

Open

Council

Agenda

6pm
Wednesday, 23 September 2026
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster



Council

Public Information

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2. The Council meeting is open to the public except for any exempt/confidential items. These items are normally discussed at the end of the meeting
3. The public are welcome to speak at meetings of Council provided they have requested to speak in advance of the Agenda being published. Details of the guidance for public speaking can be found on our website www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk
4. If you have any special requirements regarding access to the venue and its facilities including audio and visual needs please let us know in advance so that we can make arrangements for you.
5. This Agenda can be made available in larger print on request; if you require a copy please contact:

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COUNCIL MEETING

15 September 2026

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL AND HONORARY ALDERMEN

PRESS AND PUBLIC

Dear Member

YOU ARE INVITED to attend a meeting of the Wyre Forest District Council to be held **at 6.00p.m. on Wednesday 23 September 2026**, in the Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster.

The Agenda for the meeting is enclosed.

Yours sincerely

IRMiller

Ian Miller
Chief Executive

Disclosure of Interests

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

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

Members and co-opted Members are required to disclose any DPIs and ORIs at the meeting. Where the matter relates to a DPI they may not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not stay in the meeting unless granted a dispensation.

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

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

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

Conduct at formal meetings

Members are reminded that whilst they may differ from time to time on political views, it is important that they always treat each other with respect.

Debate can be robust without being personal or unkind.

Members help is appreciated in ensuring the highest standards of conduct at formal meetings.

(A) TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COUNCIL

The Council

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

(B) MATTERS RESERVED TO THE COUNCIL

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

WEBCASTING NOTICE

This meeting is being filmed* for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's website site (www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk).

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

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 1998. The footage recorded will be available to view on the Council's website for 6 months and shall be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

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

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

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

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

* Unless there are no reports in the open session.

Wyre Forest District Council

Council

Wednesday, 23 September 2026

Council Chamber

Part 1

Open to the press and public

Agenda item	Subject	Page Number
1.	Prayers To be read by Rev'd. Verity Phillips, The Methodist Church, Kidderminster & Stourport Circuit.	
2.	Apologies for Absence	
3.	Declarations of Interests by Members In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary 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 approve as a correct record and sign the Minutes of the last meeting held on 15 July 2026.	9
5.	Public Participation In accordance with the Council's Scheme for Public Speaking at Meetings of Full Council, to allow members of the public to present petitions, ask questions, or make statements, details of which have been received by 12 noon on Monday 14 September 2026. One member of the public has registered to present the Save Burlish Meadows – Protect Nature and Community petition. <i>If you wish to speak on an urgent matter that has arisen since the deadline and you could not reasonably have known about it at the time, you should register your interest in speaking no later than 9am on the day of the meeting of Council. In the case of a request to speak on an urgent matter, the Director of Legal & Governance will rule on whether or not the matter is urgent and that ruling will be final.</i>	
6.	Chairman's Communications To note the engagements of the Chairman of the Council since the Council's last meeting.	16

7.	Leader of the Council Announcements To receive announcements from the Leader of the Council.	
8.	Amendments to the constitution – delegation scheme for planning To receive a report from the Director of Legal and Governance to agree amendments to the delegation scheme for planning in Section 4 of the Constitution.	17
9.	Update on Local Government Reorganisation To receive a report from the Chief Executive that provides an update about local government reorganisation in light of the Government's announcement that it is reviewing the decisions that were published in July.	26
10.	Questions To receive questions submitted by Members of the Council and the replies of the Leader of the Council, or relevant Cabinet Member, in accordance with Standing Order 1.9, details of which have been received by 12 noon on Monday 14 September 2026. Six questions have been submitted by the deadline. <i>In the case of an urgent matter that has arisen since the deadline above, and could not have been reasonably known at that time, it must be delivered in writing to the Director of Legal & Governance no later than 9am on the day of Council.</i>	32
11.	Motions Submitted under Standing Orders To consider Motions in the order in which notice has been received. 1. Notice of Motion from the Conservative Group Councillor M Hart - proposer Councillor D Ross - seconder Whilst this Council never requested Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) or our abolition as a district council, we respected and accepted the decision made by the Government on 16 th July 2026. This Council expresses extreme regret that this Government, having announced LGR and the creation of a North and South Unitary Authority as of 1st April 2028, by its announcement on 7th September has postponed LGR. This has caused immense uncertainty for our valued staff members, elected members, residents, businesses, parish councils and all stakeholders. This Council further expresses our displeasure by the fact that the announcement by the Secretary of State in the House of Commons	

	has created uncertainty, indicating that unitary authorities may still be able to proceed 'if they are ready'. This Council expresses its dissatisfaction at the wasted time and money this decision has caused. This Council resolves to request that our Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State expressing our dismay at this decision and send a copy of this letter to our Member of Parliament Mark Garnier.	
12.	Emergency Motions submitted under Standing Orders To consider Emergency Motions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 4.1 (i).	
13.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Director of Legal & Governance before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.	
14.	Exclusion of the Press and Public To consider passing the following resolution: "That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of "exempt information" as defined in the paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act".	

