

- Along the intimate and tightly enclosed pedestrian route of Parkes Passage, off High Street.
 - From various points within the town towards the Severn Valley Railway and its steam-hauled trains.
 - From the valley south of Tickenhill looking northwards towards the southern edge of the town.
 - From the Severn Valley Railway station and line, looking across adjoining rooftops towards the slopes of Maypole Piece and the hillside crowned by the Summerhouse.
 - From the Severn Valley Railway station and line, looking towards the buildings on the south-west side of the river and the rising green landform of Red Hill, Kateshill and Winterdyne.
-
- From the footpaths surrounding Tickenhill looking southeast across the valley towards Kateshill House, Redhill and Winterdyne and reverse.



*Kateshill House and Redhill,
looking southeast from Tickenhill*

- From the footpaths in the fields to the rear of Lower Park looking towards Tickenhill.
- From the footpath at the rear of High Street looking northeast into and over rear elevations and gardens.
- Looking southeast along High Street and Lower Park and southwest from the Gardeners Meadow car park to the sudden backdrop of undeveloped farmland that comprises the hillside of Red Hill at the northwest end of Winterdyne.

4.10 Pattern and Density of Buildings

The pattern and density of buildings and plots within the Conservation Area strongly reflect their medieval origins, as follows:

- a) The prevailing pattern of development consists of buildings arranged along the length of streets in long, narrow plots set at right angles to the street axis. Many of these may represent surviving burgage plots, the earliest of which were recorded in the fourteenth century.
- b) Plot boundaries are typically defined by walls.
- c) In some cases, adjoining plots have been amalgamated; however, such unification is undesirable in character terms as it erodes the historic pattern.
- d) The principal building on each plot is usually positioned directly on the street frontage and faces the street. These are often accompanied by smaller ancillary buildings or ranges to the rear, historically used for domestic or small-scale industrial purposes. These subservient structures are usually of a reduced scale and extend back at right angles to the street within the narrow plot.
- e) In many cases, buildings are accessed via side alleys or tunnel archways leading through from the street. This traditional pattern remains evident today, particularly when viewed from behind the main frontages.
- f) Where buildings occur, there is a strong impression of high-density development. Buildings are generally of individual design or appear in small terraced groups, though they often adjoin to form longer terraces, creating an almost continuous street frontage.



*Terrace of individually constructed houses
adjoining the Kidderminster Road in Wribbenhall*

- a) Set within the tightly knit pattern of development, and occasionally on its periphery, are larger plots historically associated with wealthier families or individuals holding prominent community positions. The houses occupying these sites are notably larger and of superior architectural quality. Notable examples include The Redthorne on High Street and the Old Vicarage on Lower Park, both of which date from the Georgian period or incorporate Georgian remodelling of earlier buildings.



*Old Vicarage in Lower Park;
a substantial house set in extensive ground*

4.11 Style of Buildings

There are three particularly important styles of buildings within the Area, as follows:

- a) A number of vernacular timber-framed buildings of late medieval to 17th century origin survive within the Area. The larger buildings usually incorporate jetted upper floors, close studding, mid rails and front facing gables. Some include elaborate quatrefoil panels and carved brackets. The smaller and/or less elaborate buildings usually incorporate square framing.



Variations of timber framing in the Conservation Area

- b) The predominant architectural style of buildings surviving within the Area is Georgian, characterised by classically inspired façades, symmetrical proportions, and a sense of polite formality. These buildings vary in quality from modest “courts” and workers’ cottages that adopt simplified classical features, to grander houses and public buildings displaying a richness of architectural detailing and ornamentation. Many Georgian façades conceal earlier timber-framed cores, often revealed through contrasting rear elevations or exposed structural timbers in gable ends. Such features make an important contribution to the Area’s historic character and should be preserved wherever they occur.



Variations of Georgian style with the Conservation Area

- c) To a lesser extent, there are also nineteenth- and early twentieth-century buildings, ranging from modest cottages to larger houses, expressed in a variety of styles. Some of these structures draw upon the vernacular traditions of timber framing, others reflect the polite formality of the Georgian period, while a number incorporate mixed influences, including Gothic revival detailing. There are also examples of late twentieth-century development, though few display a genuine understanding of, or sympathy with, the earlier architectural character of the town.

It is particularly important that any new development within or adjoining the Conservation Area reflects and harmonises with the established vernacular and Georgian styles characteristic of the locality.

4.12 Size and Morphology of Buildings

Buildings within the Area are predominantly of two or three storeys in height. Load Street is almost entirely composed of buildings of three or four storeys; Severnside North, Dog Lane and Westbourne Street are characterised by two-storey development, although Dog Lane includes a number of taller buildings, including three-storey properties and more prominent corner buildings such as Tolley's Corner, which also incorporates dormer accommodation and additional upper-level development. Lax Lane contains a number of one- and one-and-a-half-storey cottages (the latter often incorporating later dormer windows); and Welch Gate is mainly of two and two-and-a-half storeys. There is little tradition of single-storey buildings within the Area, other than small rear ranges or those historically associated with specific industrial or service uses.

With the exception of High Street, most streets are of equal or greater width than the height of their adjoining buildings, creating a sense of space and openness. In contrast, Westbourne Street, High Street and parts of Welch Gate are notably narrower, contributing to a more enclosed character.

Building massing within most streets is varied, reflecting differences in storey numbers, individual floor heights and the natural changes in topography. This results in an irregular but generally harmonious roofscape, with varied eaves and ridge lines adding visual interest. In Welch Gate, however, the massing is more consistent, stepping up rhythmically with the rising gradient into Winbrook.

The foregoing characteristics contribute to an overall sense of harmony and compatibility with the human scale, allowing the pedestrian to feel comfortable within the townscape. Only in parts of High Street and Load Street, particularly in the vicinity of St Anne's Church, does the combination of building massing, height, and alignment begin to overpower the human scale.

Windows and doors are generally arranged with a degree of regularity, creating a strong sense of rhythm that enhances the visual coherence of the street scene and complements the overall alignment of buildings. In Welch Gate and Dog Lane, this rhythm is less apparent, while in Lax Lane, the ground-floor openings form a distinct pattern. In Lower Park and Park Lane, rhythm tends to occur within individual facades rather than extending uniformly along the street.

Georgian buildings of three bays typically exhibit symmetrical facades, while those of two bays are usually symmetrical above the ground floor.

The predominant roof form throughout the Area is with ridges aligned parallel to the street. A number of buildings, particularly in Load Street, have hipped roofs facing the street, while many pre-seventeenth-century structures are arranged with ridges running perpendicular to the road, a characteristic still visible in rear elevations. Timber-framed buildings often feature front-facing gables, reinforcing the vernacular character.

Roof pitches are generally steep or of medium-steep inclination. In Load Street, and among many of the Georgian buildings elsewhere, roofs are partially concealed behind parapets; elsewhere, parapets are largely absent, especially on vernacular or smaller polite buildings. Dormer windows are a common feature throughout the Area, particularly in Lax Lane and High Street, where they are typically gabled to the street with simple clipped verges and plate-mounted construction. In contrast, Dog Lane and Park Lane are notably free of dormers. Modern rooflights, such as Velux types, are occasionally seen, often as later additions rather than original features, and can appear somewhat incongruous within the historic roofscape. Chimneys remain a consistent feature across the Area, typically well-proportioned and of sturdy form, contributing significantly to the overall silhouette.

The varied and historic roofscapes are of particular visual interest, especially when viewed from elevated vantage points such as Venus Bank and Church View, from which the complex interplay of roofs, ridges, chimneys, and materials forms one of the most distinctive and picturesque aspects of the town.

4.13 Materials and Construction

a) Walls:

The predominant material used in the Area's timber-framed buildings is oak, originally left unpainted but now often seen with natural light red-brown tones or cream-washed infill panels. The structural timbers are expressed externally and typically comprise studs, braces, wall plates, mid-rails, end rafters (with or without bargeboards), and the lower ends of principal rafters forming modest projecting eaves. Upper floors are frequently jettied, and in some cases, the exposed timbers are moulded. Corners and changes in plane are often articulated with carved wooden brackets, while smaller brackets commonly support the undersides of projecting window ledges. Traditional wooden pegs are generally used to secure the joints, a detail that contributes to the authenticity and craftsmanship evident in these historic structures.

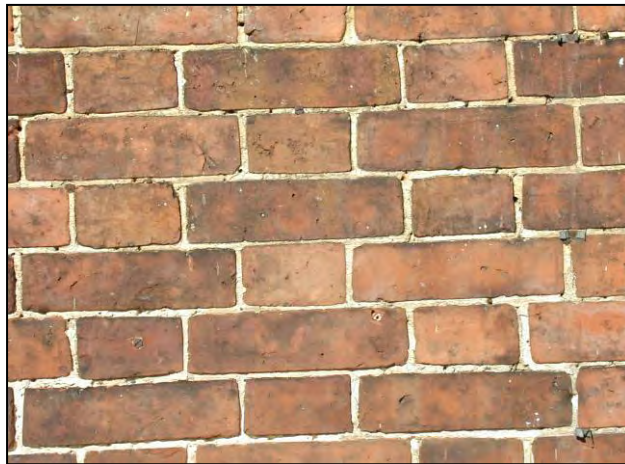


Ornate detailing on timber framed buildings

The predominant walling material for post-seventeenth-century buildings is a locally produced, plum-coloured, well-fired brick. These bricks typically display an open texture, with irregular surfaces and arrises that contribute to the richness and depth of the façades. They are traditionally laid in Flemish bond with narrow joints and finished with white lime putty mortar, usually flush to the face. Older or lower-status buildings often employ more irregular English bond, combining stretcher and header courses. The natural variation and surface irregularity of the bricks create a distinctive visual texture across the townscape.

Buildings of higher status are constructed in a more evenly fired soft red brick, often featuring gauged rubbed brick window heads and arches, and decorative details such as painted corner quoins. Subtle darkening of some bricks caused by uneven firing adds further character and patina to the façades. In several cases, brickwork is complemented by plinths, doorsteps, or other features formed in locally quarried red sandstone.

Painting of brickwork, however, detracts from the quality and character of this material and should generally be avoided. Georgian buildings frequently incorporate sandstone or rendered quoins for visual emphasis, while there is no local tradition of decorative brick banding in contrasting colours. The use of deep brown or heavily uniform modern bricks, such as those seen at Eastham Court, Severnside South, is particularly inappropriate within this historic context.



Brickwork with a traditional Flemish bond

Free standing brick walls are traditionally capped with semi-circular shaped coping bricks or semi-circular shaped sandstone.



Traditional semi-circular coping to the top of a wall

b) Roofs:

The predominant roofing material within the Area is the small, red-brown plain clay tile, typically darker in tone than the accompanying brickwork. These handmade tiles often display slight natural curvature, creating a subtly uneven surface that adds warmth and texture to the roofscape, qualities that are not replicated by modern, machine-made equivalents. While some buildings have been re-roofed in grey slate, this material is generally less sympathetic to the historic character of the Area. Pantiles are not traditional to Bewdley and should be avoided in future repairs or development. No examples of thatch survive within the Area today.

Buildings dating from the Georgian and Victorian periods predominantly feature simple double-pitched roofs, terminating either in gable ends with flush verges sealed by a mortar fillet or, less commonly, being hipped on all sides. These buildings typically have no front-facing gables or significant eaves overhangs. Where bargeboards occur, they are infrequent but often finely detailed, featuring pierced or cusped ornamentation. In contrast, timber-framed buildings characteristically display bargeboards along their gables, while verged gables are otherwise rare within the Area.

Brick dentilling is the most common form of eaves treatment, though parapets, cornices and modillions are also used. Enclosed soffits are not traditional and should be avoided in any new or replacement work.



Saw tooth dentilling (top left), Hit and miss header dentilling (top right), High quality eaves treatment (bottom)

Lead is the traditional material for flashing, cut to step with and into brick mortar courses, rather than the modern trend of setting into disc-cut grooves in the brickwork.



Lead flashing stepped with the mortar courses

Chimneys are a prominent and characteristic feature throughout the Area. They are typically tall, square or rectangular in plan, and constructed in brick to match the main building fabric. The most common position is ridge-mounted, set at right angles to the ridge in the case of rectangular stacks, although a number are located mid-slope. Chimneys frequently occur at party divisions within terraces or at gable ends, where they are built into the wall thickness rather than applied externally. Most retain modestly detailed cappings, and many still display their original clay pots, which contribute to the historic roofscape.

c) Doors and Windows:

Door and window openings are generally rectangular in form. Windows to timber-framed buildings are typically horizontally proportioned, whereas those to later brick buildings, particularly the more formal Georgian examples, are vertically proportioned. Timber is the universal material for windows and door joinery, left natural or stained on timber-framed buildings and painted (most commonly white) on later structures. Many doors retain ornate period metal fittings, including handles, letter plates, and knockers. Original window glass is still present in a number of cases and should be preserved wherever possible.

Few original doors to timber-framed buildings survive; those that do are usually of unpainted oak, with substantial iron hinges, strapwork, nails, and fixtures. Later doors are frequently panelled, with higher quality Georgian examples displaying six panels and brass fittings. More modest cottages and working buildings often feature simple boarded doors of vertical planks with cast iron furniture.

With the exception of Severnside North, Dog Lane and Park Lane, many of the better post-medieval and particularly Georgian and Victorian buildings include classically inspired doorcases, typically incorporating side columns, pediments (or bracketed canopies), and box or fanlights. Some terraced properties retain tunnel entrances giving access to rear plots, while certain former courts have communal archways from which front doors open. Many entrances are approached by stone steps and accompanied by cast-iron shoe scrapers set into the ground.



A variety of doors/entries in the conservation area, representative of the diverse styles and phases of architecture found in Bewdley.



Metal shoe scraper

Window openings in timber-framed buildings are exclusively flat-headed and incorporate both transoms and mullions. These windows would originally have been fitted with shutters rather than glass, later replaced by side-hung casements with small leaded lights, typically arranged in rectangular or diamond-patterned lattices. In some cases, openings have been extended through the mid-rail, likely representing later and less sympathetic alterations. Occasionally,

windows are set within projecting frames supported on timber brackets, particularly where positioned directly beneath a jettied upper floor.



*Transom and mullion casement windows (left)
and a projecting window with supporting brackets (right)
on timber framed buildings*

For later buildings, the most common form of window head is flat, although segmental (arched) brick heads are almost as frequent, particularly on more modest buildings. This treatment is especially evident in Welch Gate, Lax Lane and Dog Lane. Flat heads to post-seventeenth-century buildings typically incorporate rubbed and gauged brick voussoirs, sometimes with a projecting central keystone, or applied headers painted white. Voussoirs are always individually gauged, contrasting with the unsympathetic modern practice of using ungauged rectangular bricks with a gauged brick at each end supported on a concealed lintel. Applied headers are often ornamented, commonly with rustication.

Among the finer Georgian buildings, there are notable classically inspired variations in window design, including Venetian windows (a central semi-circular-headed window flanked by two flat-headed openings with arched glazing bars to the central light), thermal windows (semi-circular) to upper floors, and near-square windows with semi-circular heads. In general, the top-storey windows of formal post-seventeenth-century buildings are more nearly square in proportion than those on lower floors, which are vertically elongated.

In these later buildings, windows are either recessed within the reveal and framed with a narrow wooden architrave, or set flush with the wall face with a wider architrave—both arrangements occurring with roughly equal frequency. Cills are of projecting stone or timber, commonly painted white, though higher-status Georgian and Victorian examples tend to have stone cills. By contrast, some late twentieth-century buildings feature unpainted concrete cills, which are unsympathetic to the historic character of the Area.

The better-quality Georgian and Victorian buildings generally retain vertically sliding sash windows, with timber glazing bars dividing the openings into vertically proportioned rectangles. Where side-hung casements occur, they often feature horizontal or both horizontal and vertical glazing bars, dividing the aperture into rectangular panes. A small number of modern or adapted older buildings have casement windows without glazing bars, a treatment that is particularly inappropriate in character terms. Horizontally sliding sash windows also occur occasionally, especially to upper storeys.



A selection of Georgian sash windows found within the Area, with gauged headers (top left) gauged headers & keystones (bottom), and in the Venetian style with applied headers (top right)

Dormer windows are a frequent feature throughout the Area. They generally have pitched roofs with gabled, rather than hipped, forms and lead-clad sides. The predominant type is plate-mounted, although a small number are off-plate or purlin-mounted. There is no historic tradition of rooflights within the Area; however, a few examples have been inserted into roofs in Wribbenhall, to the detriment of the buildings' historic character and overall appearance.



Plate mounted dormer windows

d) Shopfronts

The Georgian and mid-Victorian examples, with their multiple glazing bars and finely detailed joinery, are the most sympathetic to the historic character of the Area. Later Victorian and Edwardian shopfronts introduced larger panes of plate glass, reflecting changes in retail display practices. A number of former shops, particularly along Welch Gate have since reverted to residential use but have retained their traditional shopfronts, providing valuable evidence of the Area's commercial past.



A selection of traditional shop fronts found within the Area

e) Watergoods:

Cast iron is the predominant material used for rainwater goods, including gutters, hoppers and downpipes. In Load Street, there are particularly fine and ornate examples, with some hoppers also formed in lead. These traditional materials contribute to the historic character and should be retained or reinstated wherever possible. The use of grey plastic rainwater goods is inappropriate within the Conservation Area.

4.14 Survival of Architectural Features

The Conservation Area has retained a substantial number of original architectural features. This is almost certainly due to the high proportion of listed buildings, where statutory controls have prevented indiscriminate losses. However, many unlisted buildings of interest also survive with original details, although in some cases such features have been altered or lost. Important surviving architectural features include the following:

- a) Pitched roofs, plain clay roof tiles and original chimneys.
- b) Timber sash and side-hung casement windows (often incorporating leaded lights and/or horizontal glazing bars).
- c) Gauged, applied rusticated, and segmental brick window headers.
- d) Traditional timber doors, either panelled or boarded, with original metal fixtures and fittings.
- e) Structural plinths, front door steps, boot scrapers, and other traditional entrance details.
- f) Exposed timber framing to older buildings, including beneath later façades.
- g) Unrendered brickwork.
- h) Traditional plain roofing tiles and natural slates.
- i) Undeveloped rear gardens.
- j) Plot-dividing walls and historic outbuildings.
- k) Traditional shop fronts, particularly in Load Street and the lower end of Welch Gate.
- l) Traditional railings to the fronts of dwellings, especially in High Street.
- m) Small archways and tunnel entrances leading to rear spaces.
- n) The historic pattern and form of highways.
- o) Old metal street signs and cast-iron court number plates on doors.

Notable losses or damage to architectural features include:

- a) Repointing with cement-based (often coloured) mortars instead of lime putty mortar, and the use of inappropriate pointing techniques.
- b) Replacement of traditional cast iron rainwater goods with PVCu alternatives, or other replacement systems that fail to replicate traditional profiles and detailing. Where replacement is necessary, cast iron or heritage cast aluminium systems are generally more appropriate.
- c) Application of modern stains or inappropriate paint colours to timber joinery.
- d) Replacement of original timber doors with unsuitable modern alternatives.
- e) Painting of historic brickwork.
- f) Replacement of timber framing, particularly to ground floors, with modern brickwork.
- g) Installation of inappropriate shop canopies and unsympathetic frontage treatments.
- h) Use of inappropriate street furniture, highway surfacing, lighting columns and highway signage.

Although these unsympathetic alterations have not yet caused widespread harm to the architectural and historic interest of the Area, it is important that remedial and preventative measures continue to be taken where necessary to preserve its special character.

4.15 Wyre Hill

Wyre Hill is almost a hamlet in its own right and is perhaps the oldest part of the town. It has an overwhelmingly vernacular character, defined by humble cottages of timber-framed construction, some of late medieval origin, and later brick-built cottages. The area is approached from the town centre via Welch Gate and Sandy Bank, the latter rising steeply across the contours for about half a kilometre, bordered on the south side by important

undeveloped wooded banks. Wyre Hill begins just before the hillside crests onto a plateau high above the town.

The road is narrow and winding, lacking pavements in its lower reaches. A few houses sit tight against the road on the Winbrook valley side, while opposite lies a steep, wooded bank. As the upper settlement begins, pavements reappear, rising to levels high above the road. In these sections, road and pavements are separated horizontally by grassed banks, creating generous space between building frontages and the carriageway. This open character gives Wyre Hill a comfortable, human scale and distinctive spatial quality. Gaps between short terraces of cottages allow gardens to reach the pavement edge and contribute to the street's charm; these open breaks are important to preserve free from infill development.

The historic settlement forms a linear ribbon approximately 300 metres in length. The Conservation Area boundary coincides with the extent of the historic core, beyond which the settlement continues with incongruous modern residential development on three sides. Buildings are uniformly two storeys in height and date predominantly from the 18th and 19th centuries. They are positioned at the back of the pavement and orientated towards the street. The presence of earlier timber-framed cottages amongst later brick structures indicates the early foundation of the settlement. Window and door openings generally have a vertical emphasis, though the rhythm along the street is irregular due to the steep contours. This creates a picturesque stepping effect in eaves and ridgelines, exposing gable profiles and enhancing the area's visual interest.

The principal walling material is a dark reddish-orange brick, though some cottages have been painted white, an unsympathetic later alteration. Roofs are mostly of reddish-brown plain clay tiles, with a few in natural grey slate. Brick dentil detailing is common at the eaves, and ridge-mounted chimneys typically crown the gabled ends. Window and door openings are more often cambered than flat-headed, with white-painted timber frames set flush with the wall face. Architectural features generally survive well, though the introduction of uPVC rainwater goods represents a noticeable intrusion.

Wyre Hill demonstrates a similar pattern of historic growth to the town centre, evolving from medieval to Georgian and Victorian periods. It shares a close relationship with Welch Gate, particularly in the way the road and pavements have been formed in response to the steep topography.

4.16 Landmarks, Focal Points and Special Features

There are numerous landmarks, focal points and special features within and adjoining the Conservation Area that are of particular importance in conservation terms. These features contribute significantly to Bewdley's visual identity, legibility, and sense of place.

a) Landmarks

Landmarks are buildings, structures or natural features whose size, design, or position makes them particularly prominent or distinctive within the townscape. They act as visual reference points and play a key role in defining the character and spatial experience of the area. Special care is therefore required in their management and any proposals affecting their setting. The River Severn itself, together with the surrounding elevated ground, form the most significant natural landmarks within and adjoining the Conservation Area. In addition to these, a number of man-made landmarks contribute to Bewdley's distinctive character, including:

- The full lengths of the Severnside frontages, the central bridge, quaysides, and buildings at Beale's Corner, all of which have collective value as landmarks.
- St. Anne's Church in Load Street.
- Hill top buildings and their settings, including Tickenhill, Kateshill House, The Summer House and Winterdyne (outside Area).

Particularly important buildings in larger groups, including as follows:

- Load Street: Town Hall, Nos. 14, 15 (Former HSBC) & 17, George Hotel, 70 & 71.

- High Street: No. 11 (Redthorne) & 62 (Manor House).
- Lower Park: No. 1 (The Rectory) & 15 (Lower Park House).
- Severn Valley Steam Railway viaduct over Kidderminster Road and Black Boy Hotel.



Viaduct over the Kidderminster Road

- All Saints Church (Wribbenhall) outside the Area but comprising an important gateway feature.

b) Focal Points:

Focal points are buildings, structures or areas, that are important because of their position in view lines; or because they are the centre of well frequented public activity. Special care is needed in the treatment of focal points because they are particularly noticeable to the public.

It is difficult to isolate individual sites or buildings within an area so rich in interest and appeal but they include the following:

Landmarks are buildings, structures, or natural features that, by virtue of their size, design, or position, are particularly prominent within the townscape. They serve as visual reference points and contribute to the distinct identity and legibility of the Conservation Area. The River Severn itself, together with the surrounding elevated ground, forms the principal natural landmark. Several man-made landmarks are also of considerable importance, including:

- **The full lengths of Load Street and the Severnside frontages**, the **bridge**, and **Beale's Corner** – collectively forming the town's most prominent visual ensemble and acting as a principal focal point within views both along and across the river.
- **Queen Elizabeth II Gardens** and the adjoining **public car parks behind Load Street and Lax Lane**, which provide open breaks within the dense urban grain and afford important public views of the townscape.
- **Individual landmark buildings**, including:
 - o **St Anne's Church** and **No. 15 (Former HSBC)**, Load Street – a dominant architectural pairing at the heart of the town.

- o **Town Hall and Museum**, Load Street – a civic focal point of strong historical and architectural presence.
- o **Nos. 42 and 62 (Manor House), High Street** – fine examples of substantial Georgian houses.
- o **Nos. 7 and 8, Lower Park** – notable for their scale and historic character within the riverside setting.
- o **The Railway Viaduct** over Kidderminster Road – an impressive engineering structure of historic and visual significance.
- o **Nos. 34 and 35, Kidderminster Road** – prominent Wribbenhall buildings forming a distinctive entrance to the town from the east.



*Load Street seen from the central bridge,
with the landmarks and focal points
of HSBC (left of centre)
and St. Anne's Church (centre)*

Many other smaller buildings act as focal points where they terminate, line or close view lines, particularly looking along roads, pathways and in the vicinity of highways junctions.

c) Special Features:

The Conservation Area contains 267 statutory list entries, relating to approximately 550 listed buildings and structures, together with several other buildings of local architectural or historic interest, primarily dating from the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries. While some of these later buildings have experienced unsympathetic alterations, such as window replacements or the application of render, none are beyond sympathetic repair or reinstatement, which should always be favoured over redevelopment.

In general, the retention and careful repair of all historic built fabric, particularly that dating from the medieval period through to the early twentieth century, should be regarded as a key conservation priority.

Particularly special features include the following:

- The bridge, together with its associated balustrades, quaysides, and river edgings.
- The range and variety of period architectural detailing and traditional construction techniques representing different historic phases of the town's development.
- The historic street pattern of roads, footpaths, and alleyways, including those providing pedestrian-only access and the narrow roadways flanking St Anne's Church.
- The distinctive town plan, which narrows or "pinches" towards the river, forming a unique spatial relationship with the waterfront.
- The authentic roofscape, characterised by varied pitches, materials, and historic chimney forms.
- Traditional railings to the fore of many properties (for example, at No. 62 High Street).
- Extensive views to surrounding hillsides and open countryside, providing a vital landscape setting.
- Open spaces within and adjoining the Area, and the close proximity of open countryside, notably along the river frontages, and to the south of High Street, Lower Park, Winterdyne, and Tickenhill; as well as across Maypole Piece and along Northwood Lane.
- Numerous trees and hedgerows, including the holly hedge enclosing Tickenhill and the woodland adjoining the south-east corner of the Jubilee Gardens.

Importantly, at least ten medieval buildings survive within the modern town. These include 15th-century timber-framed houses and possibly a market building on Wyre Hill; 15th-century timber-framed houses on Winbrook, Welch Gate, High Street, and Lax Lane; and a 14th-century timber-framed hall with cross-wing on Stourport Road. It is also likely that further medieval structures survive concealed behind later facades.

Notably, four 15th-century framed bays belonging to the medieval palace survive within the 18th-century Tickenhill Manor. In Wribbenhall, a partially reconstructed medieval cross stands on the site of the chapel built in 1719.

In addition, there are numerous buildings dating from the 19th and early 20th centuries that are of architectural and historic interest, contributing to the depth and continuity of Bewdley's built heritage.



