

Open

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

6pm
Thursday, 3 September 2026
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Members of Committee:

Chairman: Councillor N Martin
Vice-Chairman: Councillor F M Oborski MBE

Councillor J F Byng
Councillor V Caulfield
Councillor H E Dyke
Councillor N Gale
Councillor D Little

Councillor L Carroll
Councillor G Connolly
Councillor K Gale
Councillor I Hardiman
Councillor D Russell

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

Information for Members of the Public:

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

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

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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.

Co-opted Members

Scrutiny Committees may wish to appoint Co-Opted Members to sit on their committee in order to add value to the scrutiny process. To appoint a Co-Opted Member, a Committee must first agree to appoint either a specific person or to approach a relevant organisation to request that they put forward a suitable representative (e.g. the

local Police Authority). Co-Optees are non voting by default but Committees can decide to appoint voting rights to a Co-Optee. The Co-Option of the Member will last no longer than the remainder of the municipal year.

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

The following will apply:

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

For Further information:

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

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* Unless there are no reports in the open session.

Wyre Forest District Council
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 3 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.	Appointment of Substitute Members To receive the name of any Councillor who is to act as a substitute, together with the name of the Councillor for whom he/she is acting.	
3.	Declarations of Interests by Members In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI), an other registrable interest (ORI) or a non-registrable interest (NRI) in relation to any matter on the agenda. Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's Constitution for full details.	
4.	Minutes To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on the 2 July 2026 and the minutes of the sub-committee meeting held on 12 August 2026.	7
5.	Budget and Performance Monitoring First Quarter 2026-27 To consider a draft of a Cabinet 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.	15
6.	Briefing note on the progress of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee review To consider a briefing note from the Corporate Policy and Performance Officer.	To follow

7.	Review of Public Space Protection Orders and Level of Fines for breaching a Public Space Protection Order or Community Protection Notice To consider a draft of a Cabinet report from the Community & Strategic Projects Manager 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.	68
8.	Consultation on potential changes to council tax reduction scheme for 2027-28 onwards To consider a draft of a Cabinet 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.	114
9.	Treasury Management Review Panel To request nominations for membership of the Treasury Management Review Panel for the current municipal year, and to appoint a Chairman for the Panel. Meeting dates (to be held remotely via zoom): Monday 2 November 2026 • 4.45pm Training for all Members* • 6pm meeting Monday 8 February 2027 • 4.45pm Training for all Members* • 6pm meeting * The training is mandatory for those Members that sit on the Audit Committee and the Treasury Management Review Panel. <i>(Audit Committee members are required to attend the Treasury Management training every 2 years. Both sessions will need to be attended at least once in the 2 year cycle. It is acceptable for attendance to be split over the 2 years but both sessions must be attended in the first year a member sits on the committee)</i>	
10.	Work Programme To review the work programme for the current municipal year with regard to the Corporate Plan Priority, Annual Priorities and the Forward Plan. Forward plan Wyre Forest District Council	125
11.	Press Involvement To consider any future items for scrutiny that might require publicity.	

12.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Director of Legal & Governance before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.	
13.	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

14.	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.	
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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 2 JULY 2026 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: N Martin (Chairman), F M Oborski MBE (Vice-Chairman), E Bourne, L Carroll, V Caulfield, H E Dyke, K Gale, N Gale, I Hardiman, K Henderson, D Little and D Russell.

Observers

Councillors: N J Desmond, P Dyke, P Harrison, M J Hart, T L Onslow, C Rogers and D Ross.

The Chairman announced a revised running order, advising that agenda item 6 Disposal of part of Burlish Country Park would be taken before agenda item 5 Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026-31. She advised that for agenda item 6 she would take the report first, then the speakers, and then the Committee.

OS.11 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: J F Byng and G Connolly.

OS.12 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor E Bourne was a substitute for Councillor G Connolly.
Councillor K Henderson was a substitute for Councillor J Byng.

OS.13 Declarations of Interests by Members

Councillor F Oborski declared, in respect of agenda item 5 Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026-31, that she was the Chair of the Trustees for HELP.

Councillor L Carroll declared, in respect of agenda item 6 Disposal of part of Burlish Country Park, that he volunteers for Kidderminster Harriers Football Club and the Foundation. He takes no payment for his duties and therefore he will take part in this discussion.

Councillor N Gale declared, in respect of agenda item 6 Disposal of part of Burlish Country Park, that she was a ward councillor bordering onto Burlish Top and Burlish Meadow and had been contacted by local residents.

Councillor K Gale declared, in respect of agenda item 6 Disposal of part of Burlish

Country Park, that he was part of Worcestershire Wildlife Trust that was doing work on the next-door area, to this one.

Councillor M Hart declared, in respect of agenda item 6 Disposal of part of Burlish Country Park, that he was a season ticket holder at Kidderminster Harriers Football Club.

Councillor N Desmond declared, in respect of agenda item 6 Disposal of part of Burlish Country Park, that he was a season ticket holder at Kidderminster Harriers Football Club.

OS.14 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS.15 Disposal of part of Burlish Country Park

The Committee considered a draft of a Cabinet report from the Director of Commercial Services, with the intention to agree the principle of disposal of part of Burlish Country Park to Kidderminster Harriers Football Club.

The Director of Commercial Services presented the report and advised that the proposal relates to approximately 8.5 hectares, around 21% of the park, to support the club's plans for new training facilities, including artificial pitches, junior pitches and associated community uses and stressed that this was not a final decision to sell the land Cabinet would only be asked to agree the principal, and any disposal would be subject to three key safeguards:

The first that they must secure best consideration in line with their statutory duty under Section 123;

The second they must carry out a formal public consultation on the loss of open space and bring those responses back to Cabinet.

The third that the scheme would need to obtain planning permission through the normal process.

The Director of Commercial Services advised that the proposal from Kidderminster Harriers offers clear benefits around the expansion of sporting provision, addressing a recognised shortfall in artificial pitches locally; support of health, wellbeing and community participation, and bringing investment and potential economic activity. However, she advised that there were trade-offs, the loss of 21% of the existing country park, but that the remaining space would remain accessible to all with no change to current arrangements.

The Director of Commercial Services advised that from a biodiversity perspective, the site has ecological value, including potential for habitat enhancement and that development was likely to have some impact, although mitigation would be considered through the planning process, and if disposal proceeds any capital receipt would go into the Evergreen Investment Fund, and subject to future decision to reinvest in other green spaces across the district.

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

Linda McKenzie spoke about the money and resources that had been spent on the site since 2018, that the site has strategic significance for biodiversity, being one of only a few locations in the county where acidic heath is created and an important meadow conservation area where native trees have been planted and the impact on protected species. She also advised about the conservation grazing and the funding from Natural Networks and European funding for very specific circumstances.

Lucinda Caddick spoke about the permanent loss of publicly owned green space, which has become an important habitat for wildlife and a valued place for residents. A place where people of all ages and abilities can enjoy nature due to the relief of the land. She also commented about the public money invested in restoring and creating habitats and the biodiversity and that unrestricted public access was not expected to be retained.

Richard Lane advised he was the Chairman of the Kidderminster Harriers and spoke about their requirement for more grass and artificial pitches to support their growing sporting groups, especially football. He explained that they had grown, and this season they have 70 to 75 teams and envisage by 2030 there being over 100 youth teams, boys and girls. They want to enhance and improve their first teams, men and women, to at least maintain their tier places, explaining that the women's first team were in Droitwich and they want to bring them back, so a home for them is a priority.