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

15.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the 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

COUNCIL

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY,
KIDDERMINSTER**

15 JULY 2026 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: G Connolly (Chairman), K Henderson (Vice-Chairman), J Aston, E Bourne, B Brookes, L Carroll, V Caulfield, N J Desmond, R Drew, H E Dyke, P Dyke, K Gale, N Gale, J Griffiths, I Hardiman, P Harrison, M J Hart, D Little, N Martin, S Miah, D Morehead, F M Oborski MBE, T L Onslow, M Rayner, C Rogers, D Ross, A Sutton, L Whitehouse and P W M Young.

The Chairman welcomed two guests from the Japan Local Government Centre, Ms Ayaka Hashimoto, Assistant Director (Tokyo Metropolitan Government) and Ms Yumiko Katayama, Assistant Director (Tokushima Prefectural Government).

C.20 Prayers

Prayers were said by Reverend David Hildred, Team Rector, Kidderminster East.

C.21 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: J F Byng, M McDonnell, D Russell and N Wilson.

C.22 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

C.23 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C.24 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

C.25 Chairman's Communications

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

Agenda Item No. 4

The Chairman announced that the Kidderminster Harriers event was taking place on Wednesday 22 July at Kidderminster Town Hall, and he was holding a charity quiz night on Friday 30 October at Paisley at 106 Minster Road, Stourport-on-Severn.

C.26 Leader of the Council Announcements

The Leader of the Council referred members to his tabled report. A copy of the announcements is available for viewing on the Council's website.

https://forms.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/docs/doc61510_20260715_council_report.pdf

C.27 Amendments to the Constitution – Delegation Scheme for Licensing

Council considered a report from the Chief Executive that sought to agree amendments to the delegation scheme for licensing in Section 4 of the Constitution.

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Arts and Community Safety presented the report and formally moved the recommendation for approval.

The Chairman of the Licensing and Environmental Committee seconded the proposal.

Upon a vote, the recommendation was agreed.

Decision: Council AGREED the amendments to the Constitution in Appendix 1 of the report.

C.28 Mileage Allowances

Council received a report from the Chief Executive to consider aligning mileage allowances for staff and members with the HMRC approved rate.

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

The Leader seconded the proposal.

Upon a vote, the recommendation was agreed.

Decision: The Council DECIDED that the mileage allowance for staff and members should be the HMRC approved rate with effect from 1 August 2026.

C.29 Appointments to outside bodies

Council received a report from the Chief Executive to consider changes to appointments to outside bodies.

Agenda Item No. 4

The Leader presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval.

Councillor D Ross seconded the proposals.

Councillor F Oborski MBE thanked the Leader for her nomination to the Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Upon a vote, the recommendations were agreed.

Decision: The Council DECIDED that the following members should be appointed as the Council's representatives for the remainder of this municipal year:

Appointment	Councillor to be appointed for the remainder of the municipal year 2026/27
Bewdley Museum Management Committee	Councillor Dan Morehead
Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Partnership Assembly, substitute member	Councillor David Ross
Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Fran Oborski
Worcestershire Health and Well-being Board, substitute member	Councillor David Ross

C.30

Questions

Six questions have been received by the deadline.

1. Question from Councillor F Oborski MBE to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda

In view of the importance of their regular nesting site to swifts will the Cabinet Member look into ways in which WFDC can encourage developers to install " Swift Bricks" into new build properties?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda

The current National Planning Policy Framework states that planning decisions should support priority or threatened species such as swifts. It is not currently mandatory. There is however a proposal for the next local plan for new build properties to include swift boxes, which will go through the statutory process for new policies. So, yes, we are looking at ways to make sure that does happen.

2. Question from Councillor M Rayner to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

Please can the cabinet member for responsibility for grass cutting of verges on behalf of the county council tell me if there is still a policy of No mow

May?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

Wyre Forest District Council does not have a policy relating to No Mow May and has neither participated in nor endorsed the initiative at any time. Whilst we are fully committed to improving biodiversity across the district, we believe a more targeted and sustainable approach can deliver greater benefits for both wildlife and residents.