No. 14, Lower Park; not listed but of interest

4.17 Open Space

Open spaces are areas with little or no built development. They include public or private gardens, undeveloped hillsides, expanses of water, and street squares. The Conservation Area contains numerous open spaces, both large and small, which reveal themselves through archways, over boundary walls, along rising slopes, and between buildings.

These spaces provide visual breaks and contrast to the geometric form of the built environment. Many contain trees that add further visual interest and opportunities for shade, enclosure, and seating from which various views of the Area can be enjoyed. Open spaces often form an important part of the Conservation Area's setting, particularly where they abut its boundaries or feature prominently within key view lines and vistas.

The principal areas of open space include the following:

- a) Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Gardens, together with the woodland adjoining its south-east corner.
- b) River bank adjoining Severnside South (north-west end), the central bridge area and Gardeners Meadow car park, the first and last of which extend beyond the current Conservation Area boundary.
- c) Cricket pitch and adjoining riverside meadows to the south-east of Gardeners Meadow car park, extending beyond the existing boundary.
- d) Red Hill and Winterdyne parkland to the south-east, within and extending beyond the Conservation Area.
- e) Kates Hill and parkland, within and extending beyond the Conservation Area.
- f) Tickenhill, including land to the south-west, south and south-east, within and extending beyond the Conservation Area.
- g) Hillsides adjoining Winbrook and Cleobury Road, within and extending beyond the Conservation Area.
- h) Land adjoining Gibraltar House (Dowles Road).
- i) Riverside meadows extending north-west from Severnside North (north-west bank of the river), beyond the existing boundary.
- j) Boundary along the western side of Dog Lane car park.
- k) Riverside meadows and bowling green off Riverside North (north-east bank of the river), extending beyond the Conservation Area boundary.
- l) Hillside and summit in the vicinity of the Summer House and Gloucester Way, Wribbenhall.
- m) Lychgate Gardens, off Westbourne Street and Stourport Road, Wribbenhall.
- n) Maypole Piece, Wribbenhall, including the hill, hillside, and the undeveloped gap between All Saints Church.
- o) River bank at Beales Corner, and the stretch from Millside Court through to Bewdley High School on the north-east side of the River, both within and extending beyond the existing Conservation Area boundary.
- p) Wooded area adjoining the north-east side of the central bridge land arches at Beales Corner.
- q) Numerous private gardens and undeveloped plots (not all identified on the map), including the extensive garden surrounding the Rectory in Lower Park.

It is particularly important that these spaces are retained free from built development or intrusive structures, as they contribute significantly to the Area's character, setting, and sense of openness.

It would be desirable to investigate opportunities for public access and the creation of a viewing point at the top of Maypole Piece, from which the town, river, and surrounding landscape could be appreciated.

4.18 Ground Surfaces

There are four principal types of surface treatment across the Area, each having a distinct impact on its visual quality and historic character:

- a) Modern tarmac is by far the most common surfacing material for both roads and pavements. While practical, it is historically and visually inappropriate within the Conservation Area. Its uniform appearance, ranging from weak to medium grey depending on whether it is dry or wet, offers little visual texture or relief, and detracts from the historic character of adjoining buildings and spaces.
- b) A short stretch of old moulded blue clay setts laid in a criss-cross pattern survives along the eastern end of The Racks (parallel to Winbrook). Limited areas of historic cut stone setts or cobbles also remain in front of both the Town Hall and Kemp Hospice Shop (Load Street), and within the wagon entrance to No. 21 Load Street. Additional historic blue setts survive at the footway crossing at the former Angel Public House (now Tesco), although this surface has been subject to repeated and poor-quality relaying in recent years and is now in a deteriorating and potentially hazardous condition. Small patches of uncut pebbles or cobbles survive in parts of High Street and before Nos. 1–9 Kidderminster Road (off the vehicular highway).
- c) Traditional-style paving materials, such as square grey concrete slabs, have been introduced throughout Load Street. However, their regularity of size and uniform texture lacks the subtle irregularities that give genuine historic paving its character. In Severnside North, semi-traditional road setts (Marshall Tegula) and riven stone paving slabs were installed by the County Council during the 1990s. These Tegula units generally provide a more appropriate appearance and greater durability than large-format square slabs, which are now largely obsolete and prone to creating uneven surfaces and trip hazards where replacement units differ in size or texture. It is therefore considered desirable that future reinstatement works, particularly following utility excavations, should prioritise the use of matching Tegula or equivalent materials to ensure consistency and long-term visual quality. Occasional kerbs are defined in traditional stone, though most are formed from modern pre-cast concrete, which is visually intrusive. In parts of High Street, the erosion of modern tarmac has revealed older stone-edged gutters, providing a glimpse of the street's earlier construction and surface treatments.



*Uncut pebbles or cobbles (left)
and cut stone setts or cobbles (right)*

- d) A recurring issue across the Conservation Area is the reinstatement of paving following utility works. In many cases, temporary tarmac reinstatement is used on the understanding

that original surfacing will be replaced, however this is frequently not achieved, resulting in a cumulative loss of historic or higher-quality paving and a progressive erosion of visual coherence within the streetscape.

e) Some properties incorporate traditional style metal railings to their fore, whilst in other cases traditional style railings enclose or delineate other spaces and features.

f) Grass is present both in small private gardens and in larger communal open spaces throughout the Area. In smaller patches, it contributes texture, colour, and visual relief, softening the hard edges of buildings and paving. In larger expanses, grass plays a more significant role by tempering the dominance of built and hard-surfaced elements within the townscape. It achieves this in two key ways: firstly, through the natural irregularity of growth and mowing, which introduces a sense of softness and informality; and secondly, by following the land's natural contours and varied shapes, helping to contrast with surrounding buildings and streets while reinforcing a comfortable human scale and spatial balance within the landscape.

g) Water is present most prominently in the broad expanse of the River Severn, which forms a defining feature of the town's setting, and in the ornamental pool within the Jubilee Gardens. Together, these elements add significant visual interest and variety to the Area, their changing colours, surface movement, and reflections enhancing both atmosphere and aesthetic appeal. Water also acts as a natural focal point, drawing the eye and reinforcing the Area's relationship with its landscape context.

Any proposed development situated where it may be reflected in the river or other water surfaces should be carefully considered, with conscious attention to how its mirrored image might either enhance or detract from the overall townscape character.



Traditional style railings in Westbourne Street (top left), adjoining the River (top right) and to the fore of a house in High Street (bottom).

4.19 Tranquil and Active Areas

The Conservation Area contains both tranquil and active areas, each contributing in different ways to its overall character and sense of place.

Tranquillity refers to the peace of a place where the sights, sounds, and smells of human or mechanical activity are minimal or absent. Such areas are increasingly rare within town centres and are particularly valuable for providing contrast and respite from busier spaces. It is therefore important to retain their quiet, reflective character.

Tranquil areas include:

a) The Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Gardens and the network of backland plots behind Load Street, Severnside South, Lax Lane, High Street, and Lower Park.

b) The network of backland plots, footpaths, and open land to the south-west of High Street and Lower Park, and to the south of Tickenhill, including:

- Park Alley and the footpaths leading up from there to Tickenhill and open countryside.
- The footpath on the south-eastern slopes of Tickenhill.
- The footpath leading west from the bottom of Red Hill.

c) Lychgate Gardens in Wribbenhall.

d) Parts of the footpath running parallel to the north side of Winbrook and Cleobury Road.

In these areas it is possible to become detached very quickly from the noise, movement, and general activity of the town centre, and to appreciate the more natural and reflective qualities of the Area.

Active areas are those characterised by a high level of movement and interaction, or where focal points attract people for social, commercial, or recreational purposes.

The most active areas include:

a) The main roads and pavements where there is frequent vehicular and pedestrian movement, including Kidderminster Road, the River Bridge, Load Street, Severnside South, Welch Gate, Winbrook, and the car parks off Dog Lane. In these locations, traffic noise and emissions are noticeable environmental detractors. In Welch Gate, Winbrook, High Street, and on either side of St Anne's Church in Load Street, the narrow pavements can cause conflict between vehicles and pedestrians. While the restricted carriageway widths contribute positively to the historic character, they present modern challenges for accessibility and pedestrian safety.

Dog Lane, whilst historically quieter in character, has experienced a noticeable increase in activity associated with the introduction of modern retail development, including servicing movements, delivery traffic, and informal parking. These factors have reduced its previously more reflective character and contributed to a more consistently active and functional streetscape.

b) The Silver Jubilee Gardens, which, although accessible only on foot and free of vehicular traffic and ball games, remain highly popular with both residents and visitors. This space therefore combines qualities of both tranquillity and activity, particularly during the tourist season.

4.20 Noise

There are several types and sources of noise within the Conservation Area, some of which detract from its character, while others contribute positively to its distinctive sense of place.

Detracting noises include:

a) Motor vehicle traffic, which is the most significant source of intrusive noise. The impact is greatest along Kidderminster Road, Beale's Corner, the central bridge, Load Street, Welch Gate, Winbrook, and around the Dog Lane car parks. Although traffic noise is an environmental detractor, it is an inevitable consequence of the town's road network and its function as a local centre, where through-traffic cannot be entirely avoided.

b) Late-night music emanating from some of the public houses within the Area. Noise occasionally intrudes into nearby residential areas, particularly in High Street, associated with the Talbot and Little Packhorse public houses.

More acceptable and characteristic sounds contribute positively to the Area's atmosphere and reinforce its historic and natural setting. These include:

- a) Birdsong in the outer parts of the Area, particularly within the Silver Jubilee Gardens, adjoining woodlands, and private rear gardens.
- b) The calls of geese, swans, ducks, and gulls along and over the River Severn.
- c) Human voices from casual conversation on the streets and riverside walks, contributing to a sense of vibrancy and community.
- d) Church bells, which mark the passage of time and maintain a traditional aural link with the town's historic identity.
- e) The whistles and sounds of steam trains arriving and departing from the Severn Valley Steam Railway station in Wribbenhall, which form a distinctive and evocative feature of the local soundscape.

4.21 Smells

Certain odours within the Conservation Area detract from its character and amenity. These include the following:

a) Vehicular fumes, particularly along Kidderminster Road, Beale's Corner, the central bridge, Load Street, Welch Gate, Winbrook, and around the Dog Lane car parks. In these locations, emissions from traffic are a notable environmental detractor, diminishing air quality and the overall experience of the public realm.

b) Cooking odours from restaurants and takeaway premises in Load Street and Welch Gate. Extraction equipment, including external ducting and fans, often installed on rear elevations, can be visually intrusive. Such installations are frequently finished in bright metallic colours that contrast harshly with traditional materials and tones. Where possible, ductwork should be discreetly located and finished in a subdued, recessive colour (such as dark red or black) to reduce visual impact and better integrate with the surrounding built fabric.

c) Intermittent sewage odours within parts of Load Street detract from the character and amenity of the Conservation Area. These odours can adversely affect the experience of residents and visitors and diminish appreciation of the historic environment, particularly during periods when they are most noticeable.

4.22 Alien Features

Alien features are elements that were introduced after the Area's prevailing historic architectural character had been established, and which do not reflect its traditional forms, materials, detailing or methods of construction. The following features are considered to detract from, or sit uncomfortably within, the established character and appearance of the Conservation Area:

- a) Lampposts, pedestrian crossing lights, bus shelters and railings of unsympathetic style and finish.
- b) Excessive or poorly designed traffic signage and street clutter detract from the character and visual coherence of the Conservation Area. This includes oversized or unnecessary signage, such as the yellow parking directional signs at either end of the central bridge, which disrupt key views and the historic setting.
- c) The use of tarmacadam for pavements and road surfacing within sensitive historic locations, together with prominent yellow road markings, erodes the traditional appearance of the streetscape. More recessive surfacing treatments and lighter-toned line markings would better preserve the character and appearance of the Area.

- d) Overhead telephone wires and associated infrastructure interrupt important views and detract from the historic roofscape, notably in Lax Lane and Welch Gate. The presence of a modern metal telegraph pole in Westbourne Street is similarly visually intrusive within the street scene.
- e) Modern telecommunications kiosks and other standardised street furniture that do not reflect local character, such as the telephone box adjoining the Load Street car park, detract from the Area's historic quality.
- f) The installation of satellite dishes on prominent elevations or roof slopes visible from the public realm harms the visual integrity of buildings and the wider townscape.
- g) Unsympathetic modern materials and architectural products diminish architectural authenticity and detailing. These include uPVC windows and doors, standard off-the-shelf replacement doors, concrete window cills and lintels, and proprietary roof lights set flush within historic roof slopes where they are prominently visible from the public realm or adversely affect the character of the roofscape. Well-designed conservation roof lights may be acceptable in appropriate locations, particularly on less visible rear roof slopes, where they are of appropriate scale, flush fitting, and designed to minimise visual impact. Repointing in hard cement mortar rather than breathable lime mortar is also harmful to traditional building fabric and should be avoided.
- h) Inappropriate shopfronts, fascias and display windows that fail to respect historic proportions, materials or detailing, particularly along Load Street, disrupt the architectural rhythm and coherence of the commercial frontage.
- i) Fixtures, signage, lighting and other fittings bolted or screwed directly into historic brickwork or masonry cause lasting damage to building fabric and should be avoided.
- j) The painting of previously unpainted brickwork, or the use of inappropriate colours on timber elements, erodes architectural integrity and can undermine the uniformity and group value of terraces and building clusters.
- k) The two spotlights emanating from the Rowing Club at night are highly visually intrusive, particularly when viewed from higher ground, and detract from the character of the Conservation Area by introducing a prominent and incongruous source of illumination within the historic townscape.

4.23 Enhancement Sites

Areas and features that would benefit from enhancement include the following:

- a) The car park between Load Street and Dog Lane forms a visually open and functional space within the Conservation Area. While it provides important parking provision, it offers a limited contribution to local character.

- b) The south-west facing elevations of the late twentieth-century three-storey town houses at Millside Court (Nos. 1, 2, 20 and 21), which adjoin the east bank of the River Severn, are particularly prominent in views from Severnside South and from the opposite bank. Due to their scale, profile and contemporary detailing, these elevations contrast with the form, materials and colour palette of the surrounding traditional buildings. This visual prominence has been increased by the removal of several willow trees along the adjoining riverbank, reducing natural screening. The loss of vegetation has not only exposed the buildings more fully in long views but has also resulted in areas of topsoil erosion and diminished riverbank planting.



- a) Unsympathetic shop fronts, including the following:
- No. 16 Load Street (formerly HSBC) has benefited from a generally well-executed programme of restoration to the upper floors and wider building fabric, which has significantly enhanced its contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. However, the ground floor shopfront remains unsympathetic in its current form. The proportions and detailing of the windows, the treatment of the brickwork, and the entablature course do not reflect the building's historic architectural language or the prevailing character of Load Street.
 - There remains scope for enhancement at ground floor level, potentially through the reintroduction of a more classically composed frontage. This could include reinstating door openings (which may be expressed architecturally rather than functionally) with appropriately detailed doorcases and pediments, the introduction of glazing bars, the use of rubbed gauged brick headers to window openings, and selective brick replacement or repair to achieve a closer match to the historic fabric. Such measures would complete the building's restoration and further strengthen its presence within the streetscape.



*Unsympathetic alterations to the ground floor
of HSBC in Load Street*

- No. 40 Load Street (Carpet Shop) retains a flat roof introduced during the mid-twentieth century, which contrasts with the traditional pitched and tiled roofscape characteristic of the street. There would be scope, should the opportunity arise, to reinstate a pitched tiled roof more in keeping with the prevailing architectural form.
- At No. 49 Load Street (formerly Jackson's Butcher), the previously prominent blue glazed tiles to the shopfront have now been removed, improving the building's appearance within the streetscape. Continued enhancement of the ground floor frontage, through a more traditionally proportioned and detailed shopfront and appropriately designed signage or blind, would further strengthen its contribution to the character of the Area.
- Nos. 50 and 51 Load Street (formerly Co-op) are currently unoccupied. The existing shopfront treatment remains of a late twentieth-century style that does not fully reflect the traditional proportions and detailing of neighbouring premises. The vacancy presents an opportunity for future reinstatement of a more historically informed shopfront design. In addition, alterations to the first-floor Venetian window at No. 50 have diminished its architectural integrity; reinstating traditionally detailed sash windows and glazing bars would enhance the building's upper façade.
- Nos. 57 and 58 Load Street retain recessed shopfronts of a modern style that sit somewhat at odds with the traditionally front-mounted rhythm of the street. There would be potential, in the longer term, to reinstate front-mounted shopfronts more closely aligned with historic precedents.
- No. 65 Load Street features fascia lettering that is bold in colour, scale and style relative to the surrounding historic context. Replacement with more restrained, traditionally proportioned hand-painted signage would better complement the building and wider streetscape.

- No. 1 Severnside South has a ground floor shopfront and associated alterations that do not fully reflect the building's historic character, including painted brickwork, simplified detailing to the first-floor canted windows and a modern plastic door canopy. Opportunities remain to enhance the frontage through a more traditionally detailed shopfront, reinstatement of appropriate cornices to the canted windows, and removal of the plastic canopy.

In addition to the enhancement of the specific sites and features identified above, the wider character and appearance of the Conservation Area would benefit from a coordinated programme of public realm improvements. This could include the gradual replacement of tarmac surfaces and concrete kerbs with more sympathetic, high-quality materials appropriate to the historic setting; the introduction of street lighting columns, signage poles, roadside railings and bus shelters of a design better aligned with local character; and, where feasible, the rationalisation or undergrounding of overhead cabling.

4.24 Neutral Sites

A neutral area is defined as a part of the Conservation Area whose character does not conform to that of its immediate surroundings. Such areas may detract from the overall quality and cohesion of the Conservation Area but can often be improved through sensitive management and redevelopment.

Remedial approaches typically involve ensuring that, where an existing use is to continue, any proposals for alteration or redevelopment should be:

- a) Confined to parts of the site not visible to the public realm, thereby minimising visual intrusion; or
- b) Designed to incorporate discreet and subtle references to the predominant materials, scale, and design features of the surrounding historic environment.

Ideally, where feasible and appropriate, uncharacteristic or intrusive features should be removed and replaced with new structures or landscaping of a scale, form, and appearance consistent with the character of the Conservation Area. However, careful consideration should always be given to ensure that an uncharacteristic feature is not, in fact, an important remnant of the Area's historical development which, despite its incongruity, may merit retention.

Identified Neutral Site:

- a) Texaco Petrol Filling Station and Shop, Kidderminster Road.



Ch

*Texaco petrol filling station and shop,
Kidderminster Road*

- b) Lock-up garages to the rear of Police Station, Kidderminster Road.
- c) Extensions to the north east corner of St. George's Hall (Load Street) and Lavatories to the rear of No. 69 Load Street (unsympathetic late 20th century buildings).



*Extension to St. George's Hall (right)
and lavatories to the rear of No. 69 Load Street (left)*

- d) Telephone exchange, Dowles Road, and in particular the northeast facing mono pitch roof, dark brickwork, uncharacterful fenestration and satellite dish.



Telephone Exchange, Dowles Road

- e) Unsympathetic twentieth century dwellings in Maypole Close and Telford Drive (adjoining the Conservation Area but in sensitive locations); and Park Close, Kidderminster Road (Nos. 27 to 33) and No. 63a High Street (within the Conservation Area and in sensitive locations).
- f) Bridge House and adjoining commercial buildings in Riverside North. (Adjoining the Conservation Area but in a prominent position).



4.25 Condition of Buildings and Structures

Most buildings and structures within the Conservation Area are in good or fair condition and continue to contribute positively to its character and appearance. A small number of buildings and structures require ongoing monitoring and maintenance to secure their long-term preservation, whilst others previously identified as vulnerable have benefited from conservation-led intervention and now represent positive examples of heritage preservation. Buildings and structures currently requiring attention include:

- a) No. 3 Beale's Corner, a vacant timber-framed dwelling that has long been identified as vulnerable. The completion of the town's flood defence works has significantly reduced flood risk within this part of the Conservation Area, improving the prospects for the building's long-term conservation.
- b) 63 High Street is in a poor state and is continuously deteriorating. Its condition is at odds with the remainder of High Street and detracts from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

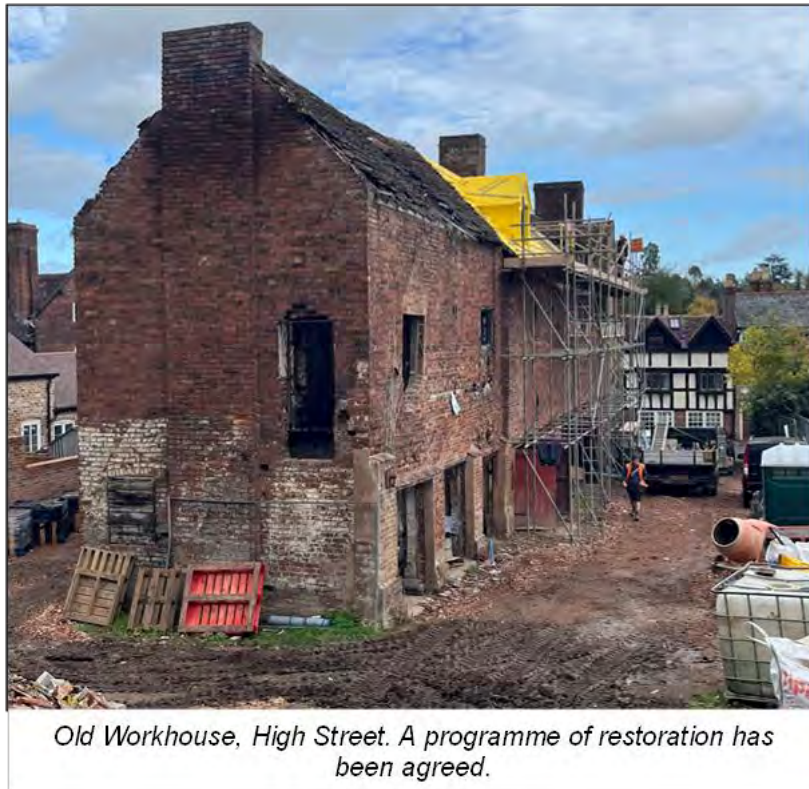
c) Outbuildings (possibly former washhouse and bakery) to the rear of Nos. 14 and 15 High Street.



d) Nos. 2 and 3 Severnside South continue to require regular maintenance attention. Rainwater goods are prone to blockage, largely due to persistent pigeon activity, necessitating frequent clearance to prevent water ingress and associated fabric decay. Elements of external timberwork also require ongoing repair and redecoration to ensure their long-term preservation and to prevent incremental deterioration.

The following assets have been identified in previous appraisals and have since benefited from positive conservation action:

e) The former Old Workhouse to the rear of No. 64 High Street is a substantial three-storey building that had remained vacant for some time. Planning permission has now been granted for its rebuild and conversion, securing a viable new use and enabling the retention of its historic form and character. The implementation of this approved scheme represents a positive step toward safeguarding the building's significance and reducing the number of heritage assets at risk within the Area.



f) The central bridge, including its principal balustrades and those extending towards Beale's Corner, has undergone a comprehensive and sympathetic programme of restoration. Previous concerns included intermittent vehicle damage, weathering of stonework, and the use of inappropriate repair materials such as non-stone copings and concrete footings to certain piers. The land arches on the north side adjoining Beale's Corner had also required attention. The completed restoration works have addressed these issues using appropriate materials and conservation techniques, resulting in a significant enhancement to the structure's condition and appearance. The quality and extent of the works were sufficient to secure the removal of the bridge and its balustrades from Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, representing a notable achievement in the stewardship of this key landmark within the Conservation Area.

5.0 BOUNDARY REVIEW

As part of this Appraisal, the existing Conservation Area boundary has been reviewed to assess whether it continues to reflect the full extent of the area's special architectural and historic interest.

Maypole Piece, Wribbenhall

The Conservation Area boundary has been extended to include the remainder of the land known as Maypole Piece, together with the adjoining slopes and ridgeline to the north-east and south-east, where these form part of the same historically and visually significant landscape.

Maypole Piece is an area of open space with a long-established historic landscape that has formed part of the setting of Bewdley and Wribbenhall for centuries. Its historic name, longstanding association with the town and continued survival as an undeveloped hillside contribute directly to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. The site illustrates the historic relationship between the town and its surrounding countryside a defining characteristic of Bewdley's historic development.

Occupying a prominent elevated position on the eastern side of the River Severn, Maypole Piece forms one of the most distinctive landscape features associated with Bewdley. The largely undeveloped hillside contributes significantly to the setting of the historic town and provides an important visual backdrop to views from within the Conservation Area, particularly from Severnside North, Severnside South, Load Street, Beale's Corner and the River Bridge. The hillside is equally important in longer-distance views. It forms a prominent landmark when approaching Bewdley from the east along Kidderminster Road and remains highly visible from the surrounding landscape. Its open and undeveloped character reinforces the historic relationship between Bewdley and its rural setting, a characteristic that has long contributed to the town's distinctive identity.

The Conservation Area already includes part of the Maypole Piece hillside, acknowledging its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area. However, the existing boundary bisects a single historic landscape and landform. The ridgeline and adjoining slopes function as one coherent landscape unit whose contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area cannot be meaningfully separated from the land already included within the designation.

The site serves as a point of transition between the historic core of Wribbenhall and later twentieth-century suburban expansion. Its open character maintains the legibility of the town's historic form by separating the historic settlement from more recent development.

In addition to its historic and townscape significance, Maypole Piece contains mature trees, hedgerows and areas of vegetation that reinforce the wooded river valley-side character of Bewdley and make a positive contribution to the appearance of the Conservation Area throughout the year. These landscape features also frame numerous important public views and contribute to the wider appreciation of the historic town.

Other areas of open land around Bewdley were considered during the review but were not found to demonstrate the same combination of historic interest, contribution to the setting and significance of the Conservation Area, prominence in key public views, continuity with land already designated, and long-established historic association with the development of Bewdley and Wribbenhall. Maypole Piece is therefore considered to represent an exceptional landscape whose inclusion more accurately reflects the extent of land that contributes to the Conservation Area's special architectural and historic interest.

The proposed amended boundary is shown on the map in Appendix C

6.0 CONCLUSION

Bewdley Conservation Area possesses considerable architectural and historic significance. The town's origins lie in its strategic position as a principal crossing point of the River Severn during the medieval period which, combined with its role as an inland port, established Bewdley as a thriving centre of trade and commerce. This prosperity continued into the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and is reflected in the town's rich and varied built fabric.

Many of Bewdley's buildings, particularly those dating from the late medieval and Georgian periods, display a high degree of craftsmanship and architectural quality which together define the town's distinctive and recognisable character. These buildings establish an important benchmark for the scale, materials and detailing of any new development or alteration within the Conservation Area.

The arrival of the railway in the mid-nineteenth century introduced additional layers of character, most notably through the Victorian architectural influences visible in parts of Wribbenhall and around the station. Together, these successive phases of development have created a townscape of considerable historic depth and visual richness.

The preservation and careful management of this historic environment is therefore essential. The Conservation Area designation seeks to ensure that change within Bewdley is

appropriately managed so that its architectural integrity, historic character and important relationship with the River Severn and surrounding landscape are maintained. The appraisal provides a clear understanding of the elements which contribute positively to the significance of the area and will serve as a guiding framework for future development, ensuring that Bewdley's distinctive character is preserved and enhanced for future generations.

