



MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL

# Electoral Review Council Size Submission

to the  
Local Government Boundary Commission for England









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# 1. INTRODUCTION

**At their meeting on 19th February 2019 Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) agreed to initiate discussions with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) with a view to commencing an Electoral Review of MHDC taking into account both council size and warding.**

The Council decision of 19th February 2019 was based on recommendations from the Council Policy Group (CPG) on Corporate Governance which was set up further to an LGA peer review recommendation made in 2018. The aim of the CPG was to review governance issues.

The CPG's Terms of Reference is attached as Appendix 1

The CPG is a cross party group with membership chosen by the Leader based on interest and knowledge in Council governance. The CPG spent some time reviewing MHDC's governance structure, looking at neighbouring councils and considering the options available.

The CPG's final report with recommendations to Council is attached as Appendix 2

Further to the Council's decision, the LGBCE spoke with the Chief Executive and presented details of their proposed review to members and officers in February 2020.

Whilst the timetable for the review has been delayed as a result of the covid-19 global pandemic, MHDC is in a position to present this submission. The Governance CPG has continued to operate and has been undertaking the work that has fed into this submission.

This submission has been informed by the work of the CPG which met 5 times between September and November 2020. They conducted an online Survey of all Members to determine the amount of time spent on council work as well as a Questionnaire of all Members to determine the scope of work undertaken across the Council.

This submission evidences the Council's recommendation based on the information requirements for making a council size submission to the LGBCE and demonstrates how the Council can fulfil its governance, scrutiny and representational role with 31 members.



# 2. RATIONALE FOR THE REVIEW

**MHDC took part in an LGA peer review challenge together with Wychavon District Council in March 2018. One of the key recommendations of the peer review was for MHDC to consider a review of governance arrangements. A CPG on governance was set up pursuant to this recommendation and the group looked at various issues including the following:**

## **a) Governance Model**

MHDC has a 'fourth option' style administration based on a politically balanced committee system. The Council Leader is appointed annually and currently works with 5 other portfolio holders to oversee the strategic direction of the council's services.

Having reviewed the alternative options the CPG recommended that MHDC remain with its current governance model as the 4th option model allows the right balance between efficiency and openness. This was based on the fact that the Executive Committee, with a maximum of 11 members and 6 portfolio holders, is small enough to operate as an efficient decision-making body whilst retaining some of the benefits of continuing to operate as a Committee including remaining open to the public and allowing for public participation and scrutiny.

## **b) Annual Election of Leader**

MHDC elections cycle is based on all out elections every four years however, the Council elects their leader annually at Annual Council. The CPG reviewed this and considered whether the appointment should be for the full 4-year term, however, having considered the issues, the CPG recommended that the annual election of the Council leader should be retained.



## **c) Policy Development Panels**

The CPG recommended the introduction of 3 new member policy development panels based on MHDC's current priorities of environment, economic prosperity and a strong community. Council accepted this recommendation and accordingly the constitution was amended and new terms of reference for the panels were agreed. The panels report directly to the Executive Committee and, whilst the relevant portfolio holders can attend the meetings, they cannot chair them. Since May 2019 all 3 panels have been meeting regularly.

## **d) Scrutiny Function**

The CPG reviewed the function and frequency of Scrutiny. They recommended that meetings take place at least 4 times a year and be scheduled to fit with the council's standing business such as budget setting. This is in addition to the scrutiny call in process.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had 5 formal meetings scheduled for 2019/20 and in addition set up two Task and Finish Groups to undertake detailed scrutiny of Apprenticeships and Temporary Event Notices. More detail of this work can be found at point 4.5 of this report.

## **e) Electoral Review**

The CPG recommended that LGBCE be invited to speak with the Council and, subject to the outcome of that discussion, the Council should request that MHDC





commence an Electoral review taking into account of both council size with a strong preference that the total numbers of members be reduced and warding to have regard to electoral balance and numbers of members per ward with a preference for single member wards where practicable.

#### **f) Audit and Standards**

The CPG reviewed committees and workloads and recommended that the Audit Committee and Standards Committee functions be merged into a single Committee. Appropriate flexibility for sub-committees in relation to Standards investigations and accommodating co-opted members were included and the constitution was amended allowing the new structure to be effective from May 2019.

#### **g) Governance CPG**

The CPG also made a suggestion that the governance CPG continue into the next year and as such it has continued in the year 19/20. The group has met regularly and at the council meeting in July 2020 recommendations around removal of the planning policy group and the planning chairman's group were accepted as was a new streamlined officer scheme of delegation. The governance CPG has continued for 20/21 and has been gathering evidence and preparing this submission.

In addition to the formal recommendations set out above, the 18/19 CPG made recommendations around improved induction training for new councillors to include digital and online options. Whilst MHDC had

been moving towards more digital content for members with a dedicated members' portal and online members' handbook, the current covid-19 situation has accelerated the process of moving to more online training modules. In addition, the new Coronavirus Act 2020 introduced temporary measures for virtual meetings which MHDC introduced from May 2020. MHDC is now also looking at improvements in technology that will allow their council chamber to host hybrid meetings.

MHDC is aware that the last boundary review was 2002. Prior to the last review, MHDC had 42 elected members and, as a result of the review, the number was reduced to 38 elected members. Since the last review there have been many changes in the district and in how MHDC functions.

During this recent pandemic period MHDC has worked closely with Worcestershire County Council assisting with a multi-agency approach to response and recovery. However, since the last review MHDC has broadened its joint working links across Worcestershire and in particular has very close working relations with neighbouring Wychavon District Council with whom they share a number of services, a senior management team and chief executive. These joint working arrangements were introduced to achieve operational efficiency and are not directly relevant to the council size submission.

As a result of increased joint working arrangements and some outsourcing arrangements, MHDC's total workforce has shrunk from over 250 at the last review to 155.31 FTEs and 178 Headcount.

The population of the district means that the number



of voters per elected member is lower than the national average. For more information, the breakdown of electors per councillor for Malvern Hills is shown at point 3.3 (a) and the nearest neighbour information is included at point 3.3 (f).

The annual Independent Remuneration Panel report which MHDC commissions along with neighbouring districts demonstrates that, due to this low number of voters per member, the costs of democracy within the district are much higher.

This can be demonstrated by the following table as extracted from the last full IRP report:

**Table: Total spend on Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) as a cost per head of population 2018-19 figures**

The full IRP Annual Report 2020/2021 is attached as



Authority, population [1] and number of Councillors	Total spend Basic Allowances £	Total spend on SRA £	SRA as a percentage of total Basic Allowance %	Cost of total basic and SRA per head of population £	Total of basic and SRA as a percentage of Net General Revenue Fund expenditure %
<b>Bromsgrove DC (31)</b> <b>95,768</b>	136,350	60,697	45.01	2.05	1.80
<b>Malvern Hills DC (38)</b> <b>75,339</b>	163,274.80	65,517.37	40	2.93	2.99
<b>Redditch Borough (29)</b> <b>84,500</b>	100,881	38,706	38.37	1.65	1.46
<b>Worcester City (35)</b> <b>100,405</b>	150,117	68,016	45.31	2.17	1.64
<b>Wychavon (45)</b> <b>118,738</b>	192,241	69,087	35.94	2.08	1.95

Appendix 3.

Added to this, at recent elections, MHDC has had a number of uncontested wards which are detailed below.

Uncontested wards for the past 5 scheduled elections are:

- 2019 Teme Valley (1 seat), Tenbury (2 seats) and Woodbury (1 seat)
- 2015 Baldwin (1 seat) and Lindridge (1 seat)
- 2011 Baldwin (1), Kempsey (2), Lindridge (1), Martley (1), Ripple (1), Teme Valley (1) and Woodbury (1)
- 2007 Baldwin (1), Lindridge (1), Martley (1), Teme Valley (1) and Woodbury (1)
- 2003 Martley (1), Teme Valley (1) and Woodbury (1)

[1] ONS population figures mid 2019. Totals for Basic and Special Responsibility allowances paid are as published by each authority for the 2018-19 financial year.



At the last election of Councillors for the Wards of MHDC on 2 May 2019, the turnout was as follows:

Electoral Area	Vacant Seats	Electorate	Turnout %
Alfrick and Leigh	2	2.890	41.94
Baldwin	1	1.713	35.55
Broadheath	2	2.942	38.31
Chase	3	4.611	34.94
Dyson Perrins	2	3.372	29.92
Hallow	1	1.497	38.61
Kempsey	2	3.652	31.68
Lindridge	1	1.835	32.10
Link	3	4.789	35.46
Longdon	1	1.724	35.73
Martley	1	1.533	33.27
Morton	1	1.837	43.77
Pickersleigh	3	4.372	22.96
Powick	2	3.233	44.01
Priory	2	3.087	41.37
Ripple	1	1.510	38.28
Upton and Hanley	2	3.411	33.10
Wells	2	2.580	43.60
West	2	3.172	41.33
<b>Totals</b>		<b>53.767</b>	<b>36.03</b>

Every part of the District is covered by a town or parish council. This sets MHDC apart from some neighbouring districts as it means every resident has an additional level of representation.

MHDC has changed considerably since 2002. The Council now has a strong 5-year plan which, although updated in light of the covid-19 recovery plan, includes ambitious goals for the district.

Councillors are involved directly through panels and task and finish groups on topics such as: Focus on apprenticeships; Causes of poverty; Community strategy in light of Covid-19; Destination Zero: our carbon reduction plan; Economic recovery; Community Transport; Town centre regeneration.

The MHDC Five Year Plan 2020/2021 summary is attached as Appendix 4.

The CPG carried out a Member Survey to gauge the time spent, on average, on council business. Members detailed work spent on attending council meetings including

preparation, community representation including case work and "other" which took an average 15.6 hours per week. When asked about the current number of councillors at MHDC, 50% felt that there were too many, 47% felt that that the number was about right and 3% felt that there were too few. Comments raised included the complexity of rural and urban wards, where some areas were geographically large with lower density of electors necessitating more travelling and more creative ways of engaging electors. It was noted that wards with multiple Parish Councils increases the workload for local members. Time travelling for meetings was mentioned, with support for the current position where most meetings take place remotely. Finally members made some comments around 3 member wards for various reasons: difficulty to split the workload effectively; confusion for residents in knowing which ward member to approach and the view that the more responsive members tended to be approached directly and others could effectively "hide".

The analysis of the survey response is attached as Appendix 5.

The CPG also carried out a Member Questionnaire to ascertain what activities were undertaken by members and how they engaged with their communities. Results showed a wide range of working practices, attendance at and engagement with Parish and Town Councils, engagement with Outside bodies such as Malvern Hills Trust, engagement with WRS and County Council. Members spent time attending events in their communities such as village fetes, pub quizzes and school events, all the time making themselves available to residents for informal discussion about council business.

The full Questionnaire response is attached as Appendix 6.

# 3. DISTRICT OVERVIEW



## 3.1 BOUNDARY CHANGES

MHDC is based in the town of Malvern in south west Worcestershire and its area covers most of the west of the county including the towns of Tenbury and Upton. Whilst the main part of what is currently MHDC was formed in 1974 the council was subject to significant boundary reform in 1998. The current boundaries were formed on 1 April 1998 when the county of Hereford and Worcester was divided into two counties of Worcestershire and Herefordshire.

## 3.2 COUNCILLOR NUMBERS

Malvern Hills District comprises of 68 parish areas (town councils and parish councils). The district is divided into 22 electoral wards, some one member, some two member and some three member wards, giving a total of 38 elected members.

In 2002 the LGBCE conducted their last review of council size for MHDC. As a result of that review, the district moved from 42 elected members to the current 38.

## 3.3 THE AREA

a) Ward information



Ward	Electorate	No. of Cllrs	No. of Electors per Cllr	% +/- MHDC Average	No. of Parish Councils per Ward
Alfrick and Leigh	2848	2	1424	90.1	4
Baldwin	1691	1	1691	107.0	3
Broadheath	2940	2	1470	93.0	3
Chase	4586	3	1529	96.8	Town
Dyson Perrins	3363	2	1682	106.4	Town
Hallow	1498	1	1498	94.8	2
Kempsey	3504	2	1752	110.9	2
Lindridge	1819	1	1819	115.1	5
Link	4829	3	1610	101.9	Town
Longdon	1708	1	1708	108.1	5
Martley	1511	1	1511	95.6	2
Morton	1778	1	1778	112.5	3 ½*
Pickersleigh	4335	3	1445	91.5	Town
Powick	3206	2	1603	101.5	4
Priory	3109	2	1555	98.4	Town
Ripple	1488	1	1488	94.2	3
Teme Valley	1580	1	1580	100.0	6
Tenbury	2993	2	1497	94.7	3
Upton and Hanley	3410	2	1705	107.9	2
Wells	2576	2	1288	81.5	1 ½*
West	3218	2	1609	101.8	Town
Woodbury	1739	1	1739	110.1	4
			AVERAGE = 1580		

\* The parish councils of Little Malvern and Welland form a grouped parish, however each parish council is in a different district ward. Little Malvern is in Wells Ward and Welland is in Morton Ward, so denoted as falling ½ in each.

b) MHDC provides services for over 75,000 residents in the district.

c) Malvern Hills is a good place to live and work and this is an important feature to deliver on the priority of economic growth. The area was 17th best rural place to live in the Halifax Quality of Life survey (2017). Annual residents' surveys have indicated an 85% satisfaction rating from residents with the area as a place to live. There is relatively low deprivation with a ranking of 188 out of 324 local authorities in England.

d) The Malvern Hills District covers 577km and is dominated by the Malvern Hills on its western border which are designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It has four major settlements of Malvern, Tenbury, Kempsey and Upton which account for over half the population. The rest of the area is sparsely populated, consisting of many villages and

hamlets and has numerous conservation areas and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

e) The Malvern Hills district is an attractive visitor destination with the great outdoors, heritage and culture, arts and entertainment, local food and drink, festivals and events, and much more for visitors to explore on offer. In 2018, the Malvern Hills district attracted over £3.7 million visitors with 677,000 overnight stays. This enabled over £137 million in tourism value to be added into the local economy whilst also providing 8.4% of total employment (2019 data will be made available soon). Malvern Hills District Council plays an important role helping to develop and promote tourism across The Malverns, which includes working with key industry stakeholders, like the Three Counties Showground, Malvern Hills Trust, Malvern Theatres, National Trust and English Heritage. Malvern Hills District Council

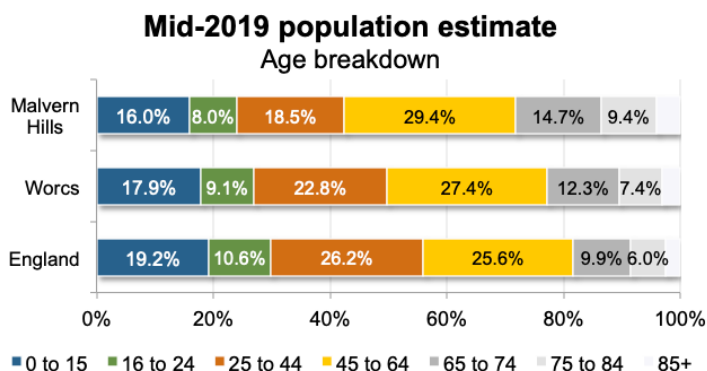
has representatives who sit on the Board of Directors at Malvern Hills Trust and Malvern Theatres.

f) The District also has a diverse and flexible business base with high levels of entrepreneurial activity, excellent business survival rates and some of the most qualified people in the country to build upon. The District now has a strong base in the high value added and knowledge based economy with a number of businesses such as QinetiQ and those based at Malvern Hills Science Park (MHSP). The Science Park has developed over 5 phases so far providing 130,000 Sqft of high tech office and laboratory space accommodating 30+ businesses and 400+ staff focussed on science and technology. The Phase 6 site is ready for development and 4.5 Ha of expansion land for a further 300,000 SqFt of high tech workspace has been secured and is being cleared to facilitate the development of a European scale science park campus encompassing the existing MHSP site, expansion land and QinetiQ. Key tenants at the science park are Collins Aerospace, Payara, IQHQ Ltd, Ascertain forensics, Txtlocal, Borwell, 3SDL and Worcestershire LEP

As well as a thriving high tech sector the District is home to a range of other manufacturing and service businesses and has a significant agricultural sector. The Malvern Hills District has substantial natural and built, historical and cultural assets centred on the three thriving District centres of Great Malvern, Upton upon Severn and Tenbury Wells. This offers a mix of services and facilities and promotes a high quality of life for residents, visitors and investors in the area.