The Chairman thanked the public speakers for their participation.

The Committee were then able to fully scrutinise the report and were given an opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

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

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

OS.16 Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026-31

The Committee considered a draft of a Cabinet report from the Director of Housing and Planning which regarded the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2026-31) and briefed members on adopting the strategy.

The Director of Housing and Planning 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.

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

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

OS.17 Disposal of playing pitches to Worcestershire Football Association

The Committee considered a draft of a Cabinet report from the Director of Commercial Services, to seek agreement to the principle of disposal of Brown Westhead Park and Habberley Road Sports Field to Worcestershire Football Association (WFA), and to set out the next steps for negotiation and completion of the transaction.

The Director of Commercial Services presented the report and outlined the key issues. The Committee scrutinised the report and were given the opportunity to ask questions and making comments.

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

- 1.1 Agree the principle of Leasehold disposal on a long lease of Brown Westhead Park and Habberley Road Sports Field to Worcestershire Football Association (plans in appendix 1) on the following basis:**
 - 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 Delegate authority to the Director of Commercial Services, in consultation with the Director of Legal & Governance, Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Finance and the Capital Portfolio to:**
 - (a) Enter into negotiations with Worcestershire FA to finalise heads of terms;**
 - (b) Advertise the proposed disposal of open space and consider any objections received;**
 - (c) Conclude the disposal and complete legal documentation, subject to satisfactory negotiation outcomes.**

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

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

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

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

- 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.**
- 1.3 To Note:**
- 1.4 The provisional outturn position, budget variations, virements and comments within the report and appendices 1 to 4.**
- 1.5 That in line with the recommendation approved by Council on 25th February 2026, the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio, has allocated £300k of the Final Account savings to the General Risk Reserve and has increased the working balance by £200k to £2m (paragraph 6.1).**
- 1.6 The recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meetings on 2nd July 2026.**

OS.19 Work Programme

The Committee reviewed the work programme for the current and new municipal year.

It was agreed that although there was nothing on the Work Programme for October, they would meet to explore and discuss any projects that they want to scrutinise.

It was also agreed that the report Disposal of part of Burlish Country Park would come back to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee once the consultation process had happened and the next report to Cabinet was done.

OS.20 Press Involvement

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

OS 21 Exclusion of the Press and Public

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

OS. 22 Agenda Item 7 - Disposal of playing pitches to Worcestershire Football Association.

EXEMPT Appendix 2a: Exempt Draft Heads of Terms for Brown Westhead

EXEMPT Appendix 2b: Exempt Draft Heads of Terms for Habberley Road Sports Field

Having considered the appendices, the Committee re-affirmed their decision made in the open session of the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.40pm.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

WEDNESDAY, 12 AUGUST 2026 (4PM)

Present:

Councillors: N Martin (Chairman), J F Byng, L Carroll, D Little and A Sutton.

Observers

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

OSSC.01 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor: K Gale.

OSSC.02 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor A Sutton was a substitute for Councillor K Gale.

OSSC.013 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

OSSC.04 Development loan proposal from the capital projects fund

The Sub-Committee considered a Cabinet report 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.

The Deputy Chief Executive: Regeneration and Commercial presented the report and outlined the key issues. He gave a comprehensive explanation of the proposal and explained the Council is a member of the Stourport Sports Club Ltd (SSC), which is a company limited by guarantee incorporated on 16 August 1995, and the loan was being granted in pursuit of a specific public policy objective.

OSSC.05 Exclusion of the Press and Public

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

OSSC.06 Agenda Item 4 - Development loan proposal from the capital projects fund

EXEMPT Appendix 2 - Detail of proposed loan and rationale for it

EXEMPT Appendix 3 - Subsidy control assessment

The Deputy Chief Executive: Regeneration and Commercial presented the confidential appendices.

The Sub-Committee fully scrutinised the report and appendices and were given an opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

The Chair advised she had her own recommendation she wished to add with regards to the Sports Club providing a business case with any future requests for financial assistance. This was agreed by all.

Agreed: The Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee considered the information in the report and recommend to Cabinet to AGREE:

- 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 ended at 4.21pm.



Wyre Forest
District Council

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**Report of: Helen Ogram, Director of Resources and
s151 Officer**

Date: 3 September 2026

Open

Agenda item no. 5 - Budget and Performance Monitoring First Quarter 2026-27

Summary

Attached is a draft of a Cabinet report on this subject, which Cabinet is expected to consider on 16 September 2026.

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

Officer contact details

Name: Helen Ogram

Title: Director of Resources and s151 Officer

Contact number: 01562 732907

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:	Director 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	6,545,730	5,704,120
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	914,360		
Contribution (from)/to Reserves	809,990	(841,610)	(1,340,180)
Reserves as at 31st March	6,545,730	5,704,120	4,363,940

- 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 - srvice 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 not been formally agreed – The NJC employers have offered staff a rise of 3.30% on all pay points and allowances which is above the allowance made in the 2026-29 MTFS and would, if agreed, constitute a budget pressure of circa £50k. UNITE, UNISON and GMB members have rejected the offer. UNISON's industrial action ballot closed on 6 August, turnout was low at 28.4%, it is unlikely that strike action will proceed on this pay round. Unite has been running targeted ballots, and GMB has been considering localised industrial action options. We are awaiting further updates from NJC employers but the prudent planning assumption at quarter 1 is 3.3%. In addition to pay award cost pressures recruitment and retention pressures remain significant in Planning; Finance; Environmental health (WRS) and Legal services

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

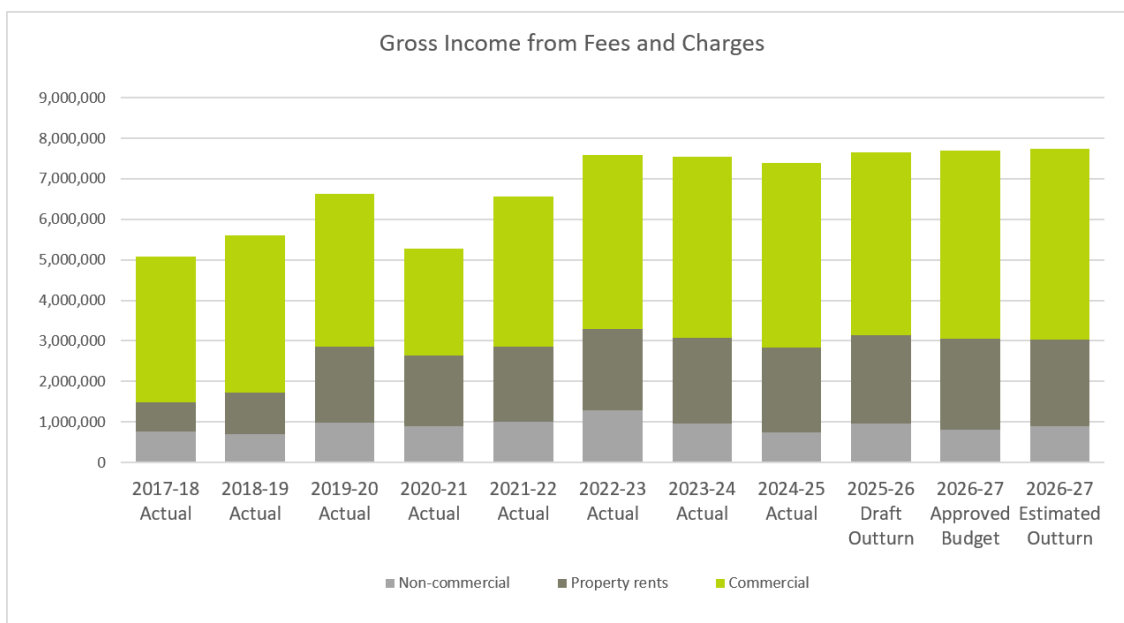
7.3 This positive performance against in year target and MTFS assumptions is primarily driven by demand led income streams, most notably planning and car parking. Parking enforcement also performed above target. Property rental income is below target.