**Bewdley Conservation Area
Character Appraisals and
Management
Recommendations**

Statement of Consultation

June 2026



Wyre Forest District Council

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This consultation statement has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) 2012. The statement sets out who was consulted, when and how, and summarises the representations received and how they have influenced the Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Recommendations.

2. Name and Purpose of the Documents

- 2.1 Bewdley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.
- 2.2 This document analyses the history, character and appearance of the oldest part of Bewdley and identifies threats and opportunities for the area's historic significance.

3. Who was consulted on the Document?

- 3.1 The district Conservation Officer undertook the review and updated the existing Character Appraisal in the light of intervening development in the Conservation Area and to follow the latest guidance from Historic England.
- 3.2 An initial walkabout was undertaken by the Conservation Officer.
- 3.3 Public consultation was conducted on the draft document between 13th April and 10th May 2026. The responses to that consultation are in Appendix B of this document.
- 3.4 Appendix A lists those organisations consulted.

4. How Were People Consulted?

- 4.1 The document was posted on the District Council's website and advertised on social media and in the local press. A recommendation made during O&S Committee was to factor in those who don't use social media and/or the internet regularly. As such, the decision was made to produce physical copies of the draft appraisal to be housed at Bewdley Library for public review. Additional advertising for this was provided by posters that were put up on town council noticeboards and in shops and services in the town.

5. Summary of Responses

5.1 A total of 25 representations were received from 25 respondents.

Issue Raised	Officer Response
Strong support for the inclusion and protection of Maypole Piece as an important landscape, heritage and community asset.	The significance of Maypole Piece in terms of historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley, prominence in key public views and community value has been assessed. Officers consider that it makes a direct and distinctive contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Bewdley Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full extent of the site as a single coherent historic landscape unit.
Factual inaccuracies and outdated references, including former petrol filling station, renamed or changed uses, missing or unclear features, and corrections to place names and site descriptions.	Outdated or incorrect references will be amended or removed as appropriate.
Requests for inclusion of accessibility, disability access and energy performance considerations, with reference to national guidance and sustainability principles	These are important considerations in heritage planning. The appraisal will be reviewed to ensure appropriate reference to accessibility and sustainability in line with current national and Historic England guidance
Requests for clearer definitions of design terminology such as “appropriate” and “unsympathetic”, and improved explanatory guidance or illustrative material.	The use of qualitative terminology is standard in character assessments; however, clarity will be reviewed and consideration given to improving explanatory content and alignment with supporting design guidance.
Environmental amenity concerns including noise, odours, air quality, congestion and general environmental quality.	Some matters fall outside the direct scope of the Character Appraisal but are relevant to wider environmental quality and will be recorded where appropriate within the management context.
Importance of trees, green infrastructure, ecology, biodiversity, and preservation of key views and landscape openness, including concerns about planting impacts and infrastructure.	Trees, landscape features and ecological networks are key contributors to Conservation Area character. The appraisal will be reviewed to ensure appropriate recognition of these assets and key views.

5.3 Copies of the representations received can be found in Appendix B.

6. Summary of the Main Issues Raised

6.1 The respondents welcomed the review of the Conservation Area but raised a number of matters in relation to updating the appraisal to reflect changes within the town. These included comments supporting the proposed boundary amendment and the inclusion of Maypole Piece as an important landscape, heritage and community asset.

A number of representations identified factual inaccuracies and outdated references within the document, including inconsistencies in place names, site descriptions, and historic land uses, as well as references to former uses and sites that have since been renamed or redeveloped.

Comments were also made requesting greater consideration of accessibility for disabled people within buildings and public spaces, alongside issues relating to energy performance of buildings, carbon emissions, and wider sustainability considerations.

Further representations sought clearer explanation of qualitative design terminology used within the appraisal, including terms such as “appropriate” and “unsympathetic”, and requested improved explanatory guidance and supporting material.

Environmental amenity matters were also raised, including concerns relating to noise, odours, air quality, traffic congestion and general environmental quality within the Conservation Area.

The importance of trees, green infrastructure, biodiversity, landscape character, openness, and the protection of key views was also highlighted, with representations emphasising their contribution to the overall character and distinctiveness of the area.

7. How have those Issues been addressed in the final document?

7.1 The responses received during consultation were generally supportive of the draft appraisal and identified a number of factual updates and clarifications required to reflect changes within the town.

- 7.2 In response to representations relating to Maypole Piece, the proposed boundary has been reviewed against the statutory test for Conservation Area designation under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Officers consider that the site makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area through its role as part of the historic valley-side landscape, its prominence in key public views, and its continuity with land already designated. The boundary has therefore been amended to include the full extent of Maypole Piece as a single coherent historic landscape unit.
- 7.3 A number of factual inaccuracies and outdated references have been corrected within the final document, including updates to former land uses, place names and site descriptions.
- 7.4 Representations relating to accessibility, sustainability and energy performance have been considered. These matters are acknowledged within the management framework as considerations, reflecting current national and Historic England guidance, but are not part of the detailed character assessment.
- 7.5 Comments relating to trees, green infrastructure, biodiversity and key views have been reviewed and the appraisal strengthened where appropriate to ensure these elements are clearly identified as contributing factors to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 7.6 Terminology used in the appraisal has been reviewed to ensure clarity and consistency. While qualitative design language remains appropriate for character assessment, explanatory text has been strengthened where necessary.
- 7.7 Environmental amenity matters raised during consultation have been noted. While some fall outside the direct scope of the Character Appraisal, they are recorded within the wider management context where relevant.

Appendix A: List of Consultees

Bewdley Town Council
Bewdley Civic Society
Historic England
Local ward members
Members of the public

Appendix B: responses received

Respondent / Response No.	Support / Object / Comment?	Summary	Officer Response
Phil Swallow	Support	I have just read this. I think that it is an excellent piece of work and was very informative.	Thank you for your comments
David Hood	Support/Comment	A remarkably thorough piece of work. I would add to 'alien features' the two spotlights emanating from the Rowing Club at night, which are very visually intrusive, especially when viewed from higher ground. There are also a handful of out of date references, for example, the long-gone petrol station near Maypole Piece.	Thank you for your comment, out-of-date references have now been removed and/or updated.
Richard Perrin	Comment	Under 4.6, I am unable to locate the three trees mentioned. Do you have a photo please?	Thank you for your comment, out-of-date references have now been removed and/or updated.
Bewdley Town Council	Comment	At a Planning Committee Meeting held on Monday 27 April, members considered the Bewdley Conservation Character Appraisal and made the following comments. Bewdley Town Council Planning Committee requested that the eastern border be extended to include Ivy Cottage by Maypole piece. It was noted that the character of Bewdley extends beyond the conservation boundary. It was commented that shop fronts have been mentioned many times but the council notes that there are discrepancies with adherence to shop front design, it would welcome more enforcement to ensure compliance. It was noted that some shop frontage alterations may have	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit. Text has been updated regarding smells.

		been carried out before there were tighter planning restrictions in place. It was noted that the appraisal did not mention the sewage smells in load street and requested that this be included in addition to food smells and vehicle fumes.	
Graham Luxford	Comment	The draft 2026 version is taken from the 2015 adopted appraisal prepared by Nick Joyce Associates with some added and revised wording and new photos. I don't believe the following items are now applicable and should be omitted or amended: --- <u>General Note</u> 1. Inappropriate and unsympathetic are words used frequently throughout the appraisal in regard to past and ongoing development as well as specific building elements and features. Whilst these are the right terms to use, it would be helpful for readers to know what is deemed to be appropriate and sympathetic, possibly in appendix form, example photos or with reference to supplementary design guidance, etc. 2. There is a marked absence in the appraisal of any reference to disability access to buildings and public areas, also the energy performance of buildings and the town's carbon footprint. Both of these issues have become increasingly important but they can often be in conflict with the conservation of heritage assets. I	Thank you for your comment, out-of-date references have now been removed and/or updated and text has been amended to reflect.

		believe the appraisal should adopt Historic England's stance on this, in the case of disability access that 'accessibility and conservation are not mutually exclusive and rather that making a historic place accessible is seen as a way to ensure its future sustainability and social value.' In the case of energy performance Historic England's stance is similar, that energy performance and environmental sustainability are core components of sustainable development, that 'high energy costs in poorly insulated listed buildings can lead to heritage at risk, that 'sustainability is a tool for conservation, not a threat to it.' Historic England has published guidance documents on this, for accessibility: - Easy Access to Historic Buildings and Easy Access to Historic Landscapes and for energy performance Advice Note 18: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency 2026. The appraisal should include reference to these documents and state that it will comply with the guidance given.	
Tony Leach	Support/Comment	The BCS welcomes the publication of this document. In our view the consultation is a very worthwhile exercise. It is an important element in preserving and developing the character of Bewdley.	

		The BCS has forwarded detailed comments from 4 of its members: Bill Dewar, Graham Luxford, Richard Perrin & Bob Watkins. Between them they have a vast knowledge of Bewdley and the BCS would hope that their comments are studied carefully so that the BCACA brings the maximum benefit to the residents of the whole town not just those who live in the conservation area. One issue that the BCS was pleased to see included was in section 4.1 Setting and Topography. The last sentence is very salient: “Safeguarding this rural setting is essential to conserving the character of both the town and the Conservation Area with careful attention given to the interrelationship between the Area and its wider landscape context.” The BCS feels that this should be stressed to the WFDC Planning Department as they look to allocate possible sites for future development.	
Penny Griffiths	Comment	The “Bewdley Conservation Area” Document seems to have been developed from a report made in 2015. It has been quite difficult to ensure that I have	Thank you for you comments. This has been noted and we have amended the report to reflect the

		downloaded the correct document as sometimes I found I was working on the 2015 version. I am disappointed that as always Dog Lane is treated as an undervalued area of the town. There is not a single photograph of the characterful cottages or even the monstrosity that is the Sainsbury/Brigade House building. Visitors return to Dog Lane again and again to see the gardens, with many compliments given to us at 3 of the 5 gardens. The gardens were regular winners in the Bewdley Bloom competition and enhance the conservation area. The listed cottages (2 – 5) are all that remain of the houses that joined up to no 10. They were all condemned in the 50's but fortunately these few were retained. I sometimes felt that part of the report had been completed by someone who had not visited Bewdley. These are the comments that I would like to include. 4.6 Trees There is no mention of the Copper Beech that stands proudly next to Dog Lane/Load Street carpark. There have been many rumours of it's condition but it is still a focal point of the town.	specific trees of importance mentioned.
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		There is also a London Plane tree in the vicinity. There is no mention of the Sweet Chestnut which sits in the land of Kateshill House. This is believed to be one of the oldest of its type in the county. Bewdley needs to maintain its conservation character. But so much of the town is left with litter and dirt. The street furniture would all benefit from regular cleaning. Please visit Dog Lane and understand how special this little area is.	
Peter Thompson	Support/Comment	I am a local Psychotherapist as well as a writer and poet in the area. I became very involved with the community and movement to save this historic piece of land when I was asked to write a piece of work for them to use to promote the campaign. There is an untapped social value to this land as well as the role it can play in people's mental health. If it were to be set aside and protected by and for the community as it once was it would only enhance the lives of those who used it. Studies only confirm that connection to nature is immensely beneficial to every community. So it would be a grave loss to the townsfolk if development were to be permitted here.	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit.

Agenda Item No. 8.1 Appendix 2

Elaine Passey	Support/Comment	I strongly support the inclusion of the Maypole Piece within the above. It's very exciting. It's very important historically and for the community of Wribbenhall (much of my childhood was spent playing on The Maypole). It would be wonderful if the footpath known locally as Lodge Banks, running from Catchems End to Stourport Road (passing the folly bridge - another piece of Wribbenhall's history) could also be included. Please also note that the WFDC car park on Severn Side Sth is Gardners Meadow not Gardeners! Furthermore there has been no petrol station on Kidderminster Road, near All Saints Church, for many years. Thank you so much for giving those of us born in Bewdley this opportunity.	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit.
Louis Oliver-Brooke	Comment	Im writing to express how much the Maypole means to me. As a resident of Wribbenhall i see the Maypole everyday, walking my dog nearby and enjoying the abundance of wildlife inhabiting it, not only the birds where I have seen kestrels and buzzards but also the wonderful plants that thrive on the hill. As a herbalist I can say that there are many medicinal plants that grow on the hill, not to mention the amount of plants for the bees and other pollinators which are integral for the ecosystem.	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit.

		The maypole is so important not only for the community but also for the flora and fauna that lives, grows and thrives there.	
Aaron Bourne	Comment	In response to the call for thoughts and feelings regarding Bewdley's conservation area, namely Maypole Piece, I would like to share my views. Bewdley is a rural town, and this is part of its allure for tourists, the character of the town which makes the locals happy to live there, and what the town has built its reputation on. Whilst I acknowledge that development is important, and there have been a number of housing developments over the years, to strip the town of all its green spaces is to strip it of what makes it a popular town. We the locals cannot allow this land to be lost to private developments as without it, what public green spaces exist on the East side of the river Severn? They are fewer and further between of late. Were the town to be fully tarmacked and urbanised, the appeal of Bewdley would greatly diminish, harming the wellbeing of the locals and the economy of the town As a space, Maypole Piece is culturally, historically and environmentally significant. It is a place where we can see nature shaping itself: paths I remember using as the main paths have been changed by nature itself, such as gorse bushes causing diversions around and various trees which have self planted and now grow healthily. Wildlife has increased there since other places have had	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit.

		developments and displaced them. One only has to watch the birds of prey soaring above to realise what smaller creatures have made it their home. I think the area is greatly worthy of consideration for the future, to preserve it for generations to come.	
Colin Jones	Support/Comment	I am writing in response to the consultation on the draft Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan. I strongly support the inclusion and recognition of Maypole Piece within the document as it recognises the important contribution this area makes to the Wribbenhall side of Bewdley. Maypole Piece is far more than an undeveloped parcel of land. It forms an important green gateway into the town and represents a rare surviving open landscape. Its openness contributes significantly to key views, tranquillity and the semi-rural character that distinguishes Bewdley from many other historic towns. The site also has considerable historical and community value. It forms part of the setting of historic routes into the town and contributes to the appreciation of nearby heritage assets. Retaining and protecting this open space is therefore essential to maintaining the special architectural and historic interest that the Conservation Area designation is intended to preserve. The footpath provides public access past the historic folly bridge associated with	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit.

		Mayor Webb's former Springfield Estate, an important local historic feature which contributes to Bewdley's historic landscape character. The route also offers views towards and connections with the Severn Valley Railway bridge, another significant heritage structure that contributes strongly to the town's identity and historic setting. The inclusion of this footpath within the appraisal would strengthen the document's recognition of the interconnected relationship between Bewdley's historic buildings, landscapes, transport heritage and public rights of way. It would also acknowledge the importance of preserving not only individual heritage assets, but the wider historic environment and the experience of moving through it. I welcome the Council's work in preparing this appraisal and hope these comments can assist in ensuring that the final document fully reflects the importance of Maypole Piece and its surrounding historic landscape to the character and significance of Bewdley.	
Alysha Evans	Support/Comment	I am writing in reply to the draft Area Character Appraisal (March 2026). I fully support the inclusion of Maypole Piece in this draft. This area is such an important green space within our community and our history, and the preservation of it is so close to my heart. In addition, I feel it would be prudent to include the footpath from Kidderminster	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of

		Road to Stourport Road within this document (alongside the other footpaths listed). This link that runs directly from Wribbenhall to Stourport Rd. is used by many dogwalkers, runners and school children within our community, and is an integral section of the Maypole land - worthy of being protected for future generations. I hope you will consider these points, and I look forward to seeing the finalised document. Thank you for including The Maypole within this document.	the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit.
Friends of the Maypole	Support/Comment	Thank you for including Maypole Piece in the proposed conservation area. We are obviously hugely passionate about preserving and protecting this important space for the future. Not only does it have significant conservation value it is also part of our collective community heritage. We fully endorse The Maypole being part of the wider conservation area and see it as an integral part of the future of Bewdley. If our aim is realised, the Maypole will be secured for generations to come, being part of the conservation area will add to this, and the community young and old will be able to benefit from the decisions we make today.	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit.
Sarah Frost	Support/Comment	I am writing in response to the consultation on the draft Bewdley	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has

		Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan. I wish to strongly support the inclusion and recognition of Maypole Piece within the document, particularly the references contained within sections 4.1(a), 4.3, 4.8(c), 4.16(c) and 4.17(n). These references rightly acknowledge the important contribution this area makes to the historic character, landscape setting and heritage significance of Bewdley. Section 4.17 n states “ Maypole Piece, Wribbenhall, including the hill, hillside, and the undeveloped gap between All Saints Church and the petrol filling station.” Please note there is not a petrol filling station there now, it has been turned into housing. Maypole Piece is far more than an undeveloped parcel of land. It forms an important green gateway into the town and provides a rare surviving open landscape that helps preserve the historic relationship between Bewdley’s built environment, the River Severn corridor and the surrounding countryside. Its openness contributes significantly to key views, tranquillity and the semi-rural character that distinguishes Bewdley from many other historic towns. The site also has considerable historical and community value. It forms part of the setting of historic routes into the town and contributes to the appreciation of nearby heritage assets. Retaining and protecting	been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit. Incorrect details have now been updated.
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		this open space is therefore essential to maintaining the special architectural and historic interest that the Conservation Area designation is intended to preserve. Given the importance of the site, I would also urge the Council to ensure that the Conservation Area boundary includes the entirety of Maypole Piece and not merely part of it. The landscape, heritage and visual significance of the area can only be properly understood when considered as a whole. Dividing the site risks undermining the integrity of its historic setting and could weaken the protection afforded to this important open space. The entire area contributes collectively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and should therefore be recognised and protected in its entirety. The inclusion of the bottom field between the church and the housing behind the sandstone wall is also of vital importance to preserve the historical importance. In addition, I would request that section 4.7 be expanded to include reference to the public footpath running from Kidderminster Road to Stourport Road. This route is historically and visually significant and should be recognised as an important heritage corridor within the Conservation Area. The footpath provides public access past the historic folly bridge associated with Major Webb's former Spring Grove Estate, an important local historic feature which contributes to Bewdley's historic	
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		landscape character. The route also offers views towards and connections with the Severn Valley Railway bridge, another significant heritage structure that contributes strongly to the town's identity and historic setting. The inclusion of this footpath within the appraisal would strengthen the document's recognition of the interconnected relationship between Bewdley's historic buildings, landscapes, transport heritage and public rights of way. It would also acknowledge the importance of preserving not only individual heritage assets, but the wider historic environment and the experience of moving through it. I welcome the Council's work in preparing this appraisal and hope these comments can assist in ensuring that the final document fully reflects the importance of Maypole Piece and its surrounding historic landscape to the character and significance of Bewdley. As a resident of Wyre Forest for 40 years this piece of land and the 360 degree view from the top is well worth preserving.	
Geoffery Passey	Comment	I would like to recommend that the Maypole Piece be included in the above. Having lived in Wribbenhall all of my life I played there and remember Bewdley Old Boys (now Bewdley Town FC) playing football there in the 1960s when they actually cut the grass themselves! It's so important to the history of Wribbenhall.	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special

		Could the Lodge Banks footpath from Stourport Road to Catchems End also be included. Both present such wonderful views of the area	architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit.
Katy Jones	Support/Comment	I am writing in response to the consultation on the draft Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan. I strongly support the inclusion and recognition of Maypole Piece within the document as it recognises the important contribution this area makes to the Wribbenhall side of Bewdley. Maypole Piece is far more than an undeveloped parcel of land. It forms an important green gateway into the town and represents a rare surviving open landscape. Its openness contributes significantly to key views, tranquillity and the semi-rural character that distinguishes Bewdley from many other historic towns. The site also has considerable historical and community value. It forms part of the setting of historic routes into the town and contributes to the appreciation of nearby heritage assets. Retaining and protecting this open space is therefore essential to maintaining the special architectural and historic interest that the Conservation Area designation is intended to preserve. The footpath provides public access past the historic folly bridge associated with Mayor Webb's former Springfield Estate, an important local historic feature which contributes to Bewdley's historic	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit.

		landscape character. The route also offers views towards and connections with the Severn Valley Railway bridge, another significant heritage structure that contributes strongly to the town's identity and historic setting. The inclusion of this footpath within the appraisal would strengthen the document's recognition of the interconnected relationship between Bewdley's historic buildings, landscapes, transport heritage and public rights of way. It would also acknowledge the importance of preserving not only individual heritage assets, but the wider historic environment and the experience of moving through it. I welcome the Council's work in preparing this appraisal and hope these comments can assist in ensuring that the final document fully reflects the importance of Maypole Piece and its surrounding historic landscape to the character and significance of Bewdley.	
John Frost	Comment	My name is John Frost. I am a resident of Wribbenhall (13 New Road Bewdley DY12 1JF and also a trustee of The Friends of the Maypole. I strongly endorse the inclusion of the Maypole Piece in the Conservation area and would offer these words to support that endorsement. Maypole Piece is one of Bewdley's most distinctive natural assets. This largely undeveloped hill on the eastern side of the River Severn makes a vital contribution to the town's character and deserves both	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to

		active protection and formal recognition within the Conservation Area boundary. Its visual significance is immediately apparent to anyone approaching Bewdley from the east. Travelling along Kidderminster Road, the hill forms a commanding presence on the skyline, signalling arrival into a town of genuine historic and natural character. That same prominence is felt by passengers on the Severn Valley Railway, for whom Maypole Piece provides one of the most memorable glimpses of the Bewdley landscape and gives them depth and texture that no built development could replicate. What makes Maypole Piece particularly valuable is the rural quality it brings to an area that sits well within the modern town boundary. In an age when the pressure to build on every available piece of land is relentless, the open, undeveloped character of this hillside is genuinely rare. It provides a natural buffer between the historic eastern edge of the Conservation Area and the later residential development of northern Wribbenhall, softening what might otherwise be a jarring transition between old and new. The ecological and biodiversity value of Maypole Piece cannot be overstated. The substantial tree and shrub cover on the upper slopes supports a rich variety of flora and fauna, and the hillside functions as a vital wildlife corridor connecting Bewdley to comparable natural habitats at	include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit.
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		Blackstone and Dropping Well. This connectivity is essential. Isolated green spaces lose their ecological vitality over time; it is the links between them that allow species to move, feed, and thrive. Severing or degrading that corridor through further development would have consequences that extend well beyond the boundaries of the site itself. The existing housing on the lower western slopes around Maypole Close serves as a cautionary example of what is lost when planning decisions fail to account for landscape and ecological sensitivity. That so many local people feel strongly about this place is itself significant. The Friends of the Maypole have mounted a sustained and passionate campaign to protect the hill, reflecting the deep affection the community holds for it. This level of civic engagement is not incidental; it speaks to the fact that Maypole Piece is woven into the identity of Bewdley and its people. A successful campaign presents a real opportunity for a partnership between the community, the land and nature something for the town and the wider area to be proud and an inspiration to other communities considering similar campaigns. Having the Maypole Piece in the Conservation Area will support this opportunity for current and future generations of people in Bewdley. Crucially, the area of genuine conservation interest extends beyond the current boundary. The ridgeline and the adjoining	
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		slopes to the south-east and north-east all contribute to the character of this place and warrant inclusion within a revised designation. Maypole Piece should be protected in full. Its landscape, ecology, biodiversity and community value make the case compellingly.	
Bob Watkins	Support/Comment	The Conservation Area was designated in 1968 and reviewed in 1976. The initial Character Appraisal was in 2002, and updated in January 2015, so an update now is timely, (The Act requires reviewing “from time to time”). Can I suggest the Civic Society comments that 1) It welcomes the update of the Character Appraisal. 2) It specifically agrees with the comments regarding the Maypole Piece (section 4, “East of the River”), and Winterdyne House[“Vegetation and Parkland”], and Winbrook. 3) The Society is disappointed that the Council does not have a work programme to review the boundaries of the Conservation Area (5.00 “Map of Conservation Area”). The Society believes that the boundaries should be expanded, especially to manage issues at The Maypole Piece,	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit.

		and Winterdyne. 4) The Society therefore requests the Council set a timetable for a boundary review of the Bewdley Conservation Area.	
Bill Dewar	Support/Comment	I agree this document is well worth reading and should inform and provide a sound basis for continuing planning debates and decisions. Clearly some references/aspects need updating to recognise some developments/changes since 2015 [e.g references to the Medical Centre and Library relate to their previous rather than current settings] . The following however made a particular impression and I feel continue to be particularly relevant given the current pressure for additional housing and other development . The need to ensure notable established architectural and other distinctive Bewdley town features are safeguarded retained and not jeopardised by proposed intrusive or inappropriate developments /alterations . • The importance of challenging and ideally removing existing unsympathetic past developments/shop fronts / street lighting etc. that are intrusive in both the established Conservation Area and immediate surroundings -e.g Bridge House .	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit. Incorrect Details have been amended. Some elements are outside the scope of this appraisal but will help to direct future development into being character-led and sympathetic to the significance and needs of Bewdley.

		• The importance of protecting views -e.g. those around Redhill, the Severn Valley etc. In addition I believe there is a clear need: • to vigorously challenge any threats to existing Green Belt that could further undermine the separation of Bewdley from neighbouring Kidderminster and Stourport and in this way help preserve their unique identities . • to address existing air pollution/noise pollution/congestion in certain identified areas of the town and avoid developments that would worsen the current situation. • To have a clear related Local Plan that safeguards the Historic Environment in and around Bewdley, protects and ideally enhances local heritage assets in not only the Conservation Area but also adjacent areas .	
Denise Weaton	Comment	I was born and Bred in Bewdley and I am 65 years of age. The maypole was my playground for many years.	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to

Agenda Item No. 8.1 Appendix 2

		There's been that many houses been built in the area please make the maypole free from houses . This will make a lot of people very happy.	the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit.
Mike OB	Support/Comment	I read the appraisal with great interest and it sounds amazing. I wanted to put my support behind including Maypole Piece in the area. This is a special place for so many people and has a huge and significant history with the local community. The views are incredible and it is the only green space on the route into Bewdley from the Safari Park. The adjoining footpath that links Kidderminster Road to the High School is, I believe ancient and well worth preserving.	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit.
Lynn Gill	Support/Comment	Lovely green space. Been there for years. I want my grandson to enjoy it as I did and my children did	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit.

Robert Fearnall	Comment	I have been here for years and my grandkids need to experience the countryside do not allow building on	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit.
Lesley Edwards	Support/Comment	As a local resident, I strongly support the inclusion of Maypole Piece within the Local Plan for conservation consideration and welcome its recognition within the draft Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal published by Wyre Forest District Council. Maypole Piece forms an important part of Bewdley's historic landscape and character. Its open green space provides a beautiful and distinctive gateway into the town, helping preserve the rural setting and sense of arrival that make Bewdley so special. I am pleased to see Maypole Piece referenced within the draft appraisal, particularly within sections: • 4.1(a) • 4.3 • 4.8(c) • 4.16(c) • 4.17(n)	Thank you for your comment. The significance of Maypole Piece has been assessed in terms of its historic landscape character, contribution to the setting of Bewdley and prominence in key views. Officers consider it makes a direct contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. A boundary amendment is therefore proposed to include the full site as a single coherent landscape unit.