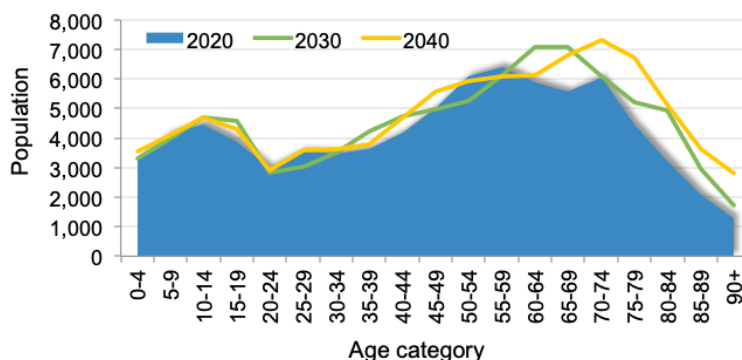
g) Demographics – age/ ethnic make-up/ areas of growth

The mid-2019 estimated population of the district is 78,698. Of these, 28.2% are aged 65 or over compared with 22.9% in the county and 18.4% in England.



The population is projected to increase by 8.9% to 86,370 by 2030 and to 91,407 by 2040

**Population projections by five year age category**  
2020 - 2040



The 2011 census revealed that Just 2.4% of the district’s residents are from a Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) background. 90.8% of residents were born in England and a further 4.3% in the rest of the UK.

h) The main tenure of housing within the district is owner occupation with 11.6% private rented and 14.1% rented affordable housing. There is an issue around affordability with the average house price being 10.5 times the mean annual earnings. There is a larger than average proportion of 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 provider in Malvern Hills district being Platform 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, including 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.

i) 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
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



# 4. POLITICAL MAKE UP, GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING



## 4.1 CURRENT POLITICAL MAKE UP

The last district elections were held in May 2019 when 38 members were elected for a four year term. There is currently no single party or group with overall control at MHDC and instead the Council is run by the Democratic Alliance (a partnership between Independent and Green Party councillors). The current political make up stands at Democratic Alliance 19, Conservative 13, Liberal Democrats 5, Labour 1.

## 4.2 GOVERNANCE MODEL

Due to the size of the District, in pursuance of the Local Government Act 2000 governance options, MHDC adopted the '4th option' model. This is effectively a hybrid of the cabinet and committee models. It allows for a streamlined committee system and is available to shire districts with populations of less than 85,000 which MHDC was, when the decision to adopt this model was made.

The governance structure has full council as the main body for determining strategic policy and certain other matters which are legally reserved for council such as budget and council tax setting. Other committees, including the executive committee feed into council as detailed below.

There is an opportunity for members of the public to raise questions and ask questions at most Council and Committee meetings in accordance with the MHDC's public participation scheme. Regulatory committees such as area planning committees and licensing sub committees have slightly different public participation schemes. The Council chamber allows for audio recordings. The public part of most committee meetings is audio recorded and the recording is made available on the council's website.

## 4.3 COUNCIL

All councillors serve at full Council which is the sovereign decision-making body of the Council and is chaired by the Chairman. The Chairman is the civic representative of the District and in 2019/20 the chairman undertook numerous civic engagements and raised over £1500 for their chosen charity.

Council appoints committees to undertake various functions on its behalf and holds those committees to account for the decisions that they make. Council meetings require a strong chair and extra time commitment from the chairman to attend pre briefings. There are 7 council meetings every year. All council meetings are held in the evenings and on average last a few hours.

Council meetings are open to members of the public. Members of the public wishing to speak and or ask a question must register their intention to do so prior to the meeting.



## 4.4 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee is made up of the leader of Council and up to 10 other Councillors and determines all those matters that are not reserved for Council or delegated to another Committee. The political balance of the committee for 2020/21 is 6:4:1 (Democratic Alliance: Conservative: Liberal Democrat).

Although neither the leader nor any of the committee members have individual delegated powers, the leader appoints 5 committee members and together these 6 portfolio holders steer a service area or function of the Council.

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

#### a) Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Tourism

Responsibilities: Lead on emergency planning including Covid-19 matters, strategic leadership and direction, corporate communications and reputation management, lead on external matters including LEP, economic growth and prosperity, urban regeneration and town centres revitalisation, rural economy and growth matters, tourism and visitor economy, strategic business liaison, skills and apprenticeships, lead on community transport.

#### b) Portfolio Holder for Community Services

Responsibilities: Deputise for the leader as appropriate, community engagement and development including parish councils and schools, leisure strategy and delivery including sports promotion, lead on voluntary sector including CAB, youth action plan, Worcestershire Regulatory Services lead member (including licensing), community safety, policing and crime matters (including OPCC links).

#### c) Portfolio Holder for Resources

Responsibilities: Lead on financial impacts of Covid-19, business planning, financial strategy, planning and budget matters, ICT matters, corporate performance and strategy, property strategy and investments, human resources and legal, property and land assets, Civil Parking Enforcement.

#### d) Portfolio Holder for planning, infrastructure, and flooding

Responsibilities: SWDPR strategic planning and joint advisory panel lead member, neighbourhood planning, heritage matters, building control, land charges and street naming, strategic transport and infrastructure, strategic and urban design policy and initiatives, land drainage and flooding, planning enforcement.

#### e) Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health

Responsibilities: Strategic housing function, homelessness and rough sleeping, private sector housing, strategic links with registered providers, health and wellbeing, ageing well, healthier communities campaigns, arts and culture.

#### f) Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

Waste management, refuse collection and recycling, delivery of the carbon reduction plan, promotion of the district as a low carbon economy, street scene services, parks and grounds maintenance, biodiversity and the natural environment, environmental campaigns including litter, plastics and energy reduction.

The Executive Committee meets approximately 10 times per year. Meetings are held in the early evening and can last anything from 15 minutes to a few hours. Meetings are open for all members of the council to attend as well as members of the public.

The relevant portfolio holder is normally responsible for presenting reports relating to their area and are assisted by relevant officers. All decisions are made collectively by the whole committee.

## 4.5 SCRUTINY

MHDC has an Overview and Scrutiny Committee which acts as their watchdog by undertaking scrutiny of all issues from council services, decision making and performance. The constitution allows for the committee to be up to 11 members and members of scrutiny cannot be members of the Executive committee.

The committee is currently 11 members and the political balance of the committee for 2020/21 is 6:4:1 (Democratic Alliance: Conservative: Liberal Democrat).

As mentioned above the 18/19 governance CPG reviewed the role of overview and scrutiny. As a result, the committee meets at least 4 times a year and normally in line with timings for standing business e.g. budget setting. Based on previous discussions of the governance CPG, this year the chairman of overview and scrutiny is an opposition group member.

At their first meeting of the municipal year the committee normally sets a work plan for the coming year and agrees what areas of the council's work they will be looking at. If necessary, the committee will set up task and finish groups to look into specific issues.

In addition, the committee is able to 'call in' decisions of the Executive Committee if it thinks these should be looked at again or reviewed in line with statutory provisions.

During 2019/20 there were 2 task and finish groups. One looked at the council's role in promoting apprenticeships and the other looked at the current process in respect of temporary event notices under the current licensing regime.

The task and finish group looking at apprenticeships consulted widely and met with representatives from Jobcentre Plus, Worcestershire Apprenticeships, Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, School Careers Leads, Training Providers, Worcestershire Business Central, large and medium sized local businesses, current apprentices and school pupils. The final report of the group made a number of recommendations which were accepted by Council and have already been acted on by the LGA.

The reports demonstrate the considerable work and time commitment made by members into this committee and task and finish groups.

The final reports of both these task and finish groups are attached as Appendices 7 (Apprenticeships) and 8 (Temporary Event Notices).

During 2020/21, a task and finish group has been set up to investigate the causes of poverty in the District.

Overview and Scrutiny 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 other third party representative by invitation of the committee. Meetings are generally held in the evening and on average last a few hours.

Like all the Worcestershire district councils, MHDC also has a representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) which is a joint committee with the county council.

Scrutiny at MHDC is effective and helps with accountability and transparency of decision-making. The effectiveness of having a chairman from the opposition will be reviewed at the end of 20/21.

## 4.6 PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL



At MHDC there are 2 area planning committees, one for the North of the District and one for the South. These Committees determine all development control applications (including planning, listed building, conservation area consent, enforcement, tree preservation orders) unless delegated to officers in accordance with the scheme of delegation.

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 95% of planning applications are dealt with under delegated powers and the rest are reported to the planning committees.

Every member of the Council is a member of either northern or southern area planning committee.

Both committees are scheduled to meet once a month and the amount of work for the committees varies significantly. The average number of applications per committee during 19/20 was 2. Meetings are often cancelled due to lack of business. During 19/20 4 northern area committees were cancelled and 6 southern area committees were cancelled.

In the past, meetings have lasted 4 hours. However, since 2018 the longest meeting was a southern area meeting which lasted 2hrs 57 minutes and the shortest was also a southern area meeting which lasted 22 minutes. All planning committee meetings take place in the evenings.

Whilst some applications which come before the area planning committees will be straightforward there are often complex and difficult applications and decisions. All members are required to undertake regular mandatory planning training to be able to continue attending the committees. In 19/20 there were 3 members who did not complete all the mandatory training and were therefore unable to attend any planning committee meetings for that whole year.

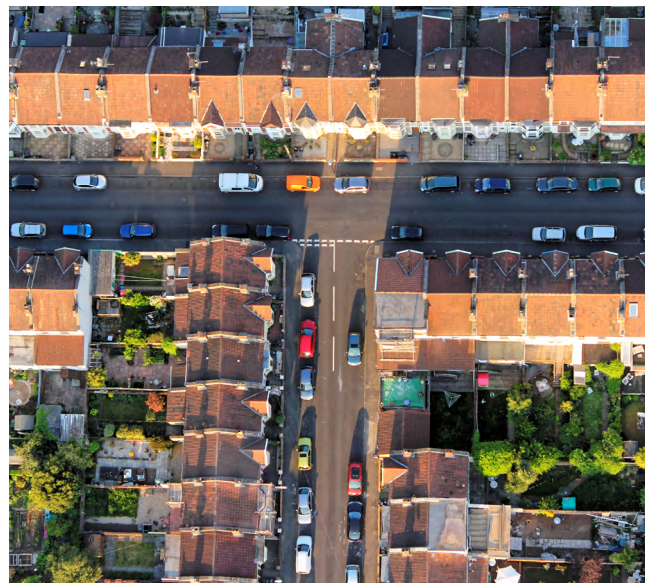
Some applications will therefore involve significant advance reading in preparation for the meeting. A number of applications also require site visits. Site visits are organised for the whole committee by relevant planning officers and usually take place earlier in the week of the committee meeting.

There is significant public involvement at planning committees and MHDC has a specific public speaking policy in place for planning committees which allows applicants, objectors and local parish/ town councils who have registered prior to the committee to attend and speak. Ward members are also able to ask questions at committee. Area planning committees require some extra time commitments from the chairman to allow for pre-briefings.

The Council has previously considered moving to a single planning committee however, members have felt that the present system works well. The last review of the

two area planning committees was in 2017 as a result of which at the Council meeting on 28 November 2017 the Chief Executive asked Council to decide whether or not it wished to change the current decision making arrangements to a new district wide Planning Committee. The council resolved that 'Council does not wish to change the current Area Planning Committee structures to a newly constituted Planning Committee for the district from the municipal year 2018/19'

## 4.7 PLANNING POLICY



Planning policy is evolving and policies relating to the development plan are often lengthy and complex. Planning policy issues may be considered by the Area Planning Committees but will always be recommended to Council for approval.

Current position of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP):

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.

## 4.8 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.

The full MHDC Licensing & Appeals Committee meets when required by WRS to review and make recommendations to Executive Committee or Council on Licensing Policy. The committee is made up of 11 members and political balance of the committee for 2020/21 is 5:4:2 (Democratic Alliance: Conservative: Liberal Democrat).

As part of the member induction programme all members of the committee receive specific training.

Sub committees of 3 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 3 members are chosen based on which sub-committee, A, B or C that they are appointed to at annual council.

Licensing committees and sub-committee meetings are usually held during the day. Full licensing committees are normally held late afternoon or early evening and last an hour. As WRS officers provide committee members with updates as necessary and policy matters go to Executive

committee the full licensing committee rarely meets, their last meeting was June 2019.

Sub committees rarely hear more than 1 application at a time and generally last 30 mins to an hour. They 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 19/20 the full committee met once and there were 5 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 have been nominated to do so by someone who has submitted an objection.

Full licensing committee and sub-committees are open to members of the public to attend however they rarely do and sub-committee hearings involving private hire or hackney carriage driver applications are always held in confidential session.

## 4.9 AUDIT AND STANDARDS



As a result of the 18/19 governance CPG review the two separate committees of Audit and Standards were combined. This was based on a review of the work of each committee, the skills required from the members involved and the cycle of meetings.



The committee usually meets at least 4 times per year in line with set business and the budget cycle. Meetings to consider specific standards issues can be called as and when required however, no such meeting has been necessary since 2017.

The committee has a mixed membership but includes independent members and co-opted parish members as legally required for standards matters. When meetings are called if there are no relevant standards matters those co-optees and the independent members are informed that it is not necessary for them to attend.

Meetings are normally held late afternoon or early evening and last no more than an hour. Meetings are open to members of the public but the council holds no record of a member of the public having attended in the last 4 years.

#### 4.10 OTHER COMMITTEES

MHDC's constitution sets out a number of additional committees that meet as and when required for specific matters, e.g. the shared appointments committee. Full details of the additional committees are detailed in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

<https://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/about-your-council/your-local-council/council-constitution>

#### 4.11 COUNCIL POLICY GROUPS (CPGS) AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANELS (PDPS)

At MHDC the leader has discretion to set up CPGs in consultation with the leader of the opposition. The aim of CPGs is to facilitate open discussion on specific issues such as governance issues. The CPG reports back to the leader and Council. CPGs do not meet in public.

For 20/21 there is the Governance CPG which is looking at the LGBCE review and the Coronavirus Recovery CPG which is looking at the Council's covid-19 recovery framework.

Pursuant to a CPG review, MHDC set up 3 Policy

Development Panels. The panels are aligned to and have the scope of their work plan linked to the Council's priorities, currently:

- Environment
- Economic Prosperity and Growth
- Stronger and Healthier Communities.

The aim of the panels is to provide Executive Committee with advice and support in relation to policy development on matters relating to the Council's priorities. They are advisory and not decision-making and as such they are not open to the public.

#### 4.12 OFFICERS

MHDC has in place a specific scheme of delegation in part 3 of its Constitution which sets out delegations made to officers – <https://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/about-your-council/your-local-council/council-constitution>

The scheme of delegation was updated pursuant to a review by the 19/20 Governance CPG.

MHDC works closely with neighbouring Wychavon District Council with whom they share a Chief Executive and senior management team. In addition, a number of 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 - <https://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/about-your-council/your-local-council/council-structure>

#### 4.13 EXTERNAL PARTNERS AND JOINT WORKING

MHDC is involved in a number of joint working initiatives with neighbouring councils and external partners for specific services. For example, MHDC has joined with Wychavon and Worcester City councils to provide joint building control, internal audit and IT services. Additionally, the 3 authorities have worked together on their local development plan, the South Worcester Development Plan, 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.

Additionally, in more recent years MHDC has looked at various outsourcing opportunities. MHDC has successfully outsourced the core service of revenues and benefits which includes the administration and recover of council tax and business rates.

## 5. MEMBERS

### 5.1 REPRESENTATIONAL ROLES



Every 4 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 MHDC councillors are provided with a council iPad and MHDC 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.

Members reach out to their communities in a variety of different ways. They attend parish council meetings, attend local events at schools, pubs and in the community. Some produce newsletters and leaflets, others give regular press releases and many have a presence on social media.

### 5.2 WORK IN THE COMMUNITY



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 Councillor events and Democracy days at schools. Some are involved 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, such as The Womens' Institute, Scouts, Rainbows and Brownies.

### 5.3 ENGAGEMENT

In 2019, the Council's Member Development Group (MDG) was re-established, with its terms of reference stating that its focus would be to draft, recommend and monitor a Member Development Programme and Strategy and all associated matters including training and development activities. The group is also tasked with looking at ways to support members with their engagement work, to fulfil their roles as community leaders.

