

Agenda

Council

**Thursday, 16 January 2020, 10.00 am
County Hall, Worcester**

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DISCLOSING INTERESTS

**There are now 2 types of interests:
'Disclosable pecuniary interests' and 'other disclosable interests'**

WHAT IS A 'DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST' (DPI)?

- Any **employment**, office, trade or vocation carried on for profit or gain
- **Sponsorship** by a 3rd party of your member or election expenses
- Any **contract** for goods, services or works between the Council and you, a firm where you are a partner/director, or company in which you hold shares
- Interests in **land** in Worcestershire (including licence to occupy for a month or longer)
- **Shares** etc (with either a total nominal value above £25,000 or 1% of the total issued share capital) in companies with a place of business or land in Worcestershire.

NB Your DPIs include the interests of your spouse/partner as well as you

WHAT MUST I DO WITH A DPI?

- **Register** it within 28 days and
- **Declare** it where you have a DPI in a matter at a particular meeting
 - you must **not participate** and you **must withdraw**.

NB It is a criminal offence to participate in matters in which you have a DPI

WHAT ABOUT 'OTHER DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS'?

- No need to register them but
- You must **declare** them at a particular meeting where:
You/your family/person or body with whom you are associated have
a pecuniary interest in or **close connection** with the matter under discussion.

WHAT ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF ANOTHER AUTHORITY OR PUBLIC BODY?

You will not normally even need to declare this as an interest. The only exception is where the conflict of interest is so significant it is seen as likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

DO I HAVE TO WITHDRAW IF I HAVE A DISCLOSABLE INTEREST WHICH ISN'T A DPI?

Not normally. You must withdraw only if it:

- affects your **pecuniary interests** **OR**
relates to a **planning or regulatory** matter
- **AND** it is seen as likely to **prejudice your judgement** of the public interest.

DON'T FORGET

- If you have a disclosable interest at a meeting you must **disclose both its existence and nature** – 'as noted/recorderd' is insufficient
- **Declarations must relate to specific business** on the agenda
 - General scattergun declarations are not needed and achieve little
- Breaches of most of the **DPI provisions** are now **criminal offences** which may be referred to the police which can on conviction by a court lead to fines up to £5,000 and disqualification up to 5 years
- Formal **dispensation** in respect of interests can be sought in appropriate cases.

Thursday, 16 January 2020, 10.00 am, County Hall, Worcester

Agenda and Summons

Councillors: Mr R P Tomlinson (Chairman), Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Ms P Agar, Mr A T Amos, Mr T Baker-Price, Mr R W Banks, Mr R M Bennett, Mr G R Brookes, Mrs J A Brunner, Mr B Clayton, Mr K D Daisley, Mr P Denham, Ms R L Dent, Mr N Desmond, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr A Fry, Mr S E Geraghty, Mr P Grove, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr A I Hardman, Mr P B Harrison, Mr M J Hart, Ms P A Hill, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Dr A J Hopkins, Dr C Hotham, Mr M E Jenkins, Mr A D Kent, Mr R C Lunn, Mr P M McDonald, Mr S J Mackay, Mr L C R Mallett, Ms K J May, Mr P Middlebrough, Mr A P Miller, Mr R J Morris, Mr J A D O'Donnell, Mrs F M Oborski, Ms T L Onslow, Dr K A Pollock, Mrs J A Potter, Prof J W Raine, Mrs M A Rayner, Mr A C Roberts, Mr C Rogers, Mr J H Smith, Mr A Stafford, Ms C M Stalker, Mr C B Taylor, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr R M Udall, Mrs R Vale, Ms S A Webb and Mr T A L Wells

1 Apologies and Declaration of Interests

To receive apologies and invite any councillor to declare any interest in any of the items on the agenda.

2 Public Participation

To allow a member of the public to present a petition, or ask a question relating to the functions of the Council, or to make a comment on any matter on the agenda.

Members of the public wishing to take part should notify the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance in writing or by e-mail indicating both the nature and content of their proposed participation no later than 9.00am on the working day before the meeting (in this case, 15 January 2020). Further details are available on the Council's website. Enquiries can also be made through the telephone number/e-mail address listed below.

3 Minutes

To approve as a correct record and authorise the signing of the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2019 (previously circulated electronically).

4 Chairman's Announcements

To receive any announcements to be made by the Chairman.

5 Reports of Cabinet 1 - 8

To consider the report of the Cabinet – Summary of decisions taken and to receive answers

to any questions asked on it (**White pages**).

6 Constitutional Report - Bromsgrove South by-election and Political Balance 9 - 12

To consider the recalculation of political balance following the result of the Bromsgrove South by-election (**Yellow pages**).

7 Notices of Motion 13 - 16

To receive the report of the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance on any Notices of Motion received by him (**Lilac pages**).

Councillors are asked to note that any Notices of Motion must be received by the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance no later than noon on 7 January 2020.

8 Annual Report of the Leader of the Council 17 - 26

To receive this report and to receive answers to any questions on it (**Blue pages**).

9 Annual report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board 27 - 42

To receive the annual report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board and answers to any questions on it (**Grey pages**).

10 Question Time 43 - 46

To receive answers to any questions asked by Councillors (**Orange pages**).

(Members are reminded of the timescale adopted by Council for notice of questions. A Councillor may only ask a question if:

- *It is delivered in writing to the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance by noon on 7 January 2020 or*
- *If it relates to urgent business, the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance is notified at least half an hour before the start of the meeting.)*

11 Reports of Committees 47 - 58

To consider the reports of Committees and to receive answers to any questions asked on those reports as follows (**White pages**):

- a) Audit and Governance Committee;
- b) Pensions Committee; and
- c) Planning and Regulatory Committee.

NOTES

- **Webcasting**

Members of the Council are reminded that meetings of the Council are Webcast on the Internet and will be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's

Website. Members of the public are informed that if they attend this meeting their images and speech may be captured by the recording equipment used for the Webcast and may also be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website.

- Catering Arrangements**

Lunch will be available at 1.00pm or thereabouts in the Lakeview Room. This will be provided for all Councillors, without payment, and for pre-notified guests, who must be paid for in advance. An indication of any guests wishing to take lunch should be given to staff in the Business Support Unit at least three days before the Council meeting.

Agenda produced and published by Simon Mallinson, Assistant Director for Legal and Governance, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP. The above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website at: www.worcestershire.gov.uk

To obtain further information or a paper copy of this agenda please contact Simon Lewis, Committee Officer by telephone on Worcester (01905) 846621 or slewis@worcestershire.gov.uk

Date of Issue: Wednesday, 8 January 2020

**COUNCIL
16 JANUARY 2020**

REPORT OF CABINET - SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN

Worcestershire Passenger Transport Strategy

1. Further to the report to Council in July 2019, the Cabinet has considered the results of the public consultation on proposals relating to financially-supported bus services. The objective of the consultation was to understand people's priorities for provision and the likely impact of proposed service changes. The findings were to inform the development of a Passenger Transport Strategy which would provide a clear direction on the Council's position on transport provision and the future of service delivery models.
2. The Cabinet has agreed to adopt a proposed Passenger Transport Strategy in light of the comprehensive public consultation. The Strategy takes a strategic and holistic view of all Public and Community Transport provision, including Home to School Transport arrangements, fares and ticketing, concessionary travel, infrastructure and information. The Cabinet has authorised the Director of Economy and Infrastructure to implement the Strategy and formulate operational policies with an appropriate implementation schedule having regard to the Strategy in consultation with the Cabinet Members with Responsibility for Highways and Education and Skills in relation to any strategic impacts.
3. The Cabinet has also authorised the commencement of a full review by the Director of the Council's Passenger Transport network in accordance with the adopted Strategy, which will incorporate Home to School transport, Public Transport, Community Transport and Social Care Transport.

Kepax Bridge

4. The Council is working in partnership with Worcester City Council in the development and delivery of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the River Severn in Worcester from Ghetluelvlt Park to the West side of the City. Building on the success of the Connect2 Diglis Bridge scheme the project aims to provide improved cycle and pedestrian connectivity to the north of Worcester and enhance links along the riverside.
5. A Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) has been completed and presents the strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management case for the bridge. The Cabinet has welcomed the SOBC and authorised the development of a Full Business Case (FBC). It has also authorised the preparation of a Planning Application for the project and delegated the decision to submit the Application to the Director of Economy and Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy and Infrastructure.

6. The Cabinet has allocated £1.5m from the Capital Programme allocation for Walking and Cycling Bridges towards the project and authorised the submission of funding bids to third parties for the completion of the scheme. It has also approved the expenditure of the funds necessary to complete the FBC and to prepare the Planning Application up to the parameter for preparation, and authorised the completion of a pre-planning public engagement exercise. The Cabinet will receive a further report on the project following the outcome of the Planning Application and with details of the FBC and progress on funding applications. The commencement of construction will not occur until funding sources have been secured.

Update on Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Action Plan including the Local Government Ombudsman Report

7. Further to the report to Council in July 2018, the Cabinet has received a progress report on the Local Area SEND Written Statement of Action (Improvement Plan). The Cabinet has acknowledged the progress underway to show how agencies were tackling areas for improvement identified in order to enhance outcomes for children and young people with SEND. It has also acknowledged the Department for Education and NHS England monitoring visit and the feedback provided highlighting particular strengths.

8. The details of a Local Government Ombudsman Report of an investigation into a complaint made by a parent carer concerning her son have also been considered by the Cabinet. The Ombudsman had found the Council were at fault because of maladministration and that injustice was caused. The Cabinet was informed of the action that had been taken to address the recommendations of the Ombudsman and endorsed the Action Plan prepared in response.

Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board (WSCB) Annual Report 2018/19

9. The Independent Chair of the WSCB is responsible for publishing an annual report that provides a public assessment of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Worcestershire and also recognises achievements and is realistic about the challenges that remain. During 2018/19 WSCB had a particular focus on a number of priorities including:

- Implementation of Neglect Strategy
- Protecting children and young people from exploitation
- Seeking assurance and promoting effective early help
- Voice of the child
- Critical friends to the Children's Social Care Service Improvement Plan
- Establishment of new arrangements for the Safeguarding Partnership
- Consolidation of findings from Serious Case Reviews into learning which leads to improved practice.

10. The Board concluded that at a strategic level there is a strong commitment to safeguarding in Worcestershire. It has also received assurances that safeguarding arrangements are in place in partner agencies and that safeguarding responsibilities are taken seriously. In addition, the Board's contributory partners have maintained the same level of financial contributions despite operating within financial constraints. As last year, much of the Board's attention has focussed on Children's Social Care as lead agency for safeguarding children. Feedback from Ofsted indicated that satisfactory progress was being made and the Service Improvement Plan has been reviewed and priorities re-focussed.

11. The Cabinet has received the WSCB Annual Report 2018/19 and noted the progress of its work. The WSCB has now been replaced by the new Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP).

EU Exit Preparedness Update Report

12. The Cabinet has received a report outlining preparations being made by the Council for exit from the EU. The Council has received financial allocations from Government totalling £167,500 specifically for spending against EU Exit-related issues. Each District Council and the West Mercia Local Resilience Forum (LRF) secretariat have also received dedicated funding. The Government introduced regular reporting arrangements in March 2019 and the Council has been contributing to the no deal EU Exit contingency planning which is co-ordinated through the West Mercia LRF and its emergency response arrangements. These reporting arrangements have been suspended following the decision to grant the UK an extension to the withdrawal agreement to 31 January 2020.