		I believe there is strong justification for including the whole of Maypole Piece within the Conservation Area boundary, recognising it as one connected historic landscape rather than fragmented sections of land. The historic footpath linking Kidderminster Road and Stourport Road is also an important heritage feature which deserves recognition within section 4.7. The route, including the folly bridge associated with Major Webb's Spring Grove Estate and the views towards the Severn Valley Railway bridge, contributes significantly to the area's historic and visual character. Maypole Piece is valued by many local people not only for its history, but also for its environmental importance, open views, wildlife value and contribution to the setting of Bewdley. Protecting these landscapes helps preserve the town's unique identity for future generations. I hope the Council will give full consideration to the importance of conserving the entirety of Maypole Piece as part of Bewdley's historic environment and local character.	
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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

CABINET 16TH SEPTEMBER 2026
Budget and Performance Monitoring First Quarter 2026-27

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor D Ross, Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Head of Resources and s151 Officer
CONTACT OFFICERS:	Helen Ogram Helen.Ogram@wyreforestdc.gov.uk Diana Evans Diana.evans@wyreforestdc.gov.uk Lisa Hutchinson Lisa.Hutchinson@wyreforestdc.gov.uk Lucy Wright Lucy.wright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 - Wyre Forest District Council Revenue Budget Requirements Appendix 2 - Capital Programme Appendix 3 - Budget Risk Matrix Appendix 4 – How we are doing performance reports <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 and other performance at the end of Quarter 1 ending 30th June 2026 and to present the emerging budget pressures and known variances that are likely to have an impact on the outturn position for the 2026-27 financial year.
- 1.2 The report sets out the current forecast of income and expenditure against budget for 2026-27 for revenue expenditure. In addition, the report also provides key information relating to estimates of the Council's financial position for the next three years, highlighting the revised Funding Gap that will need to be closed to bring expenditure into line with income.

Revenue – The projected full year services variance at the end of quarter 1 is £341k better than the approved budget, after inclusion of the capital account variances, the year-end outturn position is forecast to be £864k better than the position in the 2026-29 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Capital – the approved Capital Programme for 2026-27 is £29.102m, including slippage of £4.912m from 2025-26. The forecast slippage to future years at Quarter 1 is currently anticipated to be £0.375m, although reprofiling will take place as part of the revised budget process where necessary.

- 1.3 The report also briefs members on current progress against the savings and efficiency targets in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and includes the quarterly “How are we doing” performance report. This combined report allows both Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee a rounded view of the Council’s performance including its financial position.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to NOTE:

- 2.1 **The projected budget variations, virements and comments within this report and Appendices 1 to 3.**
- 2.2 **The performance against measures and actions as set out in the report and Appendix 4.**
- 2.3 **The recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 3rd September 2026.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Budget projections are reviewed regularly and reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet on a quarterly basis. The 2026-27 Original Budget was approved as part of the 2026-29 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) by Council on 25th February 2026. Performance is measured against the Original Budget presented within the 2026-29 Strategy (Appendix 1). The current forecast shows a net underspend against the approved Budget of £864k.
- 3.2 The current assessment of the outturn position is based on a wide range of assumptions, predicted patterns of cost, service demand and behaviours and the forecasts continue to be refined.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 Under the Business Rates Retention System (BRRS) the Council would receive a share of any growth in rateable value achieved in the taxbase above the government’s baseline assessment. If the baseline assessment isn’t met the council will receive funding in 2026-27 up to the baseline level from the safety net mechanism. It is likely that the council will receive a safety net payment in 2026-27. Government carried out a full reset of the business rates retention system as part of Fair Funding Review 2.0. New business rates baselines, baseline funding levels and tariff/top-up arrangements were set for every authority, effective from 1st April 2026. The reset redistributes resources according to assessed need and relative resources rather than allowing councils to continue benefiting from historic growth. For 2026-27 only, the Government introduced a transitional safety net at 100% of each authority’s new Baseline Funding Level (BFL) as part of the business rates retention reset.
- 3.5 Year-to-date monitoring shows that in year income from business rates payers is likely to be in-line with the position previously estimated. and business rate appeal refunds also in-line with the position previously estimated with no noticeable increase in empty reliefs this position is being closely monitored.

- 3.6 Collection rates at the end of the first quarter are on a par with those achieved last year for Council Tax.
- 3.7 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. 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.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 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 quarterly budget monitoring includes the forecast position for the current financial year. 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 current projected outturn position with variances against the budget approved by Council on 25th February 2026. The projection is based on known and emerging cost pressures where these can be quantified and cost reductions or income growth but does not take into account any management action plans still to be developed to address potential overspends:

Table 1: Quarter 1 Revenue Budget variances and Estimated Outturn 2026-27

SERVICE REPORTING GROUP	Approved Budget £000	Estimated Outturn £000	Quarter 1 Variances £000
Chief Executive and Legal and Governance	3,695	3,640	(55)
Community and Environment	7,389	7,085	(304)
Economic Development and Regeneration	427	557	130
Resources	1,172	1,222	50
Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services	2,033	2,010	(23)
Housing and Planning	2,810	2,671	(139)
WFF Savings target	(259)	(259)	0
Services Total	17,267	16,926	(341)
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	1,713	1,614	(99)
External debt Interest	1,041	786	(255)
Investment Interest	(838)	(1,008)	(170)
Capital Account (Other)	(2,407)	(2,407)	0
Total Capital account	(491)	(1,015)	(524)
Grand Total	16,776	15,911	(865)

The assessment of variances is based on a wide range of assumptions, and the forecasts will continue to be refined and reset.

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

Table 2: Quarter 1 Capital Spend and Draft Slippage 2026-27

2026-27 Capital Programme	Latest Approved Budget (including slippage from 2025-26) £	Q1 Capital Expenditure 2026-27 £	Draft Slippage/ Reprogramming to future years at Q1 £
Community and Environmental Services	3,140,950	422,060	-
Resources and Revenues, Benefits & Customer Services	618,260	98,793	-
Housing & Planning	14,015,760	384,577	268,000
Economic Development & Regeneration	6,213,390	129,953	-
Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewal Schedule	5,113,350	50,525	107,250
Total	29,101,710	1,085,908	375,250

Supply chain and inflationary pressures continue to be a significant risk for the Council's capital programme, such as increasing costs for construction and equipment renewals. Other financial risks include unforeseen site conditions, planning or regulatory obligations and scope changes. Full detail of scheme progress is provided in the Major Capital projects update at section 8, the How are we doing performance section and Appendix 2 to this report.

The Capital Programme has been amended by £55,900 in respect of the housing grant repayments received in 2025-26. This has been added to the Disabled Facilities Grants budget to ensure that the capital approval reflects the full value of available grant.

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 tables below present the reserves position with the current (quarter 1) projected outturn for 2026-27. 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 Quarter 1 Estimated Outturn

Projection of reserves per MTFS for Draft Outturn 2025-26

Reserves Statement	Original Budget 2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
	£	£	£
MTFS assumed reserves as at 1st April 2026	5,262,010		
2025-26 Outturn adjustment (Pre-audit)	473,730		
Reserves at 1st April	5,735,740	6,495,730	5,654,120
MTFS assumed contribution to/(from) Reserves	(404,370)	(1,441,610)	(1,340,180)
Budgeted Release of Earmarked to Unallocated (General) Reserves	300,000	600,000	0
Estimated Outturn variance	864,360		
Contribution (from)/to Reserves	759,990	(841,610)	(1,340,180)
Reserves as at 31st March	6,495,730	5,654,120	4,313,940

- 5.2 The Council's expenditure plans exceed its funding position for each year of the 2026-29 MTFS, being balanced by a contribution from reserves. The reserves position is reported after consideration of current savings targets and income growth projections. If these targets are not achieved in full the council will have to make a greater contribution from reserves each year. In the absence of additional income, further savings and efficiency measures or additional Government funding, the Council would exhaust its general fund balances in 2029-30, if we disregard LGR, based upon the Q1 estimate. The Cabinet and officers are working towards implementing further savings and efficiency measures and exploring additional income generation proposals.

Earmarked Reserves

- 5.3 The Council's earmarked reserves held at 1st April 2026 totalled £16.542m. 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 will be applied, if required to support price escalation due to inflationary pressures and to meet any revenue items of expense that cannot 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.

Table 4: Earmarked Reserves latest balances

Earmarked Reserves	Reserves b/f at 01/04/26	Spend 30/06/26	Commitments outstanding	Balance available
	£000	£000	£000	£000
External Funding	(3,205)	46	3,188	28
Shared Service	(93)	0	93	(0)
WFDC Budget	(7,611)	5	5,036	(2,571)
Innovation Fund	(1,650)	0	955	(695)
General Risks	(2,244)	35	626	(1,584)
Sub Total	(14,803)	85	9,897	(4,821)
Business Rates (timing)	(1,456)	0	1,456	0
Capital Programme	(283)	0	283	0
Total	(16,542)	85	11,636	(4,821)

- 5.5 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 inflated costs of approved capital projects or any 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 This report draws attention to new and emerging budget pressures that will potentially have a significant impact on the council's ability to deliver services within the budget envelope approved February 2026 Council. The report is produced in consultation with CLT, Heads of Service and Service Managers.
- 6.2 The following table presents an overview of the current projected budget pressures and savings.

Table 5: Quarter 1 estimate of major revenue variances compared to approved budget

Estimate of major variances compared to approved budget at Q1	
	2026-27 £
Cost Pressures and budget savings	
Pay and other staff related variances (net)	(305,390)
Waste collection - tipping charges	(20,450)
Software maintenance (whitespace)	10,530
Vehicle hire charges	16,380
Other net variances	33,400
Income targets exceeded	
Verge maintenance (WCC) - annual uplift above budget assumption	(6,570)
Car parking (pay and display and season tickets)	(70,000)
Parking enforcement	(40,000)
Bulky waste collections - upturn in demand	(6,000)
Private sector housing, fees and charges	(20,430)
Development management fee income	(84,300)
Income shortfall	
Waste Transfer Station (CHG no longer using facilities)	21,000
Wyre Forest House - rental shortfall due to vacancies	76,000
Piano building - service charge income shortfall	45,000
Land charges fee income	10,130
Services Total	(340,700)
Reduced statutory charge for the use of assets (MRP)	(99,170)
Reduced external debt interest	(254,490)
Increased Investment income	(170,000)
Capital Account Total	(523,660)
Projected full year variance at Quarter 1	(864,360)

6.3 Emerging cost pressures (not fully quantified)

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 due to the impact on long term (3 year plus) contracts as they fall due for renewal.

The April 2026 pay award has now been formally agreed for all three main local government negotiating bodies in England and Wales. The National Employers made a full and final offer of 3.3% on 24 March 2026 for NJC staff, Chief Officers and Chief Executives. Agreement for Chief Officers was reached on 2 June 2026, the NJC ("Green Book") settlement was concluded during August 2026 and announced publicly on 1 September 2026 and agreement for Chief Executives was reached on 24 August 2026.

The final settlement at 3.3% is below CPI inflation during 2026 but above the allowance made in the 2026-29 MTFS and constitutes a budget pressure of circa £50k.

In addition to pay award cost pressures recruitment and retention pressures remain significant in Planning; Finance; Environmental health (WRS) and Legal services

Agenda Item No. 9.1

Growth in not for profit specified accommodation providers – council officers are aware of a 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 2026-27 impact is expected to be above the 2025-26 outturn position and above the planning assumption. The widening gap between housing benefit subsidy and actual accommodation costs remains one of the largest financial risks for many district councils. Policy changes that increase homelessness demand further exacerbate this pressure

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:

- Devolution and Local Government reorganisation (LGR). Local Government Reorganisation may adversely impact the Council's MTFS during the period preceding vesting through additional transition costs, reduced delivery of planned savings, increased reliance on reserves, workforce instability, and delays to income-generating investment and capital projects. This could increase forecast budget gaps and reduce the Council's financial resilience in the final years prior to reorganisation.
- Restoring councillors' access to the local government pension scheme from April 2026 – uptake could exceed the planning assumption in the MTFS
- 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.
- Various policies are increasing the regulatory impact on landlords which in the short term is impacting on the availability (supply) of private rented sector properties due to higher compliance costs and the potential withdrawal of poorer quality stock. This reduces available housing options for homeless households and increases competition for accommodation this typically translates into higher temporary accommodation costs and greater homelessness prevention pressures. Such policies include Renters' Rights Act reforms; EPC C requirements by 2030; tax and borrowing cost pressures on landlords.
- Other government policies including asylum seeker dispersal and criminal justice and prison release policies are contributing to increased demand for homelessness prevention, temporary accommodation and affordable private rented housing.
- NHS Discharge Policies - Faster hospital discharge requirements can increase pressure on Disabled Facilities Grants; adaptations and housing support services.
- 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
- Despite the council policy decision to delay the impact of waste collection changes as a result of the simpler recycling and waste reforms, the Government's position remains that local authorities are expected to comply with their statutory duties under the Simpler Recycling reforms. The council has committed to continue reviewing the position in light of local government reorganisation and will explore options to align future arrangements with our North Worcestershire neighbours.

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.

Table 6 – Emerging Budget Pressures (not included in table 1 and 5 unless stated)

Area	Impact	Detail
Slippage on capital programme increasing revenue spend/decreasing income	£££	Void property expenses, reduced rental income, increased expenses (including business rates and security). Impact of inflation on supplies and materials and labour. Cost of alternative provision. Risk of higher maintenance expense and external hire charges (fleet) Slippage on fleet due to long lead times.
Income from the Council's property estate	£££	Retail (including F&B) demand continues to be weak and future rental growth is uncertain. Increased incentives likely to be required to secure tenants and longer void periods and increased risk of insolvencies need to be factored into projections. At the same time compliance requirements continue to expand
Housing Benefit subsidy caps	£££	Growth in out of area supported housing provision in district. Supported exempt accommodation, where the landlord is not for profit or charity – DC doesn't get 100% subsidy on rental payments (cost over VOA rent officer determination subsidy capped at 60%)
Contract Inflation	££	The 2026-27 Budget included an uplift of £414k for general non pay inflation and specific allowances were made where inflationary increases were built into contracts. For multi-year contracts falling due for renewal in 2026-27 there is a risk that increases will be above the rate of inflation due to high inflation and pay growth in the intervening years since the last renewal date. Significant contracts due for renewal: Electricity supply Microsoft Enterprise Licence renewal
Recruitment and retention of specialist senior staff	££	There continue to be pressures around staff recruitment due to pay levels at these grades being uncompetitive nationally, hybrid working means we are now competing in some areas where shortages are acute with London Councils. Professional posts are particularly difficult to fill due to national shortages of qualified staff and Local Government Reorganisation.
Housing advice and Homelessness support	££	Supply and demand pressures on private rented housing is likely to increase rents across the District and this could result in increased demand for support from households and increase the cost of emergency accommodation and service provision.
Council tax base	££	Increase in applications for council tax discounts and awards following awareness campaigns and a suppressed collection rate will impact on future year income (deficit on collection fund and reduced tax base).

Key £ = £10k to £25k/year; ££ = £25k to £100k/year; £££ = over £100k/year

6.3 The table below summarises the budget savings and income growth identified at quarter one.

Table 7 – Emerging Budget savings and income growth (included in Table 1 and Table 5)

Area	MTFS Assumption	Current Estimate	Impact	Detail
External debt interest and reduced minimum revenue provision	£2,754k	£2,400k	£££	Slippage on capital programme and extension of internal borrowing

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 estimated outturn position is shown in the table and graphs below. Overall, performance is expected to be ahead of the target approved by Council in February by £84k.

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

Table 8: Quarter One External Income variances and Estimated Outturn 2026-27

Source of Income	2025-26 Draft Outturn	2026-27 Current Approved Budget	Outturn Projection (Quarter 1)	Estimated Full Year Variance to approved budget	
	£			£	
Car Parks and Enforcement	(1,375,138)	(1,307,580)	(1,379,600)	(72,020)	
Wyre Forest Leisure Centre	(682,830)	(682,830)	(682,830)	0	
Waste	(1,726,720)	(1,680,000)	(1,659,000)	21,000	
Garage	(7,789)	(4,100)	(4,100)	0	
Arboricultural and Grounds Maintenance	(241,169)	(191,960)	(191,960)	0	
Parks and Green Spaces	(152,709)	(148,310)	(154,881)	(6,571)	
Street Cleansing	(153,102)	(134,560)	(147,130)	(12,570)	
Bewdley Museum	(182,493)	(149,040)	(149,040)	0	
Cemetery	(71,598)	(57,390)	(57,390)	0	
Property Rental	(2,177,195)	(2,253,820)	(2,132,820)	121,000	
Land Charges	(48,533)	(55,130)	(45,000)	10,130	
Professional and Business Services	(321,429)	(252,350)	(252,350)	0	
Regulatory Income	(1,202,289)	(963,510)	(1,108,240)	(144,730)	
Total	(8,342,994)	(7,880,580)	(7,964,341)	(83,761)	

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. Parking enforcement also performed above target. Property rental income is below target.

7.4 The Planning fee income growth is largely due to a higher 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,

Agenda Item No. 9.1

fees for a single home rose by 105% from £258 to £528. Fees could be increased further from December 2026 with the planned introduction of the 90% total cost recovery baseline. The current projection does not reflect this change. Overall, the income projection at quarter one across services covered by the Commercial Strategy is above target but behind that achieved in 2025-26.

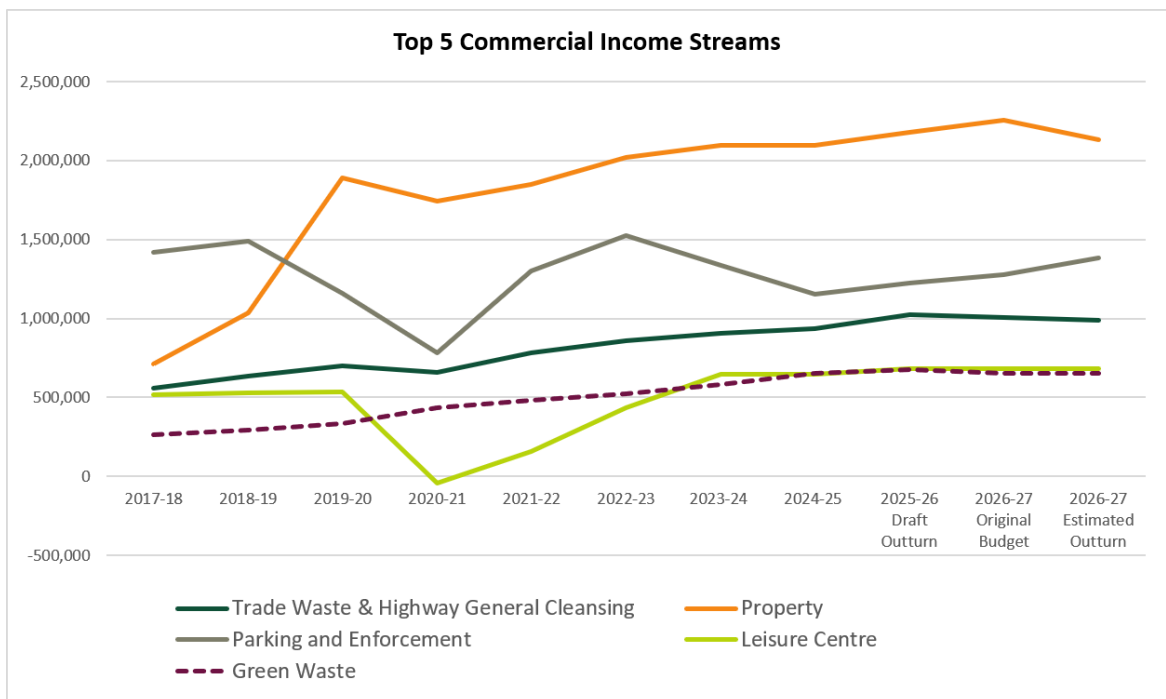
7.5 The previous success of the commercial income generation work and the recent challenges is shown in the graph below.

Summary Income Performance 2017-18 to 2026-27

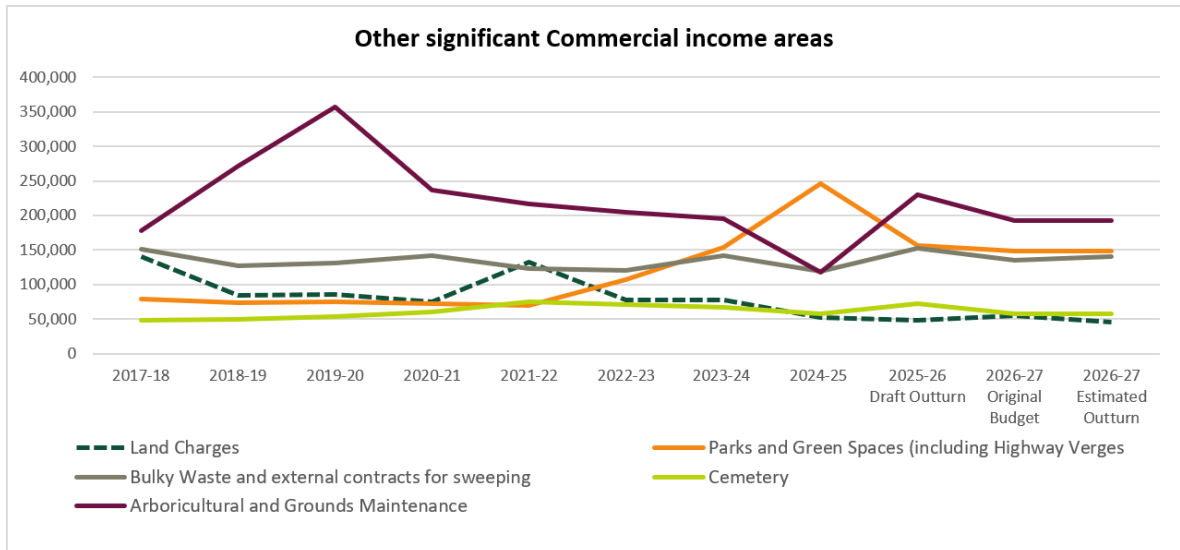


7.6 The graphs below detail performance for the income streams that fall under the Commercial Strategy.

Gross Commercial Income 2017-18 to 2026-27 – Top 5



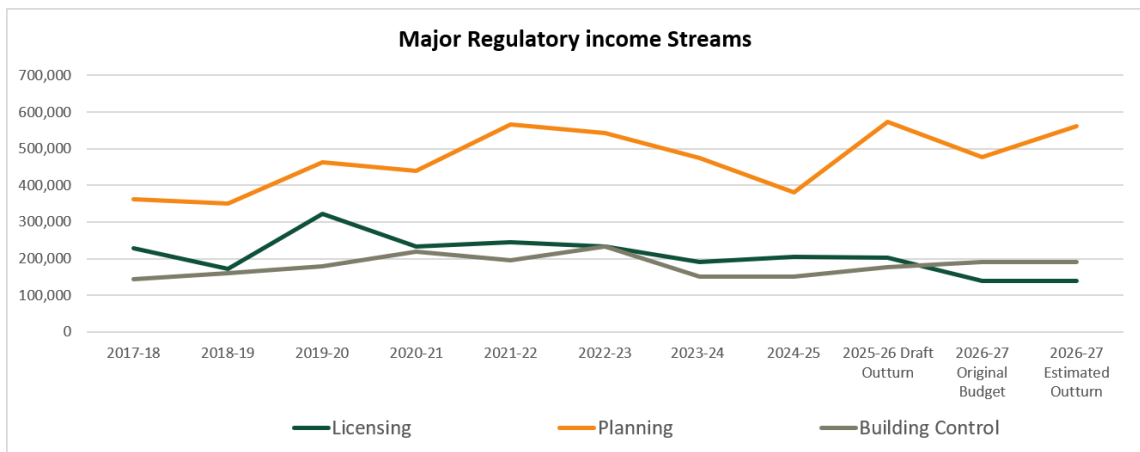
Gross Commercial Income 2017-18 to 2025-26 – Other



7.7 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 projection for 2026-27 is above the target in the 2026-29 MTFS, due to the uplift in planning fees and some of the budget planning assumptions concerning demand not crystallising.

Regulatory Income Sources



7.9 **Capital Portfolio Fund** - The Capital Portfolio Fund supports regeneration, economic growth and housing, is allied to the Council's income generation/commercialism objectives and is financed from borrowing.

7.10 The intended project outputs from the acquisitions and developments under the strategy, related to full-time equivalent jobs either created, safeguarded or facilitated

Agenda Item No. 9.1

through the investment activity. The intended outputs were variously 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 current projection of the revenue impact of the Capital Portfolio Fund in 2025-26. The Quarter 1 outturn projection shows that overall the target included within the original budget is expected to be 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 to expectation. 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. Market rents have been suppressed since the pandemic but there are tentative signs that the market is shifting towards a recovery phase. There continues to be churn in leases due to natural breaks and expiries.

Table 9: Capital Portfolio Fund Strategy – Quarter One Financial Performance summary

Property Portfolio Fund Net Impact on Council Tax after Statutory Charges		2025-26 Outturn £	2026-27 Original Budget £	Draft 2027-30 MTFS	
				Q1 Outturn projection £	Variance £
R276	High Street/Worcester Street	34,375	2,030	23,030	21,000
R277	Stratford Court	3,928	(43,160)	(73,897)	(30,737)
R278	Buntsford Gate	(54,179)	(36,020)	(37,845)	(1,825)
R279	Forest House	38,520	38,540	38,540	0
R280	Riverside	27,157	27,700	33,943	6,243
R281	Goldthorn Road	(102,781)	(107,410)	(107,410)	0
R282	Unity Park	13,155	11,440	11,440	0
R275	Property Portfolio Fund Admin account	0	0	0	0
Total		(39,825)	(106,880)	(112,199)	(5,319)

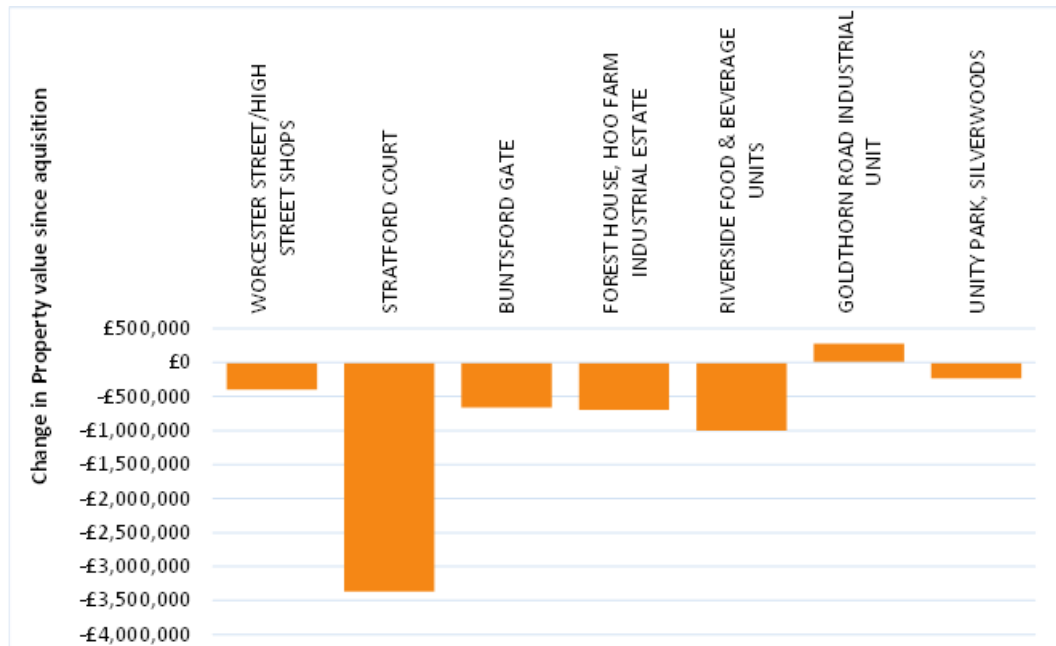
- 7.12 **Capital Portfolio Fund Debt** - The total overdue rent debt at 30th June 2026 was £22k. This represents 3% of the overall balance collected each year in relation to these properties. The majority of the arrears is in the over 120 days category and is being actively managed.