The group consists of seven members (with all parties represented) plus the Community Engagement





and Leadership Officer. They meet on a quarterly basis, with three meetings having taken place since its re-establishment. The group does not have any decision making capabilities and reports and makes recommendations direct to the Chief Executive and the leader of the council.

To date, the group has devised a member survey, which went out to all members in the spring and included questions on the recent crisis as well as questions on the induction process, support functions and engagement. The results of the survey have helped the group to start drafting the Member Development and Engagement Plan, which the MDG aims to take to Executive Committee in the spring of 2021, following further consultation with all members, the Senior Management Team and the LGA. The current draft focusses on some key themes, including training, ongoing support, the introduction of personal development planning and a councillor mentoring scheme along with a member engagement plan.

Details of Member Engagement events 2018/19 and 2019/20 are set out in Appendix 9.

## 5.4 MEMBER CHAMPIONS

MHDC has appointed member champions to promote and support various interests of the community. The roles focus on four themes, namely: Heritage, Rural,

Young People and the Armed Forces. The aim is for the member champions to act as a positive link with the local community. They make contact with local organisations, familiarise themselves with the needs of the relevant section of the community, act as advocates on their behalf and feedback the decisions of the council.

### a) Young Person's Champion

The aim of the role is to work closely with the schools in the district to improve the council's engagement with young people, consulting them on our key priorities.

### b) Rural Champion

The aim of the role is to raise and maintain the profile of the district's rural areas, drawing the council's attention to rural issues and working with the council to improve the service delivered to rural areas.

### c) Armed Forces Champion

The aim of this role is to work with the countywide Covenant Working Group and support the needs of service veterans and families in the district.

### d) Heritage Champion

The aim of this role will be to raise and maintain the profile of the built historic and natural environment and provide a focus for heritage issues across the Council.

The Member Champions provided the attached annual update on their work in May 2020.

## 5.5 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

MHDC annually appoints directly to Age UK, Community Action, Corporate Parenting Board, Local Government Association, Malvern Citizens Advice Bureau, Malvern Cube Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Malvern Hills Trust, Malvern Theatres Trust, PATROL Joint Committee, Roundabout, South Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership, Tenbury and District Museum Society, West Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association and Worcestershire Telecare.

MHDC councillors are also involved with a number of other organisations on a less formal basis.



## 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. MHDC has a designated democratic services team as well as a number of other officers who assist with member support. The chairman also has assistance from a specific officer.

All members also have access to all officers from the full range of MHDC services for advice and assistance on

specific service matters. The leader is provided with their own office and MHDC also has a specified 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 CONCLUSION

**Having taken account of the factors set out in the body of this submission such as the changes since the last review e.g. in 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 growth predictions (details of which have been provided to the LGBCE separately); the CPG considered a reduction in the number of Councillors would be appropriate.**

The CPG looked at what would be a reasonable reduction on the basis that any reduction proposed would have to be manageable and allow for effective discharging of responsibilities.

As their starting point, based on LGBCE guidance, the CPG considered what the minimum number would have to be. In line with the current constitutional requirements for committees, panels and groups the absolute minimum starting point considered was 21 members.



The CPG then started their work on this submission by looking at the various factors that influence the work of Councillors and considering how many more Councillors, over and above the minimum of 21, would be needed effectively to undertake all the work expected of councillors.

The CPG highlighted that they wished to achieve the aims of this review and a reduction in numbers without impacting on the Council's ability to deliver its services or adversely affecting the needs of constituents and members in terms of engagement.

Therefore, they started to consider evidence from various sources, as detailed in this report, including directly from the current members themselves via a member survey. The CPG looked at the constitutional requirements and compared this to the current appointments of members to Council committees and panels. Currently of the 38 members, 32 have appointments in addition to council and planning, where all 38 are involved.

The Member survey indicated that 50% of current Councillors felt there were currently too many members. Those who did make comments suggesting a size mentioned figures between 29 and 31.

The CPG considered information on current electors per councillor. For the whole of the district this was 1580. Comparing this with the nearest neighbour comparators where the number varied between 1406 to 2779 it was agreed that 1580 was low. The CPG felt an average of the highest and lowest nearest neighbour comparators, 2093 electors per councillor, could be considered reasonable and would equate to between 29 and 31 councillors.

The CPG was 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 also to represent their constituents, as well as informal meetings with officers, political group meetings, public meetings as well as ward level and community meetings. The CPG wished to balance any reduction in numbers against increasing workloads. Relevant questions were therefore asked in the member survey and the CPG considered these responses together with other factors such as the changing ways in which residents communicate with them.

The CPG looked at a reduction in numbers which would be practical to balance the Council's ability to deliver its services balanced against value for money per resident. The current cost of councillors per head of population is £2.93 averaging at approximately £6,021 per councillor. The CPG compared this to figures for neighbouring Worcestershire districts. The figures were the highest across the County and, whilst the CPG did note that the cost per head of population does depend on annual expenditure, the figures did still have to demonstrate value for money for residents.

The CPG 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, a council of 31 members would be appropriate and proportionate.

The CPG reported their findings that there should be a reduction in the number of members and their recommendation that the Council size be reduced from 38 to 31 Councillors to the Leader.

This submission was debated by Council at their meeting on 24th November 2020. There was a discussion amongst members around two or three member wards, member accountability and housing growth within the district. Council resolved, with 30 votes for, 5 against and 3 abstentions to approve this council size submission for submission to the LG BCE by the 8th December 2020 deadline and delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, authority to finalise the submission wording.

The Leader concluded that "The Council decision is a clear indication of cross party support for 31. No other number was proposed or evidenced throughout the process by any other Cllr or group of Cllrs."



# 7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – CPG Terms of Reference 2019

Appendix 2 – CPG Report to Council February 2019

Appendix 3 – IRP Annual Report 2020/21

Appendix 4 – MHDC 5-Year Plan 2020/21

Appendix 5 – Councillor Survey Analysis

Appendix 6 – Councillor Questionnaire responses

Appendix 7 – Final Report of the Scrutiny Group on Apprenticeships

Appendix 8 – Final Report of the Scrutiny Group on TENS

Appendix 9 – Member Engagement events 2018/19 and 2019/20



# **Council Policy Group**

## **Review of Corporate Governance and decision making at Malvern Hills District Council**

### **Background and draft Terms of Reference**

#### Background

At the Council meeting on 8 May 2018, the Leader announced his intention to set up a Council Policy Group (CPG) to conduct a thorough and comprehensive review of the Council's governance. This would look at whether the council should modernise its decision making and review how it delivers its democratic functions.

The decision making structure of the Council should provide a framework of transparent accountability to the community and stakeholders. This is central to the Council's effectiveness, ethos and reputation. This CPG will be a timely review of the corporate governance and decision making to provide options for the next Council after May 2019. The Council's decision making culture should promote

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Ethical standards
- Involvement and engagement.

In accordance with the Constitution, the CPG would report directly to the Leader.

The review will inevitably consider the current constitution and any aspects of it which may be improved.

#### Scope of the Review

The review will include the following matters :

- Consideration of the effectiveness of the current governance arrangements at Malvern Hills District Council.
- Identify and consider any other governance models and assess the strengths and weaknesses of each system including any structural, resource, legal or other implications.
- Consider the pros and cons of the current level of Councillor representation on MHDC and the merits or otherwise of seeking an Electoral Review.
- Consider Recommendations (1) and (2) of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge report for MHDC undertaken in March 2018.
- Review the operation, workload and discharge of functions of the Regulatory Committees.

- Make recommendations on the operation of the Council meeting to include, inter alia, consideration of the following
  - procedure for election of Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman
  - use of secret ballots in the constitution
  - venue for council meetings.
- Consider, as appropriate, other matters relating to the conduct and operation of Committee meetings such as membership, timing of meetings.
- Consider the future of CPGs and Task and Finish Groups and how such groups could fit into a modernised decision making structure.
- Learn from modernising of decision making elsewhere in the sector

The CPG may seek to broaden the agreed scope only after agreement with the Leader (in consultation with the Leader of the opposition).

### Membership

The CPG will consist of 7 members. Representation and participation from all political groups is sought. (Political balance does not apply).

The Leader has agreed that Councillor Jeremy Owenson will chair the Review and the Vice-Chair is Councillor John Raine.

The other members of the CPG are –  
 Councillor Paul Cumming  
 Councillor James O'Donnell  
 Councillor Pamela Cumming  
 Councillor Tom Wells  
 Councillor Mick Davies

Substitutes are not allowed.

### Accountability / Reporting Line and Timetable

The CPG will report directly to the Leader. The Leader may request interim reports from the CPG as appropriate. An interim or final report is expected before March 2019 which the Leader intends to present to Council.

### Meetings

The CPG will meet monthly and agree its work programme.

### Quorum

Meetings of the Policy Group will require a minimum of not less than 50% of members, including either the Chairman or Vice-Chairman.



## Officer Support

The CPG team will be supported by

Jack Hegarty – Chief Executive

Andy Baldwin – Deputy Chief Executive

Matthew Box – Policy and Governance Manager

Karen Jarman – Senior Democratic Services Officer

# Council

19 February 2019



## Report of the Council Policy Group – review of corporate governance and decision making at Malvern Hills District Council

### Relevant Wards

All

**Portfolio Holder** Councillor David Chambers, Leader of the Council

**Head of Service** Jack Hegarty, Chief Executive

**Contact Officers** Jack Hegarty, Andy Baldwin or Meesha Patel

*(If you have any queries or questions about the content of this report, please speak to the portfolio holder or contact officer in advance of the meeting.)*

## 1. Purpose and Summary

- 1.1 This report follows the receipt of the attached report from the Council Policy Group (CPG) set up in June 2018 to review governance and decision making.
- 1.2 The Leader has advised that he accepts the recommendations of the report in full and has asked that Council consider the report of the CPG. He has taken a view on the establishment of the proposed panels in Recommendation 2 (ii) with a recommendation that they are based on a revised CPG model accountable to the Executive Committee.
- 1.3 On the basis of the recommendations set out in the CPG report, a number require approval by Council.

## 2. Recommendations

### Governance of the Council

**Council is recommended to agree:**

- i) That the formal governance model of the Council is not changed and the annual election of the Council leader be retained.
- ii) That the Council establishes new member policy development panels based on the council's priorities ( currently environment, economic prosperity and growth and stronger and healthier communities) and
  - that the Constitution be amended to enable the panels to be established



from May 2019

- that the Executive Committee in April 2019 agree the Terms of Reference and composition of the Panels
  - that the Panels are aligned to the current CPG model and report to the Executive Committee (rather than the Leader)
  - that membership of Panels could be drawn from all Council members
  - that relevant portfolio holders should attend Panel meetings (but don't chair meetings)
  - that the membership of Panels strives for political balance.
- iii) That the frequency of Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings be reviewed to at least 4 per annum and that
- Meetings are scheduled to fit with the Councils' standing business e.g. budget setting, as at present.
- iv) That opposition groups should be encouraged to consider the adoption of shadow portfolio roles to widen awareness of Council business.

#### Electoral Review

- v) That the Local Government Boundary Commission for England ( LGBCE) be invited to speak with the Council and, subject to the outcome of that discussion, the Council should commence an Electoral Review of Malvern Hills District Council taking into account of both
- Council size ( numbers of members elected to the council ) – with a strong preference that the total numbers of members be reduced and
  - A review of the warding to have regard to electoral balance and numbers of members per ward – with a preference for single member wards where practicable.
- vi) That having regard to the likely timescales to conduct any such review as the LGBCE may carry out, any changes become effective at the subsequent scheduled district council elections in May 2023.

#### Regulatory Committees

- vii) That the Audit Committee and Standards Committee functions be merged into a single Committee (with appropriate arrangements for sub – committees in relation to Standards investigations and accommodating co-opted the co-opted members) and the Constitution be amended accordingly to enable the new Committee structure to be effective from May 2019.

viii) Other Constitutional changes

That the Constitution be amended to

- allow for the election of chairs of committees and panels at Annual Council each year
- to remove provision for secret ballots
- to agree the schedule of minor changes set out in Appendix 6.

**ix) Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP)**

That the IRP should be invited to:

- Consider the merits or otherwise of multi-year recommendations rather than annual reports
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the methodology for making recommendations
- Consider the leadership special responsibility allowances and whether they reflect the responsibility and nature of those roles.

**x) Doing business digitally**

That induction training for members be reviewed as part of the new council with digital and on line options being included as part of any basket of training.

**xi) Future work**

That the new Council should consider re-establishing this Governance CPG and include in its work programme a review and report on the delivery of Planning Committee arrangements for the Council (while also having regard to the existing roles of the Planning Policy Group and Planning Chairman's Group).

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 At the Executive Committee and Council meetings on 8 May 2018 respectively, the Council agreed a number of recommendations in relation to the Local Government association Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback report
- 3.2 In response to part of the feedback from the LGA, at the same meetings, the Leader announced his intention to set up a Council Policy Group (CPG) to conduct a thorough and comprehensive review of the Council's governance. This would look at whether the council should modernise its decision making and review how it delivers its democratic functions.
- 3.3 The CPG has now reported to the Leader and the report of the Group is attached. It covers a range of important governance issues and makes some major recommendations for the future decision making structure of the Council and how it conducts its business.
- 3.4 The Leader has indicated that he has accepted all the recommendations of the group. A number of the recommendations of the Group require approval by Council

to be enacted. These are reflected in the recommendations above.

#### **4. Implications and Impact:**

##### **How does it meet Council priorities?**

Supportive of both the Five year Plan and the Business Plan.

##### **What are the financial / resource implications?**

None directly as a result of this report. However, if new Panels are established then support from the Democratic Services team will be required. This can be achieved within existing resources.

##### **What are the Risks?**

Without modernising and keeping the governance of the council under review, it could lead to ineffective governance and decision making.

##### **Is a Diversity Impact Assessment Required?**

N/a

**Appendices** – Report of the CPG January 2019

##### **Background Papers**



**Independent Remuneration Panel  
for Worcestershire District Councils**

**Annual Report and Recommendations for 2020-21**

**Malvern Hills District Council**

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**January 2020**

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## **Recommendations**

**The Independent Remuneration Panel recommends to Malvern Hills District Council the following:**

- 1. That the Basic Allowance for 2020-21 is £4,526 representing a 2% increase.**
- 2. That the Special Responsibility Allowances are as set out in Appendix 1.**
- 3. That travel allowances for 2020-21 continue to be paid in accordance with the HMRC mileage allowance.**
- 4. That subsistence allowances for 2020-21 remain unchanged.**
- 5. That the Dependent Carer's Allowance remains unchanged.**
- 6. That for Parish Councils in the District, if travel and subsistence is paid, the Panel recommends that it is paid in accordance with the rates paid by Malvern Hills District Council and in accordance with the relevant Regulations.**



## **Introduction**

The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) has been appointed by the Council to carry out reviews of the allowances paid to Councillors, as required by the Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent legislation. The Panel has carried out its work in accordance with the legislation and statutory guidance.

The law requires each Council to "have regard" to the recommendations of the Independent Panel and we noted, that Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) agreed to increase the Basic Allowance for 2019-20 to £4,437 representing a 2% increase on the 2018/19 recommendation.

This year the Panel offered to meet with the Group Leaders of the Council to discuss any other particular issues. Two members of the Panel met with the Council's Governance Council Policy Group in January 2019. Two members of the Panel then met with Councillor S Rouse, Leader of the Council on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The role of the IRP and of different Committees was discussed and Councillor Rouse explained that a review of ward boundaries was being considered. The potential to introduce an SRA for the Chairs of new Policy Development Panels, which had been established to reflect the Council's priorities, was raised by the Leader and a proposal was subsequently submitted to the IRP and considered at the Panel meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> November. The Panel agreed to the introduction of an SRA at 0.25 for the Chairs of the Policy Development Panel. This award to remain in place for a maximum 4 years (term of office) or on completion of the Panel's work, whichever is the sooner. The Council should review the role and the impact of the Policy Development Panels' work on an annual basis.

At this point we would like to stress that our recommendations are based on thorough research and benchmarking. We have presented the Council with what we consider to be an appropriate set of allowances to reflect the roles carried out by the Councillors. The purpose of allowances is to help enable people from all walks of life to become involved in local politics if they choose.

