

Agenda

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Friday, 12 March 2021, 2.00 pm

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, Worcestershire County Council will be holding this meeting in accordance with the relevant legislative arrangements for remote meetings of a local authority. For more information please refer to: Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Please note that this is a public meeting, conducting remotely by videoconferencing between invited participants and live streamed for general access via a link on the Council's website to the Council's [Youtube channel](#)

The Agenda papers and background papers can be accessed electronically on the Council's website. Members of the public and press are permitted to report on the proceedings.

This document can be provided in alternative formats such as Large Print, an audio recording or Braille; it can also be emailed as a Microsoft Word attachment. Please contact Scrutiny on telephone number 01905 844965 or by emailing scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

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/recorded' 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.

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel Friday, 12 March 2021, 2.00 pm, Online

Membership

Councillors:

Mr A A J Adams (Chairman), Mr P Denham (Vice Chairman), Mr G R Brookes, Mr B Clayton, Mr M E Jenkins, Mr A D Kent, Mr R J Morris, Mr J A D O'Donnell and Mrs R Vale

Agenda

Item No	Subject	Page No
1	Apologies and Welcome	
2	Declarations of Interest and of any Party Whip	
3	Public Participation Members of the public wishing to take part should notify the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance in writing or by email indicating the nature and content of their proposed participation no later than 9.00am on the working day before the meeting (in this case 11 March 2021). Enquiries can be made through the telephone number/email address below.	
4	Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting To follow.	
5	Update on what the Council has done and is doing to Help Businesses in Worcestershire during COVID-19	1 - 16
6	Highways Operations Update	17 - 34
7	Work Programme	35 - 38

Agenda produced and published by the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP. To obtain further information or hard copies of this agenda, please contact Emma James or Jo Weston 01905 844965, email: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website [websitehttp://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20013/councillors_and_committees](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20013/councillors_and_committees)

Date of Issue: Thursday, 4 March 2021

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ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 12 MARCH 2021

UPDATE ON WHAT THE COUNCIL HAS DONE AND IS DOING TO HELP BUSINESSES I WORCESTERSHIRE DURING COVID-19

Summary

1. The Panel has requested an update on the Council's support to businesses during the COVID pandemic.
2. Senior Officers from the Directorate of Economy and Infrastructure have been invited to the meeting along with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Infrastructure.

Background

3. The county and district authorities along with the regulators and representatives of the business community, the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Worcestershire Regulatory Services, the National Farmers Union and Worcestershire Business Central have met regularly since March 2020 as Worcestershire COVID-19 Economic Response, Recovery and Resilience Group (WCERG). This group has provided a forum to initially understand the impact on the county and to co-ordinate resources effectively to deliver national programmes and develop a more targeted local understanding and frame our collective immediate economic and policy response to Covid-19. The group has developed an economic recovery framework to rapidly identify local interventions and the most effective ways to deploy resources.
4. There are five key areas of focus within the recovery framework which are:
 - a) Delivering co-ordinated, timely and accurate information about national programmes to the business community;
 - b) Focussing and enhancing current business support programmes available across Worcestershire and Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP Areas to support recovery;
 - c) Accelerating investment in major schemes;
 - d) The use of direct resources to support specific demands and opportunities including the Here2Help initiative;
 - e) Ensuring we have the best information we can – national analysis and local data.

The Economic Impact

5. As part of the recovery plan the Council has been continuing to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the economy, including the number of people claiming job seekers allowance plus universal credit (the claimant count) and the number of employments

which have been furloughed.

Worcestershire Claimant Count

6. Overall, the claimant count has risen by 9,885 compared to the same time last year, taking the total number of claimants within Worcestershire to 17,855 (5.1%), this figure has recently seen a small decline – see Table 1.

7. The claimant count for 18-24-year olds has risen to 8.3% although again has seen a slight decline over recent months - see Table 2.

8. Unemployment by gender: The increase in the claimant count over the last year has been greater for men, with a claimant count rate of 6.2% in January 21 compared to 4.0% for women.

Table 1: The Claimant Count within Worcestershire

Claimant Count	January 2021		Change on last month		Change on last year	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Bromsgrove	2,640	4.5%	-20	0.0%	1,530	2.6%
Malvern Hills	2,005	4.6%	-60	-0.1%	1,155	2.7%
Redditch	3,080	5.9%	-55	-0.1%	1,590	3.1%
Worcester	3,505	5.4%	-105	-0.1%	1,800	2.8%
Wychavon	3,190	4.3%	-70	-0.1%	1,930	2.6%
Wyre Forest	3,435	5.9%	-45	0.0%	1,880	3.2%
Worcestershire	17,855	5.1%	-355	-0.1%	9,885	2.8%
West Midlands	260,100	7.1%	-1,790	-0.1%	122,400	3.3%
England	2,200,965	6.3%	-15,820	0.0%	1,186,090	3.4%

Table 2: Claimant Count 18-24-year olds

Claimant Count (18-24)	January 2021		Change on last month		Change on last year	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Bromsgrove	510	8.4%	-10	-0.2%	320	5.3%
Malvern Hills	405	8.9%	-5	-0.1%	235	5.2%
Redditch	560	9.3%	0	0.0%	275	4.6%
Worcester	690	6.6%	-50	-0.5%	370	3.5%
Wychavon	640	8.2%	-5	-0.1%	380	4.8%
Wyre Forest	645	9.8%	-30	-0.5%	340	5.2%
Worcestershire	3,445	8.3%	-105	-0.3%	1,915	4.6%
West Midlands	51,220	9.7%	-960	-0.2%	25,175	4.8%
England	419,235	8.8%	-2,260	0.0%	234,585	4.9%

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) furloughed employments

9. In Worcestershire 39,700 employments were furloughed as at 31 January 2021. This represents a take-up rate of 14.7%, similar to regional and national rates. (Table 3)

10. The proportion of employees furloughed is highest in Wyre Forest at 15.2%.

11. The take up rate of CJRS has risen in the last month due to the January lockdown, the take up rate in the county in December 2020 was approx. 8%.