Rather than stopping mowing entirely for a month, ecological advice recommends that it is more effective to promote biodiversity through targeted areas of reduced mowing, rather than adopting a blanket No Mow May approach.

We have five targeted areas, called pollinator patches across the district, which are: Dunley Road Stourport, on the Stourport Road, Low Lane, Lingfield Lane and the latest one at Captain's Pool Road on the Spennells Estate in Kidderminster.

This approach helps to create a wider range of habitats, encourages native flowering plants and provides shelter for pollinators and other wildlife throughout the season.

Our policy aligns with the same approach taken by other neighbouring authorities who have concluded that a balanced and targeted approach is the most effective way to balance biodiversity objectives with the needs of residents, who on the whole want their district to look clean, tidy and presentable. Having this strategy helps to maintain the appearance of parks and open spaces, reduces complaints of untidy and long grass, whilst still delivering environmental benefits in suitable locations.

Supplementary question

Are you going to do any advertising or education of local people?

Answer

Yes, I will take your idea on board. I will speak to the Operations Team and the Media Team as we do have a fully fledged policy in place that improves biodiversity across the district. That is a really good story to tell, and I will speak to the Teams to see what we can do to promote what we are doing.

3. Question from Councillor V Caulfield to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio

How many bookings/events have been held at The Weaving Sheds since it opened?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio

Since the re-opening of the Weaving Sheds there have been two events; Octoberfest hosted by the Kidderminster BID in October and SustFest Wyre Forest delivered by Wyre Forest Green Alliance in June 2026.

Supplementary question

Could you look into this please? I really would like to see this space used a

bit better.

Answer

Of course, just to give you a bit of background, the marketing is advertised on the Council website and will also be advertised through SpacetoCo.

The Weaving Sheds are not in competition with Kidderminster Town Hall, they complement it and there is an option available for third party hirers, but their primary function is not as a place to hire. Their primary function, and why we spent the money on the Weaving Sheds was to preserve and conserve this important piece of Kidderminster Carpet Heritage.

I was interested in the comments you made regarding people having access to see this important part of heritage and I will certainly look into how we can accommodate this situation.

4. Question from Councillor H Dyke to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio

Can the cabinet member responsible please give details of the current occupancy numbers for the Councils Old Court Building?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio

Currently, there are three tenants in the building occupying 1,597 square feet of space. Further meeting space is kept available to book for these tenants on an ad hoc basis. There are two conference facilities of 2,652 square feet in total, so therefore it is 2,790 square feet of space available for occupation, or 37% of the total space of 7,039 square feet, meaning 63% of the rentable space is currently occupied.

Supplementary question

Can the Cabinet Member tell me what we do to advertise this space or what we do to make people aware that there is still space available?

Answer

In terms of marketing the upper floor, which comprises of two large office suites of over 65 square feet are being marketed by our current agents. The availability of the whole building in terms of office space and conference facilities is being marketed through SpacetoCo partnership as well. Kidderminster is not a natural office environment and there are no major office occupiers presently seeking office accommodation as the demand for space is currently being absorbed by the West Midlands and Worcester conurbations, as they are better accessible to highways such as the M42, M6, M5 and M40. The economic uncertainty being felt by the business community is certainly having an effect, making small businesses, which the Old Court would suit, more risk averse.

The Council's Property team is considering various options, which as you will understand, are commercially sensitive.

5. Question from Councillor H Dyke to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio

Would the relevant cabinet member agree with me that it is concerning to see the number of staff that are listed in Wyred Weekly as leaving the depot

Agenda Item No. 4

each week. Can he advise council what measures are being taken within the depot to retain staff?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio

The Council publishes staff information monthly, which those who are leaving, but not the reasons as they vary. There may be resignations, but also retirements, ill health matters and dismissals, for instance. It should also be noted that February to July is considered the peak period for recruitment, and so it is expected and reflected in the data from previous years that most of the nature of shift in the workforce occur during this period. During the period in question, across the depot, there were 24 staff members who left across all grades for a variety of reasons, and across the Council, there were 51 leavers in the period. Proportionally, there are more staff at the depot than in any other area of the Council, and so proportionally they had a lower turnover in this reporting period.

The retention of staff is important to the Council. As outlined previously, there are many motivators to staff choosing to leave and consequently a one size position would not work.

6. Question from Councillor H Dyke to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda

Can the relevant Cabinet Member advise if there are any forthcoming plans for the corner of Market Street site as it has now been empty for nearly 15 years?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda

There has been a number of conversations with the College about what we could do with that part of land. We have not been able to make that work with the College, so we are now seeking alternative options.