The Panel does, however, acknowledge that in the current challenging financial climate there are difficult choices for the Council to make. Ultimately it is for the Council to decide how or whether to adopt the recommendations that we make.

## **Background Evidence and Research Undertaken**

There is a rich and varied choice of market indicators on pay which can be used for comparison purposes. These include:

- National survey data on a national, regional or local level;
- Focussed surveys on a particular public sector;
- Regular or specific surveys
- Use of specific indices to indicate movement in rewards or cost of living.

As background for the decisions taken by the Panel this year we have:

- Analysed and considered the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) statistics for 2019 which gives the mean hourly wage rate for Worcestershire at £14.88.

- Benchmarked the Basic Allowance against allowances for comparable roles paid by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) "Nearest Neighbour" Councils for each authority.
- Considered local government pay awards
- Reviewed information from the West Midland Members Allowance Survey 2019.
- Considered the inflation rate (CPI) which was 1.5% in November 2019 (ONS).

In 2015, Worcester City Councillors recorded time spent on Council business for a number of weeks. This enabled the Panel to confirm the number of hours per week for front line councillors, which is used in the consideration of the recommended basic allowance.

We give more details about these areas of research in Appendix 2.

The figure being recommended by the Panel of £4,526 for the Basic Allowance appears reasonable and appropriate when compared to other Local Authorities.

Arising from our research, in **Table 1** we have included information showing the Members' allowances budget for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances paid for 2018-19 as a cost per head of population for each Council. To give context, we have included details of the proportion of net revenue budget spent by each Council on basic and Special Responsibility allowances.

In **Table 2** we show the average payment per member of each authority of the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances, which illustrates the balance between the level of Special Responsibility Allowances paid and the Basic Allowance.

**Table 1 - Total spend on Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) as a cost per head of population 2018-19 figures**

<b>Authority, population<sup>1</sup> and number of Councillors</b>	<b>Total spend Basic Allowances</b>	<b>Total spend on SRA</b>	<b>SRA as a percentage of total Basic Allowance</b>	<b>Cost of total basic and SRA per head of population</b>	<b>Total of basic and SRA as a percentage of Net General Revenue Fund expenditure</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>%</b>
Bromsgrove DC (31) 95,768	136,350	60,697	45.01	2.05	1.80
Malvern Hills DC (38) 75,339	163,274.80	65,517.37	40	2.93	2.99

<sup>1</sup> ONS population figures mid 2019. Totals for Basic and Special Responsibility allowances paid are as published by each authority for the 2018-19 financial year.

Redditch Borough (29) 84,500	100,881	38,706	38.37	1.65	1.46
Worcester City (35) 100,405	150,117	68,016	45.31	2.17	1.64
Wychavon (45) 118,738	192,241	69,087	35.94	2.08	1.95

**Table 2 - Average allowance per Member of each authority (Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances, 2018 – 19 figures)**

<b>Authority (number of Councillors)</b>	<b>Amount £</b>
Bromsgrove District (31)	6,356.35
Malvern Hills District (38)	6,020.85
Redditch Borough (29)	4,813.37
Worcester City (35)	6,232.37
Wychavon District (45)	5,807.29

### **Basic Allowance 2020 - 21**

#### **Considerations in calculating the Basic Allowance**

In considering the Basic Allowance note is taken of :

- The roles and responsibilities of Members; and
- Their time commitments – including the total average number of hours worked per week on Council business.

We then apply a public service discount of 40% to reflect that Councillors volunteer some of their time to the role. As part of the Panel’s assessment and analysis in June 2019 of a random sample of IRP reports from Nearest Neighbour councils we identified that other panels reported that they also apply a 40% public service discount. The Panel remain of the opinion that this level of public service discount is appropriate.

The Basic Allowance is paid to all Members of the Council.

Whilst each Council may set out role descriptions for Councillors, the Panel accepts that each councillor will carry out that role differently, reflecting personal circumstances and local requirements.

However, we consider the Basic Allowance to include Councillors’ roles in Overview and Scrutiny, as any non-Executive member of the Council is able to contribute to this aspect of the Council’s work. It is for this reason that we do not recommend any Special Responsibility Allowance for members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. We also consider that ICT could be included in the Basic Allowance as it is generally



more readily available to individuals than in previous years. However, we are comfortable that specific local decisions may be made about how ICT support is provided.

During the round of meetings held with Leaders during autumn 2019, all raised the issue of the SRA recommended for the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny. The Panel's position had always been that the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny has a very important and independent statutory role to scrutinise and, where appropriate, to challenge or question decisions taken or planned to be taken by the Council, as set out in the Local Government Act 2000. The Panel considered that this should be reflected in the award of an SRA equivalent to that of a Cabinet Portfolio Holder (i.e., a multiplier of 1.5.) As a result of concerns raised, the Panel has reviewed its position on the SRA for Chair of Overview and Scrutiny in this reporting cycle but it is not persuaded that this SRA should be reviewed downwards as suggested by some Councils. In reaching this decision the Panel has taken account of the "Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities published in May 2019, which reinforces the significance and importance of the role of Overview and Scrutiny in holding an authority's decision makers to account on behalf of their electorate.

As mentioned earlier, in 2015 Worcester City Councillors recorded the time spent per week on Council business for a number of weeks during the early autumn. This was considered to reflect an appropriate "average" period of time for meetings and other commitments. The results from this survey showed that the average input was 10 hours and 50 minutes per week. This figure matches the one used for a number of years by the Panel, based on previous research with constituent councils, to calculate the basic allowance.

We reviewed the levels of wage rates for Worcestershire as set out in the ASHE data (details in appendix 2) and the benchmark information available to us from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) "nearest neighbours" authorities as part of our research into the level of basic allowance recommended. We are also aware that the majority of local government employees received an average of 2% increase in pay in April 2019 (dependent on scale).

The research information used in considering the Basic allowance is set out at appendix 2.

## **Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) 2020-21**

### **General Calculation of SRAs**

The basis for the calculation of SRAs is a multiplier of the Basic Allowance as advocated in the published Guidance.

The Panel has reviewed the responsibilities of each post, the multipliers and allowances paid by similar authorities. As in previous years, the Panel has benchmarked the allowances against those paid by authorities listed as "nearest neighbours" by CIPFA.

The Panel has been asked on occasions to consider recommending SRA's for Vice-Chairs of Committees. Having considered evidence presented to us and the nature of the roles, as a principle the Panel does not recommend SRA's for Vice-Chair roles.

Appendix 1 to this report sets out the allowances recommended for 2020-21.

### **Mileage and Expenses 2020-21**

The Panel notes that the Council has used the HMRC flat rate for payment of mileage for Councillors and recommends that this continues.

The Panel was asked by one Council to make a recommendation in relation to mileage rates for privately owned electric vehicles. The Panel notes that councils generally apply the HMRC Approved Mileage Allowance Payment (AMAP) rates for employees and council members using their own privately owned vehicles for official business. The Panel notes that whilst HMRC introduced an Advisory Electric Rate (AER) for electric vehicles in September 2018, this rate does not apply to privately owned electric vehicles and the AMAP rate should, therefore, continue to be used where the AMAP rates are applied by Councils.

The Panel is satisfied that the current levels of subsistence allowances are set at an appropriate level and recommends that these continue.

The Panel notes that the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances provides that Dependant Carer Allowances are payable to cover reasonable and legitimate costs incurred in attending approved duties and recommends that this provision continues.

### **Allowances to Parish Councils 2020-21**

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Worcestershire District Councils acts as the Remuneration Panel for the Parish Councils in each District.

This year the Panel has not been asked to make recommendations on any matters by any Parish in Bromsgrove/Malvern Hills/Redditch/Worcester City/ Wychavon.

### **The Independent Remuneration Panel**

The Members' Allowances Regulations require Local Authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel. The purpose of the Panel is to make recommendations to the authority about allowances to be paid to Elected Members and Local Authorities must have regard to this advice. This Council's Independent Remuneration Panel is set up on a joint basis with 4 of the other 5 District Councils in Worcestershire. Separate Annual Reports have been prepared for each Council.

The members of the Panel are:

**Terry Cotton, interim Chair of the Panel** - Terry spent 34 years working in central and local Government, mostly managing regeneration programmes across the West Midlands. Until May 2011 he worked at The Government Office for The West Midlands where he was a Relationship Manager between central and local Government and a lead negotiator for local performance targets. Following voluntary early severance in May 2011, he worked part-time in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, setting up a new business led community development trust and currently works part-time for Worcestershire County Council's Road Safety Team. He is also a trustee of a small charitable trust providing grants to grass roots community initiatives in deprived communities.

**Caroline Murphy** – Caroline has 20 years' experience of working in public and voluntary sector organisations, including three West Midlands Local Authorities and the Civil Service. She was a senior Education Manager at Wolverhampton City Council until 2011 developing and delivering a large part of the 14-19 Pathfinder, during which time her department was recognised as achieving Beacon Council Status. She has a wealth of experience at building partnerships. Caroline now works as freelance Education, Skills and Development Adviser supporting individuals and organisations with strategic management, quality assurance and improvement, safeguarding, regulation compliance, research and evaluation, data protection and developing policies and procedures.

She has worked in a consultancy capacity for a number of organisations, specialising in those who support vulnerable young people. She also spent 14 years as the Vice Chair of Governors of a primary school in Birmingham.

**Jonathan Glover** – Jonathan has over 30 years experience working in central and local government. He has worked mostly in central government, in a range of departments and disciplines. These include: regional finance and accounts; building management; personnel management; contract management. At a local level he specialised in employment support for people with disabilities. Returning to a regional role, he ensured projects throughout the West Midlands region, which were receiving European Commission grants, complied with EC financial and regulatory compliance. Since leaving the civil service he has worked in both the public and private sector. Jonathan was a governor at his local junior school for eight years. He was vice chair of the full governing body, representing the school at Ofsted inspection and appeal panels; chair of its curriculum sub committee; and a member of personal and finance sub committees. He was a member of several recruitment and interview panels, including for a new headteacher.

**Reuben Bergman** – Reuben is a Fellow of the CIPD with significant senior HR leadership experience across a range of public sector organisations in both England and Wales. He currently runs a HR Consultancy Business in Worcestershire providing advice and support on managing change, employment law, HR policy development, mediation, management coaching and employee relations. Reuben has led successful equal pay reviews in three separate local authorities and is known for his successful work in managing change and developing effective employee relations. He is a qualified coach, mediator and a Shared Service architect. He has won national awards for his work on employee engagement and the development of an innovative Café style leadership development programme.

**Matthew Davies** – Matthew qualified as a Social Worker in 2008, and subsequently worked in Worcestershire and Jersey in the Channel Islands with children, their families and carers. On returning to Worcestershire in 2013 he worked with children in the care of the local authority before he was appointed as a Safeguarding Manager in Worcestershire in 2014, a role he continued in Manchester City until 2017. Currently he's employed as an Independent Reviewing Officer in Worcestershire. Independent Reviewing Officers are Social Workers, who are also experienced social work managers whose duty is to ensure the care plans for children in care are legally compliant and in the child's best interest. Passionate about learning and development Matthew is a guest speaker who contributes toward the West Midlands Step Up To Social Work Programme for the West Midlands, contributing toward the learning of social workers in training. He



is also an Independent Panel Member of an Independent Fostering Agency, contributing toward the approval of prospective and established foster parents for children in care.

The Panel has been advised and assisted by:

- Claire Chaplin and Margaret Johnson from Worcester City Council;
- Darren Whitney, Amanda Scarce and Jess Bayley from Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils;
- Mel Harris from Wychavon District Council;
- Lisa Perks from Malvern Hills District Council.

The Panel wishes to acknowledge its gratitude to these officers who have provided advice and guidance in a professional and dedicated manner.

**Terry Cotton, Interim Chair of Independent Remuneration Panel**

## Appendix 1

### Independent Remuneration Panel for District Councils in Worcestershire Recommendations for 2020-21

#### Malvern Hills District Council

Role	Recommended Multiplier	Current Multiplier	Recommended Allowance  £	Current Allowance (paid)  £
<b>Basic Allowance – all Councillors</b>	1	1	4,526	4,437
<b>Special Responsibility Allowances:</b>				
<b>Leader</b>	3	3	13,578	13,311
<b>Deputy Leader</b>	1.75	1.75	7,920.5	7,764.75
<b>Portfolio Holders</b>	1.5	1.5	6,789	6,655.50
<b>Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	1.5	1.5	6,789	6,655.50
<b>Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups</b>	0.25	0.25	1,131.50	1,109.25
<b>Chair of Audit and Standards Committee</b>	0.25	0.25	1,131.50	1,109.25
<b>Chair of 2 x Area Planning Committees</b>	0.5	0.5	2,263	2,218.50
<b>Chair of Licensing Committee</b>	0.3	0.3	1,357.80	1,331.10
<b>Chair of Policy Development Panels</b>	0.25	0	1,131.50 (4 year Term of Office or on completion of work, whichever sooner)	0

<b>Role</b>	<b>Recommended Multiplier</b>	<b>Current Multiplier</b>	<b>Recommended Allowance £</b>	<b>Current Allowance (paid) £</b>
<b>Political Group Leaders</b>	0.25	0.25	1,131.50	1,109.25



### Summary of Research

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) "Nearest Neighbour" authorities tool.

No two Councils or sets of Councillors are the same. Developed to aid local authorities in comparative and benchmarking exercises, the CIPFA Nearest Neighbours Model adopts a scientific approach to measuring the similarity between authorities. Using the data, Malvern Hills District Council "nearest neighbours" are:

- Wychavon District Council
- Babergh District Council
- West Devon Borough Council
- Hambleton District Council
- Derbyshire Dales District Council

Information on the level of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances was obtained to benchmark the levels of allowances recommended to the Council.

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) Data on Pay

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/contents.aspx>

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?reset=yes&mode=construct&dataset=30&version=0&anal=1&initset=>

Published by the Office for National Statistics, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) shows detailed information at District level about rates of pay. For benchmarking purposes the Panel uses the levels for hourly rates of pay excluding overtime. This is multiplied by 11 to give a weekly rate, which is then multiplied by 44.4 weeks to allow for holidays. This was the number of hours spent on Council business by frontline Councillors which had been reported in previous surveys and substantiated by a survey with Worcester City Councillors in the autumn of 2015. The rate is then discounted by 40% to reflect the element of volunteering that each Councillor undertakes in the role. Applying this formula would produce a figure of £4,360 per annum.

CPI (Consumer Price Inflation)

In arriving at its recommendations the Panel has taken into account the latest reported CPI figure available to it, published by the Office for National Statistics. This was 1.5% for November 2019.

Local Government Pay Award

The Panel was particularly mindful of the latest Local Government pay award implemented from 1 April 2019. For the majority of Local Government employees this resulted in a pay increase of 2% on 1st April 2019.

**Our vision:** to enhance the Malvern Hills District as a destination to explore and an outstanding place to live and work



### Our Communities

#### Deliver quality and affordable housing

1. Deliver 550 affordable homes and bring 200 empty homes back into use by 2025.
2. Help people access housing through promoting options including starter homes, right to buy and shared ownership (by March 2021).
3. Submit the SWDP Review to the Secretary of State for Examination in February 2021, with adoption in November 2021, to deliver the need for housing across the South Worcestershire area.
4. Work with partners to reduce the risk of rough sleeping and ensure that appropriate mental health and other services are accessed by those in need of homelessness support.
5. Work with partners, such as Registered Social Landlords, to invest in key sites that enable houses to be built for key workers and to support the wider economy.

#### Improve people's health and well being

6. Secure 2mn visits to our leisure centres by 2025, including targeting the less active to participate in sport and leisure activities.
7. Deliver a programme of at least 50 targeted community activities across the district, including arts activities.
8. Working with the new Home Improvement Agency to ensure effective performance of the new contract.
9. Refurbish Malvern Splash to improve the visitor offer and to extend the economic life of the asset.
10. Enable investment of up to £10m in new facilities and open space provision, including play areas and playing pitches across the district by 2025.

