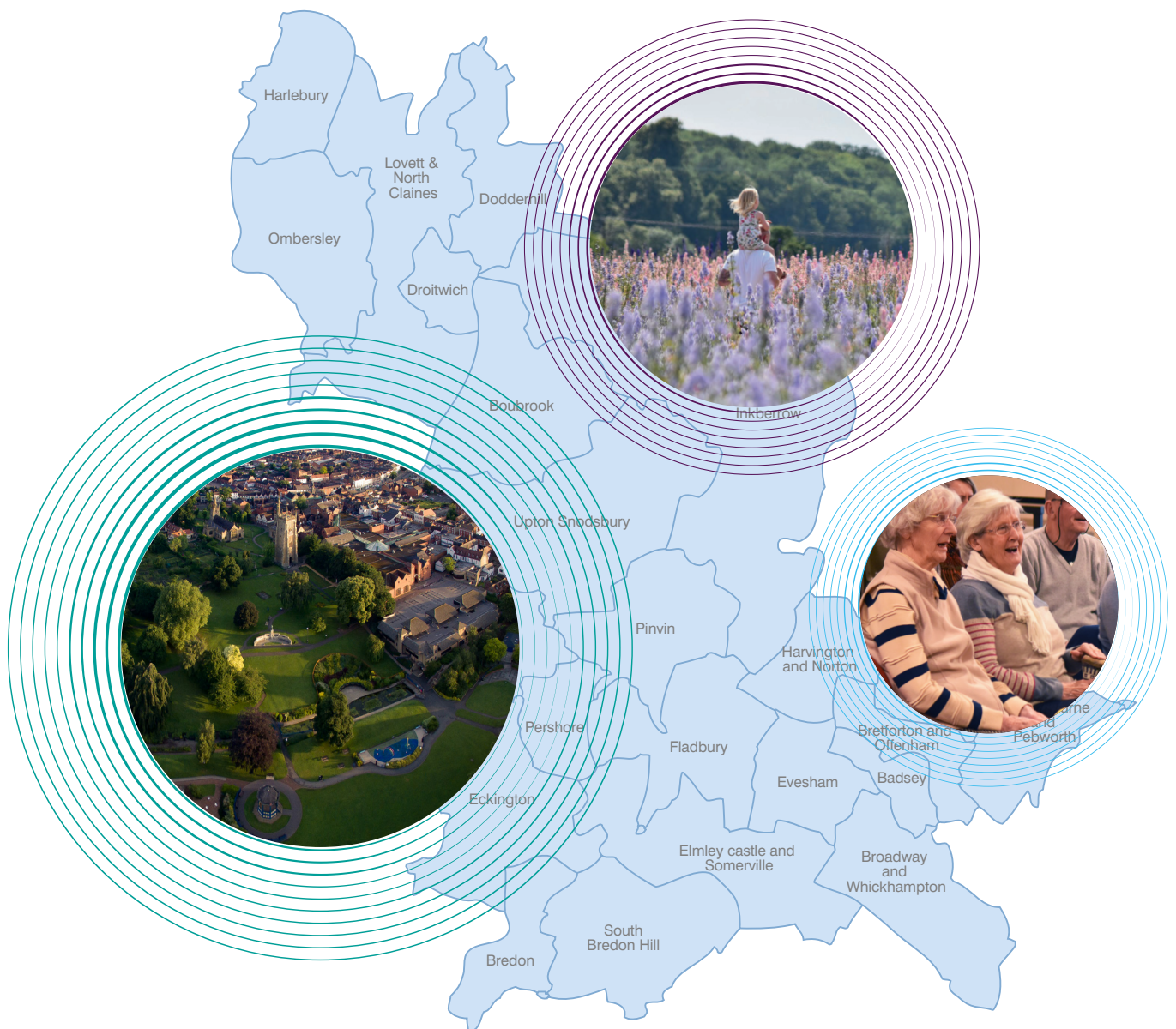


WYCHAVON

Electoral Review Council size submission

to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England



1. Introduction

The Chair of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) wrote to the Leader of Wychavon District Council (WDC) on 30 August 2019 and met with both the Leader and the (then) Managing Director on 12 September 2019. Subsequently, the LGBCE representatives met with group leaders and held an open briefing session for councillors on 8 January 2020.

At their meeting on 19 February 2020, WDC were updated by the (then) Managing Director that a LGBCE electoral review of council size and warding would be undertaken.

Subsequently WDC officers established a cross departmental working group to provide the LGBCE with the technical data and information it requires.

Whilst the timetable for the review has been delayed because of the COVID 19 global pandemic, WDC is now able to present this submission.

This submission has been informed by the work of the Executive Board who met in early September to consider the process and LGBCE requirements. At that time, they agreed to a short online member survey to determine the amount of time spent on council work and gave an opportunity for feedback around current council size. Thereafter the Executive Board met again with

group leaders to review the results of the survey and consider the number for the final size submission.

The agreed council size number of 43 for the final submission was unanimously agreed for recommendation to Council at the Executive Board meeting on 18 November 2020.

The final size Submission Report was presented to Council on 2 December 2020 and the council unanimously agreed to put this submission forward to LGBCE.

This submission evidences the council's recommendation based on the LGBCE's requirements for making a council size submission and demonstrates how the council can fulfil its governance, scrutiny and representational role with a reduction from 45 to 43 members.



2. Rationale for the review

The last electoral review of the council was in 2002 and WDC has subsequently been advised that a new review is timely. This is based on the main criteria for initiating a review being:

- More than 30% of a council's wards having electoral imbalance of more than 10% from the average ratio for that authority, and/or
- One or more wards with an electoral imbalance of more than 30%, and
- The imbalance is unlikely to be corrected by foreseeable changes to the electorate within a reasonable period.

Prior to the last review WDC had 49 elected members and 36 wards. This changed to 45 elected members and 32 wards. Since the last review there have been many changes in the district and to the way WDC works. These are outlined below.

WDC works on an all-out electoral cycle of elections every four years and has seen considerable change in the way the council and councillors work over the last few electoral cycles.

WDC has broadened its joint working links with neighbouring Malvern Hills District Council with whom they share several services, a senior management team and chief executive. These joint working arrangements were introduced to achieve operational efficiency and as such are not directly relevant to the council size submission.

As well as increased joint links with Malvern Hills District Council, WDC has established various joint working relationships with other neighbouring councils. For example, WDC has joined with Malvern Hills and Worcester City councils to provide joint building control, internal audit and IT services. Additionally, the three authorities have worked together on their local development plan, the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP), which is currently going through its statutory review process.

The main environmental health, licensing, food safety and health and safety functions of the council have been delegated to Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) a joint service hosted by neighbouring Bromsgrove District Council on behalf of all Worcestershire districts.

Further, whilst WDC has always had a strong outsourcing history since the last review, it has successfully outsourced further services including revenues and benefits which includes the core services around Council Tax and Business Rates. The revenues and benefits services run jointly service run across three councils: WDC, Malvern Hills District Council and Worcester City Council.

As a result of increased joint working arrangements and some outsourcing arrangements, since the last review in 2002, WDC's total workforce has reduced to 212.64 FTEs with a headcount of 234.

The nature of the district with three main towns surrounded by numerous small villages means that the number of voters per elected member is disproportionate in several wards.

Added to this, at recent elections WDC has had several uncontested wards. At the 2019 elections a total of eight seats in the district elections and many more parishes were uncontested. This meant around 18,000 residents in the district did not need to vote.



At the last election on 2 May 2019, the turnout was as follows:

Electoral area	Vacant seats	Electorate	Turnout %
Badsey	1	2538	27.54
Bengeworth	2	5314	25.08
Bowbrook	1	2368	40.33
Bredon	1	2103	36.61
Bretforton and Offenham	1	2302	uncontested
Broadway and Wickhamford	2	3929	39.17
Dodderhill	1	2207	Uncontested
Drakes Broughton	1	2064	35.56
Droitwich Central	1	1940	28.20
Droitwich East	2	4267	31.40
Droitwich South East	2	4588	35.79
Droitwich South West	2	3833	33.63
Droitwich West	2	3790	22.32
Eckington	1	2210	Uncontested
Elmley Castle and Somerville	1	2035	39.31
Evesham North	2	3791	29.70
Evesham South	2	3966	28.64
Fladbury	1	2297	36.22
Great Hampton	1	2693	31.19
Hartlebury	1	2337	29.10
Harvington and Norton	1	2096	Uncontested
Honeybourne and Pebworth	1	2362	29.68
Inkberrow	2	4837	Uncontested
Little Hampton	2	3997	25.04
Lovett and North Claines	2	5023	33.49
Norton and Whittington	1	2764	Uncontested
Ombersley	1	1956	36.15
Pershore	3	6247	38.15
Pinvin	1	2409	43.09
South Bredon Hill	1	1972	uncontested
The Littletons	1	2344	31.53
Upton Snodsbury	1	2232	39.20

Every part of the district is parished, this sets WDC apart from some neighbouring districts as it means every resident has an additional level of representation.

WDC has always strived to make the best use of available technology. In 2015 the council chamber was fitted with specific webcasting equipment to allow residents to view meetings online. Since 2015 all members have been provided with a council iPad. At that time paper copies of agendas were stopped.

The current Covid-19 situation has also accelerated the process of moving to more digital training modules. The new Coronavirus Act 2020 introduced temporary measures for virtual meetings which WDC introduced from April 2020. WDC is now also looking at improvements in technology that will allow its council chamber to host hybrid meetings.

It is evident that WDC has changed considerably since the last review in 2002. The council has in place a clear corporate strategy based around supporting people, strong economy and places, and sustainable environment that sets out some ambitious plans for the district over the next four years. This has been reviewed in view of the council's Covid-19 recovery framework and is still considered to be fit for purpose.