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,

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 increase. Overall, the income projection at quarter one across services covered by the Commercial Strategy is above target but behind that achieved in 2025-26.

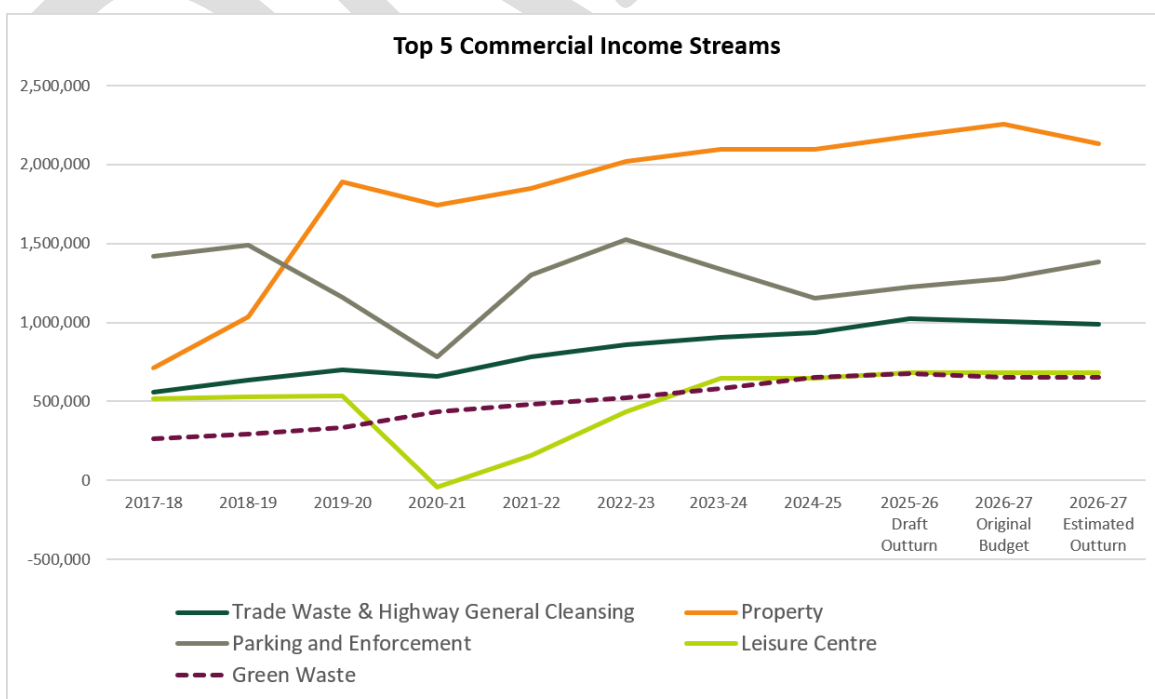
- 7.5 The previous success of the commercial income generation work and the recent challenges is shown in the graph below.

Summary Income Performance 2017-18 to 2026-27

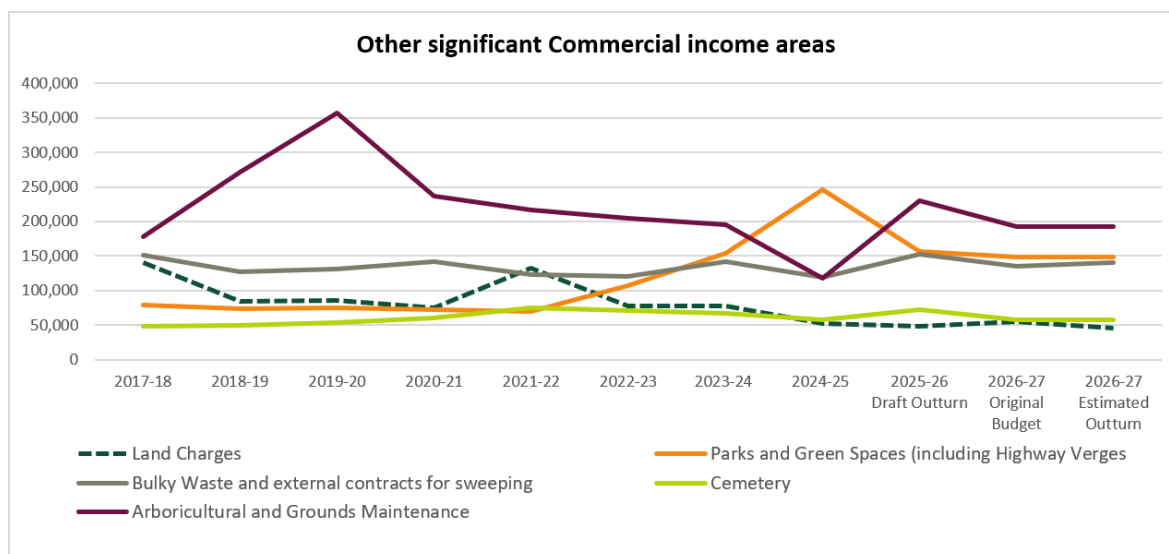


- 7.6 The graphs below detail performance for the income streams that fall under the Commercial Strategy.

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



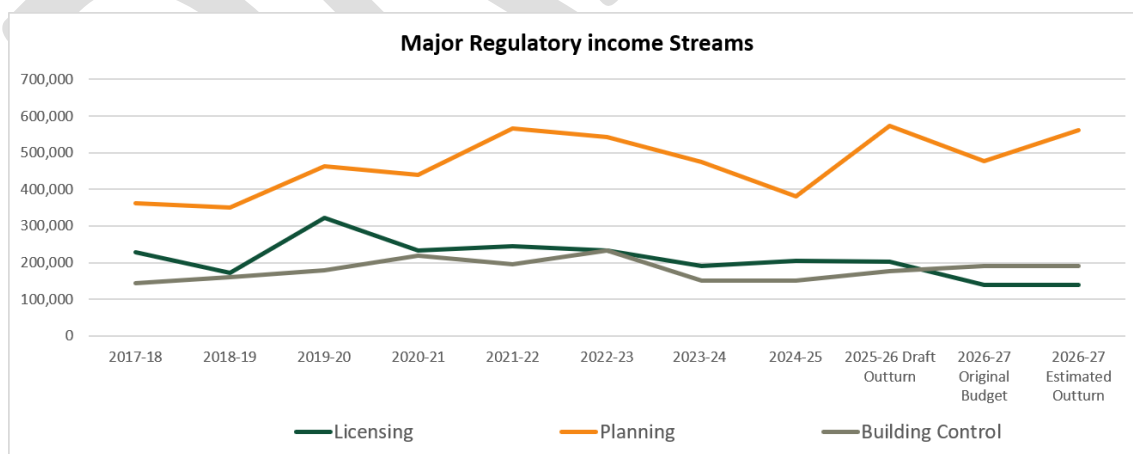
Gross Commercial Income 2017-18 to 2025-26 – Other



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

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		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)