What I can say is that we are in live discussions with a company who are exploring a padel court there. No heads of terms or contracts have been signed, but we are in live negotiations to hopefully bring something forward to that site very soon.

Supplementary question

Would it be possible to give some positive communication to members of the public, not necessarily saying what, when, how and which, but I have been approached by some members of the public who think that we have forgotten that space and that we are not actively looking at anything to solve it. I appreciate you cannot give them all the information, but perhaps something could be worded to say that it is still on the agenda, and it is still being looked at?

Answer

Yes, I can take that away, thank you.

C.31

Motions Submitted under Standing Orders

No motions were received by the deadline.

C.32 Emergency Motions submitted under Standing Orders

There were no emergency motions.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6.32pm.

Chairman's List of Functions – 2026/27

2026/27 Chairman and Vice Chairman

Sat. 4 th July *	Wyre Forest Symphony Orchestra Hollywood in Harmony *	Kidderminster Town Hall *
Thurs 9 th July *	King Charles I School Awards Evening Years 11 and 13 *	King Charles I School Comberton Road Kidderminster *
Sat. 11 th July *	Mayor of Worcester Srebrenica Memorial Day *	The Guildhall, Worcester *
Tues. 14 th July	King Charles I School Awards Evening Years 7, 9, & 10	King Charles I School Comberton Road Kidderminster
Wed. 22 nd July	Mayor of Kidderminster and WFDC Chairman's Kidderminster Harriers event (Chair and Vice-Chair attended)	Café in the Courtyard Kidderminster Town Hall
Sat. 1 st August	Mayor of Bewdley, Junior Charity Chess competition (Chair and Vice-Chair attended)	St. Georges Hall, Load Street, Bewdley
Sun. 16 th August *	Mayor of Bewdley, Family Day for dementia *	Bewdley Museum foyer and Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Gardens *
Wed. 2 nd September	Face-Face with Stourport Carnival Preview photographic exhibition (Chair and Vice-Chair attended)	Civic Centre, Stourport- on-Severn
Thur. 3 rd September	WFDC Merchant Navy Day Flag Flying Ceremony (Chair and Vice-Chair attended)	Wyre Forest House, Kidderminster
Fri. 4 th September	Mayor of Worcester's Inaugural Sessions	The Guildhall, Worcester
Sat. 5 th September *	Mayor of Stourport-on-Severn Carnival Procession & Drinks Reception *	War Memorial Park, Riverside and on-board River King, Stourport- on-Severn *

* Denotes attendance by Vice Chairman

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
23 SEPTEMBER 2026

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION – DELEGATION SCHEME FOR
PLANNING

OPEN	
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Caroline Newlands, Director of Legal and Governance
CONTACT OFFICER:	Helen Hawkes, Planning Manager Helen.hawkes@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Dan Morehead, Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 – proposed amendments to the Constitution

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree amendments to the delegation scheme for planning in Section 4 of the Constitution. The amendments are required because of the national delegation scheme that comes into force on 31 October.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is asked to:

- 2.1 **AGREE** the amendments to the Constitution in Appendix 1 with effect from 31 October 2026;
- 2.2 **NOMINATE** members and officers for the purposes of regulations 5 and 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 as set out in Appendix 1.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Parliament has approved the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 No 854 which come into force on 31 October. The Regulations introduce a mandatory national delegation scheme under which officers must determine applications that fall within Schedule 1. Applications that fall within Schedule 2 (regulation 5) or an “own-interest application” under regulation 6 will be determined by the

Planning Committee only if the nominated member and nominated officer agree that it should be determined by the Committee. If they do not agree about the handling of any particular application, the Regulations operate so that the application will be determined by an officer.