13. In September 2019, full Council resolved to ask for a report to Cabinet on its own preparations to support the local economy and residents of Worcestershire and on the mechanisms in place to co-ordinate arrangements with other organisations. The Council has contributed to an Exit Preparations Plan prepared by the LRF. It has also compiled information provided by each Directorate on the potential risks faced by individual service areas. This information was considered against the Government planning assumptions and used to inform the wider LRF planning analysis. Key areas that have emerged for Worcestershire where preparedness activity is currently taking place include: requirements to support local businesses and residents; Internal Business and Service Continuity; Care Homes and Social Care provision; EU Nationals employed by the Council and the Provision of Supplies and Regulatory Advice.

14. The Cabinet has noted the responsibility of the Council to contribute to Government-directed EU Exit contingency planning activity co-ordinated thought the West Mercia LRF and the internal planning taking place to ensure that key Council services identify risks and are prepared.

2020/21 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan Update 2020-22

15. The Cabinet has considered a draft Budget Report which provided a first assessment of the 2020-21 precept need, an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the Council's budget for 2020/21. The assessment took into account 2019/20 Period 7 financial monitoring, the impact on Council Tax, Social Care Precept, the capital investment programme, schools' overall budgets, as well as Council reserves. The report also set out an indicative MTFP to highlight expenditure and income from 2020 to the end of the current Corporate Plan 2022, although noting this was heavily caveated due to the high level of uncertainty over the future funding of local government.

16. The report indicated that, working in partnership with the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, the Council in recent years has significantly invested in the county to enable economic growth by improving the digital and physical infrastructure. These developments support the Strategic Economic Plan for the county to grow the economy, deliver more homes and create higher skilled and better paid jobs. As a result, the Council's funding tax base is growing with £14.5m more expected from Council Tax in 2020/21 with a further £1.2m of funding through the business rates retention system. Following the general election on 12 December 2019 a provisional settlement is still awaited. Given the uncertainty impacting on years after 2020/21 an iterative MTFP has only been set out to 2023. This will be reviewed in more detail for 30 January 2020 Cabinet meeting.

17. Although growing, income is not increasing fast enough to keep pace with the complexity and demand of all Council services, inflation and the National Living Wage. In 2020/21 an investment of £13.2m in Adults Social Care is needed and £4.7m in Children's Care and Transport. This is on top of £10.5m reprioritised to Children's safeguarding and placements in 2018/19. In addition to pressures in care the Council needs to maintain all its other services e.g. the economy, highways, the environment and waste disposal, and make provision for the pay award to staff. Altogether a further forecast of £14.9m is anticipated for other services on top of the £17.7m from social care and related transport. This means a £32.6m pressure, offset in part by a £24.1m growth in funds less £1.1m use of reserves which leaves the Council needing to find £9.6m of efficiencies or increased income. The draft Budget proposes a series of measures to further increase income, continue the redesign of the organisation and save money to bridge the financial gap.

18. The Cabinet has agreed that it is minded to recommend to Council in February 2020 an increase in Council Tax Precept by 3.99% (1.99% for the delivery of outcomes in line with the Corporate Plan and priorities identified by the public and business communities and 2% Adult Social Care Precept ring-fenced for those services). The Cabinet has approved for consultation a draft budget of £346.068m which includes a proposed Transformation and Reforms programme. It has also approved for consultation a capital programme of £305.4m and an earmarked reserves schedule, and has approved the use of 0.750m from the Transformation reserve to support the delivery of the redesign savings plans and the updates to the 2019/20 capital programme.

Libraries Strategy

19. The Cabinet has considered the final stages in relation to the Libraries Strategic Review together with a Libraries Strategy for Worcestershire designed to set out the vision and ambition for the service over the medium to long-term. Considerable progress has been made over recent years in modernising Worcestershire's library services and ensuring value for money. Over £3.9m of efficiency savings have been achieved since 2011/12 when the Libraries Transformation Programme was first launched. In October 2018 the Cabinet considered the findings of a libraries' needs assessment and as a result launched a formal public consultation exercise for the future delivery of the service. Feedback from the consultation together with feedback from a Libraries-focused Local Government Association Peer Review has been consolidated into a Libraries Strategy. All future delivery changes will be underpinned by the Strategy.

20. The Libraries Strategy centres around five strategic ambitions: A Library Service for everyone; Prosperous Communities; Sustainable and Innovative Libraries; Libraries First, and Resilient, Independent & Connected Communities. These strategic ambitions articulate the vision for the Library Service over the next five years and aim to ensure libraries are positioned at the heart of the Council's priorities and remain fit for the future. The strategic ambitions consider the local, national and financial context described within the Strategy.

21. The Cabinet has noted the feedback captured throughout the development of Worcestershire's Libraries Strategy and approved that Strategy which sets out the vision, ambition and high-level transformation for the service over the next five years. It has also authorised the relevant Strategic Director to take all appropriate action to implement the Strategy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities in relation to strategic matters.

Fair Funding Consultation Outcomes for 2020-21 – National and Local Changes to the Fair Funding Arrangements for Schools

22. The Council is required to consult the Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF) on any changes to the Local Schools Funding Formula (LSFF). The Council has always expanded this requirement to consult with all schools, governing bodies and interested parties. For the two-year period 2018-19 to 2019-20 the Government introduced their National Funding Formula (NFF) arrangements for Dedicated School Grant (DSG). In December 2017 Cabinet approved the LSFF for this to be based as far as practicable and affordable upon the DfE NFF parameters.

23. In September 2019 central Government confirmed that the funding for Schools and High Needs would rise by £2.6 billion for 2020-21, a further £2.2 billion for 2021-22 and a further £2.3 billion for 2022-23. The funding will be distributed using the Schools and High Needs NFF. In September 2019 the WSF discussed in detail the DfE policy for 2020-21, LSFF issues including any potential for change together with decisions required on centrally retained services. They agreed that stability was in the best interest of schools so the current LSFF based upon the NFF should continue together with the current arrangements for centrally retained services. The Council and the WSF concluded that there was effectively only one option of principle to consider i.e. to continue with the NFF as far as is practicable and affordable as the Council LSFF in 2020-21. Consultation was therefore carried out on this basis, the outcome of which was that the approach recommended was the favoured one.

24. The Cabinet has considered all the issues including the feedback from the consultation, the involvement of the WSF members and schools during the consultation and the former's views on the LSFF issues for 2020-21 and other matters. The Cabinet has approved the LSFF for Worcestershire mainstream schools from April 2020 to apply for 2020-21 to be based as far as is practicable and affordable upon the NFF parameters. It has authorised the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Cabinet Members with Responsibility for Children and Families and with Responsibility for Education and Skills to make the required submission to the Education and Skills Funding Agency by 21 January 2020 for the approved LSFF for 2020-21 taking account of any impact and change on the approved units of resources, Minimum Funding Guarantee and capping arrangements as a consequence of the October 2019 census and other 2019 data changes and the final 2020-21 DSG.

Balanced Scorecard Performance and Corporate Risk Update

25. The Cabinet has received the latest update of the Corporate Balanced Scorecard for Quarter Two 2019/20. Currently there are 61 indicators reported in the Scorecard. 27 of these are rated 'green' representing good performance or progress and 4 are rated 'red'. Of those 4 rated 'red', 1 indicator, 'Schools judged good or outstanding by OFSTED' has had an update in Quarter Two 2019/20. Actions were being taken to improve performance for this indicator.

26. The Corporate Risk Register provides a mechanism for collating and reporting risks that could affect the delivery of corporate objectives. At the end of Quarter Two 2019/20 there were 126 individual risks entered in the register of which 15 were identified as high/red' risks. The risks in the register have been reviewed significantly over the last 18 months when 187 were reported and risks that no longer exist have been removed. The Cabinet has noted the latest update of the Corporate Risk Register including actions to mitigate the risk areas that are rated 'red'.

Decision to Award Contract for an Integrated Drug and Alcohol Service for Adults and Young People

27. In September 2019 the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well-being (CMR) agreed the re-commissioning of an integrated drug and alcohol service for adults and young people using monies from the Public Health Ring-Fenced Grant (PHRFG) and a grant from the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The Cabinet Member also agreed that the Director of Public Health produce a service specification which will deliver renewed focus on integration between all parts of the current system, improve areas of below average performance and deliver robust pathways across the system and that she undertake a procurement exercise for the service.

28. An open procurement exercise had been undertaken with the tender opportunity closing on 21 November 2019. Bids are being evaluated and moderated. The contract value is up to £20m for 5 years with the option of the Council terminating the contract after 3 years. It will be funded by the PHRFG with an annual value of £4m including a £106,000 contribution from the West Mercia PPC in a grant award. The primary purpose of the drug and alcohol service is to prevent and reduce harm to service users, their families and wider society by providing access to information, early intervention and treatment, supporting people to achieve recovery, optimum health, well-being and community participation.

29. The Cabinet has noted the progress regarding the development and procurement of an Integrated Drug and Alcohol Service for Adults and Young People in line with the decision of the CMR in September 2019. It has also noted the final specification and tendering process which has been carried out in accordance with that CMR decision. The Cabinet has authorised the CMR to agree the outcome of the procurement process and the Director of Public Health to finalise the terms of the contract by April 2020 for commencement of the new service, in consultation with the Interim Director of People and the Director of Commercial and Change and to take all necessary steps to put it into effect including cancelling the current contracts by 31 March 2020.

Treasury Management Mid-Year Update to 30 September 2019

30. The Cabinet has considered a mid-year report to 30 September 2019 in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management. The report covered an economic update for the first part of the 2019/20 financial year, a review of the Council's investment portfolio and borrowing strategy for 2019/20 and a review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2019/20.

31. There were a number of national circumstances that were causing a degree of economic uncertainty including the situation with Brexit. The first half of 2019/20 has seen UK economic growth fall as Brexit uncertainty has taken a toll. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee has left the Bank Rate unchanged at 0.75% throughout 2019/20. The Consumer Price Index has been hovering around the Bank of England target of 2% during 2019/20 but did fall to 1.7% in August. Against a difficult investment market, the Council held £79m of investments as at 30 September 2019 and investment portfolio yield for the first 6 months of the year is 0.80% against a benchmark of 0.57%. The Cabinet has considered the Council's borrowing activity for the first 6 months of the financial year which included details of new loans taken, that £15.6m of debt had matured and debt outstanding was £454.7m at an average rate of 3.54%. In terms of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2019/20, the Council is well within the limits for outstanding debt and is projected to remain so for 2019/20. The Council is also comfortably within its limits for the Maturity Structure of Borrowing.

32. The Cabinet has noted the contents of the report, recognising that the Council is operating within its approved Treasury Management Strategy, and endorsed the conclusions of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Finance that Treasury Management activities continue to be cost effective.

Mr S E Geraghty
Chairman

Contact Points

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda and background papers for the meetings of the Cabinet held on 14 November and 20 December 2019.

COUNCIL
16 JANUARY 2020

CONSTITUTIONAL REPORT - BROMSGROVE SOUTH BY-ELECTION AND POLITICAL BALANCE

Recommendation

1. The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance recommends that Council approves the recalculation of political balance set out as an Appendix and requires him to give effect to it in accordance with the nominations from the respective Group leaders from time to time.

Executive Summary

2. As a result of the Bromsgrove South by-election, the Appendix sets out a proposed allocation of seats amongst the political Groups which meets the rules of political balance by reducing Labour's allocation by 2 seats and consequently reducing the total number of committee seats by 2 to a total of 101. There are no other changes.