To gather evidence for this submission, the Executive Board carried out a survey of councillors to gauge the average time spent on council business. Members detailed their preparation for and attending council meetings, dealing with casework, research, supporting parish councils, LGA involvement, representing their ward at local events, etc. When asked about the current number of councillors, 76% responded that the current level was "about right" and 24% thought that there were "too many".

Comments raised included: that the current workload seemed reasonable; WDC covers a large geographical area and many wards have multiple parish councils to support; that an increase in workload caused by reduction of councillors would make it more difficult to fill positions, and particularly difficult to attract councillors in the 30 to 50 age range. That serving on planning committee was particularly time consuming; that single and two member wards worked well, but three member wards led to an uneven balance of responsibility. Overall councillors reported a good level of debate, reasonable workload, good engagement with communities and with parish councils.

The full survey response is attached as Appendix 1.



3. District overview

3.1 Boundary changes

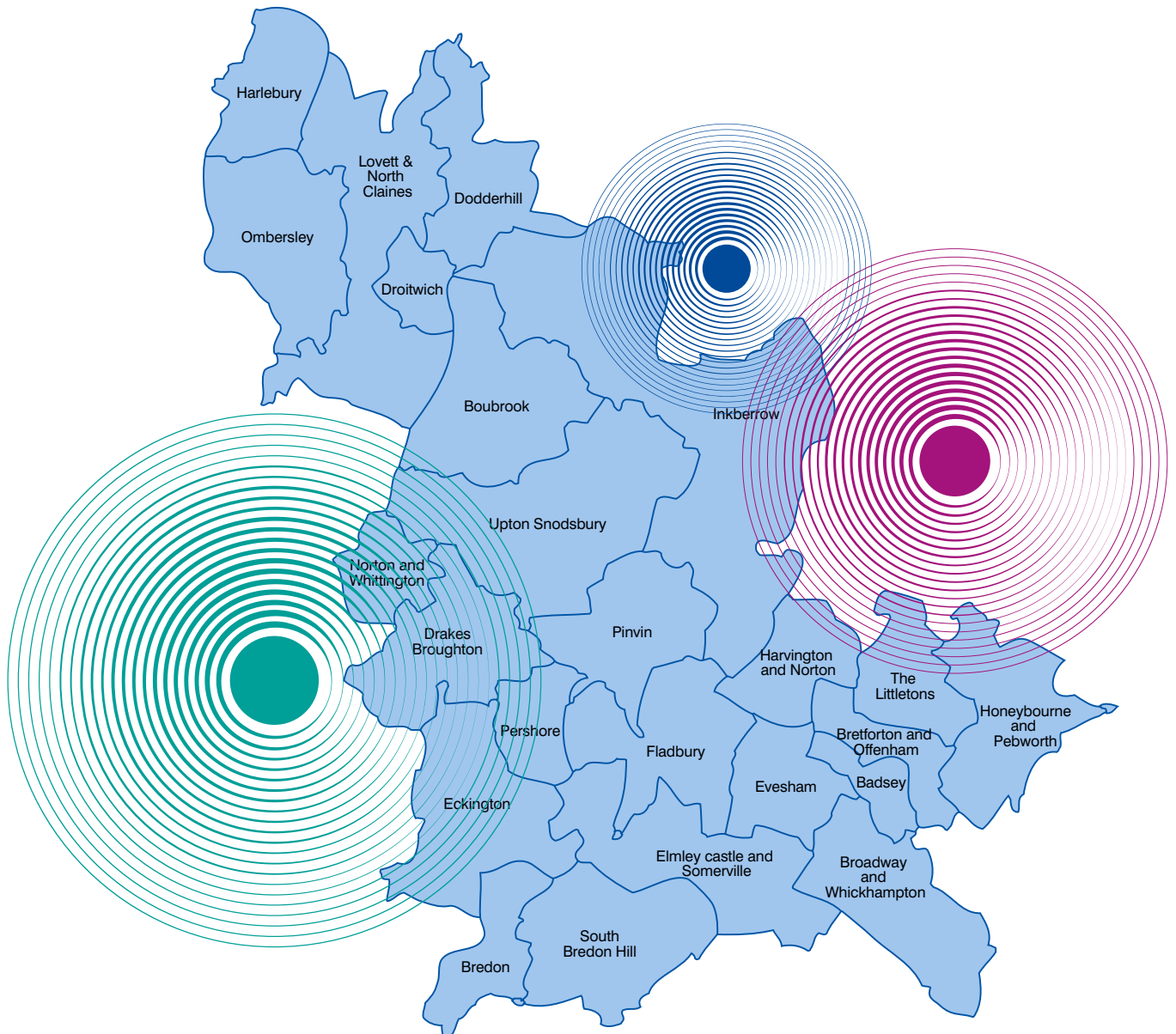
Wychavon covers the south and eastern part of Worcestershire and is the largest of six Worcestershire districts. It contains the three towns of Droitwich Spa, Evesham and Pershore and nearly 100 hamlets and villages including Broadway, the gateway to the Cotswolds.

The district was created under the Local Government Act 1972, on 1 April 1974. It was a merger of the boroughs of Droitwich and Evesham along with Evesham Rural, Droitwich Rural and Pershore Rural District.

The last LGBCE review in 2002 concluded that there should be 32 not 36 wards. The boundaries of 26 of the existing wards at that time were therefore modified.

3.2 Councillor numbers

WDC comprises of 73 parish areas (town councils, parish councils and parish meetings). The district is divided into 32 electoral wards, some one member, some two member and one three-member ward giving a total of 45 elected members. The district spreads across the three Parliamentary constituencies of Mid-Worcestershire, West Worcestershire and Redditch County. Prior to the 2002 review there were 49 elected members across 36 wards.



3.3 The area

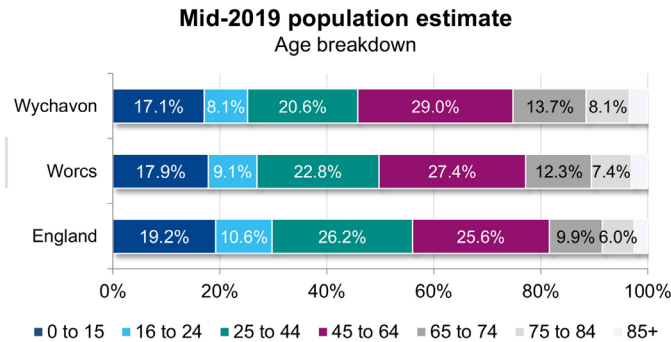
A) Ward information

The table below presents the size of the electorate for each ward and the number of electors per councillor. The figures were correct as at 1 September 2020:

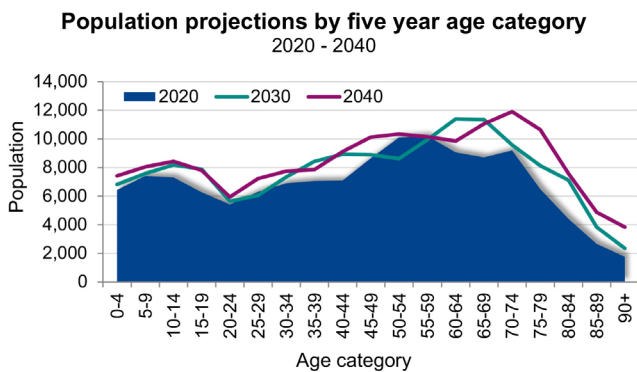
Ward	Electorate	No. of Cllrs	No. of Electors per Cllr
Badsey	2557	1	2557
Bengeworth	5337	2	2669
Bowbrook	2426	1	2426
Bredon	2126	1	2126
Bretforton and Offenham	2333	1	2333
Broadway and Wickhamford	4076	2	2038
Dodderhill	2236	1	2236
Drakes Broughton	2161	1	2161
Droitwich Central	1971	1	1971
Droitwich East	4240	2	2120
Droitwich South East	4959	2	2480
Droitwich South West	3914	2	1957
Droitwich West	3778	2	1889
Eckington	2295	1	2295
Elmley Castle and Somerville	2076	1	2076
Evesham North	3767	2	1884
Evesham South	3966	2	1983
Fladbury	2273	1	2273
Great Hampton	2845	1	2845
Hartlebury	2360	1	2360
Harvington and Norton	2160	1	2160
Honeybourne and Pebworth	2373	1	2373
Inkberrow	4928	2	2464
Little Hampton	4110	2	2055
Lovett and North Claines	5547	2	2774
Norton and Whittington	2882	1	2882
Ombersley	1997	1	1997
Pershore	6471	3	2157
Pinvin	2476	1	2476
South Bredon Hill	1947	1	1947
The Littletons	2367	1	2367
Upton Snodsbury	2250	1	2250
			Average = 2268

B) The mid-2019 estimated population of the district is 129,433.

Of these, 25.1% are aged 65 or over compared with 22.9% in the county and 18.4% in England.



The population is projected to increase to 142,000 by 2026 and to be up by 12.5% on 2020 figures to 148,009 by 2030 and to 159,953 by 2040.



The 2011 census revealed that just 2.1% of the district's residents are from a Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) background. 91% of residents were born in England and a further 3.4% in the rest of the UK. The next largest proportion (2.9%) were born in other EU countries.

We have identified an estimated 6,049 vulnerable older households using Experian's MOSAIC types for people most likely to be aged 70 and over, living alone and on low incomes.

The district is one of the top 20 places to live in the UK, according to the Halifax Quality of Life Survey 2020 and the top in the West Midlands. The 2020 Wychavon residents' survey indicated that nearly 84% of residents are satisfied with Wychavon as a place to live.