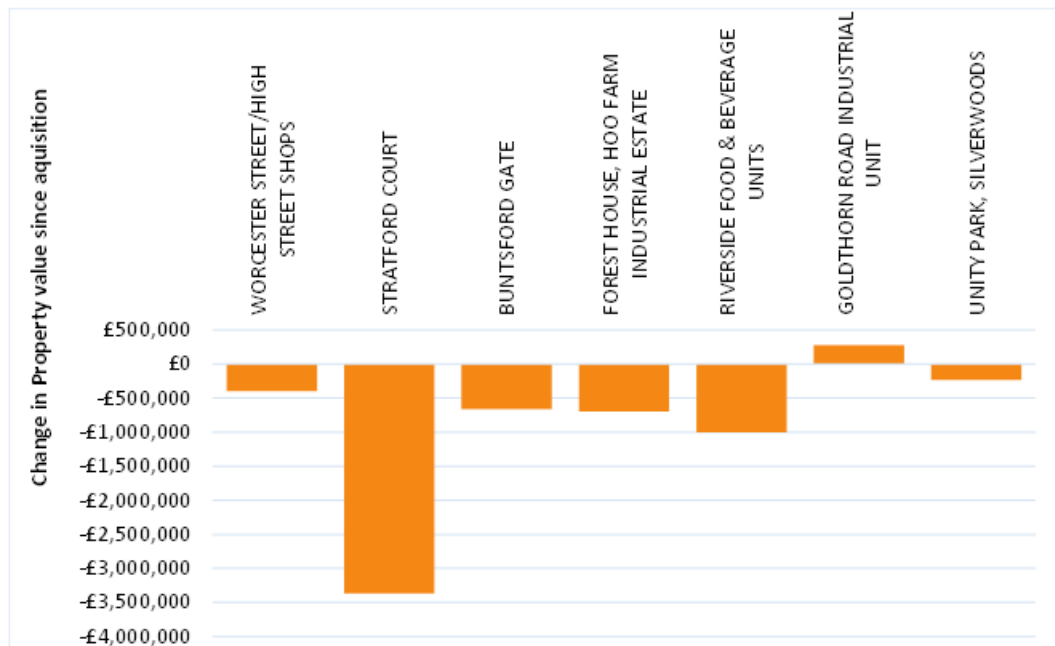
- 7.12 **Capital Portfolio Fund Debt** - The total overdue rent debt at 30th June 2026 was £22k. This represents 3% of the overall balance collected each year in relation to these properties. The majority of the arrears is in the over 120 days category and is being actively managed.

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.

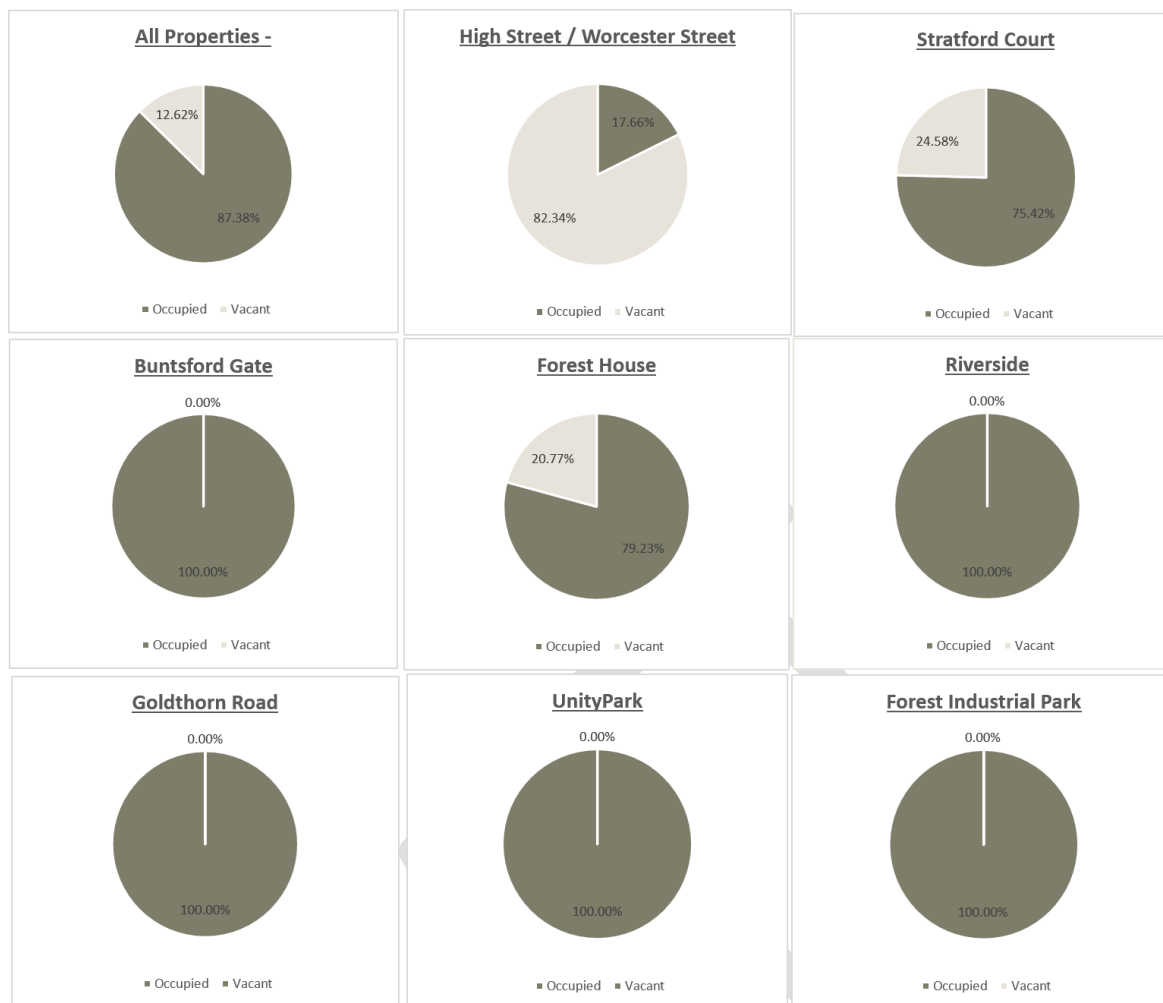
Change in Capital Value for Capital Portfolio Fund properties at latest valuation (31st March 2026)



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.

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.

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 set out 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 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: any updates:** 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)