7.13 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 at 31st March 2026 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. However, capital values will continue to be monitored for transparency.

Change in Capital Value for Capital Portfolio Fund properties at latest valuation (31st March 2026)

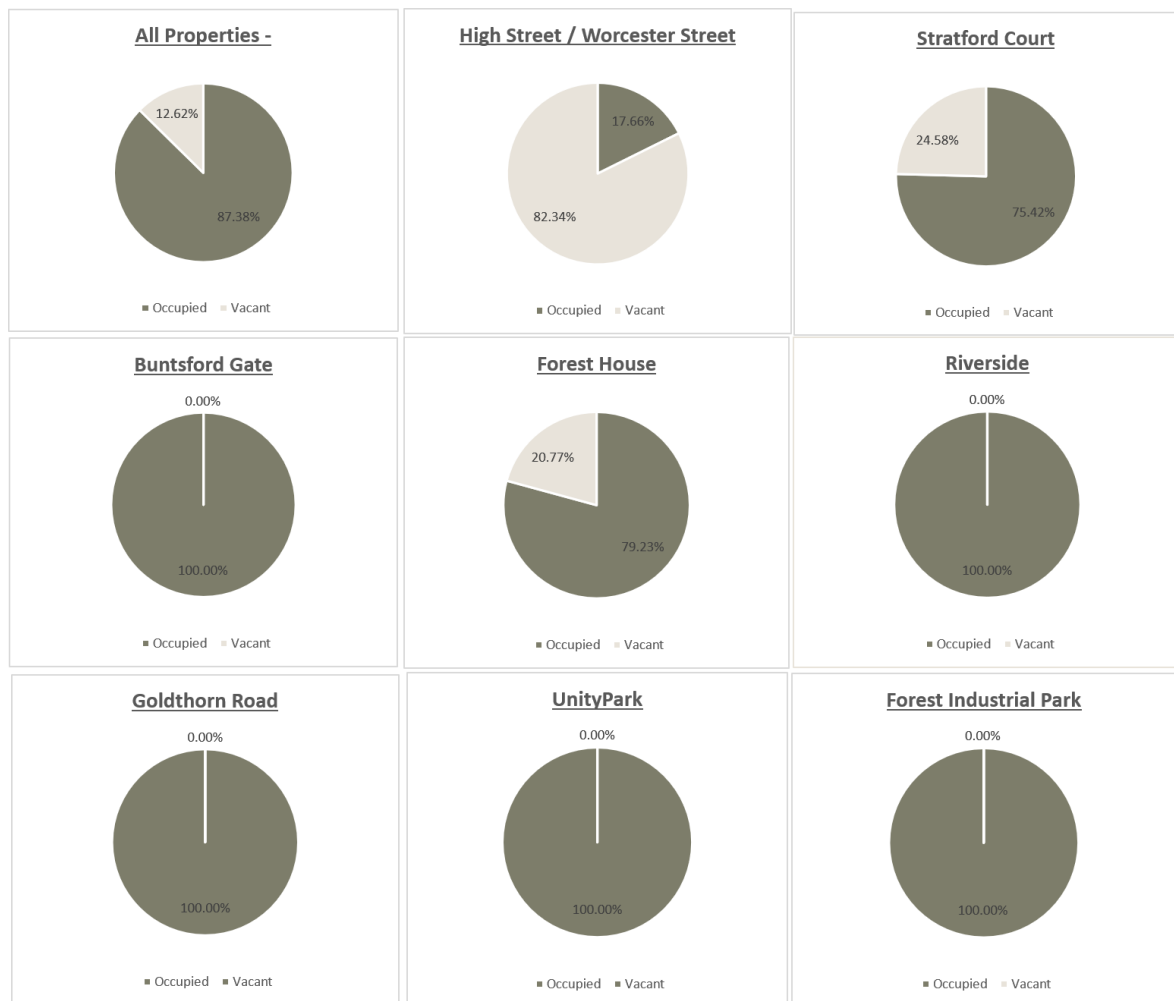


7.14 Current Vacancy levels/Voids

There continues to be a churn in leases due to natural breaks and expiries, overall occupancy, at 87% is good but lower than achieved in 2025-26. The properties held on High Street/Worcester Street have the highest vacancy rates. Development opportunities for the site continue to be explored by the high cost of borrowing has a significant impact on viability.

Agenda Item No. 9.1

Occupancy Rates for Capital Portfolio Fund properties at 30th June 2026



7.15 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 4.19% on average cash balances of £30.819m, producing gross interest receivable during the quarter of £323k. The Treasury team are proactive in managing our daily cash balances and achieved a return of 0.38% above the model benchmark performance. The projected outturn for 2026-27 at Q1 is £0.988m which is £150k above the 2026-27 original budget in the 2026-29 MTFS. Interest rates were expected to fall quickly, but inflation and energy-price shocks have made the Bank of England much more cautious, causing some forecasters to push back cuts or even consider the possibility of temporary rate increases. Rates are currently not expected to rise until the second half of 2026-27, with the next increase in rates expected in November/December. Increased internal borrowing continues to be 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 in the future.

8. **CAPITAL DETAIL - MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS**

This section of the report provides an update on the significant schemes in the Capital Programme in 2026-27, highlighting the latest forecast of spend for the financial year. Council approved the Capital programme allocations at its meeting on 25th February 2026.

8.1 **Future High Street Fund – Update from FHSF Programme Board**

The programme continued 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 project included complete refurbishment of the former Magistrates' Court on Worcester Street as a new creative and innovation hub and creation of a new urban 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 Lionfields 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 has contributed 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 was £28,996,040 (of which £1.25m was dependent on a viable business case that will no longer progress). 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) 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. Initially it was expected that the funding would be available in 2024-25 but, due to BCC's financial challenges, funding availability was pushed back until 2026-27.

The bridging financing is being met from internal borrowing. The cost to the Council is lost investment income of circa £8k per month

Talbot Park Connectivity Project (Public Realm) – Quarter 1 progress update

The project reached practical completion during the quarter, with the new town centre green space being officially opened on 2nd May 2026. Final invoices and the contract retention will be accounted for in 2026-27.

Table 10: Quarter 1 Financial Performance summary (Talbot Park/ FHSF Connectivity Project)

	Prior Years £	2026-27 £	2027-28 £	Total £
Capital Programme	9,818,440	106,190		9,924,630
Slippage from 2025-26	-155,670	155,670		155,670
Budget Adjustment (within total FHSF capital approval)	209,350			0
Budget spend profile	9,872,120	261,860	0	10,133,980
2026-27 Q1				
Acquisitions	2,408,914			2,408,914
Prelims and Pre construction	3,625,535			3,625,535
Construction	3,974,404	261,860		4,236,264
Other	229,255			229,255
Contractual costs met from revenue reserves	-365,988			-365,988
Total	9,872,120	261,860	0	10,133,980
Slippage to future years at Q1		0		

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

The building has been handed over and is operational. All planning conditions have been discharged, and the final retention sum has been paid. The final outturn for this scheme was £17.612m.

8.2 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

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 has progressed well, with completion expected in the late 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 regularly monitors and review progress, discusses issues, risks and action if appropriate and considers any change requests with recommendation for approval as appropriate.

Table 11: Quarter 1 Financial Performance summary (HLF - Brinton Park)

	Prior Years £	2026-27 £	2027-28 £	Total £
Capital Programme	1,942,270	1,037,240	80,490	3,060,000
Slippage from 2025-26	-403,720	403,720		0
Budget spend profile	1,538,550	1,440,960	80,490	3,060,000
2026-27 Q1				
Prelims and Pre construction	255,414			255,414
Construction & Other	1,283,136	1,440,960	80,490	2,804,586
Total	1,538,550	1,440,960	80,490	3,060,000
Slippage to future years at Q1		0		

8.3 Capital Slippage

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

Table 12: Capital Programme 2026-27 Estimated Slippage at Quarter 1

2026-27 Capital Programme Estimated Slippage at Q1	Draft Slippage for future years £	Budget anticipated to Slip at Q1 %	Comments
Housing & Planning			
Housing Assistance - Private Sector Measures(including Decent Homes Grant)	90,000	47.4%	Schemes ongoing with fire safety measures. Anticipate £100k spend for 2026-27 and the rest will slip to 2027-28.
Flood Relief	8,410	29.6%	Grant approved for £10k and anticipate total expenditure of £20k for the year. Balance will slip into 2027-28.
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.
Pride in Place Programme (Birchen Coppice)	120,000	100.0%	No capital funding received to date - no capital spend anticipated until 2027-28 at the earliest. Budget will slip.
Vehicle, Equipment and Systems Renewal Schedule			
Vehicles & Equipment & Systems Renewal Schedule	107,250	2.1%	Procurement of refuse freighters is complete and the order has been placed with significant lead times (£1.7m of the total slippage from 2025-26). Deliveries are estimated to commence in July 2026. Procurement of other vehicles & equipment is underway with varying lead times. Some vehicle slippage identified at Q1 but a review will be carried out as part of the revised budget process.
Total	375,250	1.29%	

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. 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 that have put back the date at which it has to bring its expenditure into line with income but in the absence of additional income, further savings and efficiency measures or additional Government funding 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 2026-27 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 North Worcestershire unitary council is best placed 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 One Wyre Forest Forward Savings - Performance summary

Transformation and Financial sustainability savings	2026-27 £000	2027-28 £000	2028-29 £000
Cummulative Prior year savings achieved	4,966	4,848	4,747
Savings achieved 2026-27 (YTD)	76	91	111
Total Savings Achieved	5,042	4,939	4,858
MTFS 2026-27 Savings Targets			
Wyre Forest Forward Efficiency and Transformation	96	149	212
Localism	24	100	100
Commercial Income growth (incl.Property)	143	284	320
Savings Target at 01/04/2024	263	533	632
Savings achieved 2026-27			
Wyre Forest Forward Efficiency and Transformation			
Smarter procurement	7	15	15
Service efficiencies and innovation - Shared Services WHAS)	69	72	75
	76	87	90
Localism			
Transfers to BTC (£40k budget reduction net of lost income (£7k and grant £29k)		4	21
	0	4	21
Income growth (net) - Commercial			
Commercial Strategy			
	0	0	0
Total Savings achieved in-year	76	91	111
Total Budget Savings not yet achieved	187	442	521

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 (the maximum extra revenue expenditure may not exceed £20,000 and capital expenditure £50,000) or by supplementary estimate, subject to specified conditions as setout in the Financial Regulations – 6.7 and 6.8. No virement requests need to be reported to Cabinet in quarter 1.

11 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE SUMMARY**

Investments

- 11.1 At 30th June 2026 the council held £22.935m in investments. The level of funds available fluctuates due to the timing of precept payments and receipt of grants. The Treasury team are proactive in managing our daily cash balances and achieved a return of 0.38% above the model benchmark performance. The estimated outturn of £0.988m is slightly above the 2026-27 Original budget in the 2026-29 MTFS.
- 11.2 The approved limits as set out in the Treasury Management Strategy report to Council 25th February 2026 within the Annual Investment Strategy were not breached during the first quarter of 2026-27.

External Borrowing

- 11.3 The Council had borrowing of £30m at 30th June 2026, having repaid one PWLB loan that matured on 24th June. The Council's Capital Financing Requirements (CFR) at 30th June 2026 is £44.536m. The CFR denotes the Council's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. If the CFR is positive the Council may borrow from the PWLB or the market (External Borrowing) or from internal balances on a temporary basis (Internal Borrowing); an internal borrowing position of circa £14.536m was held

at 30th June 2026.

Compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits

- 11.4 The Council's approved Treasury and Prudential Indicators are outlined in the approved Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS). The Council has a duty to determine and keep under review the "Affordable Borrowing Limits".
- 11.5 During the period to 30th June 2026 the Council has operated within treasury limits and the prudential indicators set out in the Council's TMSS and with the Council's Treasury Management Practices. The Prudential and Treasury Indicators are shown below:

Prudential Indicator as Per Original Budget	2026-27 Budgeted Indicator	Actual at 30 th June 2026
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	60,660,000	44,536,000
Gross Borrowing	50,000,000	30,000,000
Internal Borrowing	10,660,000	14,536,000
Internal Borrowing as % of CFR	17.57%	32.64%
Authorised Limit for external debt	75,000,000	30,000,000
Operational Boundary for external debt	65,000,000	30,000,000
Limit on Principal sums invested > 365 days	5,000,000	-
Maturity structure of fixed interest rate borrowing – upper limits (for future borrowing undertaken)		Maturity structure of existing loan portfolio (No new borrowing undertaken during Q1)
Under 12 months	10%	-
12 months to 2 years	10%	3.33%
2 years to 5 years	25%	20.00%
5 years to 10 years	50%	6.67%
10 years and above	100%	70.00%

12 REVENUE DETAIL – Central Items Business Rates and Council Tax

- 12.1 **Council Tax** - The level of discounts and awards, together with collection rates, and write-offs are being closely monitored. There is a risk that assumed growth in the tax base might not be achieved in year due to the slowdown in the housing market leading to sites being built out at a slower rate than assumed and greater eligibility to discounts and exemptions.

- 12.2 **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 overall impact of transactions in the collection fund will continue to be monitored to assess the impact on the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

12.3 **Collection Rates**

Council Tax: As at 30th June 2026, Council Tax in year collection rates were at 29.29% compared to 29.19% in the previous year. An increasing number of taxpayers are choosing to spread payments over 12 months, which is reflected in higher levels of collection being achieved during the final two months of the financial year, this makes year on year to date comparisons less reliable as an indicator of performance.

Business Rates: At the end of Quarter 1 2026-27, collection rates for NNDR are ahead of those achieved last year, at 28.37% compared to 25.79% last. Predicting business rates collections is more challenging since initial figures may not accurately reflect the final outcome and a slow start doesn't always lead to a lower year end figure. Whilst collection rates are ahead of last year, we expect to see this as WFDC now pay business rates in one instalment at the start of the year.

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. There has been a growth in the number of households where recovery options are limited.

13 How are we doing performance summary

- 13.1 The Council monitors performance and progress towards achieving the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027.
- 13.2 Performance management is instrumental in all council activities as it helps us to keep track of how well we are performing and enables any potential issues to be identified at an early stage so remedial action can be taken. It also informs our decision making processes which underpin the delivery of our Corporate Plan.
- 13.3 The Council has a number of processes in place to monitor our performance including:
- Corporate Plan Actions
 - Corporate Risks and associated actions
 - Leading Measures – looking forward at future outcomes
 - Lagging Measures – looking back to see whether improvement actions achieved the outcomes or outputs expected
- 13.4 This report provides a strategic overview of the performance for quarter one and focusses on the activities and achievements that support our priorities in the Corporate Plan.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



13.5 Corporate Priority One - Economic growth and regeneration

Key Activities in Quarter 1:

- **Piano building:** Piano Building was shortlisted in 2026 West Midlands RICS Award
- **Lion Fields (Joint Venture):** The project progressed into the procurement phase with a full tender out to market.
- **The Old Court site:** Work to market the office space has continued. Agreement reached to launch a booking platform for short term office / event space requirements to increase income and provide space for small businesses.
- **Museum of Carpet:** Following cabinet decision to provide financial support for the Museum of Carpet. Senior Officers have worked with the museum trustees and have received a business plan outlining how the museum will modernise its approach to revenue creation and create a financially sustainable museum for the local community to enjoy for years to come. The plan aims to attract new, younger trustees and volunteers to enable longer opening hours, a potential name shift to the 'Museum of Kidderminster' and exploring revenue generation through room letting, on site refreshments and grant acquisition through various museum funds.
- **Bewdley Museum:** Museum project has created a brighter, more welcoming and accessible space for visitors. The upgraded area can now also be used for exhibitions and events, enhancing the overall visitor experience.

- **Stourport (Bridge Street/regeneration):** A preferred design has been agreed for the redevelopment of the Bridge Street site following extensive public consultation. The project is progressing in line with the programme, design work is underway and expected to be complete during Q2, before progression to planning.
- **Talbot Park (Connectivity):** A major regeneration milestone was achieved with the opening of Talbot Park, transforming a former long term empty and redundant retail site into a vibrant new public space in Kidderminster.
- **Commercial Property Portfolio:** Nando's opened at Riverside Walk, strengthening Kidderminster's food and leisure offer and supporting the town centre's ongoing regeneration.
- **Career Worcestershire programme :** The council is directly funding activity through the Career Worcestershire programme, delivered from The Point at Kidderminster College.
- **BetaDen:** Continuing delivery of the tech accelerators at the Old Court into the new financial year till 31st of March 2027.
- **Worcestershire Growth Hub:** The council decided to directly fund this activity after the completion of UKSPF. £70k provided for this financial year and a commitment to provide a further £70k in 2027/28.

13.6 Corporate Priority Two - Securing financial sustainability for services the local communities value

Key Activities in Quarter 1:

- **Museum events:** During Quarter 1, Bewdley Museum welcomed 59,660 visitors, demonstrating strong visitor engagement across the spring and early summer period. The Museum also continued to strengthen its educational offer, hosting 24 school visits during the quarter, with participation increasing each month. A varied programme of activities was delivered, including 7 events, 3 exhibitions, and 9 workshops, providing a diverse range of cultural and learning opportunities for visitors. Volunteer involvement also increased significantly throughout the quarter, contributing a total of 764 volunteer hours, reflecting strong community support for the Museum and its activities.
- **Brinton Park:** The council reopened the Brinton Park Splashpad for summer 2026. Pupils from Sutton Park Primary School were engaged in planting around the new ornamental pool as part of the park's wider regeneration programme. The project is due to complete during Q3.
- **Ranger Team Work:** Supported habitat restoration, footpath improvements and wildlife conservation through volunteer ranger programmes across local nature reserves.
- **Public Access:** Improved public access to nature reserves through new wayfinding signage, interpretation panels and walking routes at sites including Habberley Valley, Blakemarsh, Moorhall Marsh, Mitton Marsh and Hurcott Pool.
- **Habitat Management:** Rangers have worked with Worcestershire County Council who founded a Natural Flood Management project at Habberley Valley.
- **Property Leases:** Completed full marketing re-launch of The Piano Building, including revised marketing arrangements to attract a wider range of occupiers. Completed lease commencement at The Old Court and continued occupation by BetaDen, supporting income generation from the building. Progressed Heads of Terms discussions for further occupancy at The Old Court. Implemented improved property portfolio monitoring through lease schedule enhancements, providing KPI reporting on vacancies, rent reviews and lease renewals.

13.7 Corporate Priority Three - A clean, safe and green place to live, work and visit

Key Activities in Quarter 1:

- **Flood management:** A business case has been submitted to the regional flood committee seeking funding for individual property protection measures in the Wyre Forest area.
- **Fly-Tipping Enforcement and Public Awareness Campaign:** The enforcement team have worked with other partners such as Police and Worcestershire County Council in the successful resolution of residents' concerns of fly grazing and equine welfare within the Stourport area. The issue of persistent abandoned vehicles at Power Station Road, Stourport has been resolved. A successful campaign was undertaken by Environmental Officers at Burlish Meadows Nature Reserve, in April when they were joined by a local veterinary practise and our own Rangers and Street Scene colleagues, where they interacted with the public regarding the on-going issues of litter and dog fouling
- **Street Cleansing:** The council expanded Wyre Forest's kerbside recycling service to include aluminium foil and plastic tubes, supporting Simpler Recycling requirements and helping increase recycling rates across the district.
- **Warm Homes Grant:** Energy efficiency improvements to 22 properties were completed in quarter 1.
- The council developed the draft **Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026–2031** with Worcestershire district partners and launched a public consultation to help shape future homelessness prevention and support services.
- The council launched a targeted **Call for Sites to identify land for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs**, supporting Local Plan development and compliance with government housing requirements.
- **Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board:** Established the Neighbourhood Board for the £20 million Pride in Place programme, giving local communities a direct role in shaping future investment.
- Introducing **Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) Fuel:** To reduce Scope 1 emissions and improve the Council's operational resilience to external price shocks in fuel markets.
- **Housing Delivery and Planning Approvals:** Approved 56 residential units.
- **Housing register:** Delivered a new housing register system and commenced re-registration of applicants. To date we have 943 households registered. We prevented homelessness for 44 households and relieved homelessness for a further 109.
- **Affordable housing:** Completed 73 affordable homes in Q1 2026/27.
- **EV charger installations:** two EV Charges installed in Green Street and Wyre Forest House.

13.8 Other achievements:

- A county-wide air quality survey was launched to help inform future environmental and public health initiatives.
- A timetable to begin preparation of a new Local Plan was approved, establishing a programme of public consultation to identify future housing sites and guide sustainable development across the district.
- Rangers ran 4 public events on Nature Reserves and Parks to highlight important wildlife and historic heritage.
- The Operational staff including the waste management were praised on social media as they continued to deliver services during the heatwaves in May and June.

14 CORPORATE COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

- 14.1 Information reported relating to complaints is correct at the time the data is produced at the end of each quarter. Subsequently complaints can move through further stages so reported figures are subject to change.
- 14.2 The information below gives a summary of the authority's performance in respect of complaints. In Quarter 1 the Council received 46 complaints. This compares with 33 during Quarter 4.
- 42 complaints (91%) were resolved at stage 1
 - 4 (9%) complaints were escalated to Stage 2
 - 1 (25%) was partially upheld, 3 (75%) awaiting outcomes
 - 0 complaints were referred directly to the LGSCO
- 14.3 A comprehensive report, which provides greater insight into the complaints received and the outcome, is considered by Audit Committee every 6 months. The analysis of all complaints received during 2025/26 was reported to Audit Committee in July 2026.
- 14.4 During Quarter 1 we received 11 compliments.
- 14.5 The total customer contact recorded via the hub customer service team for Quarter 1 was 10,352. This was 1,680 visitors, 746 emails 7,926 phone calls.

15 LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 The Local Government Act 2003 (sections 25–29) placed additional duties on Local Authorities on how they set and prioritise budgets.
- 15.2 Section 28 places a statutory duty on an authority to review its budget from time to time during the year. If the Budget Monitoring Report shows that there has been deterioration in the Authority's financial position, the Authority must take such action as it concludes necessary. The Cabinet currently reviews performance and spend against the Budget on a quarterly basis.
- 15.3 Our External Auditor Bishop Fleming makes an assessment based on the annual programme of external audit work. The focus is on ensuring there are proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience and that the organisation has proper arrangements for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

16 IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- 16.1 Equality, Climate Change and Health and Wellbeing Impact assessments will be undertaken as appropriate as part of reviews of service delivery arrangements and implementation of new models. This is a financial and performance monitoring report, there are no proposals in this report that require an assessment.

17 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 17.1 A number of corporate risks are perceived to have increased in recent months. The inability to deliver a balanced budget is one of the Council's key corporate risks and has been adversely impacted by high inflation in recent years this is now feeding through to current year procurements. The Budget Risk Matrix has been reviewed to reflect the current assessment of risk. A copy is enclosed for information as Appendix 3 and further update on risks will be given to Audit

Committee in September.

18 CONCLUSIONS/ACTION

- 18.1 The information contained within Appendices 1 to 4 provides Members with an overview of financial trends and performance within the period to 30th June 2026. Appendix 4 provides detailed information on performance to supplement the summary in section 12.
- 18.2 The estimates and assumptions included in this report will continue to be updated and refined as more information becomes available.