While the district is relatively affluent, there are pockets of deprivation. Using data from the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, we have identified an estimated 10,295 people who are financially vulnerable. The district has a very poor social mobility ranking of 320 out of 324, working with partners to improve outcomes for free school meal eligible

children and their families is one of the council's key priorities.

C)

There are over 6,400 businesses in Wychavon and the employment base is highly diverse. One of the biggest employers in the county, Kanes Foods, is based in Middle Littleton. Neighbouring South Littleton is home to Long Lartin Prison, and also Unipart, who are a key part of the automotive supply chain.

The typical Wychavon business, however, is undoubtedly the small/micro business with up to five people employed. This is the backbone of the local economy.

Tourism is well represented in the district, and the sector was valued at being worth £200 million to the local economy in 2019, employing 2,500 people.

Agri-tech is a very significant sector, and not just in the Vale of Evesham but across the district. Manufacturing makes up 18% of the district's economy, employing 9000 people. This is perhaps surprising given the largely rural makeup of the district, but large business parks such as Hartlebury in the north of the district, and Honeybourne in the south, include many small manufacturing companies. Small rural business parks such as Deer Park near Pershore, or Shires Farm near Droitwich include cyber businesses, and advanced manufacturing and automotive supply chain companies are present throughout the district.

The development of Worcester Six, home to Kimal, Materials Solutions and Spires Health Care, has helped anchor existing companies and attract new ones.

WDC has supported investment and jobs in many ways, including building a Waitrose supermarket in both Droitwich and Evesham, and a hospital in Pershore. The council also owns land at Vale Park in Evesham, has built a new home for Robert Welch Design, and provided land for Prima Fruit's expansion. The latter supplies all of Waitrose's 'exotic' fruit, and trains Waitrose staff in handling and care of the produce. The council has recently secured £600,000 from the Getting Britain Building Fund to support further expansion of commercial development on Vale Park.



D)

The main tenure of housing within the district is owner occupation with 11% private rented and 14.5% rented affordable housing. There is an issue around affordability with the average house price being 11.2 times the mean annual earnings. There are several high earners which inflates the mean average earnings and disguises pockets of deprivation. Private sector rents are significantly higher than affordable housing rents and in general the cost differential increases for larger properties.

The issue of limited access to market housing results in a high demand for social rented housing and issues around homelessness. There is an increasing need among single people and couples of all ages and for smaller family homes as well as a small but essential need for affordable housing solutions for larger households. The council works closely with partner Registered Providers with the main providers in Wychavon district council being Platform Housing Group and Rooftop Housing Group to support a robust new build programme of affordable housing and to find solutions for both the accommodation and support needs of those unable to access the market. This includes the provision of intermediate housing solutions such as shared ownership properties.

There are also issues of fuel poverty within the district often relating to the significant proportion of hard-to-heat properties. There is a need to upgrade standards of insulation and retrofitting of other energy efficiency measures which will make a significant difference in terms of improved health outcomes as well as reduced living costs for local residents as well as carbon reduction and, increased sustainability.

E)

The South Worcestershire Councils (SWCs) (Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District) have commenced a review of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP). The SWDP was adopted in February 2016 and the SWCs are required, by the 2017 Regulations, to complete a review every five years. The SWDP Review will cover the period to 2041. The SWDP Review will allocate further land for houses, jobs and retail. It will also set out planning policies for making decisions on new development proposals up to the year 2041.

Graphics should be able to insert a few images of local housing, businesses and the district in general to this section to brighten it up.

F) Nearest neighbour comparison

Council	No. of Cllrs	Electorate	No. of Electors per Cllr
Stratford on Avon	36	100041	2779
Hambleton	28	71506	2554
Bromsgrove	31	72354	2334
Wychavon	45	100845	2241
Cotswold	34	69817	2053
Mid Suffolk	40	80679	2017
Tewkesbury	38	70997	1868
Babergh	44	72386	1645
North Dorset	33	53794	1630
Maldon	31	49525	1598
Malvern Hills	38	60021	1580
Mid Devon	42	63168	1504
Derbyshire Dales	39	57231	1467
Forest of Dean	48	67501	1406
West Devon	31	43481	1403
Ryedale	30	41919	1397
Average	36.75	67204	1842

4. Political make up, governance and decision making

4.1 Current political make up

There are 45 Councillors covering 32 wards. Each Councillor is elected for a term of four years, with the last election on 2 May 2019. The current political representation on the council is:

- Conservatives -x 35
- Liberal Democrats - 6
- Green Party - 2
- Independent – 1
- Vacancy – 1 (vacancy since mid-March 2020)

4.2 Governance model

WDC operates on a governance model based on a strong leader with an Executive Board. This is in effect a cabinet model of governance as per the Local Government Act 2000 governance options, however in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 the emphasis is on a stronger leader.

The governance structure has full Council as the main body for determining matters which are legally reserved for Council such as budget and Council Tax setting. The Executive Board has decision making powers and other committees feed into Council as detailed below.

There is an opportunity for members of the public to raise questions and ask questions at most Council, Board and Committee meetings in accordance with WDC's public participation scheme. Regulatory committees such as planning committees and licensing sub committees have slightly different public participation schemes.

4.3 Council

All councillors serve at full Council which is the main decision-making body for strategic policy making and the setting of Council Tax and budgets and is chaired by the Chairman. The main role of the Chairman is to act as a non-political, civic and ceremonial head of Wychavon district.

The role of the Chairman also includes:

- Chairing meetings of the council
- Acting as official host to visitors of the district
- To represent the district at civic and ceremonial events
- To promote public involvement in the council's activities

Council appoints committees to undertake various functions on its behalf and holds those committees to account for the decisions they make. The Executive Board and Committees decide on the day-to-day operation of the council. Council meetings require a strong chair and extra time commitment from the chairman, executive board members and chairman of all the main committees to attend pre-briefings. There are approximately ten council meetings every year. All council meetings are held in the evenings and generally last no more than a few hours.

4.4 Executive Board and portfolio holders

The Executive Board is currently made up of the leader and seven other members of the leading group. The Executive Board collectively determines all those matters that are not reserved for Council or delegated to another Committee.

The Executive Board is in effect the cabinet within WDC's governance model and makes most of the day-to-day decisions of the council. The Board meets once a month in public. Non board members also regularly join public board meetings. Board meetings are normally held in the evenings and can last anything from 15 minutes to a few hours.

The Board's Forward Plan shows what major decisions the Board is planning to make in the near future and is regularly reviewed. The role of the Leader, responsibilities of the Board members and the rules and procedures of the Board are set out in the council's Constitution.



The current portfolio holders and their specific responsibilities for 20/21 are:

A) Leader of the Council

Responsibilities: chairs the Board and leads the council, lead on Covid-19 Recovery Plan, external role at local, regional and national level including joint working, lead on business planning, performance and corporate strategy, corporate communications and reputation, corporate consultation and engagement, external strategic partnership working.

B) Executive Board Member for Economic Growth and Tourism

Responsibilities: economic growth and development, lead LEP matters, urban and rural regeneration, tourism, car parking strategy and services, skills including apprenticeships.

C) Executive Board Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Urban Design

Responsibilities: SWDP Review, policy, planning and neighbourhood planning, heritage and biodiversity, building control, strategic transport and infrastructure matters, strategic urban design policy and initiatives, land charges and street naming.

D) Executive Board Member for Resources and Investment

Responsibilities: budget, revenue and capital spend, HR and payroll services, property and estate matters, health and safety, risk management and insurance, revenues and benefits, corporate procurement.

E) Executive Board Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing

Responsibilities: strategic housing function, homelessness and rough sleeping, private sector housing, health and wellbeing, Wychavon Leisure, older persons and ageing well, social mobility.

F) Executive Board Member for Environment, Recycling and Street Scene

Responsibilities: waste, recycling, street cleaning and public toilets, parks and open spaces, licencing policy and strategy, flooding, drainage and water management, Intelligently Green Plan and initiatives, environmental campaigns including litter reduction, plastics minimisation and energy reduction.

G) Executive Board Member for Strong Communities, Culture and Sport

Responsibilities: policing matters, CCTV and community safety, sports, art and culture, children

and young people, safeguarding and child sexual exploitation, oversees the council's community funding and grant schemes, community development and rural transport.

H) Executive Board Member for Town Centres and Council Efficiency

Responsibilities: efficiency and transformation in the organisation, ICT, online services, contact centres, town centre master planning and recovery, funding and investment in town centres, promotion and joint working on town centre matters.

There is a considerable time commitment required from board members. As well as the regular public meetings the board meets every month with officers to look at emerging issues and review the forward plan.

4.5 Scrutiny

WDC has one Overview and Scrutiny Committee with eleven members and is politically balanced.

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is an important one in the council's governance structure. It provides challenge to the Executive Board and Senior Management Team and helps to drive improvement and provide a critical friend role where necessary.

The committee has a responsibility to co-ordinate the scrutiny and review of the council's policies and decisions. It can also look at specific topics and present ideas on these to the Executive Board. In addition, the committee can 'call in' decisions of the Board it thinks should be looked at again or reviewed in line with statutory provisions.

At its first meeting of the year, the committee normally sets a work plan for the coming year and agrees what areas of the council's work it will be looking at. If necessary, the committee will set up specific task and finish groups to investigate specific issues. The committee is scheduled to meet about ten times per year, however this can be increased or decreased as necessary. Scrutiny groups set their own meeting schedules and report back to the main committee at the end of the year. There are also two standing task and finish groups which look at issues around health and audit matters.

One of the issues looked at during 19/20 was homelessness within the district. Relevant housing officers held an overview and scrutiny workshop to assist members understand the issues facing the district and the work currently being undertaken.

The final feedback highlighting the work is shown at



Appendix 2 as an example such workshops.