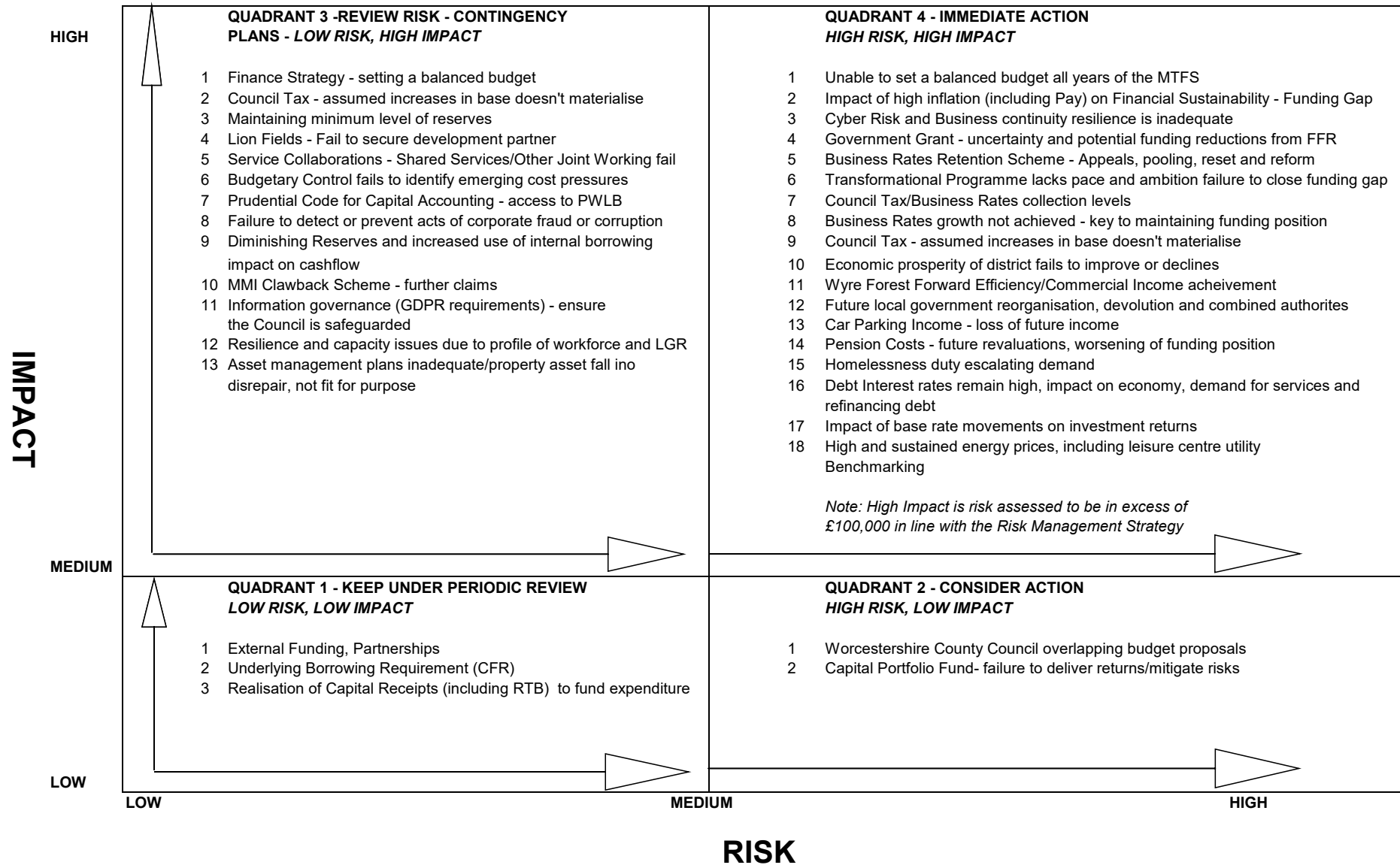
Capital Scheme	Corporate Priority*	2025-26 Capital Programme Slippage £	2026-27 Original Budget £	2026-27 Latest Approved Budget including slippage from 2025-26 £	2026-27 Qtr 1 Actual £	Slippage to 2027-28 identified at Q1 £	Progress Notes at Q1 2026-27	Total Scheme (all years) £	Total spend (all years) £	% 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%	

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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%	

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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%	

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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%	

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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
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%			

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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
		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			

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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	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			

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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			

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		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%	-			

*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

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.

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

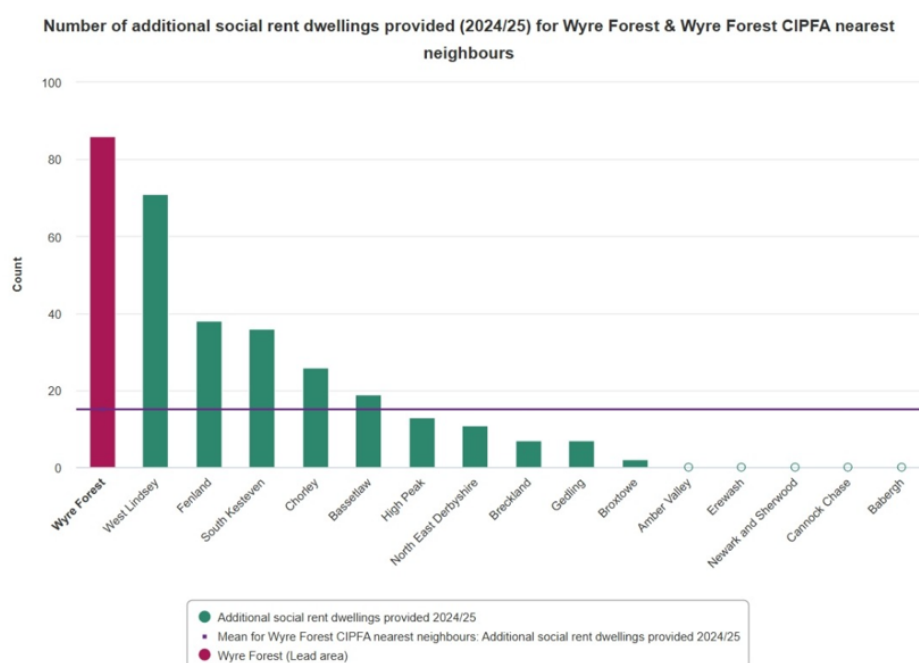
The Q1 outcomes have been selected because housing and homelessness represent key priorities for Wyre Forest and are areas where the district council has direct influence and statutory responsibilities. The themes provide an early assessment of:

- 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.

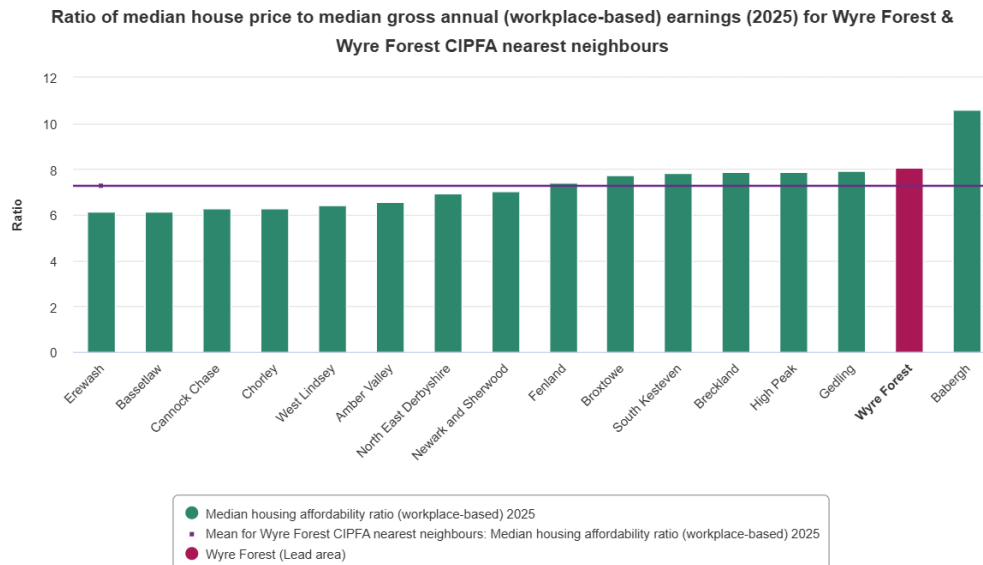
Collectively, these outcomes align closely with council priorities relating to housing delivery, supporting communities, reducing inequalities, and improving residents' quality of life. Monitoring these measures quarterly allows the council to identify emerging trends, compare performance with similar 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.