19 CONSULTEES

Corporate Leadership Team
Cabinet

20 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Budget setting papers Council 25th February 2026
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026-29

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

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026-27 - Quarter 1 Position (DRAFT)

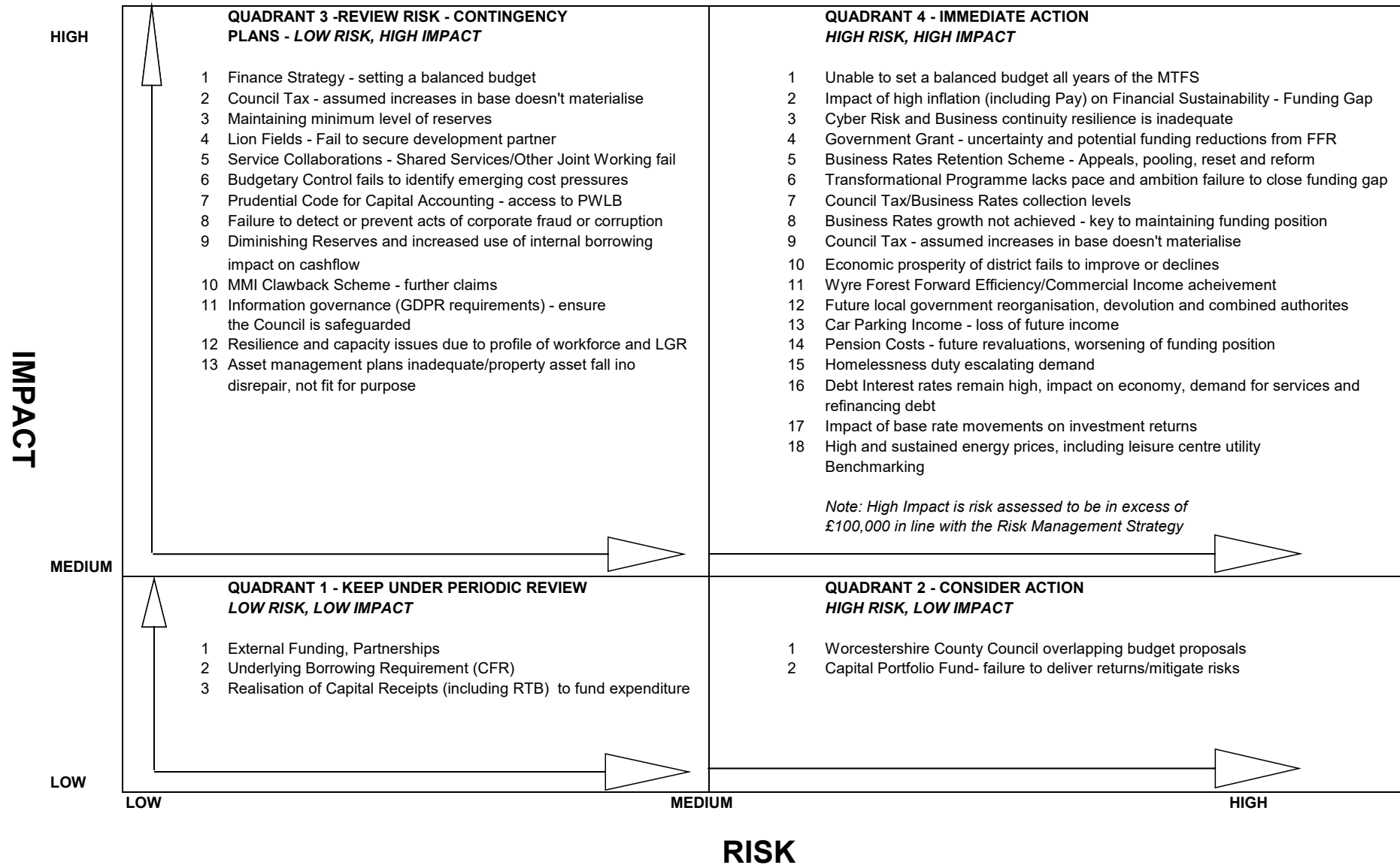
Capital Scheme	Corporate Priority*	2025-26 Capital Programme Slippage £	2026-27 Original Budget £	2026-27 Latest Approved Budget including slippage from 2025-26 £	2026-27 Qtr 1 Actual £	Slippage to 2027-28 identified at Q1 £	Progress Notes at Q1 2026-27	Total Scheme (all years) £	Total spend (all years) £	% Complete (Full Scheme)
COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES										
Improvement to Car Parks (Replacement Parking Machines)	1,2,3	150,940	-	150,940	-	-	The tender process was completed in Q1, and the contract was signed in Q2. A project start-up meeting has been scheduled, and the project is anticipated to be completed within Q3.	594,500	443,560	75%
Stourport Riverside	3	36,440	-	36,440	-	-	Remainder of the budget will be spent in line with the Master Plan in this financial year.	150,000	113,560	76%
Brinton Park HLF Scheme	3	403,720	1,037,240	1,440,960	406,934	-	Major works under way. Scheme anticipated to complete in summer 2026.	3,060,000	1,945,484	64%
Bewdley Museum - UKSPF	1,2,3	41,580	-	41,580	15,126	-	Scheme complete. Final invoices and retention will be payable in 2026-27.	190,570	164,116	86%
Innovation Fund - Capital	2	7,080	249,250	256,330	-	-	Freighter scheduled to be delivered by August 2026.	431,000	174,670	41%
Community Safety CCTV Upgrade (Grant Funded)	2	910	-	910	-	-	The remaining budget is expected to be spent by the end of Q2.	24,860	23,950	96%
Food Waste Collection (funded by Defra grant)	2	-	1,154,900	1,154,900	-	-	Weekly food waste collections for households in the district are not being introduced until the Government provides the funding needed to run the service. The position will be reviewed considering local government reorganisation and the arrangements being made by other districts in North Worcestershire, to see whether there is an affordable and value for money approach that can be adopted.	1,154,900	-	0%
Adaptive Play Equipment	3	58,890	-	58,890	-	-	Revised quotations were obtained in Q1. The scope of the procurement has been expanded to include additional elements relating to inclusive play and now incorporates other associated budgets. The procurement process will fully commence in Q2.	100,000	41,110	41%
SUB TOTAL		699,560	2,441,390	3,140,950	422,060	0		5,705,830	2,906,450	51%
HOUSING & PLANNING										
Housing Strategy: Better Care Fund (BCF) - Disabled Facilities Grants	3	292,260	2,455,900	2,748,160	352,507	-	Scheme ongoing. Shared service has commenced, so works anticipated to increase throughout the year.	Rolling programme		
BCF- Energy Efficiency	3	25,750	403,000	428,750	5,460	-	Scheme ongoing. This fund supplements and provides an alternative to government capital funding where it cannot be applied or homes need additional support.	730,000	306,710	42%
BCF- Disabled Adapted Units	3	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	10,970	179,030	190,000	-	90,000	Schemes ongoing with fire safety measures. Anticipate £100k spend for 2026-27 and the rest will slip to 2027-28.	2,376,120	2,186,120	92%
Castle Road Development	3	1,670	-	1,670	-	-	Scheme complete & retention accounted for in 2025-26; final account adjustments subject to approval.	3,860,210	3,858,540	100%
Stourport on Severn Property Conversion	3	690	120,000	120,690	-	-	Quotes received but over budget, so currently reviewing the scale of the work.	130,000	9,310	7%
Flood Relief	1,3	13,410	15,000	28,410	-	8,410	Grant approved for £10k and anticipate total expenditure of £20k for the year. Balance will slip into 2027-28.	199,000	170,590	86%
Warm Homes Local Grant	3	-	504,780	504,780	26,610	-	Scheme ongoing.	1,360,000	372,350	27%
Future Investment Evergreen Fund	1,2,3	921,210	-	921,210	-	-	Subject to business cases & due diligence.	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.	50,000	410	1%
Capital Projects Fund	1,2,3	-	7,467,750	7,467,750	-	-	Subject to business cases & due diligence.	8,267,750	800,000	10%
North Worcestershire Property Flood Resilience Project	3	28,220	1,166,530	1,194,750	-	-	Project underway; various grants already committed.	2,300,000	1,780	0%
Pride in Place Programme (Birchen Coppice)		-	120,000	120,000	-	120,000	No capital funding received to date - no capital spend anticipated until 2027-28 at the earliest. Budget will slip.	12,470,000	0	0%
SUB TOTAL		1,583,770	12,431,990	14,015,760	384,577	268,000		33,406,170	8,207,690	25%

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026-27 - Quarter 1 Position (DRAFT)

Capital Scheme	Corporate Priority*	2025-26 Capital Programme Slippage £	2026-27 Original Budget £	2026-27 Latest Approved Budget including slippage from 2025-26 £	2026-27 Qtr 1 Actual £	Slippage to 2027-28 identified at Q1 £	Progress Notes at Q1 2026-27	Total Scheme (all years) £	Total spend (all years) £	% Complete (Full Scheme)
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION										
Levelling Up Fund	1,2,3	84,300 CR	85,000	700	-	-	Piano Building Scheme now complete. Contract retention will be payable in 2026-27; the retention was accounted for in 2025-26.	17,900,000	17,899,300	100%
Capital Portfolio Fund (unallocated)	1,2,3	-	4,050,830	4,050,830	-	-	Subject to business cases & due diligence.	20,805,450	16,754,620	81%
Future High Streets Fund - The Old Court	1,2	-	-	-	-	-	Scheme complete.	17,612,060	17,612,060	100%
Future High Streets Fund - Public Realm/Connectivity	1,2	155,670	106,190	261,860	124,003	-	Contract works completed in May 2026. Final invoices and contract retention to pay.	10,133,980	9,996,123	99%
Future High Streets Fund - Creative Hub (Capital Portfolio allocation)	1,2	-	1,250,000	1,250,000	-	-	No longer required - will be removed from the Capital Programme.	1,250,000	-	0%
Corporate Property Investment Programme	1, 2, 3	-	150,000	150,000	2,950	-	Planning application submitted for Block A (Hub); currently getting tender pack ready for advertising. Air conditioning system in Block B completed - invoices .	1,050,000	2,950	0%
Bridge Street Stourport Development	1, 2, 3	-	500,000	500,000	3,000	-	Currently progressing through RIBA Stage 3, with the coordinated design, supporting surveys and planning documentation nearing completion. A formal pre-application was submitted on 10 July 2026, and submission of the full planning application is targeted for 29 July 2026, with determination anticipated by mid-October 2026. Procurement arrangements for early contractor involvement have also been initiated. Contractor appointment is currently forecast for mid-November 2026, with remediation works expected to commence in late January 2027. Main construction works are planned to begin in April 2027, with project completion targeted for early December 2027. Budget will be reprofiled as part of the revised budget process.	4,000,000	3,000	0%
SUB TOTAL		71,370	6,142,020	6,213,390	129,953	0		72,751,490	62,268,053	86%
RESOURCES										
ICT Strategy	1,2,3	77,450	540,810	618,260	98,793	-	Various projects underway. May be some slippage due to fluctuations in project delivery timetable. Will be reviewed as part of the revised budget process.	6,003,120	5,293,463	88%
SUB TOTAL		77,450	540,810	618,260	98,793	0		6,003,120	5,293,463	88%
VEHICLE, EQUIPMENT & SYSTEMS RENEWAL SCHEDULE										
Vehicles & Equipment & Systems Renewal Schedule	1,2,3	2,479,370	2,633,980	5,113,350	50,525	107,250	Procurement of refuse freighters is complete and the order has been placed with significant lead times (£1.7m of the total slippage from 2025-26). Deliveries are estimated to commence in July 2026. Procurement of other vehicles & equipment is underway with varying lead times. Some vehicle slippage identified at Q1 but a review will be carried out as part of the revised budget process.	Rolling programme		
SUB TOTAL		2,479,370	2,633,980	5,113,350	50,525	107,250				
TOTAL COMMITTED EXPENDITURE		4,911,520	24,190,190	29,101,710	1,085,908	375,250				

2026-27 Capital Budgets unspent at Q1 28,015,802

BUDGET RISK MATRIX 2026-29



Corporate Action plan 2026-27

Economic growth and regeneration

Title	Description	Managed By	Due Date	Title	Latest Note	Progress Bar	Status Icon
A. Regenerate central Kidderminster including completion of Future High Streets and Levelling Up Fund projects.	Delivery of LUF programme Delivery of FHSP programme	Ostap Paparega	30-June-2026	Town Centre Connectivity Project completion	The project is completed.	100%	
B. Redevelop former Crown House site, Lion Fields and other brownfield sites we own – mainly for housing	Delivery of Lion Fields Housing scheme Delivery of the former Crown House site Delivery of Market Street site	Ostap Paparega	31-December-2026	Delivery of Lion Fields Housing scheme	Work continued on developing the commercial structure and delivery approach for the scheme, with the Council progressing its role as a joint venture partner and supported by specialist consultancy expertise. Stage 1 invitation to tender send out to the Market. Deadline for submission 10 th of July.	25%	
				Delivery of Market Street site	Conversations held with provider with Padel Courts.	50%	
C. Progress the redevelopment of Bridge Street site, Stourport	Explore options for redeveloping the site.	Ostap Paparega	31-Mar-2028	Bridge Street car park redevelopment	Project is progressing in line with the programme, design work is underway and expected to be complete during Q2 2026-27, before progression to planning. Planning submission expected end of July/early August 2026.	25%	
D. Work with High Streets Task Force to develop and implement a vision for the regeneration of central Stourport	Develop and implement a vision for the regeneration of central Stourport	Ostap Paparega	31-November-2026	Implementation plan to be developed Autumn 2026	Working Group met during Q1 to agree objectives to progress the vision for the regeneration of Stourport. Full implementation plan to be developed over the coming months. Stourport Vision Steering group has been set up. Inaugural meeting held on 21 st of May 2026. Second meeting to take place on 16 th of July 2026 where the draft delivery/implementation plan will be discussed.	70%	

Agenda Item No. 9.1 Appendix 4

Title	Description	Managed By	Due Date	Title	Latest Note	Progress Bar	Status Icon
E. Work with partners to improve skill levels and make sure they are the skills employers need	Approval of UKSPF Projects	Ostap Paparega	31-Mar-2027	Careers Worcestershire	Following the approval from Cabinet WFDC is supporting Careers Worcester through 2026-28. Delivery will continue from the Point of Kidderminster College.	25%	
				Get Worcestershire Working	Working with other partners to form the 10-year skills strategy for Worcestershire. Once clarify on the direction on LGR this project might evolve into the delivery.	25%	
F. Make sure business support services are available to help businesses grow	Finance support from WFDC to provide business support initiatives	Ostap Paparega	31-Mar-2027	BetaDen	The further delivery planned in Summer 2026 at the Old Court.	25%	
				Worcs Growth Hub	Following Cabinet approval WFDC has agreed to fund directly the delivery of the Growth Hub until 2028.	25%	

Securing financial sustainability for services communities value

Title	Description	Managed By	Due Date	Title	Latest Note	Progress Bar	Status Icon
G. Increase net income from our commercial activities	Rental reviews and actions to obtain extra income	Faye Parrett	31-Mar-2027	Rent Reviews – complete all outstanding rent reviews and ensure current and future rent reviews are completed on time	Through the lease schedule there is accurate data to inform the team on any overdue rent reviews, this is being prioritised based on specific criteria, including potential value. Piloting using an external consultant for a high value review before a decision on whether we roll out further.	20%	
				Reduce number of vacant units	Completed full marketing re-launch of The Piano Building, including revised marketing arrangements to attract a wider range of occupiers. Completed lease commencement at The Old Court and continued occupation by BetaDen, supporting income generation from the building. Progressed Heads of Terms discussions for further occupancy at The Old Court. Signed off on the implementation of Rightmove to increase exposure, this will be implemented in Q2.	12%	
				Review service charge accounts for each property and create efficiencies where possible	This work will be done on an estate-by-estate basis. All properties managed as part of the MK2 contract have been reviewed.	20%	
				Let office space and F&B units in the Piano Building	New marketing material has been produced and engagement with the agents is ongoing.	10%	
				Let office space in The Old Court	Updated marketing and website planned for Q1. A new booking system for short term bookings will be implemented in Q2	40%	
H. Increase the visits to our nature reserves and make them more accessible	Delivery of the Wyre Forest Wild project.	Adam Hamilton	31-Mar-2027	Wyre Forest Wild project - to enhance local nature reserves through branding, improved visitor	Funding has been secured to continue roll out of the new signage	60%	

Agenda Item No. 9.1 Appendix 4

Title	Description	Managed By	Due Date	Title	Latest Note	Progress Bar	Status Icon
				facilities, and sustainable commercial opportunities			
				Development / Accessibility of Nature Reserves - to include paths, signage, transportation links, inclusive access, habitat improvement, etc.	No changes.	60%	
I. Complete the redevelopment of Brinton Park, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.	Deliver Brinton Park project as per National Lottery Heritage Fund plan	Kathryn Underhill	31-Mar-2027	Complete the redevelopment and open the park for public	Work has progressed. Expected to handover in Q2.	80%	
				Launch of the park event	Event planned for 12 th of September 2026.	25%	
J. Investigate options for developers to make biodiversity contributions on alternative sites	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) unit sales – Secure the legal framework, identify the areas of land to be allocated and develop the sale and promotion of these units	Adam Hamilton	31-Mar-2026	Investigate options for developers to make biodiversity contributions on alternative sites	In talks with other Local Authorities to investigate options – awaiting LGR announcement. To progress in Q2.	20%	
				Undertake financial assessment of these assets	Still exploring options for the piece of land that would put forward, linked to Burlish Meadows.	40%	
				Appoint a governing body for land management	Linked to Investigating options, on hold till LGR update.	20%	
				Confirm and approve sale units and locations; align with corporate policy	Still exploring options for the piece of land that would put forward, linked to Burlish Meadows.	40%	
				Develop a market-ready, credible product for promotion and trade	Director of Commercial Services has been talking to other Local authorities to investigate best way forward.	20%	

A clean, safe and green place to live, work and visit

Title	Description	Managed By	Due Date	Title	Latest Note	Progress Bar	Status Icon
K. Secure housing growth through the local plan	Support Sustainable Housing Delivery via Local Plan Implementation	Kate Bailey	31-Mar-2027	Local Plan Review and Housing Delivery	Local Plan Review Panel has been reestablished with its first meeting at the end of May. The Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal went out to consultation prior to adoption. 56 number of units were granted planning permission and 73 units of affordable housing were delivered.	25%	
N. Work with town councils and community groups to improve parks and open spaces.	Support localism by empowering town councils and community groups to lead improvements in parks and open spaces, ensuring developments reflect community needs and priorities	Kathryn Underhill	31-Mar-2027	Tranter of assets to Worcestershire Football Association	Heads of Terms are drafted and in negotiation with Worcestershire FA. Approval in principal to dispose of land scheduled at Cabinet 09/07/2026, if agreed, we will issue a notice to dispose of public open space.	25%	
				Transfer of assets of Kidderminster Town Council	Transfers are scheduled to be completed April 2027	75%	
				Transfer of assets of Stourport Town Council	Transfers are scheduled to be completed within Q2 2026	75%	
				Transfer of assets of Bewdley Town Council	Transfers are scheduled to be completed within Q2 2026	75%	

Agenda Item No. 9.1 Appendix 4

Title	Description	Managed By	Due Date	Title	Latest Note	Progress Bar	Status Icon
Q. Produce and implement a carbon reduction plan for the district and for the council	To deliver the 2026/27 climate change action plan	Kate Bailey	31-Mar-2027	Deliver the Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Action Plan	The installation of electric vehicle charge points commenced at council offices and Carbon Literacy Training has been delivered to staff from across the council. Regular meetings have been held with the Green Alliance and officer attendance at the cycle forum. Council officers supported the delivery of SusFest including the hosting of an opening event in Kidderminster at the Old Court to raise awareness of climate change and steps that people can take to support the reduction of emissions	25%	
R. Help people make their homes more energy efficient	Use the Warm Homes Local Grant to assist residents in enhancing their home's energy efficiency	Kate Bailey	31-Mar-2026	Complete minimum of 41 properties 2026-27	The Warm Homes funding has supported the delivery of measures into 22 properties in quarter one and a further property was assisted through the Councils Energy Efficiency funding.	25%	
S. Install electric charging points in car parks in all three towns	Install Electric Vehicle Charging Points across car parks in Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley	Ian Miller	31-Mar-2026	All EV charging points installed	For Q1, electric vehicle charging infrastructure was successfully installed at Green Street Depot and Wyre Forest House. Progress has also been made with NGED, and work is planned in Q2 to advance the installation of EV charging points in public car parks across the district.	5%	

Agenda Item No. 9.1 Appendix 4

Corporate Plan Priority	Corporate Action	Code	Measure	2024-25	2025-26	Q1 26-27	Q2 26-27	Q3 26-27	Q4 26-27
Securing financial sustainability for services that local communities value	Monitor council tax base to increase income	LA103	Percentage council tax collected	97.04%	96.23%	29.29%			
		LA104	Percentage business rates collected	96.93%	96.0%	28.37%			
Securing financial sustainability for services that local communities value	Monitor customer contacts to improve service provision	LA116	Number of customer contacts via hub (phone, email & visit)	45,406	42,437	10,352			
		LA117	% customer contacts that are of value	82%	81%	80%			
		LA112	Number complaints received	111	139	42			
		LA8	Number of compliments received	89	72	11			
A clean, safe and green place to live, work and visit	Secure housing growth through the local plan	LA045	Number of people presenting in need of housing advice	11,762	10,405	2,428			
		LA054a	Number of new housing units approved in planning applications <i>*open market and affordable housing</i>	191	1,655	56			
		LA039	Number of affordable new build houses completed	199	93	73			
		LA106	Percentage of applicable planning applications approved that will deliver Green Infrastructure	16.66%	10.20%	100%			

Agenda Item No. 9.1 Appendix 4

Corporate Plan Priority	Corporate Action	Code	Measure	2024-25	2025-26	Q1 26-27	Q2 26-27	Q3 26-27	Q4 26-27
		LA115	Percentage of non-major planning applications decided within 8 weeks or with an extension of time agreement	97.52%	94.02%	80%			
		LA118	Percentage of major planning applications decided within 13 weeks or with an extension of time agreement	100%	96%	97%			
		LA120	Number of planning appeal decisions received	25	21	7			
		LA127	Percentage of planning appeal decisions not upheld	26.2%	43.5%	58%			
		LA128	Number of biodiversity net gain units secured by planning permission	0	4.586	2.183			
		LA130	Number of open planning enforcement cases	251	276	135			

Agenda Item No. 9.1 Appendix 4

Corporate Plan Priority	Corporate Action	Code	Measure	2024-25	2025-26	Q1 26-27	Q2 26-27	Q3 26-27	Q4 26-27
A clean, safe and green place to live, work and visit	Support provided to low-income households	*LA102	Amount spent on hardship/welfare support	£577,827	£406,617	£21,579			
		LE144	Number of households on council tax reduction scheme	-	7,459	7,520			
		LE145	Number of households on housing benefit	-	2,309	2,285			
		LA146	Average days to process new housing benefit claims	24.59 days	19.3 days	24.59 days			
		LA147	Average days to process new council tax reduction scheme claims	72.58 days	25 days	30.80 days			
		LA148	Average days to process housing benefit change of circumstances	9.68 days	6 days	9.04 days			
		LA149	Average days to process council tax reduction scheme changes of circumstances	22.26 days	10.9 days	15.42 days			
A clean, safe and green place to live, work and visit	Contribute to making the district a clean, safe and green place to live, work and visit	**LA150	Number of cyber security incidents detected from various sources and systems <i>including emails, endpoints and web browsing</i>	-	1,825,491	1,134,970			
Corporate Plan Priority	Corporate Action	Code	Measure	2024-25	2025-26	Q1 26-27	Q2 26-27	Q3 26-27	Q4 26-27
A clean, safe and green place to live, work and	Contribute to making the district	****LA107	Number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued (total)	110	96	26			

Agenda Item No. 9.1 Appendix 4

visit	a clean, safe and green place to live, work and visit	*****LA071	Number of Fly-tipping Incidents	832	1,023	61			
		NEW LA107f	Number of Fly-tipping Prosecutions Secured	-	0	0			
		LA107d	FPN – Fly Tipping	3	7	2			
		LA107a	FPN – Littering	55	58	18			
		LA107c	FPN – Duty of Care	1	0	0			
		LA107e	FPN – Waste Carriers	9	0	0			
		NEW LA107f	FPN – WTN/Duty of Care	-	-	0			
		NEW LA107g	FPN – Abandoned Vehicle	-	-	3			
		NEW LA107h	FPN – Breach of CPN	-	-	0			
		NEW LA107i	FPN – Distribution	-	-	0			
		NEW LA107j	FPN – Fly Post/Graffiti	-	-	0			
		NEW LA107k	FPN – Nuisance Parking	-	-	0			
		NEW LA107l	FPN – PSPO Dog Control	-	-	0			
		NEW LA107m	FPN – PSPO Drinking ASB	-	-	3			
		LE011a LE011b	Number of Penalty Charge Notices issued						
			Off street	2,528	1,869	536			
			On street	3,585	3,811	955			
			In total	6,113	5,680	1,491			

Agenda Item No. 9.1 Appendix 4

		LE016	Number of visitors to Bewdley Museum	220,245	221,578	59,660			
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Corporate Plan Priority	Corporate Action	Code	Measure	2024-25	2025-26	Q1 26-27	Q2 26-27	Q3 26-27	Q4 26-27
A clean, safe and green place to live, work and visit	Contribute to making the district a clean, safe and green place to live, work and visit	LE032	Number of visitors to Wyre Forest Leisure Centre	596,305	597,596	151,614			
		***LA108	Number of new trees planted	10,270	3,608	0			
		LA044	Number of residents who experience a positive health outcome because of a housing improvement intervention	275	252	37			
		LA152	Tonnes of CO2 equivalent from WFDC fleet and operations – yearly	-	916.17 tCO ₂ e	-			
		LA153	Number of homes and businesses receiving flood risk reduction measures	-	25	0			
		LA154	Total household waste collected monthly, kg per household.	38	37.03	56.31			
		LA155	Total household recycling, kg per household.	15	15.9	14.66			
		LA065	Percentage household waste reused/recycled/ composted – (annual)	35%	33%	-			

Agenda Item No. 9.1 Appendix 4

*LA102 - The welfare figures are £21,580, which is significantly lower than the figures reported in Q1 last year. This is due to the Household Support Fund ending in March 2026 and a reduction in Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Awards following amendments to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

**LA150 - The first-quarter figure of 1,134,970 is unusually high due to a significant increase in activity recorded during the reporting period. In May, Mimecast detected and rejected approximately 747,000 inbound emails, likely driven by a large-scale spam campaign. In addition, the number of CrowdStrike vulnerabilities detected and resolved increased substantially following a major Microsoft update. These exceptional events have contributed significantly to the overall quarterly total.

*** LA108 - No trees were planted during Quarter 1 (April–June) as tree planting activities are typically undertaken during the autumn and winter planting season, when cooler temperatures and higher soil moisture levels provide the best conditions for successful establishment and growth. Planting is therefore scheduled for later in the year.

****La107a -m The Fixed Penalty Notice indicator is broken down by offence type to provide greater visibility of enforcement activity. Whilst fly-tipping incidents remain the most frequently reported environmental offence, enforcement action is dependent on the availability of sufficient evidence. Littering continues to account for the majority of FPNs issued. Additional categories introduced in 2026/27 provide a more detailed understanding of enforcement activity across environmental and community protection functions.

****La71 - The number of reported fly-tipping incidents is based on cases logged through the My Wyre Forest portal. The reduction in incidents compared with previous periods is believed to reflect the impact of increased enforcement officer presence across the district, proactive high-profile enforcement activity, and robust follow-up action on reported incidents where evidence is available. A notable decrease has been observed in known fly-tipping hotspot locations, suggesting that these measures are contributing to improved compliance and deterrence.

Appendix of FPN

Offence/Category	Definition
Number of Fly-tipping Incidents	The total number of reported or identified incidents where waste has been illegally deposited on land without the permission of the landowner during the reporting period.
Number of Fly-tipping	The total number of successful prosecutions concluded during the reporting period against individuals or organisations for

Agenda Item No. 9.1 Appendix 4

Prosecutions Secured	offences relating to fly-tipping, resulting in a conviction or other court-imposed penalty.
Number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued (total)	The total number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued for all environmental and community enforcement offences during the reporting period.
FPN – Fly Tipping	Issued to a person for the illegal deposit of waste on land without the permission of the landowner or the appropriate environmental authority.
FPN – Littering	Issued to a person who unlawfully drops, throws, or leaves litter in a public place or on land open to the public.
FPN – Duty of Care	Issued for failing to comply with the legal duty to store, transfer, or dispose of waste responsibly, ensuring it is only passed to an authorised person.
FPN – Waste Carriers	Issued to a person or business transporting controlled waste without being registered as a licensed waste carrier, where registration is required.
FPN – WTN/Duty of Care	Issued for failing to produce or complete a Waste Transfer Note (WTN), or for breaches of waste duty of care requirements relating to the transfer of controlled waste.
FPN – Abandoned Vehicle	Issued where legislation allows enforcement against a person responsible for abandoning a vehicle on public or private land without lawful authority.
FPN – Breach of CPN	Issued for failing to comply with the requirements of a Community Protection Notice (CPN), which is designed to stop unreasonable and persistent anti-social behaviour.
FPN – Distribution	Issued for the unauthorised distribution of free printed material (such as leaflets or flyers) in a designated area without the required consent.
FPN – Fly Post/Graffiti	Issued for illegally displaying posters, advertisements, or graffiti on buildings, street furniture, or other structures without permission.

Agenda Item No. 9.1 Appendix 4

FPN – Nuisance Parking	Issued for parking offences covered by local legislation or a Public Spaces Protection Order, where vehicles cause nuisance or obstruction (excluding standard traffic enforcement).
FPN – PSPO Dog Control	Issued for breaching a dog-related Public Spaces Protection Order, such as failing to keep a dog on a lead, allowing dogs into prohibited areas, or failing to pick up dog fouling where specified by the order.
FPN – PSPO Drinking ASB	Issued for breaching a Public Spaces Protection Order relating to alcohol consumption or associated anti-social behaviour in designated public spaces.

Local Outcomes Framework (LOF) Q1

Purpose

The Local Outcomes Framework (LOF) has been adopted to provide a consistent set of outcome measures that allow Wyre Forest District Council to benchmark performance against CIPFA nearest neighbours and identify areas where local interventions are having a positive impact or where further improvement is required.

Future LOF Reporting

To ensure reporting remains focused and manageable, the Local Outcomes Framework indicators will be reported on a phased quarterly basis throughout the year. This approach allows performance and outcome measures to be reviewed in themed groups aligned to Council priorities. Only measures where the council is showing as an outlier, will be reported.