During 2019/20 there was a scrutiny group looking at the current process in respect of temporary event notices under the current licensing regime. There were also scrutiny groups set up to consider social isolation and loneliness; and recycling. The standing group for budget scrutiny is ongoing. The final reports of these groups demonstrate the considerable work and time commitment made by members into this committee and its task and finish groups.

During 2020/21, scrutiny groups have been set up to consider recycling and Covid-19 response and recovery as well as Budget.

Executive Board members are regularly invited to Overview and Scrutiny meetings to give updates and answer questions on areas of work or major projects which fall within their portfolios. The committee meetings are open to the public, whilst task and finish group meetings are not. Nevertheless, both forums are open to any council officer or third party representative by invitation of the group. Meetings are generally in the early evening and on average last a few hours.

4.6 Planning

Applications for planning permission, unless delegated to officers, are decided by the Planning Committee, which meets every four weeks and has 15 members. The committee is politically balanced. It decides planning applications in accordance with agreed policies and authorises enforcement action in appropriate cases. The committee also considers items relating to planning policy which are then referred to Executive Board (and/or Council) for a decision. Its role and protocols are set out in the council's Constitution.

The Leader will avoid sitting on planning committee and, where possible, will avoid appointing two members from the same ward to planning committee. Members are sent weekly planning lists of all new planning applications and, where there is a specific reason, a member can request that a decision which is due to be delegated to officers, be considered by the committee. Approximately 94% of planning applications are dealt with under delegated powers and the rest are reported to the planning committee.

The amount of work for the committee varies significantly. The average number of applications per committee during 2019/20 was seven. Meetings are rarely cancelled and whilst in the past meetings have lasted four to five hours, in the last few years the average has been three hours. All planning committee meetings are held in the afternoon.

Whilst some applications which come before the planning committees will be straight forward, there are often complex and difficult applications and decisions to be made. All committee members are required to undertake regular planning training. This normally takes place as short sessions on specific topics prior to the committee meetings.

Planning policy is evolving and the WDC development plan policies are often complex. Some applications will therefore involve significant advance reading in preparation for the meeting. Some applications will also require site visits. Site visits are organised for the whole committee and usually take place earlier on the day of the committee meeting.

There is significant public involvement at planning committees and WDC has a specific public speaking scheme in operation which allows objectors, applicants and parish and town councils to speak on planning applications. Ward members are also able to ask questions at committee. Planning committee requires an extra time commitment from the chairman to allow for pre-briefings.

4.7 Licensing

The main licensing function of the council is delegated to Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) a joint service hosted by neighbouring Bromsgrove District Council on behalf of all Worcestershire districts. Licensing committees, however, remain a function of each individual district.

Licensing policy is dealt with by the full licensing committee. The committee is politically balanced and consists of 11 members. No substitutions are allowed. All members of the committee receive specific training.

In 2019/20 the full licensing committee met twice. Meetings are normally in the day and open to members of the public. WDC also have licensing sub committees. These consist of any three members from the 11 full licensing committee members. Meetings are scheduled monthly however scheduled meetings are often cancelled and occasionally they have to be called outside the scheduled timetable to meet statutory requirements of the Licensing Act 2003.

Sub committees of three members of the main committee also meet as and when required to consider applications for private hire and hackney carriages (drivers, vehicles, operators) that fall outside adopted policy and relevant Licensing Act 2003 (on/off sales of alcohol, late night entertainment, temporary events etc) applications which receive objections. The three members are chosen on the basis of availability as long as the applicant/application address is not in their ward.

Sub committees meet during the day, do not often hear more than two applications at a time and generally last an hour. They are attended by the relevant applicant (and occasionally objectors/ ward members) and whilst some of the hearings are open to members of the public there is very little public attendance. The sub committees involve some pre-reading for members, but often specific information is provided by the WRS licensing officer on the day such as previous convictions data.

During 2019/20 there were 13 sub-committee hearings. Ward members not sitting on a sub-committee can attend a sub-committee hearing to speak if they have submitted a relevant objection and or they are nominated to do so by someone who has objected. WRS officers provide committee members with updates as necessary.

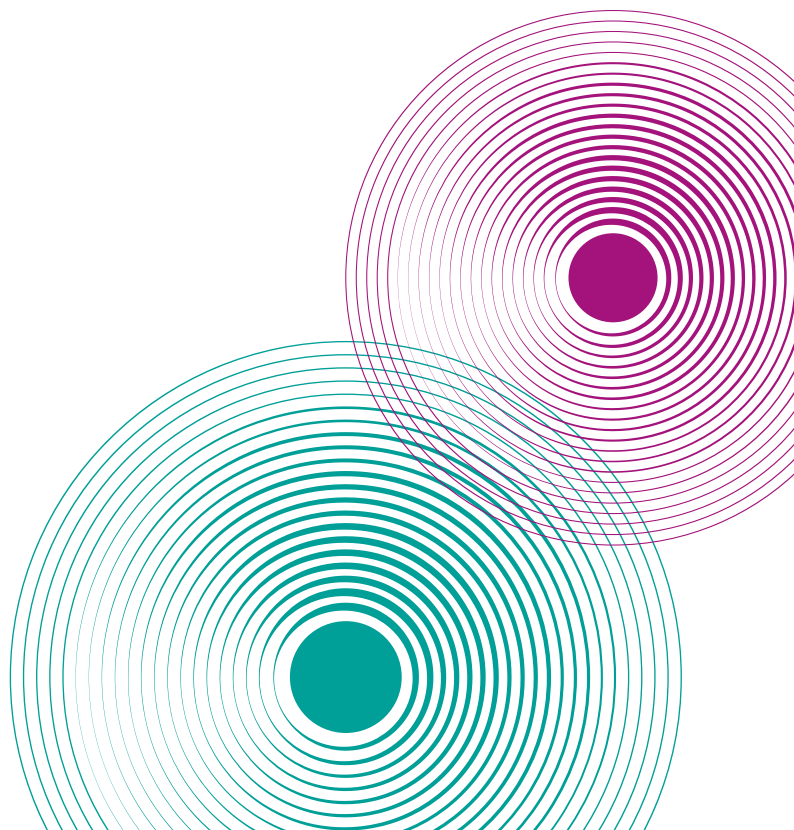
4.8 Other regulatory committees

A) Member Conduct Committee

The Member Conduct Committee is politically balanced and comprises five district councillors, one independent member (non-voting), plus two representatives from the parish councils (non-voting). The committee is involved in promoting high standards of conduct by district and parish councillors, and also considers any allegations of member misconduct. The committee meets four times a year but can meet more frequently if required for specific matters. Meetings are held in the early evening and are open to the public however often go into private session depending on nature of matters being discussed.

B) Audit Committee

The purpose of the Audit Committee is to provide the council with independent assurance on the adequacy of its risk management framework, internal control environment and integrity of the financial reporting and annual governance processes. The committee is politically balanced and comprises five elected members and one non-voting independent member. The committee meets approximately six times per year and is open to the public. Meetings are generally in the afternoon.



4.9 Other committees

WDC's constitution sets out a number of additional committees. These are generally all for specific purposes and meet as and when required such as the joint shared appointments panel which is shared with Malvern hills District Council.

Full details of the committees are detailed in the council's Constitution.

<http://mgov.wychavon.gov.uk/modern.gov/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=316>

4.10 Advisory panels

WDC has three advisory panels. All three panels provide advice to the council's decision-making Executive Board and help guide policy development. Each panel meets around six times a year and panel meetings are open to the public.

The panels are:

A) Communities and Funding Advisory Panel

Provides advice and policy development support on community leadership and engagement, community funding issues and the community rights contained within the Localism Act 2011.

B) Rural Matters Advisory Panel

Provides advice and policy development support on rural matters relevant to the district, including rural housing, community transport, rural crime and development of the rural economy.

C) Town centres Advisory Panel

Provides advice and policy development support on matters relevant to the district's three towns, including town centre master planning, revitalisation and investment.

- The panels are made up of six elected councillors with representation from more than one political party on the council. In addition, each panel can appoint up to three community representatives, who are not district councillors.

The work of the panels is key in a number of areas that align to the council's priorities and goals such as local economy. They have recently also re-focused to look at the council's Covid-19 recovery work. Some of the work of the panels is unique to WDC for example the Community and Funding Advisory Panel assess applications for Community Legacy Grants. The Community Legacy Grant scheme is a £3 million fund for innovative, ambitious, viable capital

projects that meet local needs and that will create a significant community legacy. Panel members make a significant time commitment to the work of their panels.

In addition, earlier this year the Executive Board introduced an informal Carbon Reduction Panel to focus on Wychavon's Intelligently Green Plan.