- 3.2 The Council is required to align its constitution with the provisions of the Regulations and cannot constrain the nominated member or officer to take a particular view about applications that fall within regulations 5 or 6. Instead they are required to have regard to the guidance that the Secretary of State has issued. Paragraph 13 of that guidance suggests that councils through their constitutions may “decide which Schedule 2 or own-interest applications need to be considered for referral. The regulations...do not require all schedule 2 applications to be considered” by the nominated persons. There is no such provision in the relevant Act or the 2026 Regulations and the guidance in respect of regulations 5 and 6 is something that the nominated persons (not councils) must take into account under those regulations. The Council’s officers have challenged MHCLG officials to demonstrate that councils have the power that is alleged to exist. No satisfactory response has been forthcoming at the time of issue of this report and paragraph 13 of the guidance has therefore not been relied upon.
- 3.3 The Council’s nominated persons may agree that certain categories of Schedule 2 application will be dealt with by officers, which would obviate the need for a decision to be reached on each such application individually. However they cannot agree in advance that certain categories of Schedule 2 application must always be referred to the Planning Committee because they have to apply the statutory tests in regulation 5(3), which requires exercise of judgement. Because there are no statutory tests to apply in respect of own-interest applications, the nominated persons can agree in advance that certain categories of such application will always be dealt with by officers or by the Planning Committee, as the case may be.
- 3.4 The Regulations do not deal with all types of planning applications and issues that require determination and therefore the Council may continue to make provision for them in the delegation scheme for “planning and related matters” in Table 3 of Section 4 of the Constitution.
- 3.5 Finally the Regulations provide that the maximum size of a planning committee is 13 members. This has no effect in the Council because its committee has 12 members.
- 3.6 A consequence of the Regulations is that various long-standing provisions of the scheme of delegation will have to disappear. For example, it will no longer be possible for a councillor to request consideration of an application by the Planning Committee. A parish council’s objection, where the officer recommendation is to approve, could no longer automatically result in the

matter coming to the Planning Committee for decision. Nor can there be a blanket provision that any application by a councillor or an officer must be considered by the Planning Committee. The long-standing provision that all delegated decisions must be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Development Plan or emerging Development Plan policies also has to be shed. That does not mean that planning officers will routinely ignore the NPPF, local development plan etc. in taking delegated decisions, but they will have the ability to do so – an option that the Planning Committee already has if it considers it appropriate to do so, having weighed all the relevant planning issues. After October, the Council will be operating in a statutory regime where some things are delegated to officers and cannot be recovered for decision by the Planning Committee.

- 3.7 Revised text for the delegation scheme is presented in Appendix 1 for the Council's approval. The report also seeks agreement to the nominations of members and officers to discharge the functions in regulations 5 and 6. Ordinarily, these will be the chair of the Planning Committee and the Planning Manager but provision is also made for substitutes including in the event that both the chair and vice-chair of the Planning Committee are unable to act for whatever reason.
- 3.8 The regulations come into force at the end of October. Therefore the applications that will come before the Planning Committee for determination in November and subsequent months will be handled under them even if (as will be the case for some time) the applications concerned were submitted before 31 October.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct additional financial implications arising from this report. However the Regulations mean that the Planning Manager and chair of the Planning Committee will have to meet frequently in order to decide the handling arrangements for any applications covered by regulations 5 and 6. This is likely to take up more time than operating the current delegation scheme and represents an opportunity cost.

5. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The updated scheme of delegation accords with the requirements of the 2026 Regulations.

6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 An assessment is not required as the changes respond to mandatory legal requirements. The changes to internal process do not affect how (if relevant) issues relating to equalities, health and climate change are considered in dealing with any particular application.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The proposed arrangements ensure that the Council's constitution is fully aligned with the planning legislation. It remains to be seen whether or not the nationally determined approach to delegation gives rise to any greater risk of challenge in respect of decisions on planning applications. Risks and mitigations are set out in the table below.

Risk Description	Impact (1 to 5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Total score and Risk Rating (R/A/G)	Risk Mitigation
Delegation scheme's compliance with legislation (SI 2026/854)	4	1	4 Green	This report
Challenge of planning decisions arising from decisions on handling taken by nominated persons	4	1	4 Green	Regular meetings of nominated persons to ensure prompt decisions on handling Recording decisions taken on handling

Likelihood		Impact				
		Catastrophic	Major	Moderate	Minor	Insignificant
		5	4	3	2	1
Rare	1	Low 5	Low 4	Low 3	Low 2	Low 1
Possible	2	Medium 10	Medium 8	Medium 6	Low 4	Low 2
Likely	3	High 15	High 12	Medium 9	Medium 6	Low 3
Probable	4	Very High 20	High 16	High 12	8	Low 2
Almost certain	5	Extreme 25	Very High 20	High 15	10	Low 1

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The Council is invited to approve the amendments to the Constitution set out in Appendix 1, including the nomination of members and officers for the purposes of regulations 5 and 6.

9. CONSULTEES

- 9.1 The Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda.
- 9.2 Director of Housing and Planning, Director of Resources.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 [The Town and Country Planning \(Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions\) \(England\) Regulations 2026](#)
- 10.2 [Planning Committees and the National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions: Guidance for local planning authorities in England - GOV.UK](#)

Appendix 1

Amendments to Section 4 of the Constitution: Responsibility for Functions.