- **Quarter 1** will report on **Performance Indicators (PIs)** covering **Groups 1, 2 and 3**: Housing Supply, Housing Quality and Safety, and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping.
- **Quarter 2** will report on **Performance Indicators (PIs)** covering **Groups 4–12**, including Multiple Disadvantage, Best Start in Life, Every Child Achieving and Thriving, Keeping Children Safe and Family Security, Health and Wellbeing, Adult Social Care, and Neighbourhoods.
- **Quarter 3** will report on **Performance Indicators (PIs)** covering **Groups 13 and 14**: Environment, Circular Economy and Climate Change, and Transport and Local Infrastructure.
- **Quarter 4** will report on **Performance Indicators (PIs)** covering **Group 15**, Economic Prosperity and Regeneration, together with the associated contextual outcome measures, including Child Poverty.

For Quarter 1, reporting focuses on the four LOF themes of Housing Supply, Housing Quality and Safety, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping.

Note: **Multiple Disadvantage** was initially identified for inclusion within the Quarter 1 LOF report. However, the theme currently comprises placeholder indicators only, with no published data available. Reporting will commence once baseline measures have been developed and validated, allowing performance to be tracked over time.

Why These Outcomes Were Selected for Q1

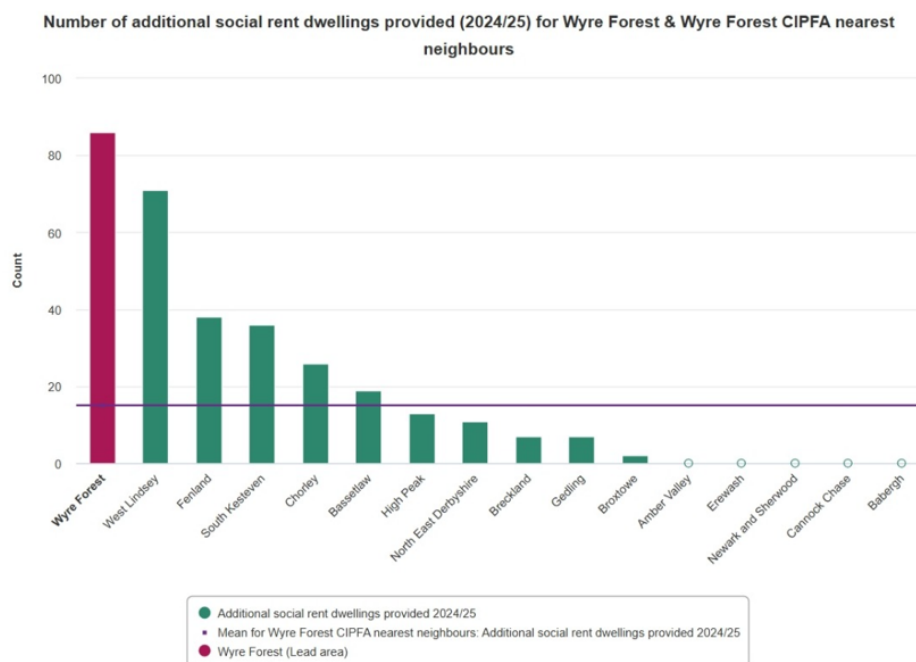
The Q1 outcomes have been selected because housing and homelessness represent key priorities for Wyre Forest and are areas where the district council has direct influence and statutory responsibilities. The themes provide an early assessment of:

- The availability and affordability of housing.

- The quality and sustainability of homes across the district.
- The effectiveness of homelessness prevention services.
- Support for vulnerable residents experiencing complex needs and disadvantage.

Collectively, these outcomes align closely with council priorities relating to housing delivery, supporting communities, reducing inequalities, and improving residents' quality of life. Monitoring these measures quarterly allows the council to identify emerging trends, compare performance with similar authorities, and target resources where improvement is needed.

Number of additional social rent dwellings provided



Comments: In 2024/25, the number of additional social rent dwellings provided in Wyre Forest was 86, which is above the Wyre Forest CIPFA nearest neighbours mean number of additional social rent dwellings provided of 15.

This is the number of completed additional units to the social rent in the area, as part of the affordable housing supply. It includes new build and acquisitions.

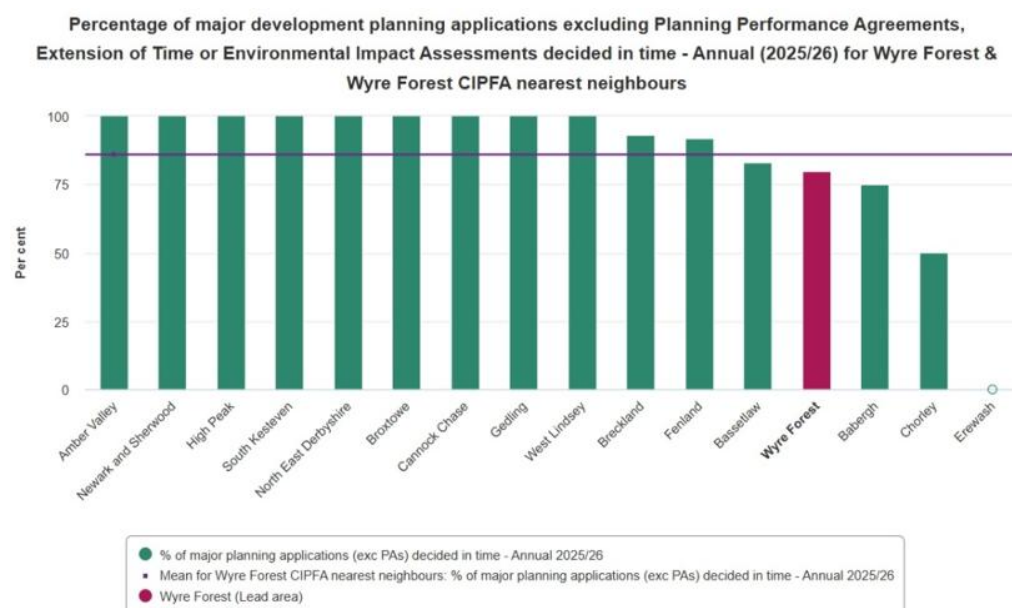


Comments: Polarity: Low value is good.

In 2025, the ratio of median house price to median gross annual (workplace-based) earnings in Wyre Forest was 8.08, which is above the Wyre Forest CIPFA nearest neighbours mean ratio of median house price to median gross annual (workplace-based) earnings of 7.27.

This is the median housing affordability ratio (workplace-based) and is calculated by dividing house prices by gross annual earnings, based on the median of both house prices and earnings.

This measure of affordability indicates the extent to which employees can afford to live where they work, not where they necessarily already live, which effectively reflects the house-buying power of employees. A higher ratio indicates that on average, it is less affordable for a resident to purchase a house. Conversely, a lower ratio indicates higher affordability in a local authority.



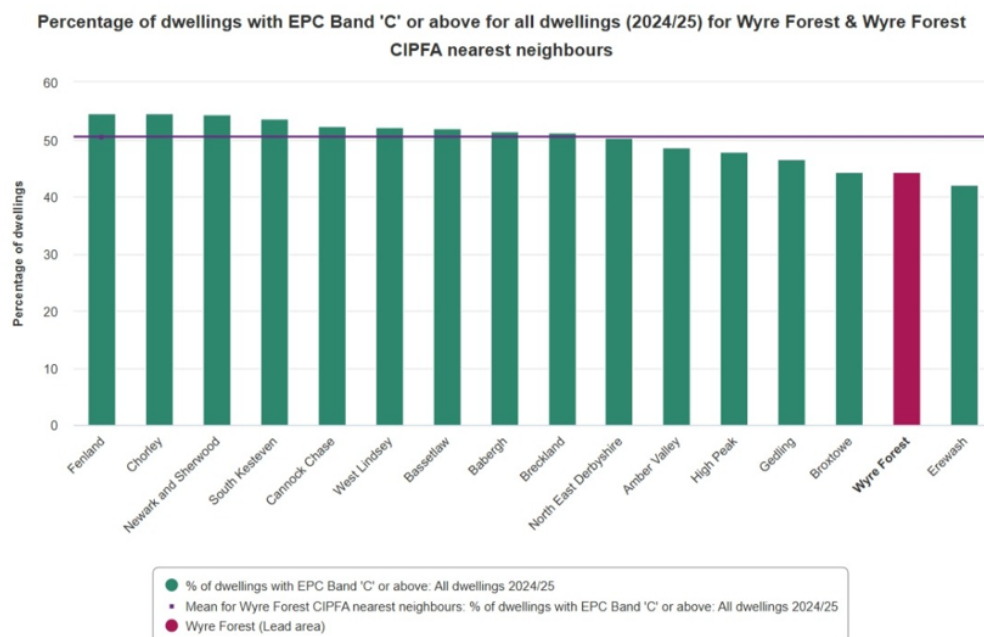
Comments: Polarity: High Value is good.

In 2025/26, the percentage of planning applications decided on time in Wyre Forest was 80%, which is below the Wyre Forest CIPFA nearest neighbours mean percentage of planning applications decided on time of 86%.

This is the percentage of major development planning application decisions (PAs) that do not have a Planning Performance Agreement (PPAs), Extension of Time (EoT) and/or Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), determined in a timely manner, each financial year.

A timely manner is statutory defined as within 13 weeks or unless an application is subject to Environmental Impact Assessment, in which case a 16 weeks period applies, for all major applications.

- 2. Housing quality and safety

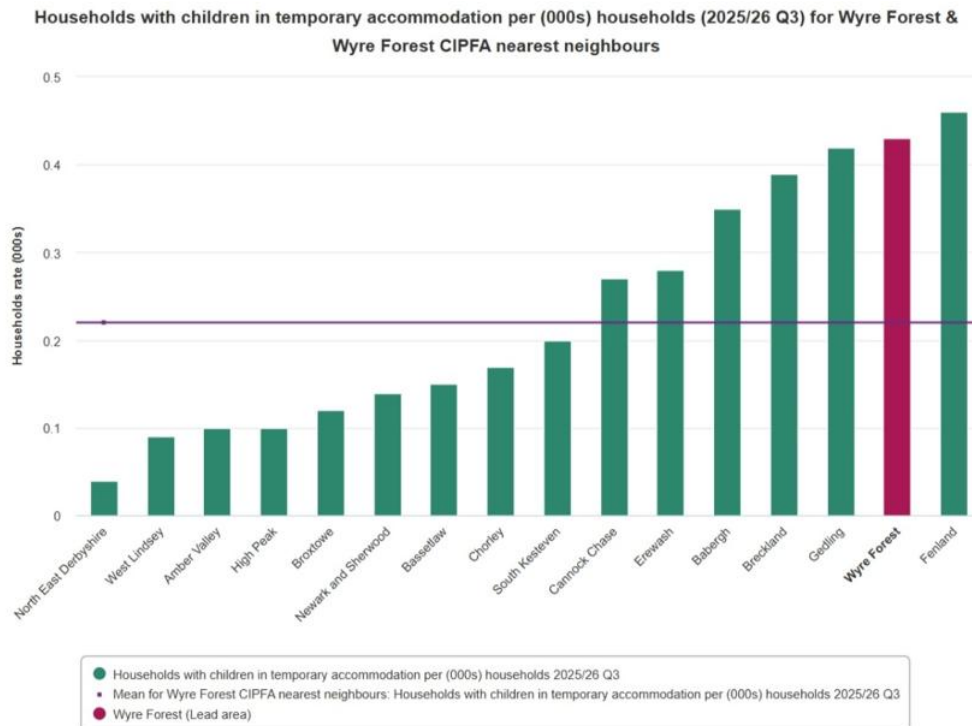


Comments: Polarity – High value is good.

In 2024/25, the percentage of dwellings with EPC Band 'C' or above in Wyre Forest was 44.25%, which is below the Wyre Forest CIPFA nearest neighbours mean percentage of dwellings with EPC Band 'C' or above of 50.38%.

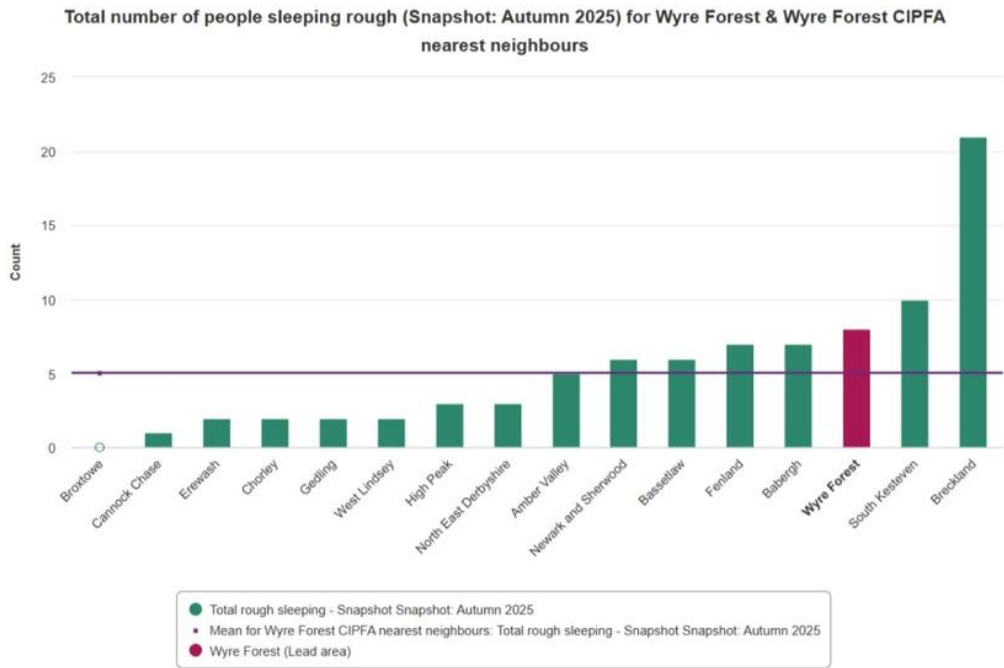
This is the proportion of all dwellings with Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band 'C' or above in the area. It is calculated by working out the percentage of EPC lodgements recorded with an energy efficiency score of 69 or above in a given area. The energy efficiency score shows the energy efficiency of a building at the time of its EPC assessment. The higher the score, the more energy efficient a building is.

• **3. Homelessness and rough sleeping**



Comments: Polarity – Low value is good.

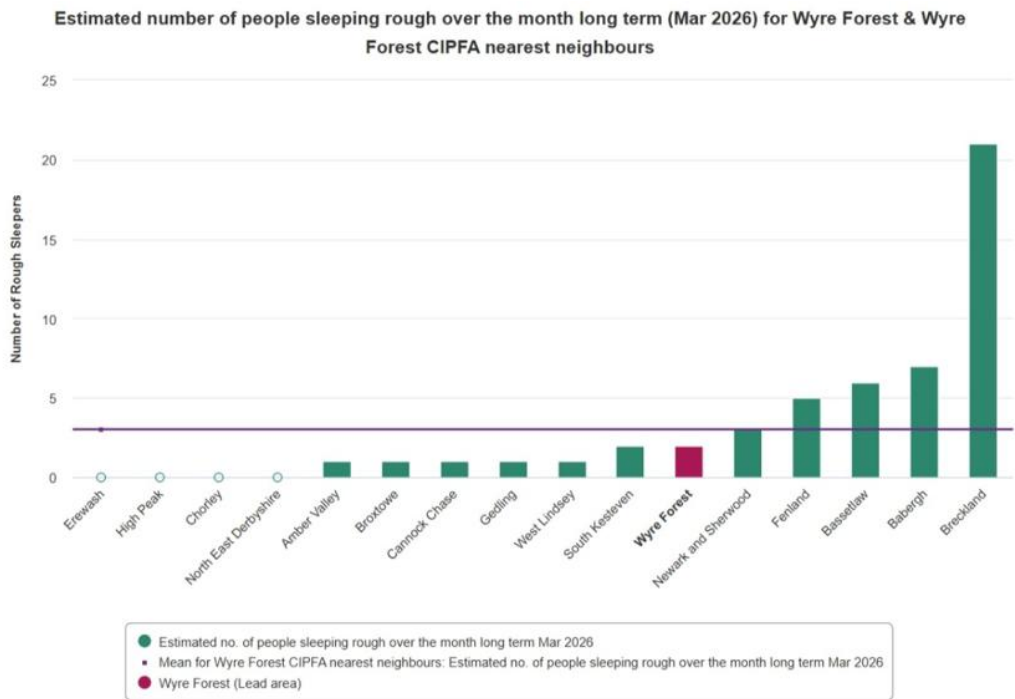
In 2025/26 Q3, the rate of households with children in temporary accommodation in Wyre Forest was 0.43, which is above the Wyre Forest CIPFA nearest neighbours mean rate of households in temporary accommodation with children of 0.22.



Comments: Polarity – Low value is good.

Autumn 2025, the total number of people sleeping rough in Wyre Forest was 8, which is above the Wyre Forest CIPFA nearest neighbours mean number of people sleeping rough of 5.

People sleeping rough are defined as those sleeping or about to bed down in open air locations and other places including tents and make shift shelters. The snapshot does not include people in hostels or shelters, sofa surfers or those in recreational or organised protest, squatter or traveller campsites. The snapshot records only those people seen, or thought to be, sleeping rough on a single night.



Comments: Polarity – Low value is good.

In Mar 2026, the number of people sleeping rough long term in Wyre Forest was 2, which is below the Wyre Forest CIPFA nearest neighbours mean number of people sleeping rough long term of 3.

This is the estimated number of people sleeping rough over the month long term. The number of people sleeping rough on a single night is an estimated figure determined from outreach contacts, or from a Point-in-Time snapshot.

- **4. Multiple disadvantage**

A few placeholders but no data:

1. Percentage of people in substance use treatment flagged as experiencing multiple disadvantage, achieving significant progress in treatment [Placeholder] – no data yet
2. Percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved for households experiencing multiple disadvantage [Placeholder] (a cohort of the homelessness and rough sleeping metric) – no data yet

Overall, Q1 results show **strong performance in housing delivery and homelessness prevention**, but also highlight challenges around **housing affordability, energy efficiency, temporary accommodation pressures, and rough sleeping levels**. These findings provide a robust evidence base for future service planning and performance improvement activity.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

Wednesday 16 September 2026

Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 3 September 2026

Budget and Performance Monitoring First Quarter 2026-27

The Committee considered a draft of a Cabinet report from the Director of Resources and s151 Officer

The Principal Finance Manager and Deputy s151 Officer presented the report and outlined the key issues. The Committee fully scrutinised the report and were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

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

- 1.1 The projected budget variations, virements and comments within the report and Appendices 1 to 3.**
- 1.2 The performance against measures and actions as set out in the report and Appendix 4.**
- 1.3 The recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 3rd September 2026.**

Background papers:

See the report on page 15 of the pdf at this link:

https://forms.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/docs/doc61592_20260903_o_and_s_committee_agenda.pdf

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET REPORT

16th September 2026

Contract for the Supply of Electricity

Open	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor David Ross, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Faye Parrett, Director of Commercial Services
CONTACT OFFICERS:	James Leach – Ext. 2717 Facilities Manager James.leach@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek cabinet approval to use the West Mercia Energy framework to enter a contract for the supply of electricity as required by the Contract Procedure Rules for services over the value of £170,000.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Cabinet is asked to:

- **Approve entering into a direct award contract with West Mercia Energy for the provision of electricity using the Flexible Electricity Framework for a period of 3 years with the option to extend for a further 2 years.**
- **Delegate authority to the Director of Commercial Services, in consultation with Director of Legal and Governance, Director of Resources, and Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio to award the electricity supply contract.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council's current purchasing agent for electricity is the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) with Npower as the supplier which expires 31st March 2027.
- 3.2 The current agreement is used to supply electricity to all sites owned and managed by WFDC, with any sites managed by tenants or managing agents being subject to separate supply agreements.
- 3.3 The energy performance report published by Box Power CIC shows that in previous years, West Mercia Energy supply prices were more competitive than the YPO framework used by WFDC. Over the five-year period, West Mercia Energy was approximately 16% cheaper, and whilst this cannot be guaranteed for future years, it demonstrates that West Mercia Energy have effective purchasing arrangements in place to ensure pricing is competitive for customers.

Table showing the price comparison between YPO Framework used by WFDC and West Mercia Energy from 2021 - 2025

Year	p/kWh YPO – current supplier for WFDC	p/kWh West Mercia Energy
2021/22 (inc VAT)	18.21	18.35
2022/23 (inc VAT)	34.59	25.25
2023/24 (excl VAT)	41.70	27.61
2024/25 (excl VAT)	29.90	29.44
2025/26* (excl VAT)	20.92	20.73

*Data has not been published by Box Power CIC for 2025/26; however average rates have been calculated by WFDC.

- 3.4 The figures are presented on a like-for-like basis for each individual year. However, direct comparison between years should be treated with caution, as the available source data differs by year. For example, some years include VAT while others exclude VAT, and the level of detail available from suppliers varies. The figures shown represent the most comparable rates available for each year, allowing a fair comparison between YPO and West Mercia Energy within that year.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The West Mercia Energy framework followed UK public procurement requirements and is compliant with the advertising requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations.
- 4.2 The new electricity contract will cover the period 1st April 2027 – 31st March 2031. This enables the Council to procure its supply at the most competitive rate without the need to directly run a procurement process.
- 4.3 Green energy from renewable sources (Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin - REGO) continues to be available under the new framework, if required. The current premium for REGO is 0.134p/kWh (in addition to the cost of standard electricity). On both the YPO framework and the West Mercia Energy framework REGO prices are aligned with the current market value, and therefore choice of framework should not affect the cost of green energy for WFDC.
- 4.4 West Mercia Energy offers a fully managed service, which includes bill validation, budget & energy reporting. This service would provide added value to WFDC and will reduce the amount of time that WFDC officers spend dealing with incorrect invoices and billing errors.
- 4.5 The Council must enter into a contract with West Mercia Energy by 1st October 2026 to be included in purchasing arrangements from 1st April 2027.

- 4.6 By joining the West Mercia Energy framework, WFDC will be greater aligned with. Worcestershire County Council, providing a smoother transition during local government reorganisation depending upon the final option chosen.
- 4.7 Volume estimates for each site are provided to West Mercia Energy in advance of each contract year and are reviewed at regular intervals to ensure consumption estimates are correct. Any consumption over or under the estimate will have no financial impact upon WFDC as volumes are managed by West Mercia Energy and are offset against customers within the same purchasing basket.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The estimated electricity spend in the 2026-2027 financial year is £401,979 based upon current supply prices and an annual consumption of 1,392,939 kWh, however it is difficult to estimate the overall value of the contract from April 2027 due to flexible purchasing arrangements as described in 7.2 below. The additional cost for green energy based on the current premium (this fluctuates daily) is estimated to be c £2,000 per annum.
- 5.2 There is no upfront cost for the fully managed service as costs are included within the kWh unit rate and daily standing charges. Costs for the managed service will total approximately £6,500 more per annum in standing charges than the current framework, however it is anticipated that this will be offset by the lower cost of energy and operational efficiencies.
- 5.3 West Mercia Energy set a maximum unit price each year which will allow WFDC to estimate electricity budgets each year with greater accuracy.
- 5.4 There continues to be volatility in the energy supply market due to significant events around the world. Electricity market prices increased sharply in 2021 and peaked in 2023, although prices still remain significantly above those seen in early 2021. Due to this volatility within the market, future price trends are currently unclear.
- 5.5 We are an Associate Member of the YPO framework and receive a small dividend in return, however this would not significantly impact any decision.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 As stated in the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules Cabinet Approval is sought for procurements where the value of the purchase is estimated to be in excess of £170,000.
- 6.2 The Contract Procedure Rules permit the use of framework agreements where the Procurement Officer and Director of Legal and Governance are satisfied that the Council can lawfully use them and that it is in the Council's interest to do so.
- 6.3 The terms and conditions have been reviewed by the Contracts Solicitor, and these are confirmed as being suitable for WFDC.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Failure to procure a new electricity supply contract in time for April 2027 will result in WFDC being moved onto a standard variable price tariff and paying the market price at any given time which would be much more expensive.
- 7.2 A flexible price contract has been chosen as they are deemed to be lower risk than fixed price contracts. As a proportion of the electricity is purchased ahead of the delivery period, flexible price contracts can take advantage of any reductions in market price whilst also smoothing out any peaks when they occur.
- 7.3 Energy procurement and supply is the core business of West Mercia Energy and therefore there is a focus upon driving down supply costs through a large, dedicated team. This provides resilience for the framework and helps to limit risk to WFDC, in comparison to other frameworks that have a limited team, where loss of staff can impact upon framework delivery. E.g. higher prices due to lack of purchasing in advance.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 This is a financial report and there is no requirement to consider an Equality Impact Assessment.
- 8.2 There are no anticipated adverse impact on health outcomes due to the agreement to enter into this contract.
- 8.3 The use of green energy on suitable WFDC sites supports the Council's commitment to sustainability by reducing carbon emissions, and contributing to improved environmental and public health outcomes.
- 8.4 The council currently uses green energy across all Council-occupied premises (admin buildings, museum, car parks, public conveniences etc.) as per the Climate Action and Carbon Reduction Plan 2024-2027.

9. CONCLUSION

Approval is sought to use the WME framework to enter into a contract for the supply of electricity. The Cabinet is recommended to approve the recommendations in section 2 of this report.

10. CONSULTEES

Director of Commercial Services
Contracts Solicitor
Procurement Officer
Finance Officer
Property Services Manager
Facilities Manager

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
16 September 2026

Consultation on potential changes to council tax reduction scheme for 2027-28 onwards

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor David Ross Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Lucy Wright, Director of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services lucy.wright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To consider whether to consult on potential changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2027-28 onwards.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to APPROVE the commencement of a public consultation on increasing the maximum level of discount for working age Council Tax Reduction Scheme claimants from 90% to 100% from 1 April 2027.**

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) is a locally designed scheme that provides financial assistance to low-income households by reducing the amount of council tax they are required to pay.
- 3.2 Under paragraph 4 of Schedule 1A to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 the Council is required to consider whether to revise its scheme or to replace its scheme for the forthcoming financial year. This report discharges that duty. If changes are proposed, the Council is required to undertake public consultation before a final decision is made.
- 3.3 Since its introduction in April 2013, CTRS has replaced the former national Council Tax Benefit scheme. Support for pension age households is prescribed by central government while councils have discretion over support given to working age applicants. Pensioners broadly receive the same level of support that was previously available under the Council Tax Benefit scheme which is up to 100%.

Maximum discount level

- 3.4 Wyre Forest currently operates an income-banded scheme for working-age households. Since April 2023, eligible households have received reductions of 30%, 50%, 70% or 90%, depending on income and household composition. As a result, all working-age households currently contribute at least 10% of their council tax liability. The discount received is based on the weekly household income bands (£ per week) and household circumstances set out in the following table.