#### Supporting and engaging with communities

11. Work with key partners to tackle loneliness and social isolation for all ages, including facilitating a series of community engagement events.
12. Work with partners to reduce the crimes most affecting our district through supporting communities, delivering education and awareness campaigns, coordinating community days of action, property marking events and road safety campaigns across the district.
13. Work with Malvern Theatres to facilitate the delivery of a new extension aimed at increasing the educational and community work done by the theatre.
14. Work with community transport providers and Worcestershire County Council to support local bus services and local transport needs.
15. Work with partners to deliver a district wide event, aimed at young people, to promote opportunities to develop and learn new skills
16. Develop and implement a community development strategy which supports the building of strong, resilient and sustainable communities
17. Support the development of Neighbourhood Planning.

### Our Economy

#### Bring forward land and premises for business to grow

18. Support at least 100 businesses to innovate and grow through business start up and growth programme.
19. Make land available to create more than 100 new jobs through Phase 6 and beyond of Malvern Hills Science and Technology Park by 2025.
20. Work with private and public sector partners to deliver investment in economic growth, new workspace and employment at key employment sites.
21. Promote and implement town centre prospectuses for the three centres of Malvern, Tenbury Wells and Upton-upon-Severn, securing funding and partner support.
22. Work with partners to deliver a plan to remediate and service employment land at QinetiQ for additional Research and Development based business development.

#### Develop the skills of our young people

23. Provide support and additional funding to encourage small and medium sized businesses to take on up to 20 new apprentices per annum.
24. Negotiate S106 agreements on developments in the district to deliver a range of construction skills and training opportunities.
25. Promote age friendly working practices within our businesses to support the ageing workforce and work with partners to develop the skills to fill future skills gaps.

#### Promote and develop the visitor experience of the Malverns

26. Develop and deliver a refreshed Visitor Economy Action Plan.
27. Develop and deliver a visitor marketing plan, including working with major attractions such as the Three Counties, Malvern Theatres, Morgan and major festivals, to raise awareness of the Malverns offer.
28. Develop a local green tourism business tool kit to encourage adoption of sustainable practices and promote the green tourism business accreditation.

#### Improve our infrastructure to support economic growth

29. Support and lobby for delivery of key transport infrastructure projects including;
  - a) **Road:** A38 Holly Green Jct, Southern Link Road Phase 4, and promote the improvement of traffic flow to the west and north west of Worcester
  - b) **Rail:** Rushwick rail halt / improved services and greater car parking capacity.
  - c) **Cycle:** Three Counties Cycle Link and Malvern to Worcester
30. Work with businesses and communities to access full fibre (FTTP) broadband by 2025, to improve connectivity, productivity and enable more efficient homeworking.

### Our Environment

#### Leading the District to become Carbon Neutral

31. Leading the district to become Carbon Neutral as soon as possible and by 2050 at the very latest.
32. Reduce the Council's own use of gas, electricity and water.
33. Work with partners to acquire land for planting woodland to provide carbon offsetting.
34. Install electric car charging points on public car parks.

#### Reduce household waste and increase recycling

35. Run a targeted waste reduction campaign to reduce the amount of waste generated by the district's households and increase recycling.
36. Eliminate the use of single use items, including plastic, from all council buildings.
37. Trial the use of on-the-go recycling bins in key locations to increase our recycling rate.

#### Improve the natural environment

38. Refresh and deliver the Biodiversity Plan for the district.
39. Deliver improved place making in the natural environment through well thought out design, high quality and locally distinctive development.
40. Work with partners to promote and support delivery of the emerging Worcestershire Pollinator Strategy including the creation of new and improved habitats for bees on Council managed green space.

#### Improve the built environment

41. Make comprehensive improvements to Priory Park, including a new children's play area, leading to Green Flag status by 2025.
42. Identify litter prone "grotspot" areas and provide additional litter bins by the end of 2021.
43. Improve the cleanliness and appearance of our streets.
44. Address environmental crime more proactively, particularly fly tipping, through education programmes and enforcement campaigns.
45. Deliver improved place making in the built environment through well thought out design, high quality and locally distinctive development.



# Boundary Commission

## Council Size Survey Results



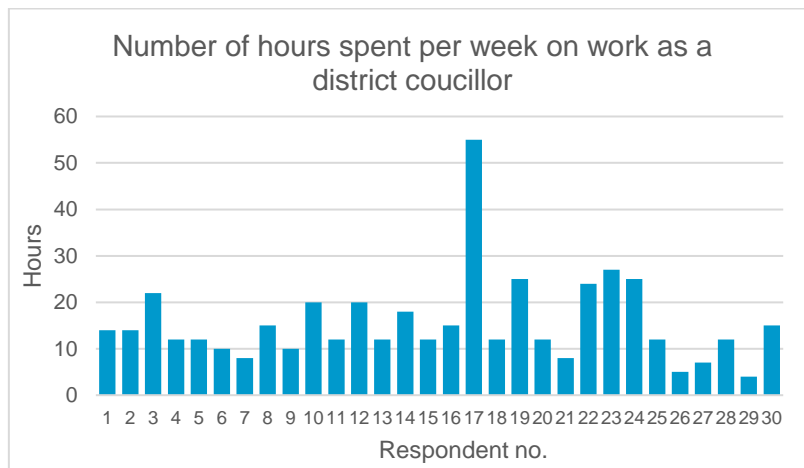
There were 30 responses to the survey from the 38 councillors in the district giving a response rate of 79%.

There were four questions in total and the responses to each are detailed below.

### Question 1

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

The mean number of hours was 15.6 per week although responses ranged from four hours to 55 hours. The median number of hours was twelve and over half of answers were between ten and fifteen hours per week.

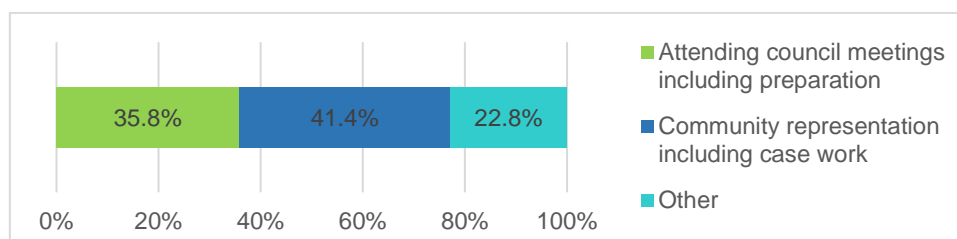


### Question 2

#### Please break this total down as follows:

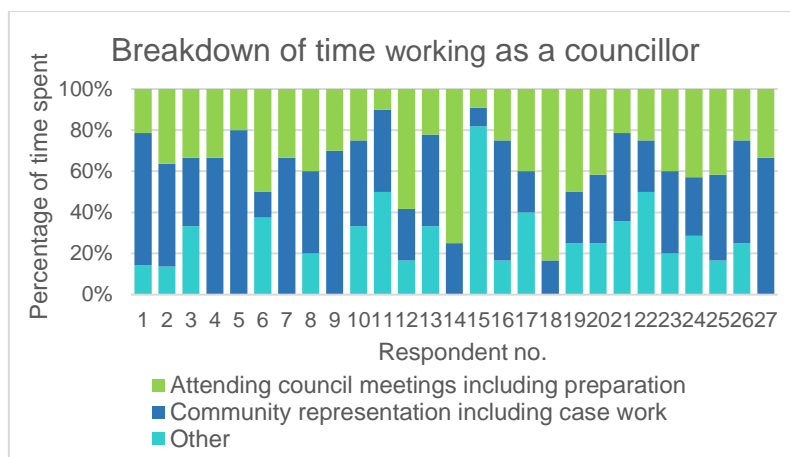
*Attending council meetings including preparation / Community representation including case work / Other (please describe below)*

There 27 responses to this question and the average percentage of time spent on the three options was:



There were a variety of different splits of the time spent working on the three categories and several that spent a large proportion of time working on things in the other category.





The table below shows all the responses where the 'other' category was explained further.

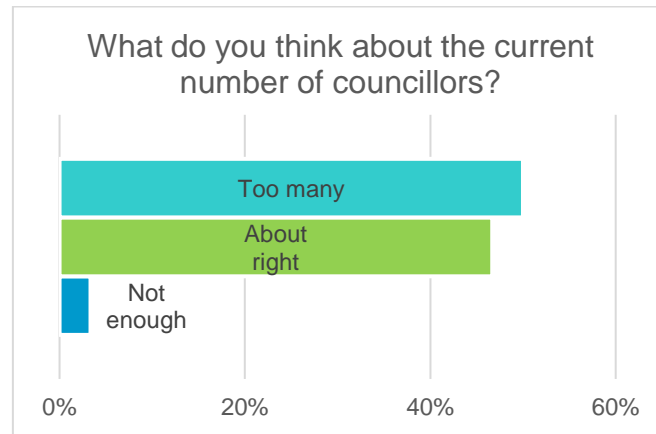
Dealing with community concerns not directly related to district council
"Patrolling" the ward/ talking to residents/ publicising MHDC & own activities
Phone calls, neighbourhood matters etc
Responding to requests for information and other queries, emails, attending outside bodies as a council rep.
Phone calls/emails, chasing case work and general catch up with residents and Parish Councils
Planning matters take up a lot of my time as does my work at MHDC Armed Forces Champion.
Long term projects and research
Internal governance
Malvern Hill Trust
Portfolio 6. Leader role 25. LGA/DCN 4. Malvern Hills Trust 5. Managing group 5.
Party political organising and campaigning relating to ward
Work as a nominated representative on Malvern Hills Trust
Prep for meetings, correspondence, ward surgery
Background and general information gathering on LGA and National Government initiatives
Council representative as trustee on Malvern Hills Trust
Community-led housing support through Worcestershire Community-led Housing Hub/Malvern Hills community-led housing group/Rooftop housing; local think tanks support, e.g. High Street Malvern, Engage Malvern; support for local businesses and the tech cluster including Malvern Hills Science Park, Wyche Innovation Centre, Malvern Bloom Space; Independent group meetings, communications group meetings and social group meetings
Dealing with emails
Reading up of information and documents sent by email
Various
Party group liaison



### Question 3

#### What do you think about the current number of councillors?

Just one councillor felt that there aren't enough councillors currently, fifteen (50%) felt there were too many and the remaining fourteen (47%) felt that there are just the right amount currently.



The comments made by those that feel there are currently **not enough** councillors:

With the substantial increase in housing within the Malvern Hills area that has already taken place and with an expected increase in excess of 40,000 dwellings over the next twenty years in the South Worcestershire Development Plan area this increase in the population will put additional pressure on the existing councillor base which will require readjusting the current ward boundaries inevitably leading to an increase in the number of wards to serve the growing population which will require additional councillors to represent those wards adequately.

The comments made by those that feel that the current number of councillors is **about right**:

The ratio of Councillors to community allows a good interaction, higher ration would mean diminished contact. People know me and are able to stop me informally to raise concerns. Councillor numbers permit offices to be filled with effective Councillors and for a reasonable sized opposition to hold the administration to account

We are two in my Ward and would find it quite a heavy load to reduce to one Councillor as it is extremely rural and spread out.

Due to the nature of our work and the rural aspects of the district. we have quite a diverse community to serve. It is helpful sharing good practice with fellow Councillors, including going out on "Meet & Greet" with colleagues from other political parties.

With the increase of houses being built and therefore the increase in the number of residents, a reduction may appear to be in order, but over the medium term there may well not be enough. As the Government push for more housing, it is likely that planning work will increase. Currently the other District Councillor in my Wards and I split the work and then meet to discuss and agree cases. One person would struggle to do this amount of work to an acceptable standard.

While there is a District Council these numbers are needed

In my ward the current number works well although there appears to be overlap in other wards

I find my current ward work relatively manageable, despite the ward being a larger ward with higher volumes and at times more taxing areas of casework than might be seen elsewhere. I can flexibility manage my workload and can engage residents in issues at present.
Difficult to know exactly how much work there is in some wards and, also, some councillors take on more roles than others
Because if we do more than 10-15 hours work per week there will be little or no ability for councillors to work fulltime and have other jobs. This will limit the expertise of councillors and the pool that we draw from will become even more limited as it is largely drawn at present from retired people who have the time to work for the very or relatively low council allowances which are available, something which few young people have the luxury of being able to do.
This is my first experience of being a councillor and from what I can tell the size of area people represent seems reasonable
THE WORK NOW UNDERTAKEN BY WARD MEMBERS IS IN MOST CASES CORRECT FOR THE WORK LOAD
I represent a three-member ward. Having three members means that we can always respond quickly to resident concerns, as there is always cover if one or two of us are temporarily indisposed. If one or two ward members have Exec or Portfolio responsibilities, the team as a whole still have the resources to maintain a sharp focus on ward residents' needs. It means that the ward is represented by a proper small team of councillors, each of us bringing our own unique strengths, experience and insights to the role.
Malvern Link is growing rapidly due to new housing, some of which is presenting problems due to a lack of communication between the developers and local residents. This together with the increase in traffic through the ward has also increased the work resolving parking issues for older properties, partly due to change of use of these properties.

The comments made by those that feel there are currently **too many** councillors

Number of councillors per head of population well above average for England.
Multi member wards seems to be an issue, although members make it work locally, residents find it confusing who to communicate with at times. The overall number seems slightly too large to be allow all members to participate fully.
I think 2 councillors per ward max is appropriate because the workload is not divided equally. People come back to the councillor who responds and takes action as do their neighbours.
They can't all hold active posts on the committees and portfolios and so have very little input to running the council.
Some of the central wards - such as those within Malvern where there are three councillors -this just isn't needed.
The work of the council has reduced over time, and the increase in use of technology means that more work can be done by fewer Councillors.
I believe there is a difference in membership between the rural areas and Urban..
Many are not engaged. Have no role other than a bit of ward work and do not contribute in meetings . Some never speak or engage at all. It is clear we have more Cllrs than we have roles that have a deliverable outcome for residents . We have created panels to attempt to engage more Cllrs. It I am not sure they do much more than create more work for officers without adding value to residents.
Notwithstanding the work content of the MHT which is a special case for me, my District Council work commitment as an ordinary member with the largest number of constituents in the district is entirely manageable. Having spent some years in the wilderness of opposition when the time commitment could have been less than now, my feeling is that fewer, engaged councillors would be well able to get the jobs done.
There is relatively little Resident-related correspondence work (in my ward) - far more of my Cllr work is county-related (highways).

If there were two or three less then I think the workload remains manageable. With population growth anticipated the numbers of councillors currently is just about justified.
Difficult to answer as the Kempsey Ward has many planning applications which are complex for Kempsey and Severn Stoke, and I also have the Planning Portfolio so complex. My opinion is that Kempsey can manage with two Councillors but may require in approx. 8 years to then increase to 3 Councillors. I cannot see why some wards have 3 Councillors and these should be reduced to 2 Councillors. Broadheath may not have enough Councillors over the next 8 years due to excessive planning.
Too many multi councillor wards

#### Question 4

#### **Do you have any further comments to make?**

There were 13 comments

Three member wards best avoided. Too easy for one member to "hide". Optimum number would be 29 councillors on population, but 31 probably required to staff current roles and responsibilities adequately.
It is a complex set of rural and urban wards making some arrears geographically large and others very small but much more population density. I would think around 31 would be the ideal number for Cllrs.
A smaller number of full-time councillors might be more effective.
People can work smarter by using more technology. I think we've found this to some degree through the Covid period.
Regarding the Ward of Kempsey, there are about to be 2500 homes built, it could be argued that another District Councillor in Kempsey would be needed, or the boundary changed to allow this new estate to have its own District Councillor.
Three member wards create problems with the split of work. I find that a good Councillor ends up with disproportionately more work, and less diligent councillors can effective hide! We need to reduce the number of councillors to at most 31, with no more than 2 member wards.
My ward is Rural, there are very diverse issues, I have to deal with several Parish Councils, to do my job properly I need to attend all of them regularly, we have bigger issues regarding planning ranging from small scale house extension, new developments to farming matters. Because of the geographical nature of my rural ward there is always a lot of traveling to PC's, visiting residents and a 90 minute round journey to attend meetings at Malvern, although since the beginning of lockdown I have only had one face to face meeting at Malvern as we have been meeting via Zoom.. as you can see I have not broken my time down as it is difficult to do so, the first week of the month is always the busiest in my calendar, but I will point out that when you are a councillor you are pretty well on call most of the time including Sunday's .. but I don't mind as I get satisfaction from the job..
If a Cllr cannot be fully engaged and add value to the Council and residents then clearly we have more Cllrs than we need to deliver positive outcomes for all .
Workload fluctuates and it depends on how committed councillors are and how many committees, groups and attendance at external meetings there are.
Not sure about the need for two cllrs in the urban wards like mine. I am sure one can do it for the most part!
Hours in this survey do not include most of the time that would be for travelling to meetings although, I believe, that meetings in person are slightly shorted that Zoom. Parish Council meetings are not working on ZOOM and can easily be 4 hours long.
A separate Spread Sheet is sent to Amanda Molloy with full details of times.
The figures declared on the average amount of work carried out weekly is based on the current level of hours worked during the current coronavirus restrictions. In normal times the weekly hours worked would

be substantially increased by as much as ten hours due to attending planning application site visits and travelling to meetings and attending training courses.