Table 3: DELEGATION TO OFFICERS OF FUNCTIONS THAT ARE NOT EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS (amendments and new material shown in bold)

Planning and related matters

To exercise authority in respect of all applications, notifications, service of notices and orders or other matters requiring a decision by the Council under the Council's published policy and practice notes and the following legislation, regulations and guidance (and to any re-enactment or replacement of the statutes, or regulations or guidance or any modifications thereof):

Acquisition of Land Act 1981

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

Brownfield Land Register Regulations 2017

Building Act 1984

Business and Planning Act 2020

Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005

Commons Act 2006

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

Electricity Act 1989

Environmental Protection Act 1990

Environment Act 2021

Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) Act 1995

Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) Regulations 1995

Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013

Hedgerow Regulations 1997

Highways Act 1980

Housing and Planning Act 2016
Hazardous Substance Regulations 2015
Infrastructure Act 2015
Land Drainage Act 1991
Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980
National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949
Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017
Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990
Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compensation Act 1991
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
Planning Act 2008
Procedural Guide Planning Appeals – England
Self Build and Custom Housing Act 2015
Self Build and Custom Housing (Register) Regulations 2016
Telecommunications Act 1984
Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements)(England) Regulations 2007
Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)(England) Order 2015
Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017
Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015
Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025
Except where, under regulation 5 or 6 of The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England)

Regulations 2026 (the 2026 Regulations), the nominated member and nominated officer agree to refer an application to the Planning Committee for determination.

AND

Subject to:

A) The following being **with prior consultation** with the Chairman or in his/her absence, the Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee as appropriate, and relevant Ward Members:

- Service of Building Preservation Notices
- Service of Listed Building Enforcement Notices
- Service of Temporary Stop Notices
- Service of Enforcement Notices
- Service of Stop Notices
- Service of High Hedge Notices

But not including Notices relating to retrospective developments where planning permission has been refused, where no such consultation is required.

B) The following consultation and/or notification (in addition to statutory or published requirements) having first been carried out:

- The relevant Parish Council and Ward Members in respect of the removal of hedgerows under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997;
- The relevant Ward Members in respect of the confirmation of Tree Preservation Orders where validly made objections have been received during the consultation period.

For the purposes of interpretation the following definitions will apply:

- **‘Planning Application’ excludes;**
 - **any notification under the above mentioned Acts or Orders;**
 - **consultations from neighbouring authorities or the County Council;**
 - **notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area.**

Subsequent to the resolution of the Planning Committee, delegated authority is given to update the wording of, or include additional conditions to, planning permissions before the issuing of the Decision Notice, as long as the

intentions of the Planning Committee are not undermined in so doing and the principle of the development remains unaffected.

The following members and officers are nominated for the purposes of regulations 5 and 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026.

Nominated member	The chairman of the Planning Committee
Nominated substitute member	The vice-chairman of the Planning Committee
Nominated substitute member if both the chairman and vice-chairman of the Planning Committee are unable to act (including in any case where they are precluded from participation in respect of an application by virtue of the Council's code of conduct or due to bias or predetermination)	Another standing member of the Planning Committee (who is not precluded from participation), the member to be selected by the nominated officer or by the nominated substitute officer
Nominated officer	Planning Manager
Nominated substitute officer	Principal Planning Team Leader
Nominated substitute officer if both the Planning Manager and Principal Planning Team Leader are unable to act	A Senior Development Management Officer to be selected by the nominated officer or by the nominated substitute officer

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
23 SEPTEMBER 2026

UPDATE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

OPEN	
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Ian Miller, Chief Executive
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ian Miller, Chief Executive X 2700 ian.miller@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Marcus Hart, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategy
APPENDICES:	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Council with an update about local government reorganisation in light of the Government's announcement that it is reviewing the decisions that were published in July.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Council is asked to **NOTE** the update.
- 2.2 Council is asked to **APPROVE** the following amendments to the municipal calendar for May 2027:

	Scheduled date	Revised date
Council (AGM)	Wednesday 12 May 2027	Wednesday 19 May 2027
Planning Committee	Tuesday 18 May 2027	Thursday 20 May 2027
Cabinet/CLT	Wednesday 19 May 2027	Tuesday 25 May 2027

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Following the Government's decision on 16 July to create two unitary councils in Worcestershire, officers of the seven councils with support from all the Leaders worked at speed to move forward with the mass of work that would have been required to support elections to the new councils in May 2027 and implementation on 1 April 2028. Less than two months later, the Government

has decided to review all the decisions on reorganisation, including for Worcestershire.