Discount	single	couples	lone parent 1 child	lone parent >1 child	couples 1 child	couples >1 child
90%	0 - 107.99	0 - 157.99	0 - 204.99	0 - 278.99	0 - 242.99	0 - 332.99
70%	108 -138.99	158-187.99	205-255.99	279-314.99	243-295.99	333-364.99
50%	139 -169.99	188-222.99	256-281.99	315-345.99	296-324.99	365-399.99
30%	170 -203.99	223-257.99	282-308.99	346-377.99	325-357.99	400-434.99

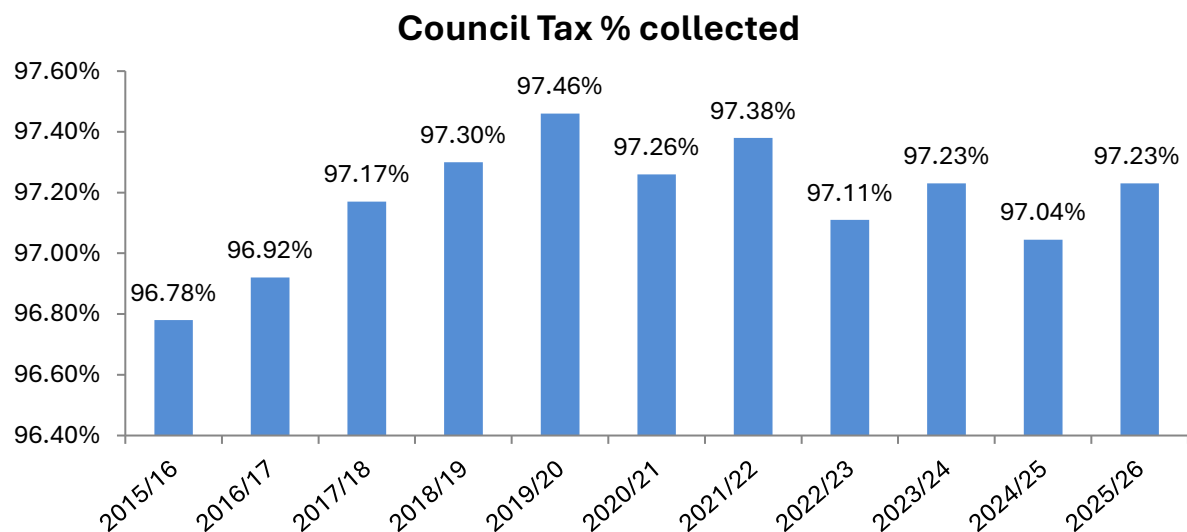
- 3.5 Analysis of the council tax forecasting data for 2026-27 shows that 3,875 working age CTRS households receive the maximum 90% discount, representing 86% of the working age CTRS caseload. These households account for over £4.8 m of CTRS expenditure and have a net collectable council tax liability of approximately £537,000.
- 3.6 It has been announced that North Worcestershire Council will become the successor authority following the abolition of Wyre Forest District Council in March 2028. From April 2028, a single Council Tax Reduction Scheme will be required across the new authority area. It is therefore appropriate that this annual review takes account of the approaches currently adopted by Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council, as well as the practical implications of future scheme harmonisation.
- 3.7 While the detailed design of the future North Worcestershire scheme has yet to be determined, both Bromsgrove and Redditch currently provide up to 100% support for their lowest-income households. Increasing the maximum level of support in Wyre Forest from 90% to 100% would provide additional assistance to residents experiencing the greatest financial hardship and would represent a step towards greater consistency across North Worcestershire ahead of local government reorganisation.
- 3.8 CTRS is applied as a discount to council tax. Any increase in support would reduce the council tax base and therefore the amount of council tax available for collection across all precepting authorities. However CTRS is only one of several factors affecting the tax base. Statutory exemptions and discounts, including the 25% single person discount, also reduce the tax base and are not based on household income. Whilst increasing CTRS support would reduce the tax base, **only council tax that is collected can be regarded as income** to the collection fund.

Removal of the two-child cap limit

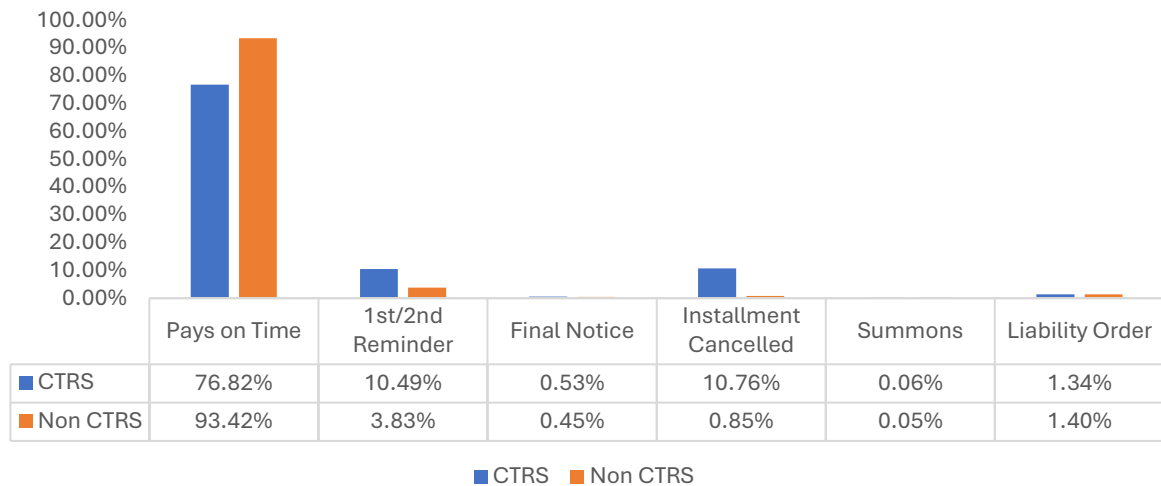
- 3.9 In November 2025, the government announced the removal of the Universal Credit two-child limit from April 2026. This cap may increase Universal Credit entitlement for some households with three or more dependant children.
- 3.10 Analysis of the current caseload indicates that approximately 62% of affected households would experience no change to their CTRS entitlement as a result of the increased UC entitlement. Around 160 households may have seen a reduction in CTRS support.
- 3.11 The impact of this change has been considered as part of the annual review. It is proposed that no amendment is made to the CTRS rules for 2027-28 and that individual cases of financial hardship continue to be considered through the Council's discretionary hardship scheme as they are currently. A table including the pros and cons of options considered are set out in the table at paragraph 4.6.

Collection performance

- 3.12 The current scheme continues to provide effective support for low-income households which is supplemented by a council tax hardship fund. Worcestershire County Council contributes £80,000 annually towards hardship assistance.
- 3.13 Although overall council tax collection rates remain strong, recovery activity has become increasingly challenging since the pandemic due to continuing cost-of-living pressures. These challenges are most acute among households receiving CTRS.

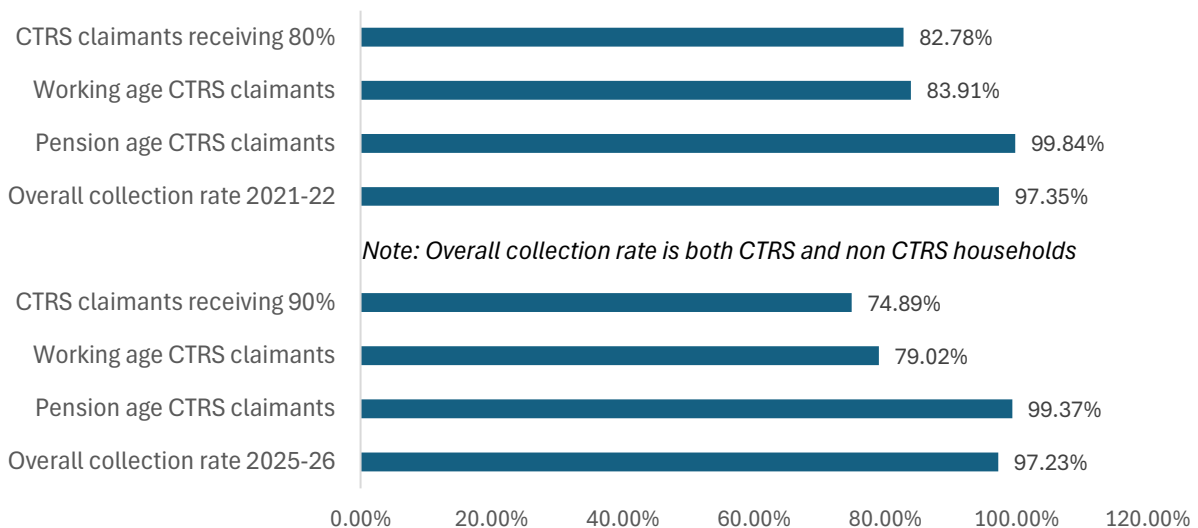


Recovery stages - CTRS and non CTRS accounts 2026-27



- 3.14 As at July 2026, 23% of households receiving CTRS are in council tax arrears compared to 6.5% of non-CTRS households. While arrears balances are generally lower among CTRS recipients, collection activity is often more resource-intensive relative to the value of debt recovered.
- 3.15 In 2025-26, the end of year collection rate for all households was 97.23%. The collection rate for working age CTRS households was 79.02% and for CTRS claimants receiving the maximum 90% discount, the collection rates fell to 74.89%.
- 3.16 The following chart shows that increasing the maximum discount from 80% to 90% in 2023 has not led to improved collection rates for working age CTRS households as expected. Collection rates, for CTRS recipients, have fallen by almost 5% over the last five years reflecting the increasing difficulty of collecting smaller balances from households on the lowest incomes.

Collection rates 2021-22 vs 2025-26



4.0 KEY ISSUES

Alternative options considered

- 4.1 Annual increases in council tax liabilities places pressure on the lowest-income households. Given the limited recovery options available where financial hardship exists, there is merit in considering whether the minimum contribution currently required from households receiving the maximum level of CTRS should be removed.
- 4.2 Increasing support to 100% would increase the overall cost of the scheme. However, it may improve collection outcomes by reducing arrears among the poorest households and allowing collection activity to focus on debts with a greater likelihood of recovery.
- 4.3 Consideration has been given to increasing the minimum contribution required from working-age households. This would reduce scheme costs but could place additional financial pressure on vulnerable residents, increase demand for hardship support and lead to higher levels of arrears and write-off.
- 4.4 The Council and its precepting partners continue to face significant financial pressures. Any changes agreed for 2027-28 will operate for one year only before a single scheme is developed for implementation across North Worcestershire Council from April 2028. It is important that any proposed amendments strike an appropriate balance between providing additional support to residents and maintaining financial sustainability. The proposed scheme seeks to achieve that by increasing support for the lowest income households without introducing the higher costs associated with adopting neighbouring schemes in full such as replicating their income bands or discount steps.
- 4.5 The creation of North Worcestershire Council will mean agreeing a single Council Tax Reduction Scheme across the new authority area from April 2028. Responsibility for determining that scheme will rest with the Shadow Authority – it will have to decide on the scheme no later than 11 March 2028, following consultation, although in practice the decision is likely to be made before that date. It would be inappropriate for Wyre Forest District Council to make fundamental changes to its local scheme immediately prior to reorganisation, particularly where doing so could be perceived as adding significantly to costs or prejudging decisions that belong to the successor authority. Thus the proposed amendments are intentionally limited to increasing support for the lowest-income households whilst avoiding wholesale adoption of neighbouring schemes ahead of the formal harmonisation process.
- 4.6 There are various options available for consideration when determining the scheme for 2026-27 and these have been summarised in the table overleaf:

Options	Pros	Cons
Option 1 – maintain scheme <i>including no change to 2-child limit</i>	- Stable and familiar to residents and staff - History of ongoing reduction in expenditure - No significant budget implications - Avoids unintended hardship that could arise if support is reduced - Minimises disruption ahead of LGR	- Two child limit does not align with the changes to welfare benefits (already the case in 2026-27) - May create misalignment with neighbouring authorities ahead of 2028 if they change their scheme - Whilst CTRS is not a benefit but a discount, some claimants may challenge the authority's decision not to change the scheme.
Option 2 – reduce support	Potential to lower overall scheme costs	- Likely to increase arrears, write offs and hardship applications and increase the administrative burden - Increased risk of higher number of households in poverty - Recovery of smaller amounts is resource intensive resulting in greater workloads for staff - Limited recovery options for those on UC - Would create further misalignment ahead of LGR
Option 3 – increase support (up to 100%)	- Aligns with Redditch & Bromsgrove schemes which will be of benefit for LGR considerations - A preventative measure that reduces poverty-related risks and helps residents remain financially stable and avoids higher cost interventions later - Simplifies collection and reduces administrative burden - Contributes to reducing poverty and financial hardship for the lowest income households - Fewer small balances to recover or write off - Focuses staff resources on collecting higher value debts	Increases total expenditure for both the authority and all preceptors (the costs of any increase would be borne in proportion to the Council Tax share which is 11% for WFDC)
Option 4 – amend the two-child limit	- Aligns with central government policy - Supports larger, low income families and reduces child poverty	- Increases total expenditure for all preceptors (11% of which would be met by WFDC) - Makes simple income grid more complex - May introduce complexity ahead of 2028 scheme harmonisation

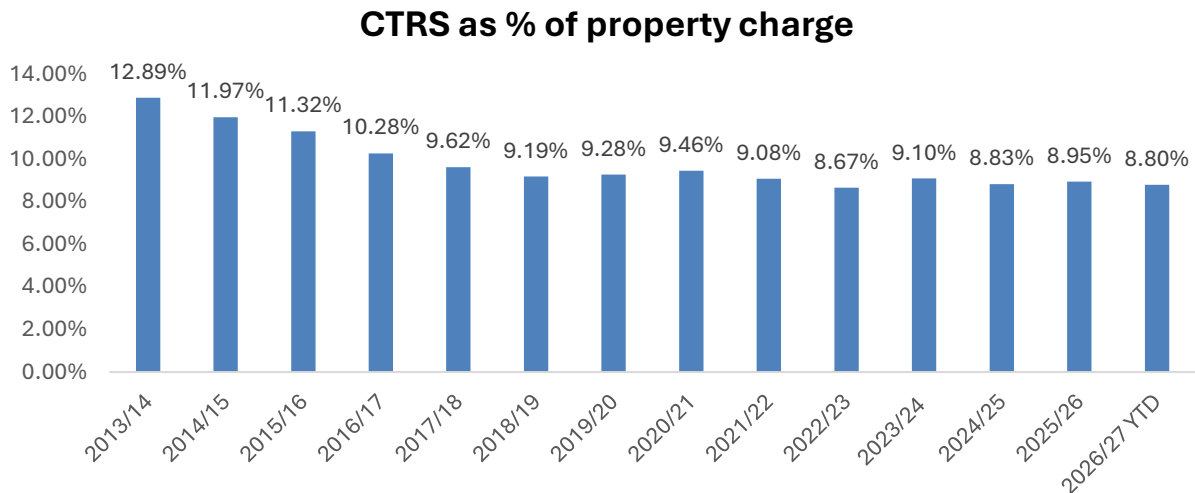
- 4.7 Based on the review undertaken, this report seeks approval to consult on increasing the maximum discount for working-age CTRS claimants from 90% to 100% from 1 April 2027. No other major changes to the scheme are proposed but the consultation documentation will be prepared in accordance with the principles established by the Supreme Court in *Moseley*. In addition to setting out the preferred option, consultees will be provided with information on the alternative options considered as part of the review including maintaining the current scheme or reducing support. This will enable respondents to understand the choices available to the Council and provide informed feedback prior to any final decision being taken.
- 4.8 If approved, consultation would be undertaken on a revised banded scheme providing reductions of 100%, 75%, 50% and 30%. Whilst Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council currently operate different discount levels of 100%, 80%, 55% and 30% the proposal would mean all three North Worcestershire councils would provide up to 100% support for households on the lowest incomes. The proposed discount structure has been developed to increase support for the poorest households whilst limiting the additional cost of the scheme during the final year before local government reorganisation. Adopting the existing Bromsgrove and Redditch discount levels and income bands would result in a significantly greater cost to the collection fund and is therefore not proposed at this stage.

Proposed timeline

Public Consultation	21 September – 31 October 2026
Consideration of consultation responses by Cabinet and final recommendations to Council	16 December 2026
Decision by Council on changes to council tax reduction scheme for 2027-28	24 February 2027 (Any decision to change the scheme must be agreed by full Council by 11 March 2027)
Scheme takes effect	1 April 2027

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 CTRS currently accounts for 8.8% of the overall property charge compared with 8.5% attributable to statutory discounts such as the single person discount. Whilst both reduce the council tax base, there is an important distinction between the two. Single person discount is a statutory entitlement based on occupancy. It is not means-tested and is available regardless of a taxpayer's financial circumstances. CTRS, by contrast, is a targeted scheme that provides support to households with low incomes. Despite the maximum award increasing from 80% to 90% in 2023, the overall cost of CTRS as a proportion of the tax base has continued to reduce as shown in the following chart. This may reflect a combination of factors including changes in household circumstances, demographic changes, improved accuracy of claims through data matching and compliance reviews and growth in the overall tax base.



- 5.2 Based on the current caseload and using the existing income bands as per the chart in 3.4, increasing the maximum award to 100% and revising the remaining discount levels to 75%, 50% and 30% is estimated to cost approximately £523,000 across all precepting authorities. Alternative modelling based on schemes used elsewhere in North Worcestershire indicates a higher overall cost as shown in the following table. Given the proximity of local government reorganisation and the requirement to develop a single North Worcestershire scheme from April 2028, the proposed 100%, 75%, 50% and 30% structure is considered to provide a more proportionate balance between additional support and affordability.

Scheme	Current CTRS working age expenditure	Proposed expenditure	Additional cost – all preceptors	Cost to WFDC
WFDC Income Bands (100% 80% 55% 30%)	£5,359,475	£5,916,629	£557,154	£60,162
R&B Income Bands (100%, 80%, 55%, 30%)	£5,359,475	£6,003,418	£643,943	£69,578
WFDC Income Bands (100% 75% 50% 30%) Recommended option	£5,359,475	£5,882,121	£522,645	£55,273
R&B Income Bands (100% 75% 50% 30%)	£5,359,475	£5,967,972	£608,497	£68,677

- 5.3 In 2025-26, the net council tax liability of working-age CTRS households totalled approximately £2.0 million, of which £1.6 million was collected. The remaining £425,000 represented uncollected council tax, highlighting the importance of considering both scheme costs and realistic collection outcomes when assessing any proposed changes. Any increase in CTRS support would reduce the level of council tax billed but is likely to also reduce the bad debt provision required, thereby lowering the net impact on council tax income.

- 5.4 Increasing support would not necessarily reduce debt in direct proportion. However removing council tax liability for the lowest-income households would reduce associated collection activity. This would allow resources to be focused on larger debts with a higher likelihood of recovery resulting in improved efficiency of collection performance.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The report discharges the requirement to decide whether to review or replace the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The proposed consultation discharges the duty to consult about any changes.

7. IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Equality Impact Assessment - Whilst the proposal is not expected to have an adverse impact on any protected characteristic, some groups with protected characteristics may be disproportionately represented within the CTRS caseload. A full Equality Impact Assessment will therefore be undertaken and reported alongside the consultation findings. The results will be presented in the report to Cabinet in December.
- 7.2 Climate Change – The proposal concerns the administration of financial support to low-income households and there is no identified climate change impact.
- 7.3 Health and Wellbeing – The proposal is expected to have a positive indirect effect on health and wellbeing. Reducing council tax liability for the lowest-income households will help alleviate financial hardship and reduce the risk of debt related stress and anxiety associated with council tax arrears and recovery action. No adverse health impacts have been identified.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The report addresses the legal requirements and other factors that will have to be balanced carefully in taking final decisions.
- 8.2 The forecast figures are based on the current CTRS caseload. There are external factors that could affect the final cost of the scheme or the impact on the collection fund.
- 8.3 There is a risk of legal challenge if the consultation is not carried out in accordance with requirements established by R (Moseley) v London Borough of Haringey [2014] UKSC 56. To mitigate this risk, the consultation will explain the proposed changes, alternatives considered, financial implications and reasons for the preferred option. Consultation responses will be considered before any final recommendations are made to Council.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The evidence presented indicates that a significant proportion of working-age CTRS recipients currently receive the maximum level of support and that

collection rates for these households remain substantially lower than for the wider council tax population. The annual review provides an opportunity to consider whether the Council's CTRS remains effective and aligned with arrangements across North Worcestershire. Increasing the maximum level of support to 100%, for the lowest income households, would provide additional protection against financial hardship while bringing Wyre Forest's scheme closer to those operating in Bromsgrove and Redditch ahead of local government reorganisation.

- 9.2 The Cabinet is invited to approve public consultation on the proposed changes, with the outcomes reported back to Cabinet and Council before any final decision is taken on the 2027-28 scheme.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Cabinet
- 10.2 Corporate Leadership Team

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Detailed information on the current council tax reduction scheme can be found at www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/counciltax

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

Wednesday 16 September 2026

Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 3 September 2026

Consultation on potential changes to council tax reduction scheme for 2027-28 onwards.

The Committee considered a draft of a Cabinet report from the Director of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services

The Director of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services presented the report and outlined the key issues. The Committee fully scrutinised the report and were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

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

- 1.1 The commencement of a public consultation on increasing the maximum level of discount for working age Council Tax Reduction Scheme claimants from 90% to 100% from 1 April 2027.**

Background papers:

See the report on page 114 of the pdf at this link:

https://forms.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/docs/doc61592_20260903_o_and_s_committee_agenda.pdf

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET 16 SEPTEMBER 2026****DISPOSAL OF LAND AT CLENSMORE STREET, KIDDERMINSTER**

OPEN WITH EXEMPT APPENDIX	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor David Ross, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and the Capital Portfolio
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Kate Bailey -Director of Housing and Planning 01562 732560
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kate Bailey -Director of Housing and Planning 01562 732560
Appendices	Appendix 1 – site plan Appendix 2 (EXEMPT) – valuation Appendix 3 (EXEMPT) – Housing Infrastructure Bid extension

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend the disposal of land at Clensmore Street, Kidderminster to a Registered Provider (RP) for the provision of affordable housing. This is to update a currently extant strong leader decision made in June 2022 due to the passage of time although the details remain the same, including the valuation.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to dispose of the freehold of the land owned by Wyre Forest District Council located at Clensmore Street, Kidderminster to Citizen Housing on the terms set out in this Report.

2.2 The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to delegate authority to the Director of Housing and Planning to conclude the disposal in consultation with the Director of Legal and Governance, the Director of Resources and s151 Officer and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and the Capital Portfolio.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This site, backing onto canal adjacent to St. Mary's Church, was previously occupied by small dwellings prior to post-war clearance and Clensmore Wharf. The site slopes down (east to west) from Clensmore Street towards the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal and comprises of a parcel of land, primarily consisting of overgrown vegetation and a former tarmacadam surface basketball court in the centre.

- 3.2 The site has been abandoned for a number of years and is sometimes used by rough sleepers who set up camp on the site.
- 3.3 Providing temporary accommodation through the use of Bed and Breakfasts and Hotels is an expensive form of provision as any Housing Benefit the household is entitled to is not covered in full by the subsidy the Council receives from Central Government. This is why the Council has invested in temporary accommodation that it owns and operates in Stourport-on-Severn and Kidderminster. The provision of 'move-on' accommodation would reduce the length of time homeless households are spending in the Council's own emergency accommodation and avoid "bed blocking" due to the lack of supported move on options. This would therefore indirectly contribute to the council's financial position.
- 3.4 This site, along with the adjacent piece of land in private ownership, was included in the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid to Homes England for funding works to the roundabout on the A456. There is therefore a requirement to deliver housing within a fixed period of time and of a certain quantum or Homes England could impose a clawback mechanism.
- 3.5 Homes England are aware of the intention to dispose of our portion of the site (to Citizen) identified in the HIF proposal and are keen to see this site built out along with a portion of the former Sladen School site which is now in Community Housing Group's ownership so the Council can deliver on the housing numbers originally agreed. The agreement with Homes England has been extended beyond the original date agreed in recognition of the difficulties in bringing both of these sites forward for housing development, including the lack of a private sector developer due to viability. This is particularly the case now that the adjacent site has planning permission for a care home, thereby reducing the quantum of developable land.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Officers approached Citizen Housing, who are one of our preferred Registered Providers, as they have had experience of delivering supported accommodation in other Local Authorities and Officers have previously worked with them on the young people's supported accommodation. They have now worked up a scheme and submitted it to planning for consideration possibly in December. They will also submit a Continuous Market Engagement application to Homes England for funding.
- 4.2 Increasing the supply of good quality accommodation at or near to Local Housing Allowance levels fits strategically with both the Corporate Plan, Worcestershire Housing Strategy and the Shared Homelessness Strategy.
- 4.3 The proposed scheme will deliver much needed supported move on accommodation and a capital receipt to the Council's Evergreen Investment Fund.
- 4.4 Officers and Citizen Housing have engaged with Housing Benefit to ensure the scheme would be acceptable as exempt supported accommodation and the Council has identified funding for a Housing Support Worker to assist with the support being delivered through the scheme (through an external Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government grant).

- 4.5 Consultation to dispose of the open space was conducted and concluded in December 2023. There were no responses to the consultation. As nothing has altered since that time, it is considered that the disposal notification is still valid and it is not proposed to repeat the section 123 notice again.
- 4.6 It has not been possible to act on the original decision due to delays in bringing the site to planning committee for various reasons including the complications arising from the ecology studies and the Biodiversity Net Grant. These issues have now been resolved, and we anticipate the decision going before planning committee in December.
- 4.7 The original valuation was obtained in 2022 but was updated by the same company in September 2025 and they confirmed no change in market value for affordable housing. A summary is provided in the exempt appendix 2. The report confirms that the Council calibrated the valuation in 2025 and relies on it for the refreshed recommendation to dispose.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The land was valued by Sanderson Weatherall to ascertain market value and the price to be paid by Citizen Housing is the market value (for affordable housing) advised in that valuation.
- 5.2 The capital receipt will go into the Council's Evergreen Investment Fund for further investment in the District.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council has wide powers in the Local Government Act 1972 and other legislation to acquire and dispose of land. The requirement to advertise disposal of public open space in section 123 of that Act was dealt with in 2023 and the advertisement produced no responses.
- 6.2 The development of affordable housing will meet a housing need and support policy objectives in the Corporate Plan, Worcestershire Housing Strategy and the Shared Homelessness Strategy.

7. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- 7.1 This report relates to disposal of land owned by the District Council. It is not considered that an equality impact assessment is required.
- 7.2 Health and Wellbeing: The provision of affordable housing assists those unable to meet their own housing needs in the open market thereby reducing homelessness.
- 7.3 Climate Impacts: The scheme will support impacts on the biodiversity through provision of green infrastructure and biodiversity net gain on site and the design and layout of the scheme seeks to reduce the impact on the canal which provides a vital wildlife corridor.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The sale will be conditional on the grant of planning permission for the development.
- 8.2 HIF bid clawback was originally March 2025, but Homes England have extended this by way of variation to enable the delivery of both this and the Sladen School site for housing. There could be a risk to the extension if the sale did not progress or if the RP withdrew interest.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The disposal of this land, which is currently unused, will bring forward much needed accommodation to meet housing needs and reduce the length of time people spend in temporary accommodation.
- 9.2 HIF bid requires that the site is developed and Homes England are currently supportive of the proposal to dispose for affordable housing.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 CLT.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Cabinet decision on disposal, 23 June 2022
[doc57670_20220623_cabinet_decision_report.pdf](#)
- 11.2 Officer decision following advertisement about proposed disposal of public open space, 21 December 2023 [doc59123_20231221_officer_decision_report.pdf](#)

Appendix 1