4.11 Officers

WDC has in place a specific scheme of delegation as part of its constitution which sets out delegations made to officers. This information is available on the website at the following link:

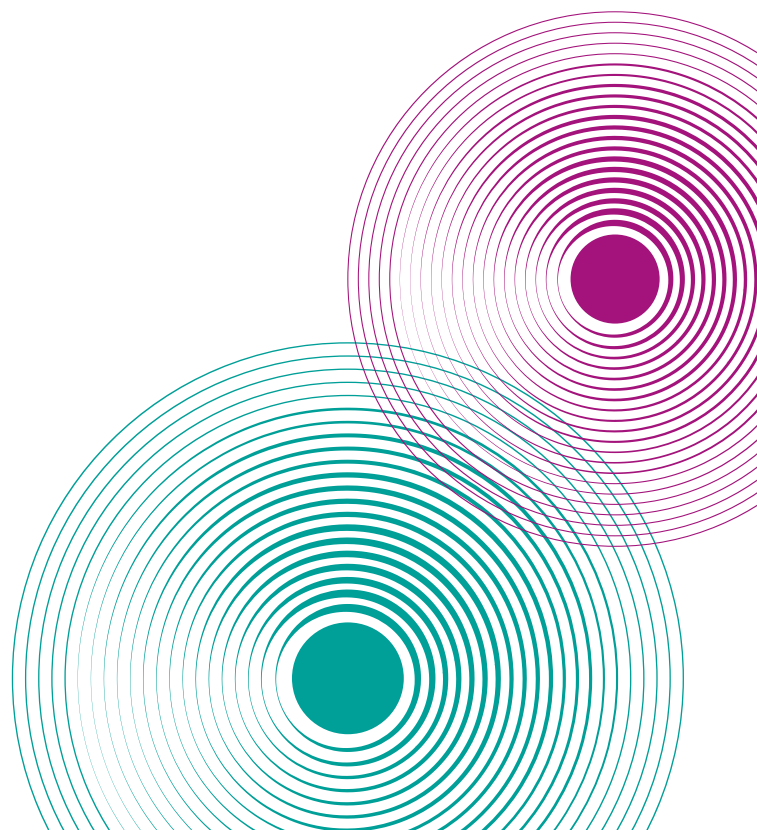
<http://mgov.wychavon.gov.uk/modern.gov/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD102&ID=102&RPID=3178787>

WDC works closely with neighbouring Malvern Hills District Council and the two councils some services are shared jointly across both councils with officers working in joint teams across both sites, full details can be seen in the attached chart -

www.wychavon.gov.uk/about-wychavon-district-council/about-wychavon/management-structure

4.12 External partners and joint working

WDC is involved in a number of joint working initiatives with neighbouring councils and external partners for specific services as detailed above.



5. Members – other roles

5.1 Representational roles

Every four years, after the elections, all members are invited to attend an induction programme. Technology has changed the way members interact with residents and currently all WDC councillors are provided with a council iPad and WDC email address. There is a comprehensive training programme arranged by officers. A number of the training modules are mandatory for all members attending and presiding on certain committees, e.g. planning and licensing.

5.2 Community engagement

Members reach out to their communities in a variety of different ways. They attend parish council meetings and local events at schools, pubs and in the community. These have continued during the coronavirus pandemic and there have been two Meet-Your-Council events on a virtual platform. Some produce newsletters and leaflets, others give regular press releases, and many have a presence on social media.

Almost all members attend events in their community where they often play a local leadership role such as fairs and fetes, charity events and arts and cultural events.

Members get directly involved with their communities through the Meet Your Council events and last year WDC hosted a democracy day for students from local high schools. Some members are involved in the community through attendance at community events held at local businesses, schools, pubs and in village halls. Members may be asked to open events such as village fetes, to attend pub quizzes, film nights, and participate in other groups active in their area.



5.4 Member champions

Every 4 years the planning committee appoint, from their membership, two member champions to support, champion and assist the committee with good practice within planning. On 22nd August 2019 the planning committee appointed a Heritage Champion and a Design Champion. Heritage being a key feature within WDC due to the rural nature of the district and design being a key feature for housing developments.

Overview and Scrutiny have also appointed member champions to highlight their key strategy areas and align them to the council's priorities, they are: Supporting people Member Champion; Strong economy and places Member Champion; and Sustainable Environment Member Champion.

5.5 Appointments to outside bodies

WDC appoints councillors directly to a number of outside bodies including the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Conservation Board, Coventry Charity, Evesham Arts Centre Management Committee, "Number 8" Company Board (Pershore Arts Centre)

Peopleton Parish Land Trustees, Pershore Volunteer Centre, Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London Adjudication Joint Committee, Vale of Evesham Commerce & Tourism Association (VECTA), Vale of Evesham Volunteer Centre Management Committee, Welcome to our Future, Wychavon and Malvern CAB. All these appointments are a way of linking into WDC's wider work and involve a time commitment on behalf of the member involved.

5.6 Member support

The role of member support officers is to give full and impartial assistance to enable councillors to carry out their duties. WDC has a designated member support team as well as other officers who assist with member support. In addition, the chairman also has assistance from a specific officer.

All members also have access to all officers from the full range of WDC services for advice and assistance on specific service matters.

The leader and chairman are provided with their own office and WDC also has a dedicated members' room.

5.7 Political role

If a councillor is also a member of a political party, they will be expected to attend political group meetings especially before council meetings, and are encouraged to attend LGA training, campaigns, canvassing sessions and events. Each group may elect a leader and other office holders, such as a chair, secretary or whip, to help run it.

6. Submission

Having taken account the factors set out in the body of this submission such as the changes since the last review to the way the council operates, reduction in officer numbers, number of electors per councillor and wider issues such as nearest neighbour comparisons and looking at the local needs balanced against future population growth predictions, (full details of which have been provided to the LGBCE separately), whilst the Executive Board accepts that a slight reduction in the number of councillors would be appropriate, they are mindful that any reduction proposed would have to be proportionate, manageable and allow for effective discharging of responsibilities.

The Executive Board wishes to achieve the aims of this review and a reduction in numbers without impacting on the council's ability to deliver its services and priorities or adversely affecting the needs of constituents and members in terms of engagement. They also wish to future proof for the anticipated population growth from the 2020 figures of 129,000 to 142,000 by 2026.

The results of the member survey indicated that over 75% of current councillors felt there were currently just the right number of members. Those who did make comments suggesting a size reduction talked more about how much they could increase capacity rather than what number to decrease by. The Executive Board considered information on current electors per councillor and looked at the nearest neighbour comparators and balanced this with the fact that, since mid-March, the council has been operating with a vacancy.

The Executive Board were keen to ensure they took account of the fact that councillors work hard to meet their commitments both in terms of their role in representing their wards and communities but also in decision making and scrutiny. Councillors attend formal Council meetings as voting members and to represent their constituents. They also attend informal

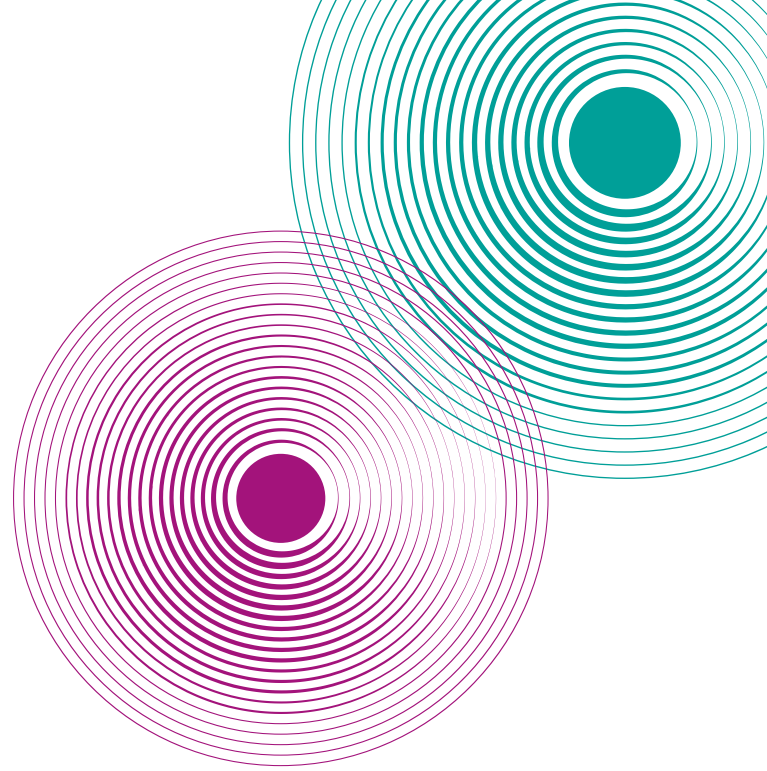
meetings with officers, political group meetings and public meetings as well as ward level and community meetings.

Whilst the Executive Board were mindful to note the changes in the way residents communicate with them, they were keen to stress that the nature of communication was now more instant and demanded more instant responses. Also, the rural nature of the district and the aging population means that members have to use a wide range of communication tools and cannot just rely on technology.

The Executive Board, in consultation with group leaders, found that, on balance any reduction in the number of councillors, whilst providing savings, should not have any impact on governance, representation, community engagement or create an unacceptable democratic deficit; the key factors were for resilience and representation to be retained and therefore, based on all the evidence considered, it was felt that a council of 43 members would be appropriate and proportionate.

The Executive Board unanimously resolved, at their meeting on 18 November 2020 to recommend the draft submission to Council.

The final size Submission Report was presented to Council on 2 December 2020 and the council unanimously agreed to put this submission forward to the LGBCE.