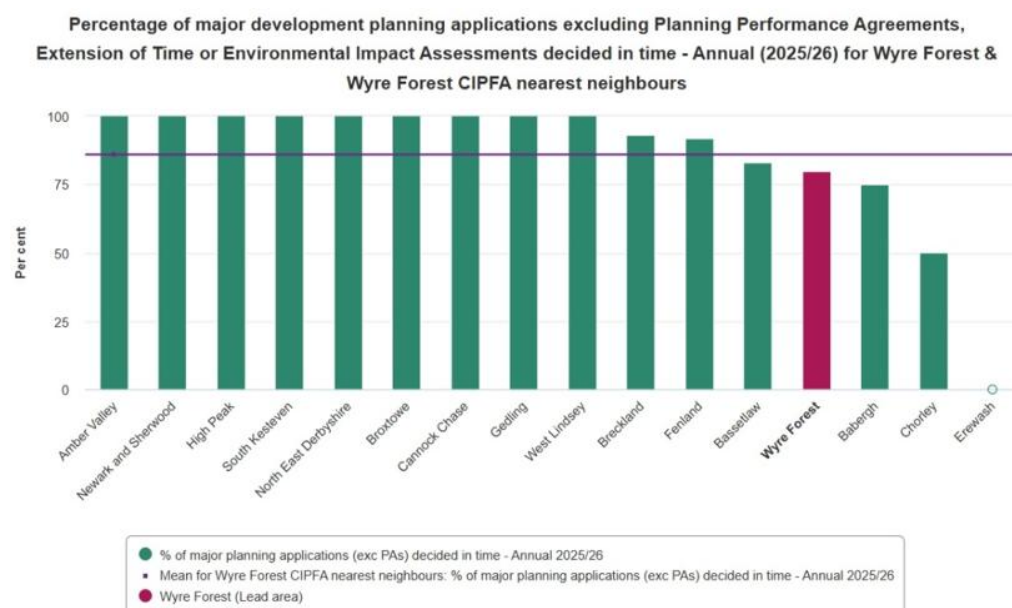


Comments: Polarity: Low value is good.

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.



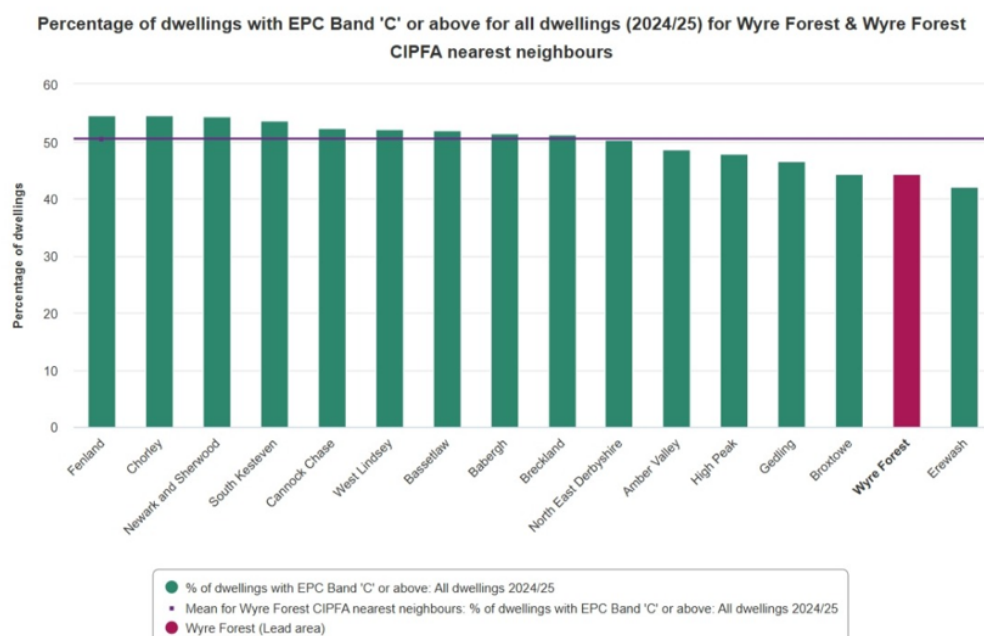
Comments: Polarity: High Value is good.

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

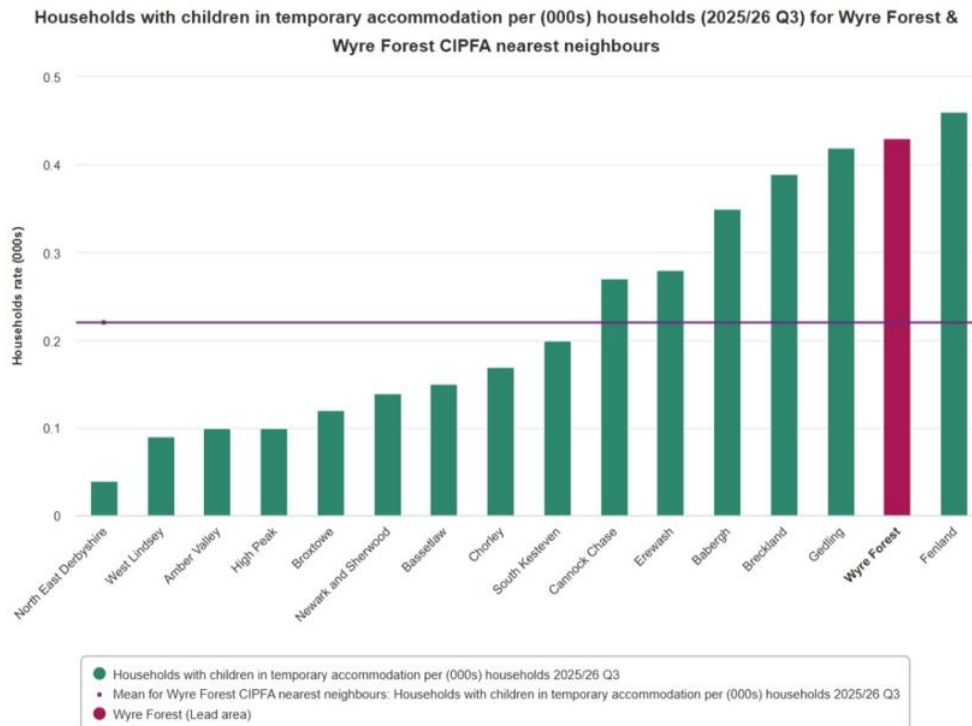


Comments: Polarity – High value is good.

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%.