Background details

3. Following the resignation of Mr C J Bloore, the Bromsgrove South by-election took place on Thursday 31 October. The successful candidate was Mr K Daisley, who has joined the Conservative Group.

4. As a result, the Conservative Group increased by 1 member (from 40 to 41), and the Labour Group reduced by 1 member (from 10 to 9). This impacted on political balance ie the number of seats on committees allocated to those 2 political Groups.

5. However, on 5 November 2019, Mr R Bennett resigned from the Conservative Group and is currently not a member of any Group. Therefore the Conservative Group has returned to 40 members, and does not gain any committee seats as there is no net increase in its size. The Labour Group still loses 2 seats as a result of its reduction in size, but no other Group gains an entitlement to them.

6. It is therefore proposed that the Labour Group loses a seat on the Planning and Regulatory Committee (which reduces in size by 1) and on the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel (which also reduces in size by 1).

7. The membership of the political Groups as of 1 January 2020 is:

- Conservative 40 (no net change)
- Labour 9 (-1)
- 2017 5
- Independent Alliance 2

(There is 1 non-Grouped member).

7. Legislation requires that the allocation of seats on ordinary committees must, as far as reasonably practicable, be in accordance with the principles of political balance. These principles are based on the membership of political Groups within the Council which members join, rather than political parties as such.

8. Political balance principles are that the majority Group is entitled to a majority on each committee; subject to this, the aggregate allocation of committee seats overall should reflect political balance, and subject to this, individual committee membership should reflect political balance as far as practicable. Council can depart from these principles in allocating seats provided no member votes against doing so.

9. A proposed allocation of seats on Committees is set out in the Appendix reflecting the political composition of the Council, and which is compliant with the principles of political balance.

10. Changes in the individual membership of committees would be made by the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance in accordance with the nominations from the respective political Groups in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Supporting information

Appendix – Political Structures – Proposed Allocation of Places

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance), there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report item.

16 January 2020

Appendix

Political Structures - Proposed Allocation of Places

A - Committees

	TOTAL	CON	LABOUR	2017	IND
Planning & Regulatory Committee	14	10	2	1	1
Standards & Ethics Committee	8	6	2	0	0
Pensions Committee	5	4	1	0	0
Waste Credit Governance Committee	8	6	1	0	1
Audit & Governance	8	6	1	1	0
Appointments etc Panel	6	4	1	1	0

Scrutiny

OSPB	8	6	1	1	0
HOSC	9	6	1	1	1
Children & Families	9	6	2	1	0
Corporate and Communities	9	6	1	1	1
Economy & Environment	8	6	1	1	0
Adult Care and Well-being	9	6	2	1	0
TOTAL	101	72	16	9	4

B - HEREFORD AND WORCESTER FIRE AUTHORITY

TOTAL	19	13	3	2	1
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**COUNCIL
16 JANUARY 2020****NOTICES OF MOTION****Notices of Motion Received**

1. The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance reports that he has received the following 5 Notices of Motion. The Constitution provides that any submitted motion must be moved and seconded at the meeting. Otherwise, unless postponed with the consent of the Council, it will be treated as withdrawn.
2. If a motion is in relation to the exercise of an executive function it will be referred to the Cabinet for decision (if applicable this will be indicated below). Otherwise the Council may decide itself to determine the Motion, or refer it to the Cabinet or another appropriate Committee for advice before determining it at the next available meeting.

Notice of Motion 1 – Proposals for Voter ID

3. **This motion is not in relation to the exercise of an executive function and the Council may decide to determine the Motion.**
4. Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mrs E B Tucker, Mr M E Jenkins, Mr T A L Wells Mrs F M Oborski and Prof J W Raine:

“Council recognises that the low voter turnout is a major concern at both local and national elections which could affect public confidence in the discharge of our statutory duties to the public and undermine the democratic mandate of our Worcestershire county councillors.

Council therefore regrets that the proposals for Voter ID as unveiled in the Queen’s Speech are likely to further depress voter turnout amongst the poorest and most vulnerable in society who are least likely to have Passports or Photo Driving Licences.

Council is concerned that this will further reduce the broad democratic mandate for its 57 councillors.

Council therefore requests our Worcestershire MPs to press government to reconsider the side effects of this proposed new policy.”

Notice of Motion 2 – Employment agencies

5. **This motion is not in relation to the exercise of an executive function and the Council may decide to determine the Motion.**

6. Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mr R C Lunn, Mr P McDonald, Ms P Agar, Mr A Fry and Mr L C R Mallett:

“Council is concerned about a recent disclosure that it paid £823.00 per day since July 2017 for one agency worker. To secure value for money and to protect Worcestershire from poor reputational risk, Council requests the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board to establish an urgent review into the use of employment agencies by the County Council. To uncover total spend, assess value for money and to recommend any new methods of engagement”.

Notice of Motion 3 – Royal Mail and Post Office Services

- 7. This motion is not in relation to the exercise of an executive function and the Council may decide to determine the Motion.**

8. Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mr A Fry and Ms P Agar:

“Council has the power to act as champion of the consumer by investigating the Post Office and the Royal Mail and by scrutinising the provision of their services within the county. Council is concerned by the number of recent Post Office closures in the county and asks the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board to consider a scrutiny exercise into the services provided by both the Royal Mail and the Post Office”.

Notice of Motion 4 – Maintenance of hedgerows and trees that overhang or obstruct pathways

- 9. This motion is not in relation to the exercise of an executive function and the Council may decide to determine the Motion.**

10. Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mr A D Kent, Mrs E A Eyre and Mr R C Adams:

“Many residents in Worcestershire believe that it is the responsibility of Worcestershire County Council to maintain the hedgerows and trees that overhang or obstruct pathways and roads, and impact visibility causing safety issues. However, on many occasions these hedges and trees are not owned by WCC.

Within the Highways Act of 1980 wherever a hedge, tree or shrub overhangs a highway or any other road or footpath to which the public has access so as to endanger or obstruct the passage of vehicles or pedestrians, or obstructs or interferes with the view of drivers of vehicles or the light from a public lamp, we may, by notice either to the owner of the hedge, tree or shrub or to the occupier of the land on which it is growing, require him within 14 days from the date of service of the notice so to lop or cut it as to remove the cause of the danger, obstruction or interference.

Enforcement and subsequent billing by the County Council is not the ideal solution. These issues affect many people daily on a local basis and the

assistance of a local Parish Council, Town Council or District Councils could be extremely helpful and improve timing and outcomes.

After maintenance on the hedges and trees is complete often the footways previously obstructed require maintenance such as siding out - removing the grass and weeds encroaching on the pavement/footways.

The footways are County assets, arising from considerable investment.

- They are major conduits between hamlets and settlements,
- Nationally public health is encouraging walking for health and wellbeing reasons - both physical and mental.
- These routes are often the first step into countryside, leading from people's homes.
- These routes should be fit to accommodate people walking, mothers and babies in buggies, motorized wheelchairs even perhaps trampers - for the disabled.
- The width and surfaces need to be maintained in particular on those routes that will most likely encourage more activity.

This motion therefore calls on the Cabinet Member with Responsibility to bring a report to Cabinet that details the required steps, system and paperwork that would enable a local Parish or Town councils who wish to, to serve and enforce the required notices on land owners on the County Council's behalf; then subsequently to be empowered to side out and maintain the said footways if practicable."

Notice of Motion 5 – Marked Bays for Car Club Vehicles

11. This motion is in relation to the exercise of an executive function and will therefore be referred to Cabinet for a decision.

12. Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mrs E B Tucker, Prof J W Raine, Mr M E Jenkins, Mrs F M Oborski and Mr T A L Wells:

"As a further expression of Worcestershire County Council's strong commitment to environmental sustainability, and particularly with regard to the pursuit of reduced carbon emissions and improved air quality in the transport sector, we call upon this Council to provide more support for the car clubs within our area, by providing white-line marked bays reserved for car club vehicles at suitable locations on the kerbside as recommended by the clubs.

Car clubs are a fast-growing component of the changing environment with regard to transportation and accessibility, especially at a time when bus services are in sad decline. Sharing vehicles via car clubs that oversee the organising and maintenance of a fleet of vehicles, and which are available to local people to use when they need, rather than each maintaining their own makes absolute sense, especially for those who need to drive only occasionally, and particularly in urban areas where both off-street and kerbside space is limited.

But to operate effectively, it is vital that club vehicles are parked in precise locations, known to all their users (and which can be identified via a special Car Club App). To this end, various local authorities, including Westminster, Bristol and Nottingham, are now working with their local car clubs and are providing white line-marked bays at suitable locations, reserved specifically for the club vehicles.

This Motion calls on Worcestershire County Council to follow suit by working with the county's local car clubs, and also with the district councils, in identifying suitable locations where there is local need/demand for a car club vehicle, and accordingly designating/providing white-lined bays for that purpose."

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

**16 JANUARY 2020****ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

1. My Annual Report coincides this time with a range of new beginnings – the dawn of a new decade, a freshly elected Parliament with a majority Government once again and a country reimagining our place in the world and future trading relationships. We also look to be on the cusp of a paradigm shift in technology – with the development of AI, assistive technologies and 5G amongst others – together with a move to reduce our environmental impact.
2. Locally we have seen the successful set up of our wholly-owned Council company Worcestershire Children First taking day to day charge of around £100 million of Council spend and delivery of important priorities around Education and Children's Social Care.
3. The Council redesign is taking shape with an agreed organisational structure and recruitment underway to fill the remaining top-tier posts. Less noticeable, but just as critical, major investment in new ICT systems and software will support the efficient delivery of services, boost productivity and enable more mobile and flexible working.
4. Working with partners, Worcestershire's Local Industrial Strategy and 2040 plan will help set the future areas of focus for the County's economy, support the revisions needed to district-led Local Plans and complement our recently approved Worcestershire Passenger Transport Strategy. In health, similar work is underway through the Integrated Care System (ICS) forum to better shape health and care services, although this is less developed.
5. Now over halfway through the timespan of Shaping Worcestershire's Future - our plan for the County - and this Council term, it is an ideal opportunity to reflect on progress achieved so far, the plans in place for the year ahead and to horizon scan the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead into the 2020s.

Open for Business

6. A growing and successful local economy is vital for residents and businesses to prosper. It underpins the financial sustainability of this Council too, through the contribution that new homes make to our tax base and the generation of increased revenue from Business Rates. That is why being "Open for Business" is a key priority for this Council.
7. Worcestershire's economy continues to perform well with our Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership and wider business organisations driving forward our jointly agreed objectives set out in the Strategic Economic Plan to create 25,000 jobs, grow the economy by nearly one third (an extra £2.9bn Gross Value Added) and deliver 21,500 new homes by 2025. Excellent progress has been made with 31,000 new jobs added, an increase in GVA of £2bn and the building of 12,980 new homes to date – ensuring Worcestershire remains one of the fastest growing local economies in the country.
8. Worcestershire LEP is on track to deliver the £71.7m of Growth Deal funding awarded since 2015 and the Local Industrial Strategy will be key to drawing down future funding to support the delivery of economic projects from 2021 onwards. Regional partnerships are increasingly playing a role and Worcestershire is actively engaged at board level in Midlands

Engine, Midlands Connect, West Midlands Rail, and we host the North Cotswold Line Taskforce – with a proposed one-off allocation in our draft budget to help progress plans.