WITH THE HELP OF M H D C AND MY CO MEMBER THIS MAKES FOR MY WARD



**Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
Questionnaire sent to all MHDC Councillors**

**Responses: 15 individual responses and a group submission from the Conservative Group.**

<b>Community leadership:</b>	
<b>How do you carry out your representational role?</b>	
	Assiduously, with charm and consideration
	Attend meetings, go around ward, use social media, go to events and local pubs, contact MP police housing association and other organisations, be available.
	Attend meetings of Parish Councils, keep in regular contact with the Parish Clerks, MPs meetings, and community meetings, WI meetings, seen around my ward regularly in farm shops, garages, post offices, hotels as well as having been invited to open village fetes, open facilities at Church Halls etc Attend pub quizzes, film nights, am a member of a village walking group. Attend church services.
	My main presence and access to me is online but usually that leads to face to face or community meetings + my presence at Parish Council meeting and in usual times at local events. I'm accessible and that's what's key.
	By communicating as much as I can with my residents and businesses
	Via email, meetings, over the phone, through parish magazine articles and update leaflets
	Facebook site, email, attend meetings with constituents, attend groups, advise constituents if they have problems or simply want signposting. Try to problem solve where possible and to get answers. Meet Your Councillor days, meet with partners. Deliver quarterly leaflets within ward. Carry out an occasional 60 second survey to ascertain the views of constituents. (not within covid-19 period)
	Available for contact by the community to help answer any queries I can, sign post where not and help co-ordinate community action.
	Conservative Group: Conservative Councillors complete their role primarily through face to meetings with residents, and through attendance at Town and Parish Council meetings. Residents can access councillors remotely via phone and email. In addition, many Councillors are available via social media. Attendance at Council Meetings, and workshops is fundamental to the role of Councillors.
	Responsibly and with care and commitment
	Translating and advocating opportunities for betterment of the lives of Ward residents into the Council's policies and into the Council's service delivery.
	Attend all MHDC council and committee meetings I am expected to, plus many of those in which I have an interest (e.g. O&S, Audit & Standards). Attend all parish council meetings. Volunteer for community support activities (Good Neighbour Scheme) and COVID support to local businesses. Research LGA and Westminster papers/ reports if they affect local government (e.g. "devolution" suggestions)
	Respond to requests by constituents for help, attend council meetings, reach out to constituents by newsletter, interviews and press releases in local media, support community groups
	Producing and distributing local newsletters. Responding to correspondence from residents. Casework-based campaigning

	Preparing for and attending council meetings. Attending and reporting to Parish Council meetings. Speaking with residents and dealing with their queries.
	To the best of my ability, a response as soon as I can. At present it is only from home – emails and telephone as not able to meet people but I will if I have to with social distance.
<b>Are there any mechanisms for you to interact with young people and those not on electoral roll?</b>	
	During social and other events in the community
	Attend schools and public meetings
	Visit to schools as part of meet the councillor days and have been a school governor for 8 years, presented prizes at school events
	I have a website and facebook page and my contact details are extremely easy to find. I also attend a lot of events where young people would be involved.
	No there are no mechanisms in place to interact with young people, although I was involved in a project investigating Apprenticeships recently
	Via interactions with schools and guides etc. But mostly via MHDC work
	Yes - through leaflet delivery and occasional door knocking (not during covid-19 period). Opportunities for Meet Your Councillor days with schools/ Opportunity to meet the new Youth Ambassador and Monthly residents meetings open to all (non- covid period) Available for contact by the community to help answer any queries I can, sign post where not and help co-ordinate community action.
	Have tried Facebook but younger people do not use this form of social media much. I was involved with football coaching and have two children so some younger people do know me.
	Conservative Group: Councillors make significant efforts to reach out to the community, including involvement with local community activities, and where Wards include Schools, attendance at selected school events. A conservative member is the present Youth Champion, having held this post for the past year and holds the Council to account on youth engagement.
	None
	Very few mechanisms in place in the ward but that is a result of a lack of initiative on my part. At a district level the school days and other youth focussed events provide those interactions.
	None formal. Job as local pub barman brings potential contact with all residents
	School democracy days and visits organised by council plus I've been in to support a school Eco club and climate emergency day, used ward allowance to buy school equipment and been to talk to 6th form politics groups.
	Community links with my old school and friends. Local democracy days, engaging with schools in the ward in the work of MHDC and a councillor.
	Activities within local schools are organised periodically.
	Not normally for young people but I take no notice of the electoral roll as this is never up to date and all people have the right.
<b>Are there formal/informal opportunities for interaction with minority groups?</b>	
	There are no minority groups in my Ward, there are some individuals who I engage with as with the majority.
	Opportunities are available to interact with all residents dependent on their individual needs.
	I make opportunities to interact with all residents and do not distinguish between different types.

	I'm always keener to engage with groups who don't usually engage in local politics. Again, doing this online makes it easy.
	No
	Depends on the definition of minority groups. But possible to make contact with variety of sections of society by engaging with many groups in the ward.
	I think a group is a group irrespective of any label you give it and am open to communication to anyone.
	Conservative Group: Conservative Councillors do not discriminate in any way and interact with all groups within their community.
	None
	There are no opportunities of which I am taking advantage
	As previous, but BAME residents form under 1% of ward population
	Not so far but this could be developed eg. via Friday prayers at the octagon after lockdown
	Use of community links to work with some minority communities are useful, although limited with the demographic profile of the ward/district.
	I'm not aware of any formal ones but that may be my ignorance.
	I will normally visit all groups that wish a visit
<b>Are you expected to attend community groups (such as Parish Councils)? What is your role in these groups?</b>	
	I attend Parish Council if requested. I have an active participant role within one, very little with other, it depends on Parishes wishes.
	Parish Councils, schools and college and other organisations. I chair one parish and various governor committees. On other committees to give assistance as required.
	I attend my Parish Council Meetings give reports on MHDC becoming involved with activities such as litter picking etc
	I attend every one and at parish councils I always give a report.
	I am a Malvern Town Councillor in addition to serving on the District Council. I completed a three year tenure as Mayor in 2019 and now chair some committees
	Yes lots. MHDC representative. It also a valued part of each Parish Council always engaging throughout meetings. Part of the community and always asked to join in and help out.
	Yes – monthly Residents Association meeting (pre covid). Listen to any problems. Take away issues to try to resolve and follow up. Give information on anything the council is doing, of relevance, or anything of interest.
	I am on the parish council but also provide a report of district activity for each meeting.
	Conservative Group: Councillors treat attendance at Parish and Town Councils as a priority. Many Conservative Councillors are also members of Town and Parish Councils, and all take a leadership role within their local parishes. Parish Councils rely heavily on their District Councillor for support, and leadership.
	Yes, I attend Town Council and Parish Council meetings. I report to them as their District Councillor and report back to District their concerns.
	Yes, certainly Parish Councils and some other active groups. My role, apart from picking up specific case work, is to inform the groups about Council activities and services (and promote them) and to be a network node and signpost to get access to advice, services and funding.
	Yes – 4 parish councils attended to report formally on MHDC activities and take any input from parishes to MHDC. Trustee for 2 local charities meeting at regular intervals.

	I am a town councillor so already do this in that role.
	Yes, reports on MHDC matters, ward matters and particularly how MHDC interacts with these issues (i.e. planning).
	Yes. This is a two way role. I report on issues I feel are relevant to them and they ask me to deal with queries / issues they have.
	Yes – always try to attend any and every public meeting. if it is a resident group, I also try to attend but official meeting usually take priority. Roll equals discussion and find out things for attendees and reports to Parish Council meetings.
<b>How can this be improved by the review?</b>	
	I'm not sure it can, I am content that most members of my community know me and know that they can approach me with problems if need be.
	By both councils working more closely together
	It cannot. But some o& us have 5 or so Parish Councils and others have one. Rural areas have far more of these sorts of groups to engage with. So it must be recognised in the review.
	Parish Councils do need more communication to them from District to support them in the community.
	No comment to make
	Giving a more modern view of the role of councillors and the differences between the various tiers of local government.
	Conservative Group: To ensure that the relationship between Parish and District can be maintained, care should be taken to ensure the ratio of Parish Councils to District Councillors is correct. When you cover more than 5 reasonably sized parishes, the pressure of work increases on the District Councillor. Ward sizes need to reflect the efforts of councillors. Single member wards covering large geographic areas with multiple Parishes within the boundary create excessive work, since DC's prefer to attend Parish Council Meetings. Conversely, large urban areas with single Town Council's and multiple ward members can also cause problems. There are issues particularly with three member wards where the efforts of Councillors can be unequal. A diligent Councillor can end up with the majority of the case-work, when a councillor who is less diligent can effectively sit back. The view of the Conservative Group is that single member wards, or dual member wards are preferable, and three member wards should be avoided.
	In the case of my Ward, I think the boundary is fine and does not need to be adjusted.
	Not sure that the Boundary Commission review will have any influence on these activities in my ward.
	Remove 3 person wards: too easy for 1 councillor to "hide".
	Unsure
	By allowing for the distinct localities that exist within the town of Malvern particular to be represented as wards that residents recognise, minimising confusion with residents identifying with one area of town, and not realising they are part of a different ward.
	I cannot do much more.



<b>Casework:</b>	
<b>How do you deal with your casework?</b>	
	Depends on the problem, I rarely have many individual problems brought to me, usually its when all other avenues have been exhausted.
	As promptly as possible to get a solution
	As soon as it occurs to get a solution in the quickest possible way, whether it be dropping everything and visit residents who have issues or phoning around officers to get the
	I answer emails and return phone calls the same day and follow issues through for my residents
	Try to answer myself or work with officers to get answers. Take on work from WCC or Parish level and always refer it onwards.
	I add case work to my every day workload – along with my day job and work through it, obviously bringing in officers where needed.
	Normally set aside some time each week to catch up on emails. Casework mainly via email or phone. Much is planning related.
	Email, phone mainly.
	Conservative Group: Casework is dealt with by the District Councillor on a case by case basis. Whilst planning forms a considerable amount of case-work, DC's become involved in a wide range of local issues and disputes.
	Carefully. I talk to Officers as required and often speak to the Clerks of the two wards.
	On a case by case basis? First to talk to the party who is raising the issue/s to understand the context and the preferred outcome. Then to act accordingly.
	Varies enormously. Some jobs (e.g. drain cleaning) I may do myself. Others require personal contact with residents and action as intermediary with other agencies (e.g Worcs CC). Many can be dealt with via phone or email responses.
	I respond to phone calls and emails ASAP and then take appropriate action and update the resident. At the moment this isn't face to face because of Covid but would usually visit too.
	Email and phone communications and then responses subsequent from that.
	Talk with the resident about the issue or query they have then obtain the information they need / pass their concerns to the relevant officer(s) or speak with other bodies involved.
	Aim to deal with all work during the period Monday to Friday and then when extra stuff that has not been completed it must to done at weekends. I dread going away on holiday as it is hard to catch-up, but I have to have a break.
<b>Do you pass casework requests on to officers or take a more in depth role?</b>	
	I find it best to act as a communication channel between local and officer.
	Only when I can't get an answer myself
	Yes if I cannot directly help I forward the matter on to officers
	I usually see them through but I do involve officers.
	More in depth myself.
	It depends on the casework. If I feel competent to handle it myself, then I will. Mainly, though, I would check most things out with officers, for example to ascertain the latest position with something, or to get the relevant contact. Quite often my queries are to do with planning or

	highways, so, in the case of highways I would either liaise with a county councillor or, go direct to an officer.
	If sign-posting is an appropriate course I will do that. I will contact officers and my fellow councillor directly also.
	Conservative Group: Most DC's remain actively involved in case work, supporting both the resident and the officer in resolving issues.
	I sometimes pass on work, other times I feel it is down to me to resolve.
	Doing my own research and asking for guidance if the question is new to me. Often just advising the originator what channels to use to get a result, frequently with advice about how best to use those channels. Often arranging meetings, calling stakeholders, harassing people and talking to participants to get things done.
	Both, as appropriate
	I ask officers to advise/take action if it's MHDC business eg planning or enforcement but I remain involved in the case. I request action from WCC or WRS myself, not expect officers to do it for me.
	Depends on the matter, if I know an issue is an matter relating to a sort of 'customer service' then the role in many cases is to signpost the resident. If it is a more in-depth or complicated matter (complaints, housing, planning disputes or the resident is vulnerable) then more in-depth correspondence and meetings with the resident is required in order to work with them to communicate their issues. If the matter is more 'issues based' affecting specific localities or the whole ward, then it will be featured in our ward newsletters or in letters to streets impacted by the issue. Other issues might call for a petition or a meeting with a number of residents to address concern and create actions arising from it.
	Varies. Most issues will require input from an officer but some just need investigation / liaison with other bodies.
	Sometimes but normally the officers pass stuff to me.
<b>What support do you get? (Officers/other?)</b>	
	Democratic services are usually very supportive and others are rarely anything but supportive and helpful.
	Assistance as needed with the exception of planning enforcement which is an ongoing frustration.
	Generally, officers, MP, police as required. Planning enforcement is a continuing issue in my ward with cases piling up.
	The officers are very good at responding to requests
	Officers are a big part of our support but so are the group members, but also my fellow councillors regardless of party.
	Great support from all officers at every level . Also as group leader I help Cllrs get the right answers and direct them to the appropriate officer
	Lots of support from officers, which is much valued. Our officers are always quick to respond and will chase things up for me. Other members, from my group, are also supportive and we help each other if we can.
	Help and support is good. There is usually someone available to ask.

	Conservative Group: Councillors are supported by officers in casework, and praise is given to the support offered. DC's also work closely with local Parish and Town Councils. Local DC's often have strong relationships with TC's and PC's.
	I have lots of support from the Officers when requested, they are a good source of information.
	Generally good support from officers and other agencies but the delays can be very frustrating. Having to explain a tardy or inadequate response is not a good place to be.
	Usually fast, efficient turn-round to questions.
	Officers are very helpful and always do their best to support my requests for help
	Help from officers and third party organisations as appropriate. Help from other councillors, particularly within my group, depending on what they take a particular interest in. Mentorship, external help (LGA group, ALDC).
	Advice and information from officers and my fellow councillors.
	100% from Officers and others and usually either the same day or next. Emails are easier to/from officers so that they can continue their work and not fully interrupted.
<b>How has technology influenced the way you work?</b>	
	Very little, there has been little change in my time on council apart from e-agenda and minutes and of course the recent Zoom meetings.
	Moved with the times
	It hasn't
	Yes most enquiries are via email and all meetings at present are by Zoom
	It's a large part of the way I work. Especially using social media and having the simple way in which people can access me – but I am also always on the phone.
	Zoom has saved a lot of time driving to meetings
	Immensely – nearly everything is done via email or, at the moment, lots of meetings are via zoom or other platforms. Social media is a way to engage with people.
	Email is a help because you can send/receive messages when it's a convenient time for you
	Conservative Group: All Conservative DC's use technology, reliant on ipads in particular. Many are actively engaged on Social Media, but this is a personal view of the individual councillor, given the issues people can experience with abuse on social media.
	Zoom meetings have made things easier.
	Email (and Zoom since Covid) have both been important as communication channels, vital even. On balance both are positive vectors. There are some negatives: The volume of email traffic is difficult and time consuming to manage. The instant communication tools don't match the long lead times for real things to happen. The mismatch is getting worse and managing the workflow is an increasing burden.
	Use of PC and knowledge of word processing spreadsheet tools is a bare minimum. Lack of good broadband connection AND 4G phone signal in rural parts of MHDC is a significant hindrance to effectiveness. Zoom meetings have reduced effectiveness as it's less possible to speak to officers and other councillors informally or discover common issues at parish level.
	Online council meetings and training have made my life much easier as a full time working single parent on top of my council role. I would like this to continue as much as possible. Meetings are more respectful now and controlled now and certain councillors are unable to bray and make offensive remarks sitting behind me which they have in the past.

