

4th March 2024, District Councillors' Report to Chaddesley Corbett PC:

Local Issues:

Robin, Marcus and Ian are again pleased to report that there are no local issues outstanding.

Wyre Forest Issues:

The District Council have just purchased the Piano Building and bus station in Weavers Wharf, using levelling Up Fund monies granted by Government. We plan to tidy up the bus station and make it more attractive and work will be underway to rent out the ground floor of the building for a food and beverage offer and the first and second floors will be rented out for office accommodation. This is another piece in the jig saw for regenerating Kidderminster.

We are currently considering options for the former Crown House site and Lionfields site in Kidderminster and will be bringing forward proposals in due course.

We have also agreed a contract with a private sector ECV company to deliver 200 spaces across all of our WFDC pay and display car parks and nature reserve sites over the next 12 months, bringing in an income for WFDC with all of the capital costs being met by the private sector company.

WFDC full council met on 21st February and approved its budget. Council tax was increased by the maximum 2.997%, under the allowed 3% which is circa an additional £7 per year for a Band D property!

We are investing in services that are important to the public, unlike the previous administration. For example, two full time litter pickers across the District to act as a litter blitz squad, responding to non-routine work has been agreed. An additional Civil Enforcement Officer to tackle parking on double yellow lines has been approved. Funding for the webcasting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings was also agreed, as we believe being open and transparent is really important. 1 hours free car parking Monday-Friday, 8am -6pm in one car park in each of the District's 3 towns has also been agreed. We will also be investing £50k in accessible play equipment at Brinton Park and Stourport Riverside. Each District Councillor will also have £1,000 for the community leadership fund to spend on projects and organisations in their ward.

We are proposing additional commercial income from a wide variety of areas to fund our investments. We still have circa £3million of unallocated reserves in 2024-2025 and indeed will still have reserves at the end of the 3 year medium term financial strategy. We are also taking a totally different approach to localism and not simply transferring services to town and parish councils unless they want to.

We were also pleased to receive additional funding from the Government of circa £125k over and above the initial settlement in December.

Our net revenue budget is circa £13.5million, employing circa 330 staff. The average council tax bill (Band D) will go up by 4.88%, circa £100 per annum.

WFDC supported the LGBCE proposals for the County Council divisions for Wyre Forest and also supported making the case against the proposals for Wolverley & Cookley Parish Council for a ward

of 10 and 4 for Wolverley and Cookley and Lea Castle respectively, agreeing with the Parish Council's view.

WFDC also acknowledged and supported the Parish Council's request for a Community Governance Review for the Parish of Wolverley & Cookley and a report will be taken to May's full council meeting.

Finally, there has been some political movement in that Cllr Leigh Whitehouse has resigned from the Labour Party and so no longer sits with the Labour Group on WFDC so they have gone down from 4 to 3 and Cllr Whitehouse has joined the Independent and Green Group, so they have moved up from 7 to 8. Cllr Liam Carroll is the new Labour Group Leader.

End,

If you have any issues requiring our assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

District Cllrs Marcus Hart, Robin Drew, Ian Hardiman.