9. Our economic 'game changer' programme has created important employment sites – at Worcester Six, Redditch Gateway, Kidderminster and Malvern Hills Science Park – that are attracting significant occupiers and generating new jobs and investment. Last year, the County Council together with Malvern Hills District Council purchased 4.5 ha of land adjacent to the MHSP site and it is anticipated that the development will accommodate up to 25,000 square feet of B1(b) commercial floor space. The vision is to establish this wider Malvern Hills Science & Technology Park as a European-scale science park. The 2019/20 budget made a further allocation to secure the next generation of sites and work is underway to identify the right locations in which to invest.

10. Turning to digital infrastructure, the Superfast Broadband programme has transformed the availability of faster broadband in the County with 96% of premises now able to access 24Mbps+. The programme has been extended as a result of additional funding, including £1 million from Defra, and aims to reach 97% superfast coverage by early 2021. Working with Government the focus will now be on increasing the percentage of 'fibre to the premise'.

11. The Worcestershire 5G consortium successfully built a 5G network across sites in Malvern and Worcester and undertook a series of 'use cases' that demonstrated the potential productivity gains that 5G can bring to UK plc. A number of significant achievements put Worcestershire on the global stage including the first deployment of 5G in an industrial factory setting in the UK, use cases demonstrating productivity improvement estimates of 1-3% and work around 'security by design'. The project has been extended by DCMS.

12. The construction of Worcestershire Parkway is complete and now progressing through the rigorous rail industry "Entry into Service" and assurance processes. This is the first new station in Worcestershire for 100 years and will transform connectivity for rail users. The station will benefit from the new Cross Country and GWR timetable, the latter covering all GWR services across Western England and South Wales, representing the greatest change on the GWR network for over 30 years. Some key services to and from London will take less than 2 hours and passengers will be able to get to Cardiff in 1hr 23 mins and to Nottingham in 1hr 49 mins. Our clear ambition is to access even more services.

13. The Southern Link Road (SLR) is a strategically important link. The planned improvements will result in critically needed additional highway capacity along the SLR leading to a significant improvement in journey times and journey time reliability.

14. The DfT confirmed the award of £54.5m for Phase 4 of the Southern Link Road last year. In terms of physical works, the construction of the new 1.9km road to the south of the current carriageway on the A4440 has progressed with construction of the flood compensation area, new embankment and road bridge foundations well underway.

15. In Bromsgrove, the changes to the A38 Barley Mow Lane junctions have been successfully delivered with progression of the designs for the M5 and M42 elements of the scheme ongoing with Highways England maintaining the plan to commence construction in 2020. The Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the A38 Bromsgrove Route Enhancement Programme is being considered by the Department for Transport, with Midlands Connect ranking it as one of the top schemes in the whole region. Our application for development funding for the work on the business case has also been successful.

16. Looking to the future, successful finalisation of the Worcestershire Local Industrial Strategy with Government and unlocking the resources via our LEP to deliver future infrastructure, skills and wider economic development projects is key to our ability to deliver the next tranche of major schemes. This in turn is important to support the efforts of our district councils in revising their Local Plans and ensuring appropriate infrastructure is in place to meet the needs of a developing county.

17. We need to play our full part in helping those district councils with Towns Fund and/or Future High Street Fund allocations to further develop proposals to ensure we collectively make the most of those resources. We are also working closely with other counties, through Midlands Connect on the A46 partnership to progress major upgrades to the route and on the Midlands Rail Hub, as well as with the North Cotswold Line Taskforce to unlock a more frequent and better train service.

Environment

18. The quality of the County's environment helps attract visitors, market the County to prospective investors and skilled individuals that our economy needs to support sustainable growth. We have a duty to protect and enhance our natural and built environment. The theme covers our work on moving around the county, dealing with flooding and waste disposal.

19. In December 2018 the Government published their new waste strategy 'Our waste, our resources: a strategy for England'. The Government consulted on the key aspects including implementing consistent recycling services, introducing weekly food waste collections and free garden waste collections. County and district councils responded jointly to this consultation, supporting some aspects but challenging others. As the Government legislates to deliver the strategy, we will work together to respond to the changes needed.

20. Our Energy from Waste plant, EnviRecover, continues to perform well, allowing our contractor to apply for the relevant permissions to enable them to progress up to 15% more waste through the facility each year. Energy from the plant creates electricity for 32,000 homes. Also 44 volunteer 'Let's Waste Less' community champions have been recruited, working to spread the waste prevention message in their local communities.

21. We have continued to complete a range of drainage and flood mitigation schemes to improve our resilience to the effects of flooding and the changing climate. Since 2013, over 460 flood alleviation and drainage schemes have been implemented to mitigate the risk to nearly 2000 homes, businesses and the highway network. During the last 12 months the major flood adaptation scheme at Upton-upon-Severn has been completed, increasing the road's resilience to future flooding. Additional capital funding of £2m (spread over two years) is proposed in the draft budget for further highway drainage and flood mitigation schemes.

22. Our highway provides a vital transportation network for both businesses and residents across the County and beyond. The County continues to gain the highest level in the DfT Incentive fund, thus securing the maximum Highway Maintenance funding. However, additional capital monies are required to achieve our ambitious target of being in the top quartile in each road class. Therefore we are proposing further investment of £12m capital (spread over the next two years) in local roads in the draft budget. This is on top of our three year Highways Infrastructure Improvement Fund (HIIF) which we agreed in previous budgets.

23. In addition to our core maintenance programme for footways, we previously invested an additional £6m to complete a total of 250 footway schemes. In the forthcoming budget we are proposing a further investment of £8m capital (over two years) to further improve pavements. Maintaining the highway in a good condition is important for everyone whether you walk, cycle, drive or take public transport and this is recognised by the public who consistently rank it as something which is important in our annual Viewpoint Survey.

24. Another key concern that is raised in our Council survey, and is a focus for investment, is cutting congestion. Following our initial budget allocation of £5m we were successful in drawing in £6.6m of Government monies to match fund schemes. Last year's budget allocated a further £5m capital to develop schemes in Evesham and Bromsgrove town centres, Kidderminster and the A38 Upton. In the draft budget I am proposing to double this to £10m to ensure we can deliver schemes in those places and attract further monies.

25. Work is continuing across the County to provide attractive public spaces to support the local retail economy. This builds on the success of Cathedral Square in Worcester, Alcester Street in Redditch, Droitwich High Street, Teme Street in Tenbury and most recently The Shambles in Worcester and Worcester Street in Kidderminster. More schemes are planned in Redditch, Evesham, Stourport and Worcester.

26. One of the challenges we face in our rural County is sustaining an adequate bus network for those that rely on public transport for essential shopping, getting to work, school or college and avoiding social isolation. The Worcestershire Passenger Transport Strategy has been developed and sets out how the County Council, working with its partners, aims to make passenger transport improvements for the benefit of residents and businesses. The draft budget proposes to invest further revenue in public transport.

27. Over the last year the environment has gained a higher prominence nationally and globally and in response the Government and this Council have adopted a target to be net carbon neutral by 2050. Worcestershire has had an active and ambitious programme for many years to reduce its environmental impact and I know we will rise to this challenge.

28. In the last year alone our sustainability team has secured a range of external funding to support businesses, householders and public organisations in reducing their environmental impact and in many cases enabling them to save money. Around £5.3m of funding has been obtained to take forward advice and grant programmes supporting Worcestershire businesses, and now public sector organisations, to improve their energy efficiency and install renewable energy. Since these programmes began c.400 Worcestershire businesses have been supported - achieving on average a 30% cut in their energy bills, installing nearly a megawatt of renewable energy systems and saving c.4000 tonnes CO₂ annually.

29. Following the launch of the Council-led £2.7m Natural Networks programme, 60+ publicly accessible sites across Worcestershire have been assessed and advice and grants given to land owners to improve biodiversity. As a result, we can look forward to more wildflower meadows, naturalisation of water courses, (which also reduces flood risk), as well as tree planting and habitat creation. £1m further funding is in the pipeline to continue the above programmes to June 2023.

30. We have been successful in obtaining c.£300k+ in Government and private sector funding for the installation of public EV charge points, with a further 25 at Parkway.

31. In the draft budget we are proposing to speed up the roll out of energy efficient LED street lighting with a further £2m (over two years), purchase green electricity in the future and embark on a significant project to plant 150,000 trees to create new woodland.

Children & Families

32. Our aim remains to ensure children receive a good education and achieve their potential, move successfully into employment and children & young people are protected from harm.

33. A good education and the right skills are vital to improving the life chances of Worcestershire's next generation. With this in mind, a new Education and Skills Strategy was approved by Cabinet last September. It seeks to ensure every young person is supported to achieve the best outcomes they can in order to fulfil their full potential.

34. Improving the education and skills of our future workforce has a key role to play in sustaining economic growth and creating higher skilled and better paid jobs. It aids social mobility too. Though our role in education has changed we continue to play a vital role in school place planning, home to school travel, SEND assessment and provision and championing good quality education & skills provision – not to forget our voice in lobbying for resources.

35. In terms of current performance, 84% of children in Worcestershire are educated in good or outstanding schools although our aim is for this to reach 90%. Last year over 90% of parents secured an offer at their first preference school for their child. Latest GCSE results show that the percentage of students in the County gaining grades 4 or above in English and Maths has increased.

36. We have done more work on modelling the number of school places required across the County in different age ranges and catchment areas. This has led to revisions to policy to ensure we secure the right contributions and can better plan for future needs. Taking account of projected housing growth, the numbers of children entering reception class between 2018 and 2022 is set to grow by 2.5%, with a predicted need for up to four new first / primary schools. The numbers of pupils entering Year 7 in Worcestershire are forecast to rise, when you include housing growth, by 13.8% up to 2026 - with the need for an additional 9.5FE.

37. Over fifteen months on from our Local Area SEND Written Statement of Action being approved and we are entering the phase where a re-inspection is due. The Local Area, including our health partners and education providers, are preparing for the re-inspection and intend to provide evidence of progress and the impact for children.

38. The growth in funding (2019/20) for the SEND assessment and planning team has enabled the recruitment of additional staff. The impact of this is evident in the 20 week timeline to complete EHC Plans, and the assessment performance has improved from 7% in January to 63% in September 2019. An improved decision-making process has resulted in a reduction in the number of EHC Plans agreed. More of our first time EHC Plans are naming mainstream schools and Worcestershire is no longer issuing a greater number of EHC Plans than other shire authorities or statistical neighbours.

39. Worcestershire continues to invest in programmes to help young people successfully transition from education into employment. The Council supports the drive towards

encouraging apprenticeships, with the Worcestershire Apprenticeships initiative reaching 27,000 young people in 2019. Latest figures show only 2% of all 16-18 year olds are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) in December 2019. Worcestershire has now engaged over 60 educational establishments, including middle and secondary schools and FE colleges, in the Careers and Enterprise Company programme which supports young people to gain a better understanding about future careers and assists local employers in creating their workforce of the future. This programme is recognised as best practice, performing better than any other in the West Midlands and third highest in England.

40. Turning to our work on protecting the most vulnerable children, we retain our vital responsibility as Corporate Parents for children and young people in the care of the Council. Corporate Parenting continues to be a ‘strength’ but efforts have been made for its further development as we recognise that the effectiveness of partnerships is vital, particularly with district councils and providers of health services.