	It makes my council work a lot more flexible, meaning I can manage it around my other work- especially with working from home growing after COVID. On the flipside, this makes it harder to 'log off' from the role, given you are even more expected to be ready for anything at any time in terms of council work.
	Enables quicker communication with all parties from wherever you are.
	For short meeting, then ZOOM/TEAMS is good – eg meeting this week for 15 minutes would have taken 40 mins in each direction travel _BUT not able to ask planners face to face if they have any problems
<b>How do you interact with electorate? (surgeries/social media/other)</b>	
	I speak to people either when out and about or at social functions. I write once a month in the Parish Mag. I very occasionally put out a leaflet. I occasionally publish on the Village face book page.
	Attend meetings, go around ward, use social media, go to events and local pubs, contact MP police housing association and other organisations, be available.
	As above!! but also social media. The above is a very brief resume of the work in my ward which I am involved with.
	I interact through emails or welcome face to face meetings when possible
	Social media and I also spend time walking around my patch.
	Update leaflets, parish magazines, facebook, attending all social events and parish meetings. Talking to people in the community.
	Monthly residents meeting and monthly surgery (pre-covid) Otherwise by phone, email, facebook, and through some leafleting
	Tried some social media but that's a bit hit and miss. Have leafleted and also contributed to the parish magazine.
	Conservative Group: This varies from councillor to councillor, and includes surgeries, social media and individual reach-out sessions. Interactions with the electorate vary dramatically when planning issues are underway. The increase in electronic media, and the arrival of remote (electronic) meetings, mean that it is easier for DC's to support their communities. Therefore, a slight increase in the ward size (and therefore a reduction in the number of councillors) would be supported by the Conservative Group.
	I post on the local facebook groups, send out leaflets and often hold walking surgeries in Upton.
	I don't use social media! I use, but not regularly, local publications to alert people to my presence and to my contact details. I meet a lot of people when out with volunteer groups, or when organising or participating in events. Until Covid I was running a weekly surgery, publicised on local noticeboards and attended by a negligible number of people.
	Facebook page updated at least weekly, monthly parish magazine column. Yearly leaflet hand-delivered to all 1520 properties in ward. Weekly "patrolling the patch" by car or bicycle and Sunday working in one local pub. Also daily visits to shop, talking to anyone there. Ad hoc visits to other retail outlets, but obviously curtailed during COVID.
	Respond to requests by constituents for help, attend council meetings, reach out to constituents by newsletter, interviews and press releases in local media, support community groups - plus street stalls, social media, local media, visits, newsletters posted through letterboxes
	Mostly through literature that we produce for the ward, updating residents on local news for the ward and the council as a whole. Door-knocking/street surgeries.



	<p>Petitions. Limited social media.</p>
	<p>Most interactions are by email and phone with a few visits where needed.</p>
	<p>Local monthly report in Parish Magazine every month to keep residents up to date with what is going on which I pay for personally. Also include contact details if they wish to contact me (and they do).. Also look at local facebook groups and respond as necessary. Being a resident of my Ward for 67 years, I am asked many times a week various Parish questions.</p>

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25 June 2020



## Report of the Apprenticeship Task and Finish Group 2019/20

**Relevant Wards** - All

**Portfolio Holder** - Councillor Beverley Nielsen, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development

**Head of Service** – Phil Merrick, Director of Economy and Environment

**Contact Officer** – Amanda Molloy, Democratic Services Officer

*(If you have any queries or questions about the content of this report, please speak to the portfolio holder or contact officer in advance of the meeting.)*

### 1. Purpose and Summary

- 1.1 To perform the Overview and Scrutiny role in relation to a review of what Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) can do to assist in increasing the apprenticeship numbers across the District.

It was seen by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that this was an important issue for MHDC given the skills shortage, not just across the County but also within the Malvern Hills District. Increasing Apprenticeships can be seen as an effective measure to increase the desired skills in the job pool, whilst maintaining the available workforce numbers in the area and also giving businesses the skilled people they need to grow.

It was recognised that there is a need for people over the age of 25, classified as older apprentices, as well as school leavers.

- 1.2 A full Terms of Reference is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The review was carried out over a five month period, with meetings being held at Malvern Hills District Council on the following dates: 29 November 2019; 9 January 2020; 30 January 2020; 6 February 2020; 27 February 2020; 12 March 2020. Later meetings to write the report and formulate recommendations were suspended due to the outbreak of Corona virus and subsequent work has been carried out remotely.
- 1.4 The Task and Finish Group carried out a comprehensive review of Apprenticeships

across the District by interviewing the following stakeholders:

- Jobcentre Plus (23 December)
- MHDC HR Department (9 January)
- Worcestershire Apprenticeships (30 January)
- Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (30 January)
- School Careers Leads (6 February)
- Training Providers (6 February)
- Worcestershire Business Central (27 February)
- Senior Manager from a levy paying (larger) business (27 February)
- HR Manager from a non levy paying (midsize) business (27 February)

The aim was to learn from each what they were doing, where there were gaps and what MHDC could do to encourage more businesses to take on Apprenticeships in the District.

1.5 The Task and Finish Group also carried out surveys with:

- Local Businesses (76 responses)
- School Pupils (168 responses)

1.6 To report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration:

Recommendations as to how MHDC can increase the apprenticeship numbers across the District.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 *Lobby Government:* Regarding funding of apprenticeships and particularly the use of levy funds, it is recommended that MHDC lobby the Government and the Local Government Association to consider changes to the current system highlighting the difficulty for small and medium sized businesses to access funding for apprenticeships and address the mismatch between programmes promoted by organisations such as Chamber of Commerce, Local Enterprise Partnership and Worcestershire Apprenticeships and the actual experience and impact of these by schools and users at ground level.

2.2 *Marketing:* There is a need to promote and market apprenticeships and it is recommended that the Council run a sustained marketing campaign to educate young people, parents and businesses about the benefits and potential of Apprenticeships.

Using Social Media such as facebook, twitter, instagram and other platforms used by younger people, it is recommended that the marketing campaign could focus on promoting:

- the variety of apprenticeships from Degree apprenticeships to the more well understood standard apprenticeships.
- that apprenticeships operate within a competitive market as businesses look to recruit the best applicants;

- demonstrate apprenticeships as a real job with gains for the apprentice, both educationally and financially, as well as gains to businesses;
- advertise specific apprenticeship opportunities with local businesses and signpost where apprenticeships might be advertised (Worcestershire Apprenticeships, [www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk](http://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk), Recruitment Agencies, Training Providers).
- remind the public that apprenticeships are not just for school leavers, but for older adults as well.
- Share success stories, particularly the more unusual opportunities, using posts including interviews and podcasts.
- Clarify the role of different agencies and organisations such as Worcestershire Apprentices and Training Providers.
- Promote the soft skills sought by businesses
- Signpost applicants to sites where they can learn or refresh their interview skills.

As part of the marketing strategy, it is recommended that a catchy strapline be used. Whilst this is best left to the experts, the group toyed with things like: “Beast for Business”; “Making apprenticeships happen” and “Malvern makes it happen”.

2.3 *MHDC Website*: It is recommended that the current Council website on apprenticeships be updated so that it becomes a source of vital information: signposting people to current apprenticeship opportunities; explaining more about the range of courses and apprenticeships available; showing the flowchart of how to access apprenticeships; and clarifying the role of different organisations currently supporting apprenticeships.

2.4 *Working with Schools*: It is recommended that the Council encourage links between schools and local businesses. This could create better relationships between schools and their local businesses, ensure that staff have a better understanding of the potential of apprenticeships, and encourage businesses to translate work experience placements into apprenticeships and/or job opportunities.

The Council should continue to engage with School Careers Leads and all teachers through attending in-service training days and other engagement events such as Parents’ Evenings and Careers Fairs to promote the benefits of apprenticeships.

The Council should continue to engage with Pupil Ambassadors through its current engagement activities.

2.5 *Outreach and promotion*: It is recommended that the Council continue promoting apprenticeships at external events such as Business Fairs and Forums.

It is furthermore recommended that the Council facilitate informal networking opportunities to allow businesses to share their experiences and good practice around apprenticeships, including conversations around retention and engagement, salary and other support

2.6 *Financial Assistance*: It is recommended that the Council should identify ways in which it could offer financial assistance for apprentices to travel to work. This could take the form of a bursary or grant in the first year of the apprenticeship, with the employer picking up this expense for the remainder of the apprenticeship period.

2.7 *Procurement:* It is recommended that the Council review its tender process and s106 agreements to give additional weight to organisations that support apprenticeships.

### **3. Background**

3.1 In November 2019, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee nominated the following councillors to form the Task and Finish Group on Apprenticeships: Councillor Daniel Walton (appointed Chairman); Councillor Neville Mills; Councillor Cynthia Palmer and Councillor Caroline Palethorpe.

3.2 It was agreed that the lead officers would be Simon Smith, Economic Development Manager and Christine Butler, Economic Development Officer and the Task and Finish Group would be supported by Amanda Molloy, Democratic Services Officer.

3.3 The Group met in November 2019 and agreed that it wanted to interview key stakeholders to identify the role of each stakeholder in the current apprenticeship model and understand the barriers to increasing the number of apprenticeships in the district.

3.4 The Group initiated a survey of businesses across the district to gauge current experiences and attitudes to apprenticeships. The survey questions can be seen in Appendix 2.

3.5 The questions for the survey were provided by the Group and the survey was created by Paul Curry, Joint Research Intelligence Officer. MHDC businesses were contacted through the MHDC Business Bulletin newsletter, by circulating and contacting all the training organisations operating in the area, through Business Central at Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce and the Construction Industry Training Board operating in the area. The link to the survey was shared with over 5000 businesses in total. 76 responses were received and these included large businesses (levy payers) as well as small and medium businesses. The survey results can be seen in Appendix 3 and an analysis of results in Appendix 4.

3.6 From the Business Survey the Group drew the following conclusions:

- i) There is a mismatch between the skills that potential apprentices have and the requirements of the employers.
- ii) The employers identify a shortage of suitable applicants as a major reason that they do not take on more apprentices.
- iii) Only 15% of businesses considered that the training offered by the training organisation met their needs even once an apprentice was in place.

3.7 On 30 January 2020, the Group met with Kim Cook from Worcestershire Apprenticeships (WA) and Judy Chadwick from the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), to gain a greater understanding of the role of these two organisations in supporting and promoting apprenticeships.

3.8 Kim Cook explained that WA set up the Apprenticeship Hub which deals with enquiries from potential apprentices and employers, and also promotes



apprenticeships in schools and at careers fairs. The Hub is intended to be a central point for information, advice and guidance on apprenticeships in Worcestershire. Subsequent meetings with stakeholders revealed that this is not functioning well at ground level.

- 3.9 The WA administers apprenticeship bursaries on behalf of Worcester City Council to pay for Travel/Tools/Clothing as these items can be a disproportionate expense for apprentices on low wages. WA would be prepared to administer a similar scheme for MHDC if there was funding to support this.
- 3.10 Judy Chadwick explained that the LEP fund WA to support apprenticeships. The LEP also collects data on apprentices and can provide statistics by age/ level/ subject area, which is used by Officers in the Council to gauge apprenticeship data. The 2018/19 data shows a growth in many sectors of Malvern district apprenticeships and figures holding steady in other areas, but overall a positive picture. An example of the most recent data is attached as Appendix 5.
- 3.11 On 6 February 2020, the Group met with School Career Leads from Tenbury and The Chase High Schools to learn more about how apprenticeships are promoted in schools. The meeting was very interesting and Career Leads made a lot of very useful points and observations about the view of Apprenticeships and how children and the schools engage with them. Both careers leads indicated that they had limited time and resources to specifically promote apprenticeships and undertook the role alongside teaching duties.

Both Careers Leads agreed that it is easy to find information on apprenticeships online but in their experience, most students securing an apprenticeship were doing so through family/friend contacts.

- 3.12 The School Career Leads shared the view that the Worcestershire Apprentices Hub, and the Career Enterprise Company (CEC), upheld as exemplars, offered limited practical benefit or support to schools – one example was that Enterprise Advisers failed to provide any input to school careers fairs. In addition, the CEC Compass system generated additional workload for Career Leads, as documents needed to be updated weekly, and case studies provided, sometimes at short notice.

Careers Leads did not see a benefit from engaging with the Hub/CEC, however all agreed that Officers at MHDC provided helpful targeted information, signposting schools to apprenticeships that might be of interest to their pupils.

- 3.13 On 6 February 2020, the Group also met with Training Providers to learn more about their role in supporting apprentices. Representatives from The Development Manager (TDM), Herefordshire and Worcestershire Group Training Association (GTA) and Warwickshire College Group (WCG) attended a meeting in the Council House.
- 3.14 Training Providers recruit and place apprentices with employers, acting almost as a recruitment company in this respect, but also providing the training for different apprenticeships. They explained the rigorous recruitment process as they look to recruit high quality applicants with the best chance of successfully completing their apprenticeship training. Training Provider funding is dependent on completion of the apprenticeship, so they support both the business and apprentice to ensure a good

match and to manage expectations. It was interesting to note how competitive the market has become, typically 120 applications for 50 available positions.

- 3.15 Training Providers explained that some apprentices work on the minimum wage, but in order to attract high quality applicants, the average is higher and that engineering and IT apprenticeships attract the highest salaries of up to £23K per annum. This reinforced one of the key benefits of apprenticeships, that apprentices earn while they learn and then enter the workplace with valuable experience.
- 3.16 On 27 February 2020, the Group met with Laurence Speller of Speller Metcalfe, a Principal Building Contractor in Worcestershire and levy payer, so representative of a larger business in the district. Speller Metcalfe currently have 7 apprentices studying Level 6 Site Management through Wolverhampton University and source their apprentices through links with Hanley Castle High School.
- 3.17 Speller Metcalfe identified the following barriers to apprenticeships:
- Issues with transport making it difficult for apprentices to travel to work, particularly where a business has sites in rural and diverse locations.
  - Parents still have negative view of apprenticeships, so there is a need to work with schools to raise the profile of modern apprenticeships, and particularly to educate the public about the existence of degree level apprenticeships.
- 3.18 On 27 February 2020, the Group met with Julia Millidge of Payara Services Ltd, an IT company offering online support solutions. Payara represents a medium sized business and is a non levy payer. They currently support 2 apprentices studying degree level apprenticeships in Digital Solutions through Aston University in Birmingham. Payara source their apprentices through links with The Chase High School.
- 3.19 Julia highlighted the difficulty of being a non levy paying business, relying heavily on apprenticeships to grow the business and she called for a rethink around the Government funding in this area. Currently, SMEs need to identify a levy paying business and team up with them to secure funding. Payara do this through a convoluted arrangement with Lloyds Bank, the Greater Birmingham Local Enterprise Board and the West Midland Combined authority. She argued that funding should be easier to access as this put small and medium businesses at a disadvantage and therefore less likely to offer apprenticeships.
- 3.20 On 27 February 2020, the Group met with Kevin Aisbitt from Worcestershire Business Central (WBC) to find out how the organisation supports and promotes apprenticeships. The WBC Growth Hub is one of a limited number of Government Growth Hubs tasked with providing independent business support to small and medium sized enterprises. They engage with about 2000 businesses a year however, although the Growth Hub received regular questions around apprenticeships, they tend to refer these queries to the WA or CEC, and see their role very much as a referral one.

Anecdotally, Kevin noted that most businesses seemed confused by the number and functions of agencies involved with apprenticeships and there was a need to clarify the different roles of these organisations.

- 3.21 The Group wanted to meet with a representative from the Worcestershire Chamber

of Commerce. Nicky Hope, Skills and Engagement Manager, was not able to meet, but instead sent in a written response. She explained that the Chamber supports their Members and the wider business community to address their skills challenges and provides information, advice and guidance around skills initiatives and support in the County.

Nicky reported that there had been a shift in attitude towards apprenticeships and most are now using apprenticeships as a genuine talent pipelining opportunity to address their skills needs and are offering appropriate wages and remuneration packages. They are looking to attract the best candidates and are positioning their apprenticeship vacancies appropriately. She added that the Chamber currently have several apprentices and expect them to remain with the Chamber upon completion of their training programmes.