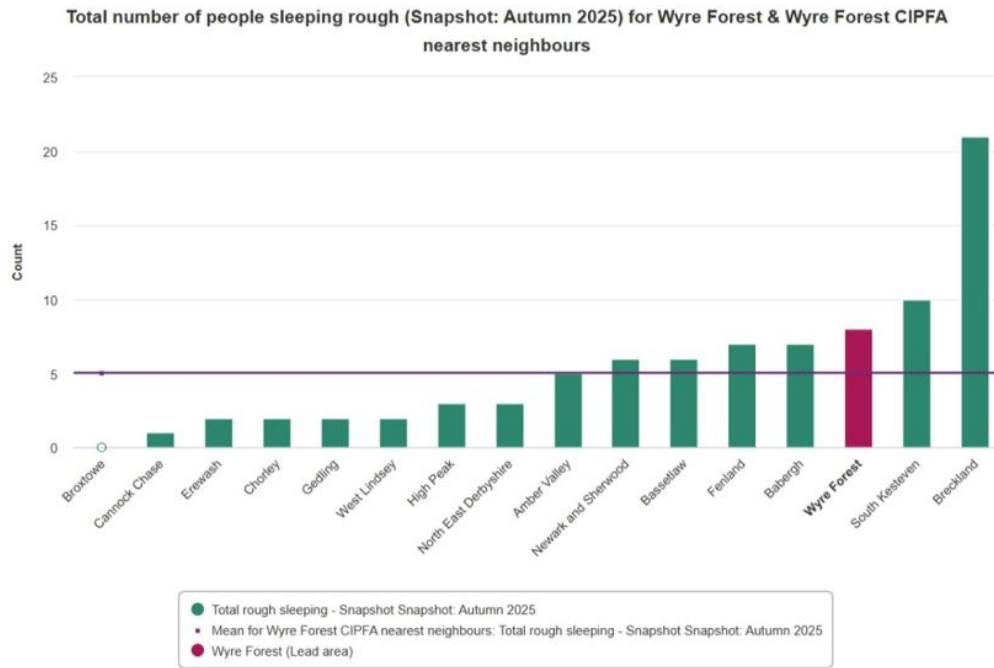
This is the proportion of all dwellings with Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band 'C' or above in the area. It is calculated by working out the percentage of EPC lodgements recorded with an energy efficiency score of 69 or above in a given area. The energy efficiency score shows the energy efficiency 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.

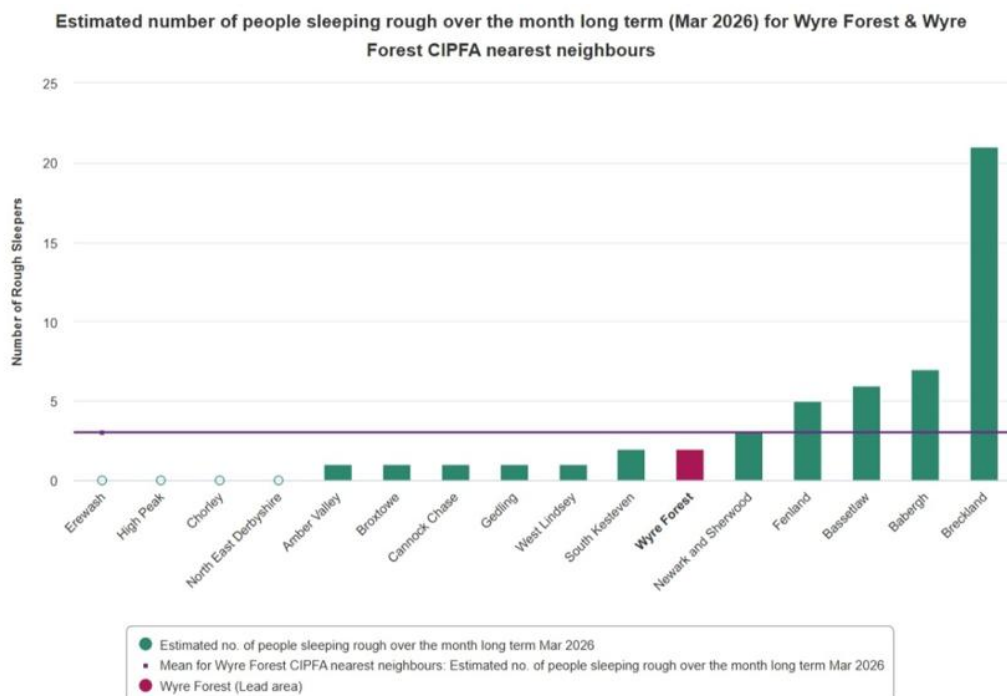
In 2025/26 Q3, the rate of households with children in temporary accommodation in Wyre Forest was 0.43, which is above the Wyre Forest CIPFA nearest neighbours mean rate of households in temporary accommodation with children of 0.22.



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.

**Report of: Kathryn Underhill, Community & Strategic
Projects Manager**

Date: 3 September 2026

Open

Agenda item no. 7 - Review of Public Space Protection Orders and Level of Fines for breaching a Public Space Protection Order or Community Protection Notice

Summary

Attached is a draft of a Cabinet report on this subject, which Cabinet is expected to consider on 16 September 2026.

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

Officer contact details

Name: Kathryn Underhill

Title: Community & Strategic Projects Manager

Contact number: 01562 732956

**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. *[EQIA – PSPO – to be inserted]*
[EgIA - 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
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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 hurcott 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

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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 pspo 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](#)

Report of: Lucy Wright, Director of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services

Date: 3 September 2026

Open

Agenda item no. 8 - Consultation on potential changes to council tax reduction scheme for 2027-28 onwards

Summary

Attached is a draft of a Cabinet report on this subject, which Cabinet is expected to consider on 16 September 2026.

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

Officer contact details

Name: Lucy Wright

Title: Director of Revenues, Benefits & Customer Services

Contact number: 01562 732948

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

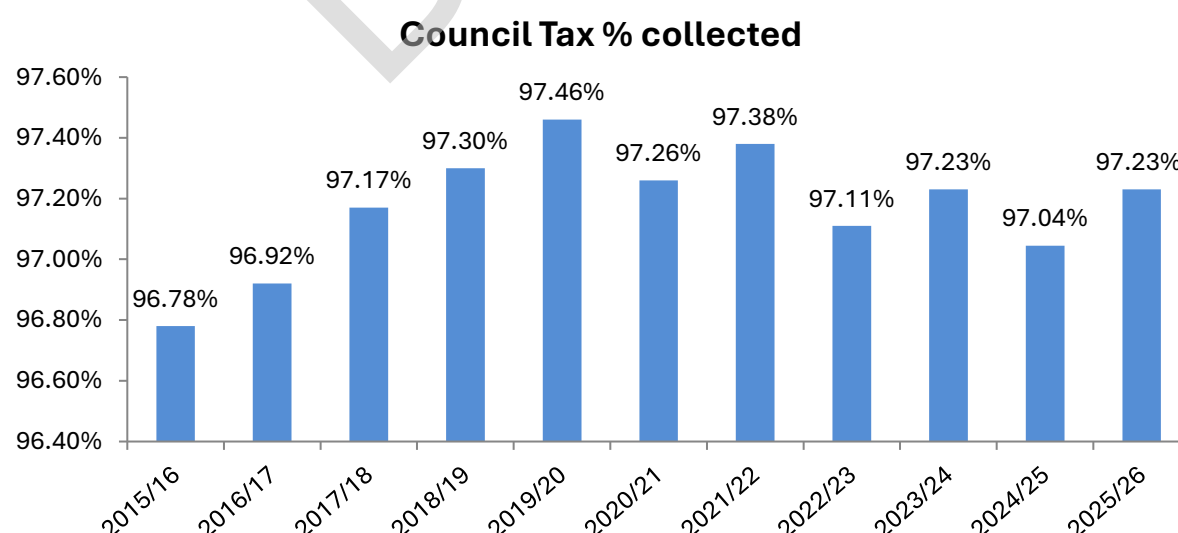
- 3.5 Analysis of the council tax forecasting data for 2026-27 shows that 3,875 working age CTRS households receive the maximum 90% discount, representing 86% of the working age CTRS caseload. These households account for over £4.8 m of CTRS expenditure and have a net collectable council tax liability 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