41. Our improvement plan for children’s social care has made excellent progress over the last year and as a result our engagement with Essex County Council as Improvement Partner has drawn to a close. A more stable workforce with permanency rates for front line social workers at 86% has been achieved and average caseloads have reduced to 20. In terms of the numbers of children in care they have stabilised at 70 per 10,000 and for the first time we are now taking fewer children into care than the West Midlands average. Whilst our overall numbers in care remain higher than statistical neighbours or the national average, our direction of travel is a positive one with children getting appropriate support and a renewed focus on edge of care and support for those families who need it most. Our investment in skilled and highly motivated staff and management continues to pay off.

42. Ofsted conducted a full inspection of our children’s social care services in June 2019. The report found that Worcestershire is now judged as “requires improvement to be good”. It recognised our strong trajectory of improvement since the last inspection, when services were rated as “inadequate”. It was noted that “effective work by senior management and staff, together with commitment and investment by political leaders, has led to improved responses to the needs of children and families. As a result, outcomes for many children and their families are better, and there is evidence of a sustained trajectory of improvement.” We will continue to focus on improvement work to achieve full consistency in services.

43. Alongside the sustained focus on improvement, the Ofsted inspection and work on SEND, we have successfully set up our new wholly owned council company, Worcestershire Children First. In March 2019, Cabinet approved the size and scope of the company with WCF responsible for delivering education and early help services, alongside social care and safeguarding. The company went live on 1 October 2019 and is operationally independent with its own board of directors. The Company will have a single focus on children and young people; however, strategic objectives and significant decisions will remain with the Council. We retain the responsibility for ensuring safe and effective Children’s Services.

44. Looking to the coming year, the draft budget proposes further investment in Worcestershire Children First to support the placements budget, home to school travel and SEND.

Health and Wellbeing

45. Our Health and Wellbeing theme has three key elements: Improving general health and wellbeing, supporting people to live independently for as long as possible and working with health and social care to ensure we have effective and evidence-based services in place.

46. Public health is at the forefront of our efforts to promote healthy lifestyles, embed prevention and reduce health inequalities. A key focus is on childhood, through our health visiting and school health services that deliver key universal prevention services. The Healthy Child Programme includes five key developmental checks of all pre-school children.

47. The Council spends some £28m on Public Health, funded through the Government ring fenced grant we receive, and, alongside mandated services, we are continually looking for innovative ways to achieve the goals set. This includes investing in our Council services.

48. Our NHS Health Checks programme, for people aged 40-74, is designed to identify early signs of stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia, and deliver risk reduction. All these conditions are linked to an increased risk of loss of independence.

49. Living independently is more likely if people are actively engaged within their local community. An innovative social prescribing pilot has taken place, in which people attending their GP can be seen by social prescribers who can support them with social issues and refer where appropriate to other community services. The Reconnections service links lonely older people to volunteers and activities in the community. Community strength and balance classes are available to enable older people to develop or regain mobility, strength and prevent falls. Adaptations and repairs continue to be made to homes to reduce falls.

50. Promoting independence is a key aim, as we know that people can live healthier and more fulfilling lives if they retain their independence. To achieve this, Adult Social Care uses a strengths-based approach called the Three Conversations Model. This approach connects people with resources in the local community, friends and family. If people are in a crisis, we work with them swiftly until this is resolved and only then start planning for the future. The evidence demonstrates that people receive a significantly faster response and fewer people need on-going funded support.

51. Even with all these initiatives, Adult Services faces significant demand and cost pressures, with increased numbers of older people living with frailty and rising market costs. Over 75% of the people we support are over 80. There has also been considerable demand pressure to support those people with disabilities who are also living longer - a fact to celebrate - but with enhanced need.

52. As over 85% of the care provided is purchased from the independent sector, we are looking for more innovative ways of delivering care with that sector, and are now seeking to maximise the potential of assistive technology to enhance people's lives in their own home. We are also working closely with our district colleagues through the innovative 75% Business Rates Retention Pilot. This one-off resource will be spent on projects that have the potential to mitigate the demand or costs of social care services. I am pleased that one of the projects approved to date is a new community reablement service.

53. Collaborative working with health and social care helps to ensure evidence-based and effective services are in place to protect and improve health and wellbeing of our residents, whilst providing value for money. Work is continuing with the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP). This includes contributing leadership and support to the Integrated Care System and neighbourhood teams across Worcestershire, bringing together professionals including GPs and social workers.

54. Optimal health and wellbeing for the people of Worcestershire requires close working between organisations including social care, public health, the voluntary/community sector and the NHS. An integrated wellbeing model is being developed to join up information and advice, lifestyle and wellbeing support and access to community activities.

55. The long-term funding of social care undoubtedly remains the key challenge and one that will require a nationally agreed solution. In the meantime, I welcome the continuation of the social care grants, the additional funding announced in the autumn for 2020/21 and the proposed continuation for one more year of the Adult Social Care precept that together will enable us to fund the rising costs of social care next year.

The Financial Challenge

56. In my last Annual Report I outlined that Worcestershire, in line with other County Councils, faced significant in-year financial pressures during 2018/19. I was pleased to report at Cabinet in June that we managed this down from a projected £17.9m overspend to one of just over £2m. Whilst it was disappointing to not achieve balance the scale of turnaround achieved in-year should not be underestimated and I would like to put on record my thanks to the entire organisation for the efforts made to achieve this result. Our external auditors at July Audit and Governance Committee were quick to recognise these efforts.

57. Our Annual Statement of Accounts for 2018/19 were signed off on time and unqualified, with a further unqualified opinion on our Value for Money assessment from our external auditors, Grant Thornton. This achievement, when around 40% of councils across the country failed to gain an opinion on time, is noteworthy and a credit to the team.

58. At the same time as managing the position in 2018/19 we were working hard to set the 2019/20 revenue and capital budgets. Active financial management, alongside growing income from Council Tax & Business Rates, enabled us to meet the demand-led social care pressures and invest in the future with £23m of investment in the County's infrastructure.

59. Looking forward we have seen Government announcements, through the Spending Round 2019, that we will receive a significant boost to our funding. We still await precise details but the additional monies are a welcome reflection of the lobbying we have been undertaking alongside our CCN partners. We look set to receive up to an additional £8.5m for Social Care and over £8m for High Needs and SEND. This is a shift in the Government's approach and, alongside the other proposed measures around Council Tax and continuing reform, means we have published a balanced draft budget for 2020/21.

60. Going forward, we will continue to lobby for a new funding formula expected in 2021 that reflects the key drivers of cost and adjusts the weighting for rurality and sparsity. This could help to ensure the sustainability of the services we deliver today for future years.

Our Communities

61. The Council have held face to face conversations with 1,200 residents at the seven public roadshow events that were held last summer. The resident roadshows give people from across Worcestershire the opportunity to share with us their thoughts and opinions. Last year's themes included the Council's investments into major infrastructure projects, adult social care and the creation of Worcestershire Children First. The issues most important and in need of improvement in our viewpoint survey continue to be highways-related; road and pavement repairs, tackling congestion and public transport.

Council of the future

62. Last year I pointed to the need to reimagine what the Council will look like into the 2020s. Council approved in September a new design for the top three tiers of the organisation and the consultation to deliver that structure has been underway. Work continues on the other aspects of the Council redesign with engagement from staff volunteers and partners.

63. We will need to ensure we have a modern and competitive Total Reward framework enabling us to both recruit and retain the workforce of the future to deliver services in the most efficient and effective way. Our workforce priorities will be aligned to embedding a performance and productivity culture. This way we will have the right workforce, with the required skills in the correct roles to deliver priorities.

64. We continue to develop our commissioning capability including a step change in our ability to use Power BI and other technology to provide insight into how best to procure and manage our £500m+ annual contract spend.

65. Over the last year we have commenced the roll-out of a new Windows 10 programme to upgrade all Members and staff from the ageing Windows 7 computers to Windows 10, and help maximise the use of Office 365 and new cloud-based services for greater access to data on the go. Aligned with this is the move to Exchange Online services, moving our physical on-site email services to cloud hosted services.

66. In support of more flexible and partnership working we have also rolled out new Wi-Fi services allowing guests and partners a one-time registration instant logon Wi-Fi service in all of our Wi-Fi enabled buildings.

67. Major investment in a new social work case management system, migrating from Frameworki to Liquid Logic, is taking place and during a pilot of the new system very positive feedback was received from staff about the new software. It enables staff to better access and update case files, enhances productivity and lends itself to mobile and flexible working.

68. Work on the redesign of the organisation will continue this year with key roles to be filled shortly and efforts to fully utilise the new systems and ways of working to deliver productivity gains and genuine efficiencies. We also need to think ahead and explore the possibilities that the next generation of technology will offer.

69. Finally, I would like to thank Cabinet Members, our management team and the wider workforce, as well as all Members of the Council for the invaluable contribution they make each and every day to improving Worcestershire and the services of the Council.

Simon Geraghty
Leader of the Council
January 2019

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**COUNCIL
16 JANUARY 2020**

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE BOARD**

Recommendation

1. **The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance recommends that the Council receives the annual report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board for 2019.**
2. The Council will be asked to receive this report and to receive answers to any questions on it.

Supporting Information

Appendix - Annual report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board for 2019.

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

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Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2019

January 2020

www.worcestershire.gov.uk



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Foreword

It is a pleasure to be able to write the Foreword to this year's Annual Scrutiny Report. However, I was only elected to the Chair in November and only became a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board in September, so most of the work and all of the credit must go to others.

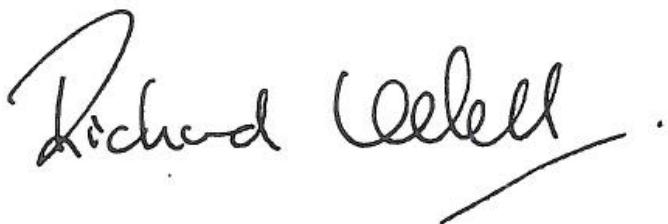
In particular, a big thanks must go to Christopher Bloore, who not only preceded me as Chair but was also my successor two years ago. He helped to refresh Scrutiny and his challenging style and forensic investigatory skills will be a big loss. I wish him all the best for his future in Canada. Also, special thanks to Elizabeth Eyre, the Vice Chair of the Board who took over the reins from him and kept Scrutiny going, her experience and commitment are key to the success of Scrutiny in Worcestershire. Equally, all members of the Scrutiny Board have played important roles in ensuring we continue to speak truth to power and hold the Executive to account, I happily thank them all for their service and commitment.

We face difficult times ahead, as scrutineers we need the tools to enable us to do our job properly; we have many demands, new priorities and a varied workload. We also need to take more seriously our role of overview, to help, assist and provide advice to the Executive when they are engaged in making difficult decisions. We need to be able to monitor performance, challenge when necessary and not be afraid to speak our minds and must resist the temptation to be controlled by any external forces. Scrutiny independence must be protected.

I would like us to review the way we conduct Budget Scrutiny and to make it more meaningful, it is one of the most important parts of our job; we must ensure we are doing it correctly. We also need to concentrate our efforts and our work into areas when it can be most useful, the use of Task and Finish Groups have long been one of our most effective forms of Scrutiny.

During the past year we have been very busy and have helped to deliver new policies. The issue of Gateway Drugs has unified the Council and Scrutiny has responded. I hope we will be able to continue to make the changes, meet the challenges and deliver the new ideas which can make local government relevant, make politics work and demonstrate how we can make a difference.