- 3.22 When asked about larger businesses and their use of the levy, she said that some businesses use their levy as a way to upskill existing staff, however others report that apprenticeships are not always a fit for their needs and need shorter CPD type courses funded.
- 3.23 Nicky thought that one factor limiting the growth of apprenticeships in the district was that businesses find it is difficult to attract young people to the area for work. Difficulties with transport may also have an effect, particularly for young people who do not yet drive.
- 3.24 The Group wanted to survey the views of secondary school pupils towards apprenticeships and initiated a short survey in March 2020.
- 3.25 The method comprised sending an internet link to all career advisers at Malvern Hills District Council schools, and also face to face filling out of questionnaires at The Chase School, Dyson Perrins Academy and through a careers adviser at Tenbury High Ormiston Academy run by Christine Butler. One school set the questionnaire as careers homework after the school was closed due to the Corvid-19. In total 168 young people, anonymously, responded to the questionnaire. 85% of the responses were from year 10 to year 13 students, the ones actively engaged in selecting a destination job, college, university or apprenticeship. The survey results can be seen in Appendix 6 and an analysis of results in Appendix 7.
- 3.26 From the Schools Survey the Group drew the following conclusions:
- i) School pupils agreed that apprenticeships offered good quality training and were a cost effective way of obtaining a qualification, compared to university study.
  - ii) Many pupils favoured university study as apprenticeships were not offered in their intended line of work.
  - iii) Most students had not accessed advice from the various organisations set up to support apprenticeships, and regarded the information, advice and guidance provided as poor.
  - iv) Opinions of parents and friends were influential in the decision about whether to go directly into the workplace, apply for an apprenticeship or go to university.
- 3.27 Many themes recurred through the consultation process including: the reputation of apprenticeships as “not as good as university”; the difficulty finding good quality information, advice and guidance about apprenticeships; transport difficulties for

young people to enable them to get to their placement; limited range of apprenticeships on offer; and a mismatch of expectation between employers and apprentices.

3.28 The Group held its final meeting on 12 March 2020 and, although further meetings were planned, these were prevented following the nationwide lockdown, so the report and recommendations were co-ordinated and agreed electronically.

**Councillors: Daniel Walton (Chairman), Neville Mills, Cynthia Palmer and Caroline Palethorpe.**

**30 April 2020**

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference  
Appendix 2 – Business Survey Questions  
Appendix 3 – Business Survey Results  
Appendix 4 – Business Survey Analysis  
Appendix 5 – Apprenticeship Data  
Appendix 6 – School Survey Results  
Appendix 7 – School Survey Analysis

## **Background Papers**

None

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 April 2020



## Report of the Temporary Event Notices Review Group 2019/20

**Relevant Wards –** All

**Portfolio Holders –** Councillor Emma Stokes, portfolio holder for Environment, Recycling and Street Scene

**Head of Service –** Vic Allison, Deputy Managing Director

**Contact Officer –** Spencer Winnett, Member Support Officer

*(If you have any queries or questions about the content of this report, please speak to the portfolio holder or contact officer in advance of the meeting).*

### 1. Purpose and Summary

1. The report presents the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Temporary Event Notices (TENs) Review Group, which has examined the processes adopted by Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) and Wychavon District Council (WDC) when dealing with applications for Temporary Event Notices (TENs), with particular focus on:
  - a. A review of the current legislation and the powers of both councils as local licensing authorities.
  - b. A review of how Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) manage the TENs process, and the role that both Environmental Health and the police play in the TENs application process.
  - c. Where, when and how MHDC and WDC could be more proactively involved with the process, including communication to local residents.
  - d. Any other issues that might arise during the Group's investigations.
- 1.2 A full Terms of Reference is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The review was carried out over a five month period, with meetings being held at both Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council on the following dates: 23 October 2019 (WDC); 19 November 2019 (MHDC); 14 January 2020 (WDC); 25 February (WDC); and 13 March 2020 (MHDC – councillors only).



## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Regarding legislation, Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils should lobby the Government and the Local Government Association to effect changes to timescales in order to discourage late submission and encourage early submission of Temporary Event Notices (TENs). This will subsequently allow time for consideration of possible issues that may arise with TENs.
- 2.2 Regarding changes to Council procedure, it is recommended that an on-line TENs guidance pack be produced and made available, using plain English and as little technical language or acronyms as possible. The guidance should also encourage early application.
- 2.3 Regarding the on-line application process for a TEN, it is recommended that the on-line application form could be made easier to fill in, not relying on Adobe reader.
- 2.4 It is recommended that on-line applications should receive an automatic response to the applicant so that they know the application has been received.
- 2.5 It is recommended that applicants receive a suitably prompt response regarding the acceptance or rejection of their TEN application/s.
- 2.6 It is recommended that a small group of Malvern and Wychavon councillors meet twice a year to review TEN events that have taken place in order to monitor TENs on a regular basis.
- 2.7 It is further recommended that it would be helpful if Worcestershire Regulatory Services circulate to councillors from Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils a weekly list of TEN events planned. This weekly list should include place, date, time, group and activity.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 In October 2019, the Wychavon District Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee nominated the following councillors to form the Overview and Scrutiny Temporary Event Notice Review Group: Councillor Julie Tucker (appointed Chairman); Councillor Ged Bearcroft; Councillor Peter Griffiths.
- 3.2 It was agreed that the officer lead would be Meesha Patel, Joint Legal Services Manager. It was also agreed that this was to be a joint review with members of the Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and that two councillors from MHDC had also been identified to be part of this Review Group. The two MHDC councillors were confirmed as Councillors Cynthia Palmer and John Gallagher.
- 3.3 In the 12 months preceding the introduction of this Review Group, there had been at least two occasions where Temporary Event Notices (TENs) had been given for events that subsequently caused a number of local issues and resulted in increased numbers of complaints to Malvern Hills (MHDC) and Wychavon District Councils (WDC).

- 3.4 To obtain permission for a TEN, the person organising an event needs to provide MHDC/WDC, as Local Licensing Authority (LLA), their TEN application no later than 10 working days before the day on which the event is to start, alongside the relevant fee (currently £21). A copy of the TEN also needs to be sent to the police and the local environmental health officer.
- 3.5 It had been noted that Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), MHDC and WDC had been receiving increasing numbers of late TEN applications.
- 3.6 This Group agreed that it wanted to look in more detail at the processes around administering TENs and consider what more, if anything, both MHDC and WDC could do to manage the applications and the expectations of local residents.
- 3.7 Meesha Patel, Joint Legal Services Manager, advised the Group regarding TENs legislation. She explained to the Group that the legislation was very limited and rigid in terms of Wychavon's and Malvern Hills' authority to consider TENs applications in detail or to add conditions.
- 3.8 The Group was given a TENs legislation guidance note, relevant Government guidance and the current TEN application form.
- 3.9 The Group discussed the reasons that might lead to a TENs application being refused. The Group was advised that whether or not a TENs application was refused was based on whether or not it breached the Licensing Principles, which were for matters such as public nuisance, public safety, harm to children and public health.
- 3.10 The Group agreed at an early stage of the review that it would be beneficial to hear from a Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) officer to explain the TENs application process and to answer questions regarding the TENs applications in the Malvern and Wychavon districts.
- 3.11 The Group also discussed the issue of communication between WRS and Malvern/Wychavon councils when it came to the issuing of TENs and raised the need for a regular update list of TEN applications.
- 3.12 It was agreed that it would be useful for the Group to consider the role that both Environmental Health and the police play in the TENs application process.
- 3.13 Niall McMenamin, WRS Officer responsible for processing TENs for MHDC, Dave Etheridge, WRS Officer responsible for processing TENs for WDC and Nathan Poole, Environmental Health Officer, all attended the meeting on 19 November 2019, and shared their experience of working with TENs.
- 3.14 Dave Etheridge introduced the written responses to the questions submitted by the Group prior to the meeting, and it was confirmed that these responses had been emailed to the Group prior to the meeting. The questions and responses can be seen in Appendix 2.
- 3.15 The Group discussed standard and late TEN applications and the reasons why late TEN applications of five working days had been introduced.

- 3.16 It was noted by the Group that WRS has seen an increasing trend in late TENs, and the implications of late TEN applications, such as there being less time to address objections or concerns, were discussed.
- 3.17 With WRS, the Group discussed the checks undertaken to ensure TEN events were properly conducted and monitored.
- 3.18 The Group agreed that it would be useful to hear from a member of the police in relation to TEN applications.
- 3.19 Sgt Martin May, from the Problem Solving Harm Hub for South Worcestershire, attended the Group's meeting on 14 January 2020.
- 3.20 Sgt May acknowledged the questions that the Group had submitted prior to the meeting, which focused on the process and considerations of the TENs application process from a police perspective.
- 3.21 Sgt May confirmed to the Group that all TEN applications were looked at by experienced officers with licensing experience and that there was liaison with Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS).
- 3.22 Sgt May also explained the process of the TEN application from a police perspective and how applications were assessed. He confirmed that on occasion, certain stages of the TEN application process had been processed in a more informal manner due to time constraints associated with late applications.
- 3.23 The Group was advised that the police considered the four licensing principles during the TENs application process, and set these out as being: to prevent crime and disorder; public safety; to prevent nuisance; to protect children.
- 3.24 Sgt May confirmed to the Group that the minimum time period allowed for processing TEN applications made the process more difficult.
- 3.25 In response to a question about the measures in place for enforcing the requirements of TENs, Sgt May confirmed that there were no conditions as such. But he added that he treated the TEN as a contract with the applicant and that the advice given to the applicant stressed the importance of adhering to the conditions outlined in the TEN.
- 3.26 Sgt May advised the Group that perceived difficulties could often be overcome with good communication with the applicant.
- 3.27 The Group suggested that the Council could provide a guide that could communicate what information was required in order to produce a good TEN application that would ensure that the needs of the Council, the police and WRS were satisfied. Sgt May confirmed that this would be useful.
- 3.28 In response to a question about what the Council could do to ensure that the TEN application was complied with fully, Meesha Patel reminded the Group that the TEN was just a notice by someone to advise that an event was going to be held.

- 3.29 The Group and Sgt May discussed again the TEN application guide and agreed that it would be a good addition to the TEN process.
- 3.30 In between the meetings held on 14 January and 25 February, the Group initiated a TENs survey. The survey questions can be seen in Appendix 3.
- 3.31 The questions for the TENs survey were provided by the Group and the survey was created by Paul Curry, Wychavon and Malvern's Joint research Intelligence Officer. The link to the survey was then emailed to 810 TEN applicants across Malvern Hills and Wychavon by Worcestershire Regulatory Services on Monday 3 February 2020. 92 responses were received in total, and these responses can also be seen as Appendix 3.
- 3.32 At its meeting on 25 February 2020, the Group discussed the following points from the survey responses:
- a.) A number of applicants had concerns that they had received no response to or acknowledgement of an application (after initial submission) until the outcome of that application was received. The Group felt that this area could be improved.
  - b.) The overuse of acronyms and the need for Plain English and the explanation of certain areas of the application in a 'live' sense (as in, on screen as the application was being completed).
  - c.) The Group agreed that it would seek clarification from Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) as to why the form was a PDF and not online.
  - d.) The Group identified one potential area of concern relating to repeat applicants using 'saved' applications as this had been easier for them to do this, but it was unclear what would happen if the application form was, or had already been, updated.
  - e.) The Group questioned why WRS and the Council used the TEN application form that it used and if it was a Government standard and if the form went back to the Government or remained with WRS.
- 3.33 On the last point raised (point e), Meesha Patel explained that the form used was a standard template form relating to the Licensing Act and was used to ensure that nothing was missed off an application and that it was a requirement as part of the Act's regulations.
- 3.34 The Group discussed the possibility of having an editable online version of the application form, that would be accompanied by online guidance.
- 3.35 The Group discussion moved on to late applications and it was agreed that it would consider, in its recommendations, proposals that would help provide more time for the consideration of a TEN.

3.36 The Group agreed that it was limited in terms of changing the TENs application form, but that IT software should be looked at to help assist and provide guidance as the form was being completed – such as pop-up boxes or an advice/jargon buster website page.

3.37 The Group held its final meeting, without officers, on Friday 13 March, at MHDC. At this meeting the Group agreed the recommendations set out in this report.

**Councillors Julie Tucker (Chairman), Ged Bearcroft, John Gallagher, Peter Griffiths and Cynthia Palmer.**

**24 March 2020**

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference.

Appendix 2 – Questions to and Responses from Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

Appendix 3 – Temporary Event Notice Survey.

## **Background Papers**

None



# Member Engagement 2018/19 and 2019/20



No.	Action	2018/19	2019/20
1.	<p><b>Meet Your Council</b> Promote council services and go out with Councillors to meet residents and businesses through the Meet your council programme</p>	<p>17 out of 22 wards visited in 2018/19. This has included visits to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 27 businesses</li> <li>○ 10 community groups</li> <li>○ 5 heritage sites</li> <li>○ 4 local fetes, where we had a stand</li> <li>○ 4 resident's homes</li> <li>○ 2 older people's residential homes plus</li> <li>○ 2 doorknocks</li> </ul> <p>Councillors also support the Great British Spring Clean each year with us organising 3 picks with 35 volunteers and 10 Parish and Town Councils organising picks too.</p>	<p>Due to this being the induction year for many of our councillors, we opted to focus on having a council presence at community events, with local councillors invited to manage the stand. 13 events were supported. 2 MYC days took place in West Malvern and Chase with visits to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 3 businesses</li> <li>○ 2 community groups</li> <li>○ 1 high school</li> <li>○ 1 primary school</li> <li>○ 1 community litterpick</li> </ul> <p>with the plan being to roll this out to other wards before Purdah, floods and then Covid-19 meant that we were unable to do this.</p>
2.	<p><b>Primary school visits</b> Approach all primary schools in the district to offer a visit from a local councillor</p>	<p>Seven visits made in 2018/19 which included 3 assembly sessions on the role of the local councillor and 4 class sessions on citizenship and democracy. One visit resulted in a school arranging to visit Parliament.</p>	<p>Six visits were made with councillors in 2019/20, this included one school visiting the council house for a half day of democracy sessions with councillors, something we hope to roll out going forward.</p>
3.	<p><b>Youth Engagement Programme</b> Develop youth engagement and democracy offer to schools</p>	<p>Bigger picture survey undertaken with over 1200 students from five high schools plus a workshop with 10 young people. Youth Action Plan produced to address issues raised.</p> <p>Local Democracy Day held with four high schools and 30 students. 92% rated the day good-excellent.</p> <p>In 2018/19 worked with Malvern St James' school to deliver an Equalitea event to celebrate 90 years since some women could vote. 40 Yr 9 students joined 25 residents and councillors for an afternoon of debate and talks.</p>	<p>The member lead Youth Action Plan was approved at Executive Committee and features 11 actions to tackle some of the key issues raised in the Bigger Picture Survey. Actions achieved in 2019/20 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Promotion of a new Youth Chair role (this role was developed in consultation with members including the Member Youth Champion).</li> <li>○ Local Democracy Day took place in November 2019. Reduced due to Purdah but 25 KS3 pupils took part. 86% said they had a better understanding of what the council does. 87% said they felt they had a chance to play a part in our decision making. 68% said they had more of interest in the work of the council and a potential career in local government or as a councillor</li> <li>○ Planning for our Futureproof campaign to help young people develop their life skills, done in consultation with the Member Youth Champion.</li> </ul> <p>Approval given for a revised Terms of Reference for the re-established Member Development Group meaning that member engagement will be incorporated into their work programme going forward.</p>
4.	<p><b>Working with Parish and Town Councils</b> Continue to improve the Council's relationship with Parish and Town Councils by holding two forums each year, one Parish takeover event, one clerk networking event and publish one newsletter each year. Keeping them informed and involved in the Council's practices, providing advice and support and hosting skills workshops as and when requested.</p>	<p>October forum cancelled due to low response rate. No forum in April due to Purdah. First Parish clerk networking event held in Dec 2018 – 10 in attendance. Positive feedback received and relationships formed as a result. Improving communication between parishes.</p>	<p>35 Parish and Town Councillors and Clerks attended the October session. No forum in April due to Covid-19. Parish clerk networking event held in Jan 2020 – 14 in attendance. Parish newsletter published weekly during lockdown.</p>



MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL

# Electoral Review Council Size Submission

to the  
Local Government Boundary Commission for England

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