- 3.2 At the time of issue of this report, there is no information about the timetable and process for the review. An updated version will be issued in the event of a Government announcement before the Council meets. Among other things, the Government should provide clarity about whether the review process is internal to MHCLG or if it will involve an opportunity or expectation for councils, other stakeholders or the public to respond.
- 3.3 The Local Government Association reacted in strong terms to the unexpected announcement: “there is no excuse for the Government’s mishandling of this process. Today’s announcement, however, will have caused significant uncertainty, after councils have invested scarce public money and countless hours in the government’s LGR programme. People’s jobs, lives and wider commitments have been affected. Staff, councillors and their families cannot be expected to put their lives on hold while ministers undertake a review which is a mess of their own making. Particularly at a time when local services remain under real pressure, this is no way to treat local government”.
- 3.4 The certainty of timing and outcome (albeit that the structural changes order had not been laid or made) that existed as recently as the morning of 7 September has been replaced by uncertainty for members, staff, partner organisations and the public. The table shows the possible outcomes of the review for Worcestershire and assumes that reorganistaion will happen by April 2029 at the latest. Ministers have been clear that the commitment to the principle of reorgansiation remains and that unitary councils are seen as the structure of principal councils that should underpin (mayoral) strategic authorities.

Possible but timing not likely	Possible, timing more likely
One council, elections May 2027, implementation 1 April 2028	One council. Elections May 2028, implementation 1 April 2029
Two councils, elections May 2027, implementation 1 April 2028	Two councils, elections May 2028, implementation 1 April 2029

- 3.5 A small Programme Management Office has been formed, hosted by the county council and consisting of the LGR programme director for Worcestershire, who started work at the end of August, and two full-time seconded staff. Now that work specific to implementing two unitary councils has paused, the focus will be on completing work that will support either outcome.

- 3.6 It had been the intention to invite Council at this meeting to approve the formation of a voluntary joint committee for North Worcestershire to undertake preparatory work for the creation of North Worcestershire Council. The formation of such a joint committee will be a requirement in the structural changes order once made. However WFDC and other councils cannot progress the formation of joint committee(s) at this time. If the Government's review confirms that reorganisation will proceed after all in April 2028, it will be necessary rapidly to make arrangements as had previously been intended. If reorganisation is confirmed as being in 2029, the creation of joint committee(s) will be less pressing.

Electoral arrangements

- 3.7 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government had indicated that it was planning an initial five year term for the councils elected in May 2027, despite representations from Worcestershire's leaders in support of a normal four year term. The Minister confirmed the intention for a five year term in a letter on 7 August. This would have required parish council elections due in 2031 to be delayed to 2032 to maintain alignment with unitary council elections i.e. the parish councillors elected in May 2027 would also have served for five years.
- 3.8 The position has been thrown into confusion by the review. If MHCLG requires an initial five year term for unitary council(s) elected in May 2028, the next elections would be in May 2033 and then in 2037, 2041 etc. This would result either in parish council elections always being out of kilter as their elections (apart from Kidderminster Town Council) would be in 2031, 2035, 2039 etc, or the Government having to amend the term of office of parish councillors elected in May 2027 to be an unprecedented six years. There is a solution that avoids both those outcomes: if the unitary council(s) are elected in May 2028, councillors should serve for the normal four year term which would require the term of parish councillors elected in May 2027 to be extended to five years.
- 3.9 As things stand, there will be district council elections in May 2027. The Secretary of State kept open the possibility in her statement on 7 September that there might be elections to unitaries in May: "Local elections scheduled to take place to existing councils in May 2027 will go ahead unless we are in a position to hold elections to new unitary councils at that point". However this was somewhat contradicted in a webinar on 8 September when the Minister for Devolution and Local Government suggested that was only a theoretical possibility and "we definitely know that" shadow elections will not be in May 2027.
- 3.10 It is necessary to adjust the municipal calendar for May 2027 to cater for WFDC elections being held on 6 May. The planned AGM date of 12 May

would be too close to the elections – indeed the agenda would have to be issued before the day of the elections. In line with arrangements made in 2023, it is therefore necessary to move the date of the AGM to 19 May. Some adjustments to dates of other meetings are necessary so that they fall after the AGM. The proposed changes are set out in recommendation 2.2 for Council's approval.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct additional financial implications arising from this report.
- 4.2 There is an agreed county-wide programme budget of £20m for reorganisation, a small part of which is the Government grant (£2.1m based on two unitaries) with the remaining bulk met by the county council (50%) and the district councils (50%). WFDC's share is £1.5m and has already been incorporated in the medium term financial strategy adopted in February 2026. The Government had previously provided Worcestershire's councils with £258k to support preparation of proposals. Of that sum WFDC received £37k, which has not yet been spent.
- 4.3 If the unitary council elections are delayed to May 2028, this will add to the cost of reorganisation as most districts are not scheduled to hold elections in that year, assuming that the Government passes legislation to abolish police and crime commissioners in time.

5. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Reorganisation is being progressed under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The reorganisation will be given effect by a structural changes order to be made under section 7 of that Act. Pending the making of such an order, the Council is relying on generic powers such as section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 in order to undertake activities and incur expenditure.

6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 No impacts arise directly from this report. Future implementation work will have to assess (if relevant) issues relating to equalities, health and climate change.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The review has affected the risk profile. Risks and mitigations are set out in the table below.

Risk Description	Impact (1 to 5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Total score and Risk	Risk Mitigation

			Rating (R/A/G)	
Cost of reorganistaion – higher costs if unitary elections delayed to 2028	3	3	9 Amber	Kidderminster TC elections in 2028 will result in shared costs for most of the district's electorate. Shared arrangements to meeting costs of LGR.
Instability in membership in its final period if WFDC elections to be held in 2027 – risk of significant churn, change of political control/no overall control	2	3	6 Amber	Member induction programme for 2027/28 Officer support for any new administration as required Constitution and strong governance arrangements in place
Increased loss of staff in run up to reorganisation – because of longer time frame and staff seeking “safe havens” in nearby unitaries, particularly if Government decides to create one unitary council	2	3	6 Amber	Retention payments available if necessary Ability to enter agreements under s113, LG Act 1972 with councils in Worcestershire to share staff Make greater use of interim/agency staff

Likelihood		Impact				
		Catastrophic	Major	Moderate	Minor	Insignificant
		5	4	3	2	1
Rare	1	Low 5	Low 4	Low 3	Low 2	Low 1
Possible	2	Medium 10	Medium 8	Medium 6	Low 4	Low 2
Likely	3	High 15	High 12	Medium 9	Medium 6	Low 3
Probable	4	Very High 20	High 16	High 12	8	Low 2
Almost certain	5	Extreme 25	Very High 20	High 15	10	Low 1

8. **CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The Council is invited to note this update and approve the changes to meeting dates in May 2027.

9. **CONSULTEES**

- 9.1 The Leader of the Council
- 9.2 Corporate Leadership Team

10. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 Secretary of State's decision letter of 16 July 2026 assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a58d4435ca06bf11ccb42fa/Local_government_reorganisation_-_decision_letter_to_Worcestershire_council_leaders.pdf
- 10.2 Implementation letter to chief executives, 20 July 2026 [Local government reorganisation - implementation letter to Worcestershire chief executives](#)
- 10.3 Minister's letter of 7 September 2026 [Local government reorganisation: programme review and decisions withdrawal letter to council leaders - GOV.UK](#)
- 10.4 MHCLG press release of 7 September 2026 [Review of local government reorganisation launched - GOV.UK](#)

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

23 SEPTEMBER 2026

QUESTIONS

1. Question from Councillor F Oborski MBE to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio

With the Government announcement of the postponement or cancellation of LGR can the Cabinet Member tell me:

- (a) How much money WFDC had already either spent or set aside towards the preparation of a North Worcestershire Unitary Authority and
- (b) Do we know how many if any staff had decided to use the transfer to a Unitary Authority as a reason to retire and are now having to rethink those plans?

2. Question from Councillor M Rayner to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda

Can the Cabinet member with responsibility for developments within the community, give the residents of Broadwaters a definitive timeframe on the progress of the development and completion of the old Broadwaters Inn in its new guise?

3. Question from Councillor P Young to the Leader of the Council

In view of the delay in implementation of the new Unitary organisation can the Leader of the Administration provide this chamber with as much information as is available regarding the consequences and implications for the District Council?

4. Question from Councillor H Dyke to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services

Is the cabinet member able to give us any update on the County Council's recent decision to temporarily suspend accepting and dealing with freezers and fridges at their sites, especially as this could lead to more fly tipping in Wyre Forest?

5. Question from Councillor F Oborski MBE to the Leader of the Council

With the cancellation/Postponement of LGR would the Leader be willing, under Localism, to reconsider the possibility of transferring at least one small town Centre car park to Kidderminster Town Council so that it has at least one income generating asset?

6. Question from Councillor M Rayner to the Leader of the Council

Can the cabinet member with responsibility for residents' engagement tell us How and what opportunities are provided to ensure that every visually impaired resident is sufficiently enabled to engage with the council's public consultations in a timely manner?