7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Councillor Survey Response

Appendix 2 – Scrutiny Update Report on Homelessness

WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL
LGBCE Council Size submission - Member Survey

1. How many hours per week on average do you spend on your work as a district councillor?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	41
1	09/09/2020 16:53 PM	10		
2	09/09/2020 17:24 PM	14		
3	09/09/2020 17:45 PM	12		
4	09/09/2020 18:18 PM	10		
5	09/09/2020 19:10 PM	5		
6	09/09/2020 19:16 PM	14		
7	09/09/2020 20:24 PM	8		
8	10/09/2020 09:54 AM	6		
9	10/09/2020 11:41 AM	15		
10	10/09/2020 19:52 PM	12		
11	11/09/2020 11:10 AM	14		
12	11/09/2020 12:52 PM	6		
13	14/09/2020 14:08 PM	12		
14	14/09/2020 14:17 PM	10		
15	17/09/2020 14:44 PM	8		
16	23/09/2020 11:15 AM	12		
17	24/09/2020 17:53 PM	9		
18	26/09/2020 14:46 PM	10		
19	28/09/2020 13:08 PM	14		
20	28/09/2020 13:10 PM	5		
21	28/09/2020 13:25 PM	30		
22	28/09/2020 13:49 PM	10		
23	28/09/2020 17:20 PM	27		
24	28/09/2020 19:50 PM	12		
25	28/09/2020 20:50 PM	10		
26	29/09/2020 07:34 AM	25		
27	29/09/2020 13:00 PM	10		
28	29/09/2020 21:16 PM	8		
29	30/09/2020 10:52 AM	20		
30	30/09/2020 12:52 PM	9		
31	30/09/2020 15:11 PM	10		
32	30/09/2020 18:17 PM	10		

1. How many hours per week on average do you spend on your work as a district councillor?

			Response Percent	Response Total
33	30/09/2020 22:02 PM	8		
34	01/10/2020 09:06 AM	17		
35	04/10/2020 18:03 PM	16		
36	08/10/2020 15:09 PM	20		
37	08/10/2020 15:32 PM	8		
38	08/10/2020 20:27 PM	22		
39	08/10/2020 23:16 PM	15		
40	09/10/2020 10:46 AM	10		
41	10/10/2020 19:41 PM	10		
			answered	41
			skipped	0

2. Please break this total down as follows:

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Attending council meetings including preparation		100.00%	41
1	09/09/2020 16:53 PM	4		
2	09/09/2020 17:24 PM	11		
3	09/09/2020 17:45 PM	2		
4	09/09/2020 18:18 PM	3		
5	09/09/2020 19:10 PM	2		
6	09/09/2020 19:16 PM	10		
7	09/09/2020 20:24 PM	2		
8	10/09/2020 09:54 AM	4		
9	10/09/2020 11:41 AM	8		
10	10/09/2020 19:52 PM	4		
11	11/09/2020 11:10 AM	7		
12	11/09/2020 12:52 PM	3		
13	14/09/2020 14:08 PM	6		
14	14/09/2020 14:17 PM	9		
15	17/09/2020 14:44 PM	4		
16	23/09/2020 11:15 AM	4		
17	24/09/2020 17:53 PM	4		
18	26/09/2020 14:46 PM	7		
19	28/09/2020 13:08 PM	6		
20	28/09/2020 13:10 PM	2		

2. Please break this total down as follows:

			Response Percent	Response Total
21	28/09/2020 13:25 PM	12		
22	28/09/2020 13:49 PM	8		
23	28/09/2020 17:20 PM	7		
24	28/09/2020 19:50 PM	6		
25	28/09/2020 20:50 PM	2		
26	29/09/2020 07:34 AM	12		
27	29/09/2020 13:00 PM	5		
28	29/09/2020 21:16 PM	3		
29	30/09/2020 10:52 AM	4		
30	30/09/2020 12:52 PM	3		
31	30/09/2020 15:11 PM	4		
32	30/09/2020 18:17 PM	5		
33	30/09/2020 22:02 PM	3		
34	01/10/2020 09:06 AM	5		
35	04/10/2020 18:03 PM	8		
36	08/10/2020 15:09 PM	2		
37	08/10/2020 15:32 PM	4		
38	08/10/2020 20:27 PM	10		
39	08/10/2020 23:16 PM	10		
40	09/10/2020 10:46 AM	5		
41	10/10/2020 19:41 PM	2		
2	Community representation including case work		100.00%	41
1	09/09/2020 16:53 PM	4		
2	09/09/2020 17:24 PM	3		
3	09/09/2020 17:45 PM	3		
4	09/09/2020 18:18 PM	7		
5	09/09/2020 19:10 PM	3		
6	09/09/2020 19:16 PM	4		
7	09/09/2020 20:24 PM	6		
8	10/09/2020 09:54 AM	2		
9	10/09/2020 11:41 AM	3		
10	10/09/2020 19:52 PM	4		
11	11/09/2020 11:10 AM	7		
12	11/09/2020 12:52 PM	2		
13	14/09/2020 14:08 PM	4		
14	14/09/2020 14:17 PM	1		

2. Please break this total down as follows:

			Response Percent	Response Total
15	17/09/2020 14:44 PM	4		
16	23/09/2020 11:15 AM	4		
17	24/09/2020 17:53 PM	2		
18	26/09/2020 14:46 PM	3		
19	28/09/2020 13:08 PM	8		
20	28/09/2020 13:10 PM	2		
21	28/09/2020 13:25 PM	12		
22	28/09/2020 13:49 PM	2		
23	28/09/2020 17:20 PM	10		
24	28/09/2020 19:50 PM	6		
25	28/09/2020 20:50 PM	8		
26	29/09/2020 07:34 AM	5		
27	29/09/2020 13:00 PM	5		
28	29/09/2020 21:16 PM	3		
29	30/09/2020 10:52 AM	11		
30	30/09/2020 12:52 PM	6		
31	30/09/2020 15:11 PM	6		
32	30/09/2020 18:17 PM	5		
33	30/09/2020 22:02 PM	4		
34	01/10/2020 09:06 AM	4		
35	04/10/2020 18:03 PM	3		
36	08/10/2020 15:09 PM	12		
37	08/10/2020 15:32 PM	3		
38	08/10/2020 20:27 PM	10		
39	08/10/2020 23:16 PM	5		
40	09/10/2020 10:46 AM	5		
41	10/10/2020 19:41 PM	5		
3	Other (please describe below)		56.10%	23
1	09/09/2020 16:53 PM	2		
2	09/09/2020 17:45 PM	7		
3	10/09/2020 09:54 AM	0		
4	10/09/2020 11:41 AM	4		
5	10/09/2020 19:52 PM	2		
6	11/09/2020 12:52 PM	1		
7	14/09/2020 14:08 PM	2		
8	14/09/2020 14:17 PM	0		



2. Please break this total down as follows:

			Response Percent	Response Total
9	23/09/2020 11:15 AM	4		
10	24/09/2020 17:53 PM	2		
11	28/09/2020 13:10 PM	1		
12	28/09/2020 13:25 PM	6		
13	28/09/2020 17:20 PM	10		
14	29/09/2020 07:34 AM	8		
15	29/09/2020 21:16 PM	2		
16	30/09/2020 10:52 AM	5		
17	30/09/2020 22:02 PM	1		
18	01/10/2020 09:06 AM	8		
19	04/10/2020 18:03 PM	5		
20	08/10/2020 15:09 PM	6		
21	08/10/2020 15:32 PM	1		
22	08/10/2020 20:27 PM	2		
23	10/10/2020 19:41 PM	3		
			answered	41
			skipped	0
Other: (19)				
1	09/09/2020 16:53 PM	Research and ensuring I keep up to date with local issues		
2	09/09/2020 17:45 PM	Liaison with colleagues, emails, training, providing local information, keeping up with local information		
3	10/09/2020 11:41 AM	Background research. Negotiation with other members and councillors		
4	10/09/2020 19:52 PM	Very much depends but communication with businesses and researching issues and finding resolutions. Attending training and representing ward at events		
5	11/09/2020 12:52 PM	Research checking previous actions		
6	14/09/2020 14:08 PM	Reading articles etc		
7	24/09/2020 17:53 PM	General reading in connection with heritage matters Group meetings.		
8	28/09/2020 13:10 PM	Research and ensuring I keep up to date with local issues		
9	28/09/2020 13:25 PM	Researching things of interest, reading websites etc.		
10	28/09/2020 17:20 PM	Planning		
11	29/09/2020 07:34 AM	Parish Council meetings		
12	29/09/2020 21:16 PM	Attending events		
13	30/09/2020 10:52 AM	LGA duties		
14	30/09/2020 22:02 PM	Reading, notes, research etc		
15	01/10/2020 09:06 AM	Dealing with resident and general local matters		
16	04/10/2020 18:03 PM	Attending Parish Councils and Outside bodies meetings. Telephone calls, emails.		

2. Please break this total down as follows:

			Response Percent	Response Total
17	08/10/2020 15:09 PM	Research on areas of concern, meetings & discussions with other councillors on issues		
18	08/10/2020 15:32 PM	travel		
19	08/10/2020 20:27 PM	General advice to ward residents		

3. What do you think about the current number of councillors?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Too many		24.39%	10
2	Not enough		0.00%	0
3	About right		75.61%	31
			answered	41
			skipped	0

Why is this? (38)

1	09/09/2020 17:24 PM	<p>More members may simply lead to a difficulty in operating the Council effectively without this possibly leading to some members feeling that there is a lack of engagement/involvement and/or feeling disconnected from decision making processes.</p> <p>Fewer members may lead to the opposite difficult where with a lower number of Councillors this might lead to difficulties in operating the Council effectively without overloading individual Councillors.</p> <p>Consider that the current number (or thereabouts) is an effective balance between engagement and workload on individual Councillors</p>
2	09/09/2020 17:45 PM	<p>Reducing the number of councillors would increase the load on individuals and/or lessen their ability to represent their ward. The current numbers work and ensure a sufficient number of councillors to fill positions.</p> <p>There has been an effective reduction in numbers per unit of population since councillor numbers have stayed the same while our population has increased by some 20% since the last review.</p>
3	09/09/2020 19:10 PM	<p>Having served on a unitary authority with responsibility for a much wider range of services at a greater number of residents per councillor; there is simply no reason we need 45 councillors to manage the responsibilities at Wychavon. It lends itself to councillors getting involved in issues just to feel important rather than because they are needed for good governance.</p>
4	09/09/2020 19:16 PM	<p>I am a member of the planning committee, so the majority of time is spent with meetings and research. It seems to me that the council is represented by the correct number.</p>
5	09/09/2020 20:24 PM	<p>We have almost equal number members representing rural/village areas as we do urban/town areas, which I believe is a fair balance, if there were fewer councillors, then either the balance would shift or the village wards would be geographically much bigger.</p>
6	10/09/2020 09:54 AM	<p>Some of us represent several Parish councils/parishes and the area is quite widespread.</p>
7	10/09/2020 11:41 AM	<p>For me Local democracy is very important, particularly giving residents the opportunity to know and be able to contact their councillor.</p> <p>District council 2 seat wards of 5-5500 residents seem to work well, whilst the Councillor in a single seat County County Division of Approximately 10,000 seems</p>