Finally, and most importantly, a huge thank you to the people who work very hard on our behalf. A small team of talented professionals. We could not function successfully without their support, thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Udall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Richard Udall
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board

Introduction

This Report highlights some of the key pieces of work from the past year undertaken by the Scrutiny function of the Council. A diagram showing where Scrutiny fits in the governance of the Council is enclosed at the appendix. Details of the membership of scrutiny bodies and their meetings are on the Council's website here:

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20152/overview_and_scrutiny/540/overview_and_scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB)

The primary role of the Board is to co-ordinate the work of the Scrutiny Panels. However, it has considered a range of issues in 2019, generally focusing on strategic Council-wide matters.

Learning

In addition to formal meetings Scrutiny members have attended informal briefings and site visits to increase their knowledge of specific areas of work, from round table discussions to observing consultation events and visiting other authorities to see how they operate services.

Scrutiny Annual Work Programme for 2019/20

The Work Programme was drawn up following consideration by each Panel individually, so that their individual priorities could be taken into account. The work programme was endorsed by Council in November 2018:

<https://worcestershire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=129&MId=2069&Ver=4>

Call-in

The Board has considered one Call-in this year.

A Call-in is essentially one of the tools available to non-executive Councillors to hold the Executive to account for the decisions that they take. Call-in is not a process to question the merits of a decision; it is a process to ensure that the principles of good decision making have been applied to the decisions that have been taken by Cabinet.

The Call-in related to a Cabinet Member decision to introduce parking charges at the Worcester Woods Countryside Centre. The Board agreed arrangements for hearing the call-in and this took place at an additional meeting on 14 January 2019. 5 public participants attended and written submissions from a further 3 people were taken into account. The Cabinet Member for Communities (CMR) and senior officers also gave details of the processes followed in arriving at the proposal to introduce a charge.

The Board considered that the CMR did not have sufficient information on which to make the decision and was preparing to launch a task group to investigate this further when the CMR rescinded the decision.

Reflecting Matters of Concern to the Community

One of the roles of Scrutiny is to reflect on and consider issues of concern to the community. These may come to the Board's attention in many ways. The call-in referred to above is one example.

The Board has also maintained a watching brief on the Assessment Pathway for Children and Young People who may have Autism. This was originally raised via a motion at Council and the Board has considered updates from the relevant bodies during the development and implementation of a business case for the ‘umbrella pathway’. During this process the Board has been aware of the impact on families awaiting a diagnosis, whether it be positive or negative. The topic is now being followed up by the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Scrutiny of Other Agencies

In May the Board met with representatives of the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) to discuss governance arrangements and its effectiveness. This is now an annual feature of the Board’s work programme and Scrutiny of an organisation in which the County Council is a partner is regarded as best practice. The Board recommended that:

- The relationship between the WLEP and individual Councillors should be further developed
- Work to enhance the diversity on the WLEP Board should be supported.

Community Safety

The Board's Lead Member for Community Safety, Cllr Becky Vale, led the Board in its Annual Crime and Disorder meeting to consider community safety issues. This year, in addition to an update on the activities by the County Council and partners generally in supporting community safety, the Board also focused on GET SAFE, the Worcestershire multi-agency support and protection approach to child criminal exploitation. Members were impressed by the partnership working approach being taken with this initiative.

It was agreed that the Board would be updated on the progress of the data set being developed in partnership with Police analysts to enable more meaningful monitoring of crime reduction strategies, the Lead Member for Crime and Disorder would work more closely with the Chairman of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel and the GET SAFE presentations would be shared with District Councils and that they would be encouraged to champion the initiative.

Budget 2019/20 and 2020/21

The Board collated views on the draft budget for 2019/20 at its meeting in January for consideration by Cabinet at its meeting later that month. When presenting the draft budget to Cabinet, the Leader acknowledged the contribution of Scrutiny to some of the changes in the plans, including areas such as the reduction of cuts in funding for highways, the countryside service, libraries and the archives service.

The Scrutiny function has developed its approach to monitoring and challenging service and budget performance this year. Regular updates are now included in each Panel’s work programme and this has led to some ‘deep dive’ work being undertaken to follow up queries. This has helped the Panels be proactive when Scrutinising the budget and developed a deeper understanding of the services. I would like to thank Officers and Cabinet members for their support for this development during the year.

I now move on to set out highlights from the work of the Panels during the year.

Adult Care and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Panel

63,685 adults and 3,490 young people in Worcestershire are carers. The Panel has considered the support available to them. In doing so it heard from representatives of carers' organisations and from carers themselves about the issues they faced on a practical level and support that they accessed and needed. Arising from this, the Panel is looking into continuing health care arrangements in more depth and has written to the Clinical Commissioning Group expressing its concerns.

The Panel welcomed the Independent Chairman of the Adult Safeguarding Board and Board Manager to its November meeting and considered the Board's Annual Report 2018/19 and the activities of the Board. The Panel was reassured by the report and has asked for further information about Trading Standards' work on modern slavery; a guidance note for members to respond to constituents' queries about safeguarding issues and an update on Worcestershire Health and Care Trust's progression of the action plan regarding compliance with best practice against NICE guidelines on the use of decision making and mental capacity.

The Panel's work has also taken place in Task and Finish Groups, details of which are given elsewhere in this report.

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The main focus of the Panel this year has been the development and launch of Worcestershire Children First, a wholly-owned Council Company set up to deliver and improve children's social care, education and early help services on behalf of the Council from 1 October 2019. It has been updated regularly during the development of the governance of the company and has worked with the Cabinet Member and Director to ensure that it continues to receive appropriate and timely information about children's services.

At the same time the Panel has maintained its concentration on progress with the improvement in children's services. Examples are:

- A progress update on the Joint Local Area SEND Written Statement of Action/Improvement Plan – pre-scrutiny of a report to Cabinet in March and a further update in November;
- Commissioning of a 0-19 prevention and early intervention service – raised by the Panel during consideration of the budget in January and followed up in May with an outline of the tendering process and contract requirements;
- Pupil attainment at Key Stage 2 – an update on progress with raising the achievement of children in KS2 in reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, spelling and mathematics;
- The preparations for, and outcome of, the OFSTED inspection of children's services

In addition, the Panel considered, ahead of the meeting, the report to Cabinet in September about the future of Overnight unit-based short breaks in Worcestershire. This followed work by a Task Group last year which examined proposed changes to the service. The Panel supported the recommendations in the Cabinet report and agreed it will receive an update after the new model has been running for 6 months, to include levels of parental satisfaction.

Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The Panel has continued to be actively involved in consideration of the libraries remodelling proposals this year. Members of the Panel visited a library in South Gloucestershire to see how an example of an Open Library worked in practice and issues that had been faced when establishing this. Visits to other locations were also undertaken with the CMR. The members shared their learning with the Panel when it considered the draft Libraries Strategy as a pre-scrutiny in December.

The Panel supported the Strategy, seeking assurance that sufficient resources were available to deliver it. Among other things it also asked to see a detailed Implementation Plan when available and suggested, where possible, the exploration of opportunities for S106 monies that might benefit the development of the libraries service.

Arising from regular budget and performance reports, the Panel has carried out a 'deep dive' into Registration Service performance regarding death and still birth registration appointments., along with an overview of the Registration service, including performance, recent changes and future developments.

The Panel has more recently considered energy purchasing arrangements. Three members of the Panel are looking at this in more detail and will report back in March 2020.

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The Panel has examined a variety of topics, including an update on changes to street lighting, residents zonal parking schemes and countryside access.

In May, the Panel considered progress with reducing congestion, which included input and challenge from an external expert in the field. Representatives from cycling groups also contributed to the meeting. At the following meeting, responding to issues raised by parish councils, the Panel scrutinised arrangements for traffic calming. This involved officers from other organisations in addition to the County Council and discussion was wide ranging. The Panel learned about a toolkit produced by a neighbouring County Council which aimed to support communities in helping themselves and the Panel asked to see an example as a potential initiative that might be rolled out in Worcestershire.

OSPB referred consultation on the Worcestershire Public Transport Strategy to the Panel so that it could feed back during the consultation period. The Panel contributed a number of suggestions including how to maximise access to the consultation for members of the public.

Close attention is paid to the budget and performance monitoring reports and the Panel now seeks examples from the Strategic Director of 3 areas of success and 3 areas of challenge each quarter.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

Last year's report set out details of how the Committee received details of, and updates on, the implementation of the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust's Improvement Plan following its rating as 'inadequate' by the Care Quality Commission. The Committee has continued to scrutinise the quality of Acute Hospital services. This culminated in a full presentation in October by the Trust's Chief Executive of the latest Care Quality Commission (CQC) report, following inspections in May and June 2019. The report contained details of a range of quality and safety improvements which had led the CQC to lift the Trust's overall rating to 'requires improvement' from its previous rating of 'inadequate'. Whilst the Chief Inspector of Hospitals had recommended

that the Trust should be removed from special measures, this would only take place when a system-wide support package involving local and regional partners had been agreed.

The background to this year has been the announcement of the NHS Long-term plan and arising impact on the work of STP's (Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships). The Committee continues to be updated on the work of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire STP and its plans for meeting the national requirements. It has also been updated on the merger of the Worcestershire and Herefordshire CCG's.

More recently the Committee has examined how the Public Health Ring Fenced Grant is used and been updated on progress with smoking cessation. It also reviewed the audiology service and arising from that has written to the Clinical Commissioning Group about the role of GP surgeries and primary care in enabling patients to be seen most promptly when referrals are made.

Scrutiny Task Groups

The Relationship Between the Family Front Door and Schools

The Task Group was led by Mrs Potter, Vice Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Its terms of reference were '*to investigate how the Service is currently working, taking into account the relationship between the County Council and School partners, and the progress made since the Ofsted Inspection and subsequent monitoring visits*'.

The Task Group made 8 recommendations, ranging from communication with schools to training for members. The CMR for Children and Families accepted a number of the recommendations, including the CMR and Director assess the viability and merit of arranging for designated safeguarding leads and social workers to spend some time in each other's work environment as part of their training and incorporating specific training on the Family Front Door into member training.

Quality Assurance of Care Homes

This Scrutiny review was proposed by the OSPB. The Board wanted reassurance about the effectiveness of the County Council's quality assurance systems of residential care and nursing homes.

The Task Group was led by Mrs Brunner, Chairman of the Adult Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel. The terms of reference for the scrutiny exercise were '*to investigate how the Council carries out and monitors quality assurance of care homes in Worcestershire*'. Whilst the remit of this scrutiny has been on the role of the Council's Quality Assurance Team, in order to understand the broader system, the Task Group has also met with other organisations involved – including the Care Quality Commission (the independent regulator of health and social care in England) and the Clinical Commissioning Groups. The Task Group has also met with Healthwatch and visited a number of care and nursing homes across Worcestershire.

The Task Group report was agreed at the last meeting of the OSPB and is due to be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 30 January. The report makes 8 recommendations.

Care Work as a Career

In February, the Council agreed a Notice of Motion asking the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care to consider ways in which the work of Worcestershire residents who worked in the care industry could be celebrated and encouraged and how the importance of the care workers' role could be emphasised. The CMR subsequently suggested that a Scrutiny Task Group could look at how to develop the career pathway for care workers and how to promote care work as a career with justifiable rewards. The Task Group led by Mrs Tucker, Vice Chairman of the Adult Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel, has been working on this and is due to report shortly.