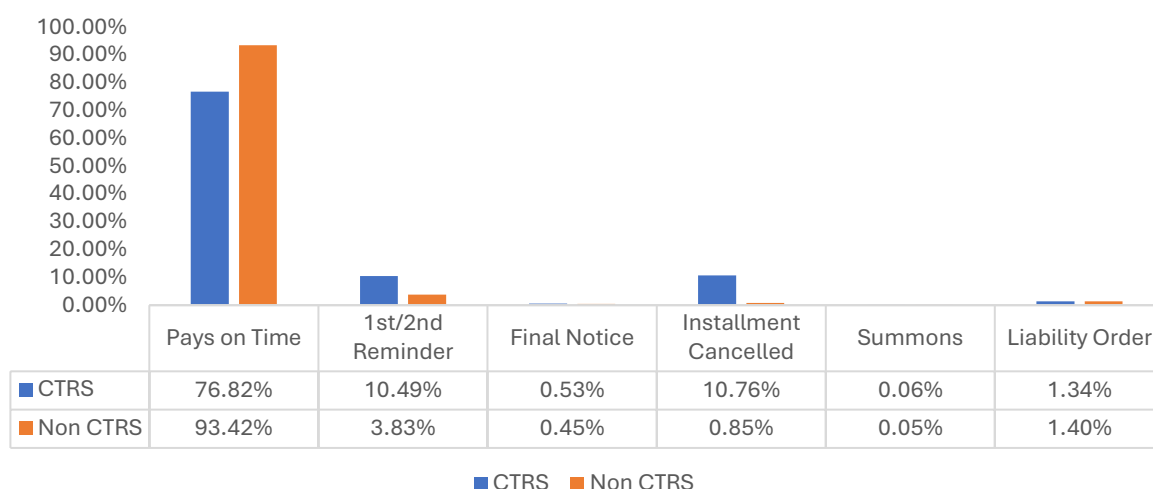
- 3.9 In November 2025, the government announced the removal of the Universal Credit two-child limit from April 2026. This cap may increase Universal Credit entitlement for some households with three or more dependant children.
- 3.10 Analysis of the current caseload indicates that approximately 62% 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.

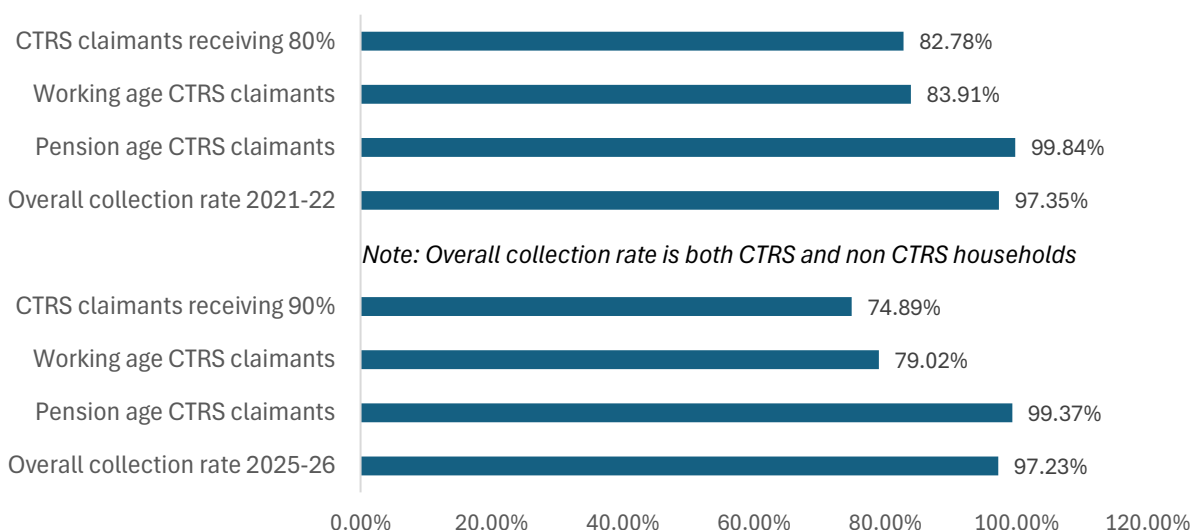


Recovery stages - CTRS and non CTRS accounts 2026-27



- 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

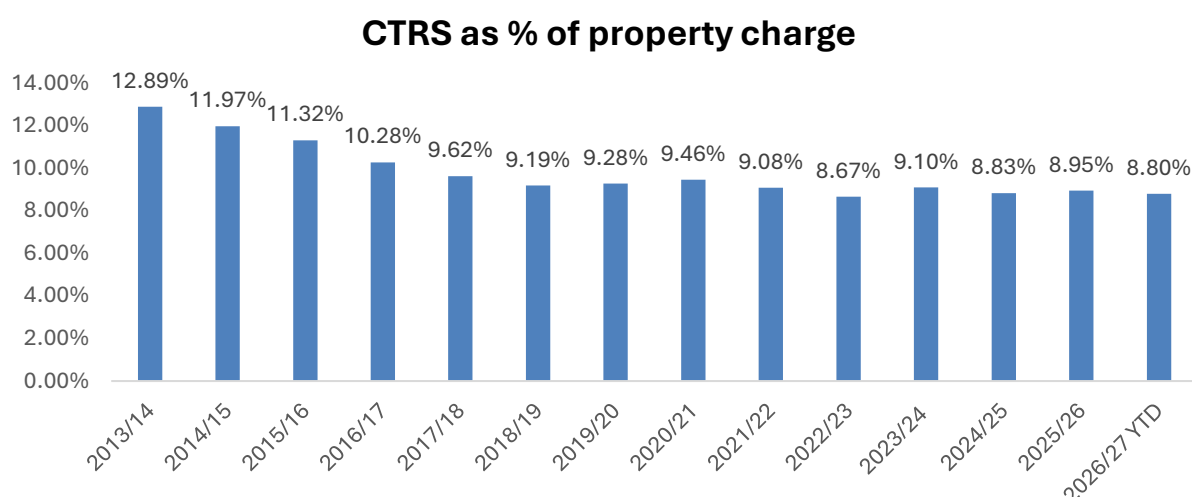
- 4.7 Based on the review undertaken, this report seeks approval to consult on increasing the maximum discount for working-age CTRS claimants from 90% to 100% from 1 April 2027. No other major changes to the scheme are proposed but the consultation documentation will be prepared in accordance with the 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

**Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme 2026-2027**

May 2026 – (Meeting cancelled - no items to consider)

June 2026

Performance Monitoring Quarter Four 2025-26

Update to Housing Assistance Policy 2026

Housing Enforcement Policy 2026

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

July 2026

Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026-31

Disposal of part of Burlish Country Park

Disposal of playing pitches to Worcestershire Football Association

Budget Monitoring Fourth Quarter 2025-26 (PROVISIONAL OUTTURN)

September 2026

Budget and Performance Monitoring First Quarter 2026-27

Briefing note on the progress of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee review

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

Consultation on potential changes to council tax reduction scheme for 2027-28 onwards

Nominations for Treasury Management Review Panel 2026-2027 (Chair to be appointed)

October 2026 (no Cabinet meeting this month)

Land disposal - Burlish Country Park

Royal Mail representative

November 2026

Budget and Performance Monitoring Q2 update

Food waste collections – update

December 2026

Bewdley Conservation Area Character Appraisal – adoption

January 2027 (no Cabinet meeting this month)

Biodiversity Policy update

February 2027

March 2027 (no Cabinet meeting this month)

April 2027

Local Plan – further call for gypsy and traveller sites - update