3. What do you think about the current number of councillors?

			Response Percent	Response Total
		too remote, with too much to do to be able to respond to all residents as considerably as some need.		
8	10/09/2020 19:52 PM	There was a recent report by the district councils network that showed that in the UK we the largest wards of any European country. Reducing the numbers will not increase participation but put people off. It is already considered a labour intensive role for the remuneration and younger people are not standing. Increasing the number of residents per councillor will add to the continuing issue of people not standing.		
9	11/09/2020 11:10 AM	We probably need more Councillors in the 30 to 50 age group. In particular we need more female councillors at every age group. Overall number about right.		
10	11/09/2020 12:52 PM	Seems to run well as it is		
11	14/09/2020 14:08 PM	Some areas no doubt need balancing out, but there are 2 Councillors in the ward I represent which enables a degree of flexibility.		
12	14/09/2020 14:17 PM	The area being served is large enough!		
13	17/09/2020 14:44 PM	The numbers seem to fit well in Wychavon.		
14	23/09/2020 11:15 AM	3 member wards unnecessary		
15	24/09/2020 17:53 PM	My experience is based on what I and my fellow party members have to do. If there were fewer of us the councillors would all have to be full time politicians.		
16	26/09/2020 14:46 PM	Wychavon's committees and panels give a wide and fair view from which to govern the district so it is important to maintain enough councillors to fill these committees and panels with a varied selection of members.		
17	28/09/2020 13:08 PM	Any less and would lose ability to maintain close contacts with Parish Councils and Ward members.		
18	28/09/2020 13:10 PM	Given our system of Leader and Cabinet government, any fewer would make it harder to fill all the necessary roles and still ensure that we have enough committed representatives on all the committees.		
19	28/09/2020 13:25 PM	I think a councillor could deal with more constituents, say 20/25% more		
20	28/09/2020 13:49 PM	Not an unwieldy number but enough to cover a wide range of background and experience.		
21	28/09/2020 17:20 PM	<p>I can manage my WDC, WCC and other areas of workload at the moment.</p> <p>My numbered tracking spread sheet tells me I am at any one time running with 30 open issues excluding planning in Broadway alone, 10 in Wickhamford and 10 in Childswickham.</p> <p>Broadway whilst a village as a major trading centre has a higher than average village demand.</p> <p>I am Vice- Chairman of Planning - this adds an 2hrs a week to read the applications and agree delegated then have the meeting.</p> <p>There are pre-planning and planning applications to look at - at any one time outstanding planning application I am reviewing are - Broadway 20 , Wickhamford 3, Childwickham est. 6. These involve research and taking account of public comments on the portal. Some of the applications are major applications.</p> <p>Broadway is a trading village - I support its Broadway Business Association - one project is the upgrade to the CCTV ,</p> <p>WDC councilors are involved with S106 monies not yet spent from WDC planning applications. They link to a great deal of community engagement ,</p> <p>The new build for the youth club a WDC legacy grant takes up time.</p>		

3. What do you think about the current number of councillors?

			Response Percent	Response Total
		<p>Having a high number of social houses I deal with the Housing Association conditions and a good number of housing queries,</p> <p>Building projects mud on road, damage to verges etc have to resolved</p> <p>Enforcement is a big issue in Childswickham to do with a large mobile home development (400) which has spread beyond its boundaries.</p> <p>Recently advice and guidance re Covid issues and leading residents to business support, and community support have added to the work load.</p> <p>I am also Chairman of WDC's Member Conduct Committee</p> <p>If you reduce the number and increase the work load the work would be done but the quality of service to residents would decline. In a way my taking on responsibility for half of Elmley Ward has shown the workload strain due to too few councilors- see below.</p> <p>My timesheet and schedule shows me I on average complete a 12 hour days and work half a weekend day - County Council, District Council, Board Member Cotswold Natural Landscape - 2 hrs a week, Member of the Fire Authority - 1 hr a week average. Broadway Museum and Art Gallery 5 hours a week.</p>		
22	28/09/2020 19:50 PM	We have a good level of debate, in two member wards we share the work equally. Committees are a reasonable size, fewer councillors would inevitably result in a greater workload.		
23	28/09/2020 20:50 PM	Because we should have one unitary Council covering the whole of Worcestershire.		
24	29/09/2020 07:34 AM	There seems to be enough coverage to represent all parts of the District. It maybe necessary to level up between some of the wards where there has been a rapid increase in constituencies.		
25	29/09/2020 13:00 PM	Wychavon is a large rural area with many villages and so it needs plenty of councillors to cover all of it.		
26	29/09/2020 21:16 PM	I think that the number of councillors is about right as it is important that there are enough councillors to hold the executive board to account and to contribute in committees.		
27	30/09/2020 10:52 AM	The workload of town councillors is often duplicated and they often have only one town council meeting to attend. Their residents are spread over a much smaller area often within walking distance and sharing the same local issues. A rural Ward such as mine is spread over a much wider area with a variety of different issues in each village. I have five parish councils to attend and three parish meetings which involves a lot of travel and extra communication required to keep in touch with their various councillors and residents.		
28	30/09/2020 12:52 PM	Cut the whole thing down by 25%		
29	30/09/2020 15:11 PM	Although it may be necessary to do some "tweaking" of ward boundaries to take account of new housing development, it is important to keep the sense of community that exists currently, particularly in rural areas		
30	30/09/2020 22:02 PM	I did not used to believe this but since Covid19 work has increased. I think due to people spending more time at home and seeing their local community more		

3. What do you think about the current number of councillors?

			Response Percent	Response Total
31	01/10/2020 09:06 AM	It allows councillors to undertake council duties alongside other commitments and provide a competent service, fewer councillors would compromise its function as a part time role .		
32	04/10/2020 18:03 PM	Currently about right but due to the proposed housing requirements more Councillors will be needed to represent an increase in residents.		
33	08/10/2020 15:09 PM	I would not want to increase the size of my ward. There seem to be plenty of issues to deal with.		
34	08/10/2020 15:32 PM	Wychavon is a big area, and it needs a fair number of cllrs. I think that in rural area such as mine 2,200 is a big enough number to mean you have contact with your community on a personal basis. Wychavon is also growing fast and even here I will in 8 years time have another 800 to deal with.		
35	08/10/2020 20:27 PM	Wychavon has a significant number of wards that are geographically spread out an therefore cannot easily be merged.		
36	08/10/2020 23:16 PM	Working practices have changed. The role of a councillor has evolved.		
37	09/10/2020 10:46 AM	Wychavon is a very rural district and so needs plenty of councillors to represent the community		
38	10/10/2020 19:41 PM	3 member wards mean one member does no work		

4. Do you have any further comments to make?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	32
1	09/09/2020 17:24 PM	I would be concerned that a noticeable reduction in the number of Councillors could be counterproductive in that this may discourage people putting themselves forward for election due to a perceived or actual increase in the time commitment required from Councillors and impositions on Councillors time. Also, a smaller number of Councillors may restrict the spread of skills and expertise provided by Councillors.		
2	09/09/2020 17:45 PM	As a rural District, Wychavon has a large number of small communities with individual identities. This requires a larger number of councillors compared to urban areas, where communities are larger.		
3	09/09/2020 18:18 PM	We should have a unitary local authority covering the whole of Worcestershire to replace the six district councils.		
4	09/09/2020 19:10 PM	A smaller, more professional authority would be much more effective.		
5	09/09/2020 19:16 PM	Where I would question the number is our parish, which has 24 councillors in total. My ward has two for district council and five for parish.		
6	10/09/2020 09:54 AM	no		
7	10/09/2020 11:41 AM	I'd like to see a lot more delegation downwards, more local decision making with local knowledge, with Town Councils being responsible for a lot more services with service provision being provide by officers who work for a number of councils, eg Civicas, WRS, background joint services WDC with MHDC, parking enforcement and CCTV services with other DCs. The local decision informed by Citizens Assemblies.		
8	10/09/2020 19:52 PM	Numbers of councillors are about right for a council of this size (geography perspective)- people already feel isolated from their representatives due to the geography of some wards (they are very big). There is also the risk of some urban		