Future Task Groups

The OSPB has recently agreed proposals for three further Task Groups –the impact that the use of gateway drugs have on young people, Elective Home Education and Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

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Appendix 2



Committees



Pensions



Planning & Regulatory



Audit & Governance



Waste Credit Governance



S.A.C.R.E



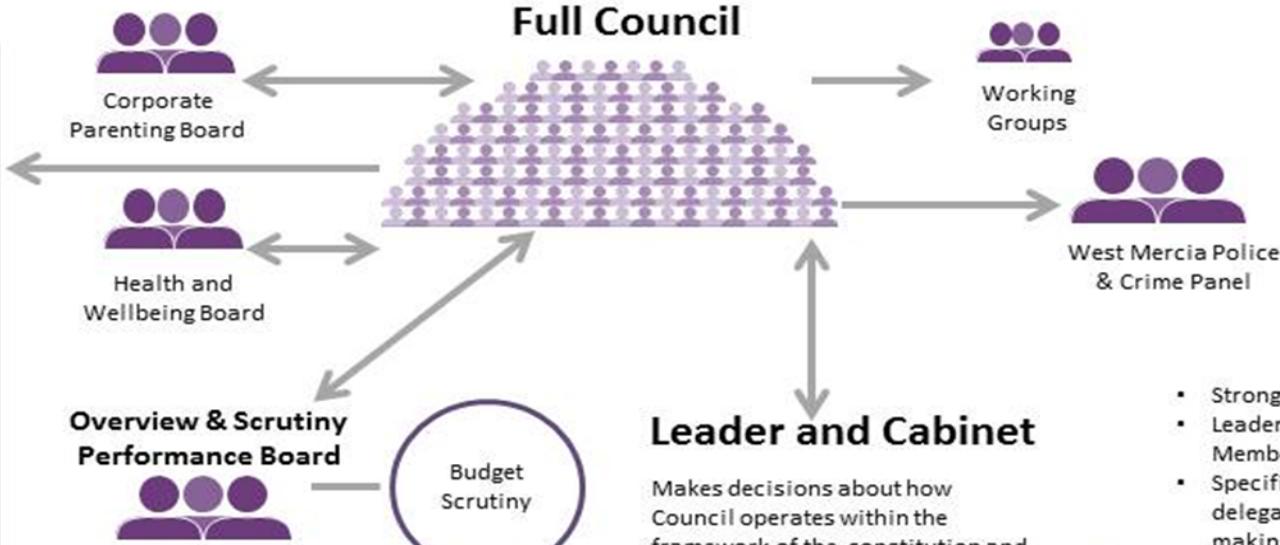
Standards & Ethics



Appointments ETC Panel

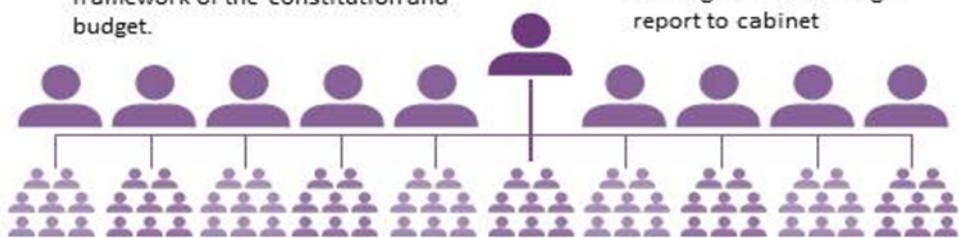
Governance Model

Full Council



Leader and Cabinet

Makes decisions about how Council operates within the framework of the constitution and budget.



Role of Full Council and all committees set out in the constitution

Holds Police and Crime Commissioner to account

- Strong Leader Model
- Leader chooses Cabinet Members
- Specific Portfolio Holder delegation enables decision making without having to report to cabinet



Corporate Business Board

**Role of the Corporate Business Board (CBB)
(Not a decision making body)**

- Cabinet and Strategic Leadership Team attendance
- Work as link to partnerships
- Policy Development
- Performance Management
- Put issues on Cabinet Agenda
- Budget Development

Further copies of this report are available from:

Overview and Scrutiny Team
Legal and Democratic Services
Worcestershire County Council
County Hall
Spetchley Road
Worcester WR5 2NP
Tel: 01905 846011
E-mail: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk
<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/scrutiny>

This document can be made available in other formats (large print, audio tape, computer disk and Braille) on request from the Overview and Scrutiny Team on telephone number 01905 844963 or by emailing scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

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**COUNCIL
16 JANUARY 2020****QUESTION TIME**

Question 1 – Unrestricted use of fireworks

1. Mr A C Roberts will ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities:

"Social media users in my division have been very active, voicing their concerns about the unrestricted use of loud fireworks. The general feeling appears to be that the sale of fireworks should be restricted for use at licensed events and not to members of the public.

There have been reports of upset animals and concerns expressed for people who are unwell or (for whatever reason) are distressed by loud bangs, though one person thought this was 'whining'.

My personal view has been jaundiced by experience and may not be typical. I feel that the sale of chemical incendiary devices for use by untrained people (who have no personal protection gear) is bizarre. It is also odd that, in an era of greater environmental awareness, what was usually a 5 November occurrence can now happen at any time during the year.

Would the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities seek information from Worcestershire Regulatory Services, the Public Health Officer, Chief Fire Officer and whoever else she thinks appropriate, so that the Council or a Council committee can consider what could be done and what should be done to see that the concerns of the public are addressed?"

Question 2 – Promotion of a public awareness campaign on the impact of fireworks

2. Mr R M Udall will ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities:

"Will the Cabinet Member with Responsibility agree the period between October and the New Year is frequently disturbed by the indiscriminate misuse of fireworks, which not only harm pets, farm animals and children, but also significantly disturb and upset military veterans and others who are suffering from PTSD.

Would she be able to use her powers as the Cabinet Member responsible for Trading Standards, to actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks, to write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those

sold to both the public and for private displays and to encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display?

In addition, would she agree to investigate and support a possible ban on the use of Fireworks which have a noise level in excess of 90db on all Worcestershire County Council owned property?"

Question 3 – Bus services to Worcestershire Royal Hospital

3. Mr P Denham will ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways:

"First Bus have changed the routes of services 36 and 38 so that they no longer stop close to the main entrance to Worcestershire Royal Hospital. First Bus says that County Council officers were consulted and supported this decision, despite the obvious impact on passengers with limited mobility and other disabilities.

Does the Cabinet Member support this decision, especially given the fact that service 36 is subsidised, and why was the county equalities officer not consulted, since we have a duty to take into account the needs of disabled residents?

Why were members not consulted prior to this decision?"

Question 4 – The 291 and 292 Bus Services from Kidderminster to Cleobury Mortimer and Ludlow

4. Mrs F M Oborski will ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways:

"The 291 and 292 Bus Services which link Kidderminster to Cleobury Mortimer and Ludlow and are jointly subsidised by Worcestershire County Council and Shropshire Council have recently been retendered with Yarrantons being awarded the one service and Diamond the other. Shropshire Council has now said that, due to traffic congestion regularly causing delays to the services within Kidderminster and Bewdley, the timings of the services need to be revisited. Currently both services travel up Bewdley Hill on their way out of Kidderminster.

When the timings are revisited please could the Cabinet Member explore, with Shropshire colleagues and the Bus Operators, the possibility of diverting one of the two Services via the Habberley estate to restore a regular service to residents in that area? Such a diversion would add a maximum of 10 minutes to the journey time but would enable several hundred residents to be able to travel to work and college in Kidderminster by public transport and would also facilitate their access to the rebuilt Kidderminster Railway Station."

Question 5 – 20 mph speed limits in Redditch

5. Mr R C Lunn will ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways:

"Following on from previous questions on this matter, would the Cabinet Member with Responsibility be prepared to allow a trial of 20mph speed limits in Batchley

Road and adjoining roads and also the roads of Smallwood in central Redditch? If so, how quickly could this be implemented?"

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Specific Contact Points for this report

Simon Lewis, Committee Officer

Tel: 01905 846621

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

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**COUNCIL
16 JANUARY 2020****REPORTS OF COMMITTEES****(a) SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE****Internal Audit Progress Report and Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy**

1. There are currently 92 outstanding actions across 23 audits, compared with 74 over 23 audits reported to the September Committee. Of those, actions relating to 7 audits had been completed and the audits closed and actions added for audits completed. Internal Audit continued to work closely with operational managers to close outstanding actions, this work includes re-profiling actions if appropriate. The most significant number of outstanding actions is related to Northleigh Primary School. Internal Audit has been working with the Headteacher to determine required actions but the school is intending to convert to an academy from 1 January 2020. A closing interview will be conducted with the Headteacher and it will be recommended that the outstanding actions be closed. If for any reason the school does not convert, the actions would be kept open. The Committee has noted the Internal Audit Progress Report.
2. The audit plan sets out detail of completed audits, progress on current audits and recommended changes to the plan. This includes alternative approaches to some audits to maximise assurance whilst making better use of resource. The Committee has approved the changes to the 2019/20 Audit Plan.
3. The size and complexity of the County Council means that some irregularities are inevitable, and therefore, in addition to planned assurance work, several special investigations are needed each year. Since the last report to Committee, a special investigation has commenced at a school following allegations about its business manager. Internal Audit are carrying out an additional matching exercise with the National Fraud Initiative to match up to date mortality data with Adult Social Care clients and pensioners. Internal Audit are also entering a trial for CIFAS, a multi-sector data matching agency, to evaluate if there are any additional benefits from this exercise. The draft Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy has been updated and is currently being consulted on within the Council and has been noted by the Committee.

External Audit Progress Report and Sector Update

4. Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditor has produced an External Audit Progress Report and Sector Update. The report provided an update on progress made by the external auditor in delivering its responsibilities. The Committee has noted the content of the report.

Income Management

5. the latest level of short-term debt stands at £15.9 million, 62% (£9.8 million) of which was raised this financial year. Although new debts are raised and debts paid off on a monthly basis, the recurrent amount of debt outstanding continues to be around £9 - £10 million. Of the total debt recorded, £10.6 million (66%) is greater than 30 days old. The remainder of the debt is broken down as: £4.0 million is less than 30 days old, and £1.4 million is being collected by agreed instalment plans. In addition to the general debt noted above, the Council has a Longer-Term Debt that it recognises of £3.6 million relating to social care accrued accommodation costs. This debt is secured against property assets pending sufficient house value. This is regularly reviewed and charges secured against properties.
6. A review of income and debt management has been taking place over the last six to nine months. In addition, a review of processes, including handovers and responsibilities has been taking place. This has identified a number of improvements in the way debt is set up, the need for debt, the ownership of debt and the chasing process. As a result, it has been agreed through the redesign programme that income management will be centralised, and processes standardised for income raising and debt collection. In addition, a programme of seeking to secure more payments before service and via the Council's internet has started. This will seek to avoid debt arising in the first instance. Debt will also now be reported to the Audit and Governance Committee on a regular cycle. The Committee will challenge and drive improvement in collection, as well as assess policies and procedures as appropriate to advise Council.

7. The Committee has noted the report and requested that a further update be brought to its March Committee meeting.

Corporate Risk Report

8. The Corporate Risk Register provides a mechanism for collating and reporting risks that could affect the delivery of corporate objectives. In April 2017 the Council adopted an electronic risk register tool to hold in one place all the major risks identified by individual Directorates and major projects. A scoring system is used to rate individual risks. This allows risks to be ranked and provides a view of the highest risks identified across the organisation.
9. At the end of Quarter Two 2019/20, there were 126 individual risks entered in the risk register of which 15 were identified as high / "red" risks. The highest risks have been grouped into six risk areas, following discussion by the Corporate Risk Management Group and the Performance and Transformation Board. The risk around financial control has been upgraded to high / "red" (from medium / "amber" in quarter one) due to a risk of overspend at year end of £3.7m as reported to Cabinet on 20 December). Current planned activity is expected to deliver a balanced budget but this is raised to red to ensure appropriate focus and monitoring throughout the remainder of the year. The six risk areas are: Safeguarding vulnerable children; Education; Services for Vulnerable Adults; Compliance management of the council's estate; business continuity response to major event; and Financial control.

10. Two further medium / "amber" risk areas have been included as follows: staff capacity, capability and productivity (which has previously been reported as red but is currently assessed as amber following significant mitigating activity over the last 12 months); and Council preparations for EU Exit.

11. The Committee has noted the latest update of the Corporate Risk Register including mitigating actions identified in respect of red risk.

Work Programme

12. The Committee has noted its future work programme.

Mr N Desmond
Chairman

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763
Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Specific Contact Points for this report

Simon Lewis, Committee Officer
Tel: 01905 846621
Email: slewis@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda papers for the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 13 December 2019.

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**COUNCIL
16 JANUARY 2020****REPORTS OF COMMITTEES****(b) SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE PENSIONS
COMMITTEE**

Pension Investment Sub-Committee Minutes

1. As set out in the Terms of Reference of the Pension Investment Sub-Committee, all decisions taken and recommendations will be reported back to the next available ordinary meeting of the Pensions Committee in the form of the minutes of the ISC. In addition, the Pensions Board has requested that their deliberations be reported to the Committee. There has not been a meeting of the Pension Board since the last Committee meeting. The Committee noted the Minutes of the Pension Investment Sub-Committee.

Actuarial Valuation and final Pension Fund Strategy Statement

2. Every three years, in line with legislation, the Fund Actuary, Mercer, carries out a full Actuarial Valuation of the Fund to calculate how much the employers in the Scheme need to contribute going forward to ensure that its liabilities, the pensions due to current and future pensioners, will be paid as they fall due. The purpose of the Funding Strategy Statement (FSS) is to set out a clear and transparent funding strategy that will identify how each Fund employer's pension liabilities are to be met going forward. The draft Funding Strategy Statement was agreed at Committee on the 16 October 2019 and sent to Employers for consultation on the 29 October 2019.

3. The provisional Actuarial Valuation is that Fund's funding level has increased from 75% funded at 31 March 2016 to 91.3% at 31 March 2019. Total employer contributions are expected to decrease for 2020/21 below those planned, following the 2016 Actuarial Valuation by £15.0m (£82m compared to £97m) based on the initial base option. It should be noted that the actual whole fund contributions to be received will ultimately depend on the employer contributions agreed with each individual employer. The Committee has noted the results of the Actuarial Valuation.

4. The key points of the FSS are:

- The target recovery period for the Fund as a whole is 15 years at this valuation which is 3 years shorter than the corresponding recovery period from the previous valuation
- A key change to the method of valuing the Fund's liabilities is the valuation of the real return over CPI inflation for determining the past service liabilities which is 1.65% (2.15% in 2016) per annum and for determining the future service ("Primary") contribution rates is 2.25% (2.75% in 2016) per annum

- The remedy for McCloud is not yet known. However, guidance from the Scheme Advisory Board is for Funds to consider their policy, in relation to the costs that could emerge, in conjunction with their Actuary
- Investment ‘pots’ – the narrative assumes that the Fund has implemented alternative investment strategies with differential levels of investment risk with effect from 1 April 2020. The aim is to provide greater control over employer’s exposure to investment risk.

5. The Committee has approved the FSS and any further operational changes have been delegated to Fund officers with an update provided to the March Pensions Committee.

6. The responses to the Employer consultation have been reviewed and it is considered that although there is a need to clarify some areas with Employers, there are no changes required to the draft FSS. The Committee has noted the points raised regarding the specific questions raised by Employers on the Funding Strategy Statement. However, the Committee considered the proportion of responses from Employers to the Funding Strategy Statement consultation was disappointing and the Pension Board has been requested to examine ways of improving response rates and report back to the Committee.

Strategic Asset Allocation Review

7. The Worcestershire Pension Fund (the Fund) is valued at £2.9 billion as at the end of October 2019. The Fund's value has risen by £0.9 billion since the last triennial valuation in 2016 when it was valued at £2.0 billion. The fund has a much-improved funding position in 2019 than 2016 being 91% funded. However, it still has a deficit and the objective of the Fund should be to maintain returns that the Fund is currently delivering within a structure that achieves reduced volatility and improved diversification.

8. The purpose of this Strategic Asset Allocation Report is two-fold: to set the scene and take stock on the performance and composition of the Fund's Strategic Asset Allocation as endorsed by the Pensions Committee in 2016; and to recommend for approval any changes required to the Fund's Strategic Asset Allocation with the aims of:

- meeting the requirements of the Fund's draft 2019 Funding Strategy Statement;
- maintaining targeted returns,
- improving the Fund's opportunity to minimise volatility of returns and optimising diversification of risk, and
- Ensure that sufficient resources are available to meet all liabilities as they fall due.

9. The Committee has received a detailed review of the Fund (including conclusions) in relation to the following: Strategic Asset Allocation including Risk; Equities; Equity Protection Strategy; Fixed Income: Exposure to currency and inflation; Property and Infrastructure; Net cashflow requirements; and Responsible Investment, Climate change and impact investing.

10. The Committee considered a summary of the recommendations which are to enable the Fund to continue to meet the assumptions contained within the Fund's Funding Strategy Statement with regard to ongoing expected returns more than CPI inflation and consider Central Government's asset pooling agenda that established the LGPS Central pool from the 1 April 2018. The Committee has approved the Strategic Asset Allocation recommendations set out in paragraph 5 of the report subject to the inclusion of specific reference to the need for investments to be signed up to the Code of Transparency. Going forward recommendations will be brought to the Committee as to the appointment of appropriate Investment Managers as changes occur during the continued plan of reviews and implementation of the Strategic Asset Allocation.

11. The Committee has agreed that the Strategic Asset Allocation actions set out in paragraph 7 of the report for inclusion in the Forward Plan of the Committee and the Pension Investment Sub-Committee.

Good Governance Review and Objectives of the Fund's Investment Advisor

12. Strong governance of the Pension Fund has always been paramount, and with the collapse of several private sector funds, alongside the set-up of the pension pools and pressures to maintain balanced funds, the need to maintain the strong governance of LGPSs has never been more important. Because of this level of inspection there have been two reviews by the Scheme Advisory Board and the Pension Regulator looking at how to strengthen governance.

13. The announcement of the General Election and delay in some of the follow up reports has meant there is a slight delay in some of the requirements and guidance. As such, it is felt that these reviews should be first considered at the Pension Board in February 2020 and the outcomes bought back to the March 2020 Pensions Committee for further discussion and agreement.

14. The Committee has agreed that the Scheme Advisory Board and The Pension Regulator's governance reviews and the objectives of the Fund's Investment Advisor be referred to the Pension Board for consideration with the outcomes bought to the Committee meeting in March 2020.

LGPS Central Update

15. Initial feedback has been provided on the LGPS Central Draft Strategic Business Plan and proposed budget for 2020/21 and the Finance Working Group have met LGPS representatives on the 6 December to discuss this in more detail. This will also include the updated cost sharing model and impact for each individual partner fund. This is planned to be formally discussed and presented to the Pensions Committee on the 31 January 2020.

16. The LGPS Central Equities Investment Director has recently resigned and there have been some changes to the Lead Portfolio Manager for the Global Equity Multi-Manager Fund which the Fund is invested in. Assurances have been sought by the Pension Investment Sub-Committee to ensure that the performance monitoring of the fund was taking place appropriately and at a level that is expected. The Committee has noted the LGPS Central Update.

Pension Investment Update

17. The Committee has noted the Independent Financial Adviser's fund performance summary and market background. The Committee has noted the update on the Investment Managers placed 'on watch' by the Pension Investment Sub-Committee.

18. LGPS Central have appointed Inalytics to provide transition oversight to look to provide as smooth as possible a transition of Corporate Bonds into the LGPS 'Global active Investment Grade Corporate Bond Fund' within the target implementation shortfall. LGPS Central then asked Inalytics to procure a transition manager and appointed Blackrock as Transition Manager. A transition kick off meeting was undertaken on the 18 November 2019 and funds are likely to transfer in early 2020. The Committee has noted the update on the transition of the Active Corporate Bonds mandate into the LGPS 'Global active Investment Grade Corporate Bond Fund'.

19. The last actuarial valuation undertaken as at the 31 March 2016 showed that the fund was 75% funded with a £654m deficit at this point. The Actuary provided a preliminary valuation in September 2019. This has been updated for discount rate assumptions, life expectancy trends, covenant, data quality etc. The estimated funding level in March 2019 was to 91% with a deficit of £265m. The Asset valuation as at the end of October 2019 was £2.865m. The Committee has noted the funding position compared to the investment performance.

20. The Equity Protection current static strategy has been extended to mid-2020 to protect employer contributions and provide certainty to the Actuary that the Equity Protection is in place when the actuary certificate must be signed off. The Committee has noted the update on the Equity Protection current static strategy extension.

21. The Committee has noted the update on Responsible Investment activities and Stewardship investment pooling and the Stewardship Code. The Committee has noted the update on the LGPS Central report on the voting undertaken on the Funds behalf. The Committee has noted the update on the development of a Climate Risk Monitoring Platform.

Risk Register

22. The Risk Register is kept under regular review and there have been no amendments to the Risk register apart from updating the mitigation in relation to Risk WPF 11 – Failure to pool assets using LGPS Central. After discussions at the last Committee meeting, the following has been added to the Register: "*The Fund will monitor the willingness of the Pool to invest in the sort of assets that could have a positive impact on the Fund's future funding levels.*" The Committee has noted the Worcestershire Pension Fund Risk Register as at 2 December 2019.

Pension Fund Training Programme

23. The Committee has noted the feedback from the Pensions Training event on the 28 November 2019 and the Training plan.

Forward Plan

21. The Committee has noted the Forward Plan.

Mr P Middlebrough
Chairman

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda papers for the meeting of the Pensions Committee held on 13 December 2019.

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**COUNCIL
16 JANUARY 2020**

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

**(c) SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE PLANNING
AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE**

Applications

1. The Committee approved the following application subject to detailed conditions:
 - Part-retrospective application for a proposed processing, stocking and bagging area at Wildmoor Quarry, Sandy Lane, Wildmoor, near Bromsgrove, Worcestershire
 - Part-retrospective application for the operation of a Mortar Batching Plant, erection of associated Silo Storage Units and Aggregate Bins and Vehicle Repairs Workshop at Wildmoor Quarry, Sandy Lane, Wildmoor, near Bromsgrove, Worcestershire
 - Proposed three classroom extension, demolition of temporary double mobile classrooms, new car park and change of use from agriculture to educational use for two adjacent fields at Fairfield First School, Stourbridge Road, Fairfield, Worcestershire.

2. Details of the above application can be found in the agenda papers for the Committee meeting held on 3 December 2019.

Mr R C Adams
Chairman

Contact Points

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda papers for the meetings of the Planning and Regulatory Committee held on 3 December 2019.