4. Do you have any further comments to make?

			Response Percent	Response Total
		areas overwhelming the decision making by reducing the number of councillors. We need to provide balance between urban and rural.		
9	11/09/2020 11:10 AM	Using Zoom or digital working might make it easier for some age groups to be Councillors		
10	11/09/2020 12:52 PM	No		
11	14/09/2020 14:08 PM	Statistics above taken from Activity in July. Likely to increase when face to face meetings start up again..		
12	14/09/2020 14:17 PM	No.		
13	24/09/2020 17:53 PM	I hope we can resist pressure to makes wards larger, I am happy that I can establish good working relations with the five parish councils that I represent.		
14	28/09/2020 13:08 PM	.		
15	28/09/2020 13:10 PM	A boundary review is long overdue!		
16	28/09/2020 13:25 PM	Covid-19 has had a huge impact on local councils and the work councillors do which has changed the face of local government.		
17	28/09/2020 13:49 PM	Covid has made a big difference with little or no travelling time but less opportunity for informal discussions which can be very useful.		
18	28/09/2020 17:20 PM	<p>My Total hours according to my records are 27 WDC +40 WCC +2 Cotswold NL +1 Fire Authority +5 Broadway Museum and Art Gallery Support as a councillor - 75 hour week - leaving 44 hours for family, meals, croquet, swimming etc. and the right amount of sleep.</p> <p>I am also a County Councillor and work on average 40 hours a week on this area. In view of the lack of a District Councillor for Hinton, Aston Somerville and Sedgeberrow I also act as District Councillor for these three villages - this time is included in the 40 hours recorded for the County Council</p> <p>.</p> <p>I have 9 villages - the issues are mainly speeding traffic, yellow lines, police issues, school transport issues, residential home and health issues, rights of way issues, Climate change concern. I am Vice Chairman of Scrutiny involved with quality and the panels and the budget.</p> <p>Residents use many mechanisms to contact me these days - email, Facebook- 9 Facebook pages, messenger, text and phone to contact me</p>		
19	28/09/2020 19:50 PM	I would like to see a better logic to the ward boundaries. I.e Evesham Town, or Bengeworth, rather than the blurred line that exists at the moment. Equally it does not seem logical to have part of Twyford bolted on to Harvington.		
20	28/09/2020 20:50 PM	No		
21	29/09/2020 07:34 AM	I do not believe there should be more than 2 members per ward and there maybe a need to change some ward boundaries.		
22	29/09/2020 13:00 PM	NO		
23	29/09/2020 21:16 PM	None		
24	30/09/2020 10:52 AM	Clearly hours worked are affected by Currently attending more virtual meetings under present restrictions. As this should only be a temporary measure I have not factored it in to my estimates.		
25	30/09/2020 12:52 PM	Slash it		
26	30/09/2020 22:02 PM	Prefer single member ward, certainly no more than 2		

4. Do you have any further comments to make?

			Response Percent	Response Total
27	01/10/2020 09:06 AM	I would like to see councillors have a greater involvement in policy making , at national and local level , local knowledge is invaluable !		
28	04/10/2020 18:03 PM	None		
29	08/10/2020 15:32 PM	Done not create two member wards since the public tend to vote for one party and another party to even it up, and the use the first name on the ballot paper from each party hence the alphabet is more important than the service.		
30	08/10/2020 20:27 PM	No		
31	09/10/2020 10:46 AM	no		
32	10/10/2020 19:41 PM	Single member wards are the most efficient, since the member can speak unanimously		
			answered	32
			skipped	9

Members Briefing - Feedback

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

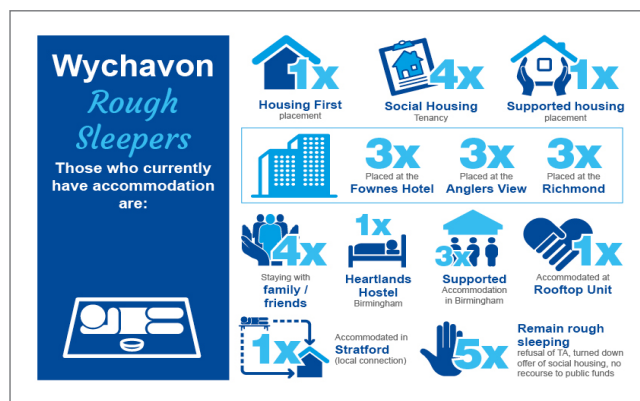


On the 8 July 2020, the Housing Services Team delivered a briefing to 42 councillors from across both Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils.

Special thank you has to be given to the following presenters:

- Jonathan Sutton and Kerry Marnell from St Paul's.
- Vicky Hines and Colette Carter from Shelter.
- Stephen Tingley from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- Laura Marshall, Naomi Morris, Elaine Salter and Rachael Tooth for their contributions to the session.
- Portfolio Holders Cllr Christopher Day (Wychavon) and Cllr Natalie McVey (Malvern Hills).
- Spencer Winnett for his support in the session being delivered remotely.

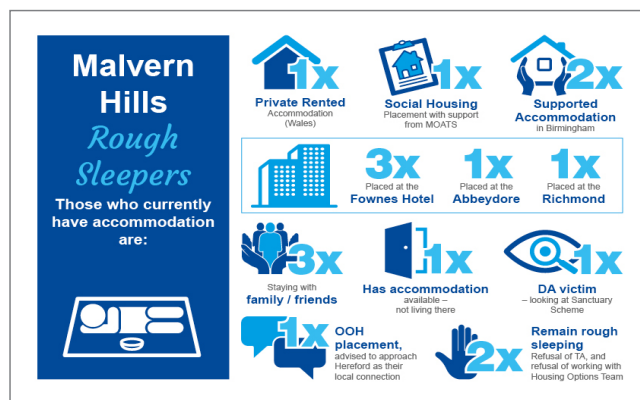
- Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-22
- The levels of homelessness approaches and the rise in numbers since the Covid 19 pandemic.
- Overview of domestic abuse figures locally.
- Community safety, criminal and civil offences. An overview of the South Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership Framework.
- An overview of the county wide response to Covid 19 was shared and the timeline over the next 12 months, to show the affect on services, and partnership working.
- An infographic was shared to show the journey of all the rough sleepers reported or located by the council, and their journey during this pandemic.



We were extremely pleased with the level of attendance and the discussions that have been brought forward following this session. We felt it enables councillors to have a wider understanding of homelessness and rough sleeping across our two districts.

The session covered:

- Detailed stories from people with lived experience of rough sleeping, and their journey to securing accommodation, support provided, building relationships with family and gaining successful employment.
- Stephen Tingley from the MHCLG detailed different funding available, and the success of this locally and nationally.
- Detailed overview of the Homeless Reduction Act.
- Detailed overview of the local response to Covid 19, and the "Everyone In" campaign.

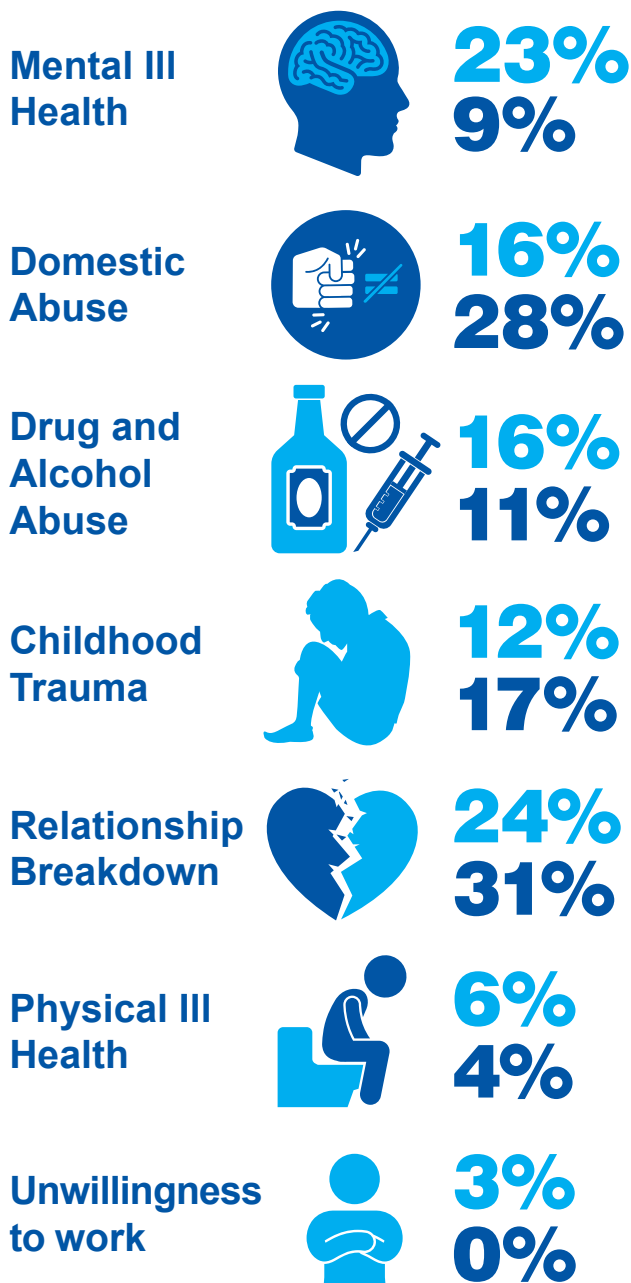


Amazing feedback was given regarding the stories told by Kerry (St Paul's) and Colette (Shelter) on their lived experience. To show our appreciation we have sent them a high street gift voucher for their time, and sharing their experiences. At the end of the briefing, Councillors were provided feedback to the following:

71%	felt that the briefing changed their perceptions on homelessness and rough sleeping in a positive way.
46%	of attendees felt optimistic that rough sleeping could be eliminated (those scoring 5, 6 or 7 out of 7).

We asked councillors what they felt were the main reasons for homelessness and rough sleeping, and the below table shows their responses, and the figures we see within the Housing Team:

- Councillor Perception
- Housing Team Access



Sound recordings of two success stories were circulated before the briefing. If anyone did not receive this, please email HousingStrategyAndEnabling@wychavon.gov.uk and we will arrange a copy to be sent to you through We Transfer.

Councillors were asked what areas they would like to see a briefing on in the future:



We will be in contact over the coming weeks with our next briefing topic, and when this will be held.

Future Improvements: We were aware that some of the break-out room sessions did not work perfectly. For events in the future, we will set rooms and ask for Zoom to split the group automatically into rooms. We will also send clearer instructions of how to join the meeting to enable this process to take place automatically without delay. We would always recommend that the links sent are used to join meetings.

Break-out room timings need to be pre-set before the meeting, to make sure the session brings attendees back to the main room, and set up the countdown function to provide warning to attendees.

We are also aware we need to work on the prison release process, duty to refer and progressing work with regard to Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation.

A copy of the slides was sent out to all councillors, but if you haven't received them, please email HousingStrategyAndEnabling@wychavon.gov.uk and we will arrange for a copy to be circulated to you.