Table 3- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) furloughed employments

Area	Employments furloughed	Eligible employments	Take-up rate
Bromsgrove	6,500	44,300	14.7%
Malvern Hills	4,700	31,400	15.0%
Redditch	5,900	42,100	14.0%
Worcester	7,200	51,200	14.0%
Wychavon	8,900	58,900	15.0%
Wyre Forest	6,500	42,900	15.2%
Worcestershire	39,700	270,900	14.7%
West Midlands	366,400	2,552,300	14.4%
England	3,769,700	25,097,500	15.0%

Business Support

12. Working in partnership with Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce, Worcestershire Business Central (WBC) and Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP), the Council carried out two business surveys (in April and June 2020) to inform plans and understand local impact. The key findings of the surveys were:

- a) Almost 50% of the businesses surveyed were either in survival mode with the majority of staff furloughed or ticking over with staff furloughed but still operating to some degree.
- b) Unsurprisingly, 76% of the businesses surveyed expect a decrease in revenue; almost 30% of these businesses expect this decrease to be 50% or above. Key impacts and challenges for businesses over the next 3-6 months are lack of sales & orders, cashflow problems and the need to adapt products & services.
- c) Encouragingly, over 70% of respondents have taken up Government support; the experience ratings for the majority of these schemes were high with over 80% ratings of excellent, very good or good.
- d) From the survey findings, ongoing support is required to support local businesses, being provided with regular updates and clear information on compliance in relation to COVID 19 rules, support for business diversification and support with business development and marketing were the most popular requests from respondents.

13. The Council will be working with partners again to undertake a new business survey during March 2021 to get an updated position following recent announcements on the plan for the relaxing of restrictions.

14. In response to the Economic Recovery Plan several measures have been implemented, these include administration of government grants, refocussing and enhancing current business support schemes and new investments to support the economy to reopen and adapt.

15. Local districts councils have been administering government grants schemes including Small Business Grants Fund, Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Grants, Local Discretionary Grants, and Local Restrictions Grants; they have issued over 17,000 grants totalling more than £140m.

16. Following the announcement of the government's Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans Scheme (CBILS) and the Bounce Back Loan scheme, the Council has worked with British Business Bank to promote the availability of the schemes alongside local partners. Both schemes have seen a large take up. In Worcestershire 753 CBILS Loans have been offered at a value of £196,051,770 and 12,228 Bounce Back loans at a value of £353,863,934. This is an investment of almost £550m.

17. The County Council has refocussed existing EU funded business support schemes to ensure delivery can continue. This has resulted in services being offered online and the support been targeted at working with businesses on restart, adaption and resilience. The programmes include:

- a) **Enterprising Worcestershire:** a programme supporting new and early stage businesses.
- b) **Elevate:** a programme supporting our businesses to pivot and grow by providing expert advice and business consultancy and business grants.
- c) **Worcestershire Innovation:** supporting innovative local companies with direct bespoke support, access to Betaden (the county's technology accelerator based at MHSP) and access to business grants of up to £30k. The programme has also recently launched an Innovation Platform providing an ask, search, find facility, collaboration space and advice from experts
- d) **Clean Growth Programmes:** supporting businesses to reduce energy costs by becoming more energy efficient and supporting companies to develop and commercialise low carbon technologies and services.

18. In July 2020 Worcestershire County Council agreed to allocate £3.5m to support local businesses and launched the Here2Help Business Programme which offers five distinct areas of support: [Here2Help Business | Worcestershire County Council](#)

- a) Business Grants
- b) Business Support programme
- c) A specific programme to support agricultural businesses
- d) Graduate Programme
- e) Business mentoring (operated in conjunction with University of Worcester and Worcestershire Ambassadors).

19. Since the launch the service has responded to over 500 enquiries, and has supported over 230 companies with advice, consultancy and grant funding, including; 38 graduate placements.

20. Overall, since April 2020 approx. 17,400 grants have been awarded to Worcestershire based businesses totalling over £141.3m. This includes the

government grants administered by district councils and Worcestershire County Council's grant schemes.

21. Working with Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership and Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire Business Central has introduced new services to support local businesses, this has included additional business advisors, the launch and delivery of peer2peer networks focussing on key sectors including, tourism, food and drink, manufacturing, town centres etc. Administering a small business grant programme to 139 small and micro businesses has provided much needed funding to make business adaptations and support for sales and marketing.

22. Through the **Getting Building Fund**, working with Worcestershire LEP, the county has been awarded £12m to accelerate the delivery of key infrastructure schemes including; Malvern Technology Park, The Vale Business Park expansion, Shrub Hill Development, A456 improvements and Kepax walking and cycling bridge. Many of these schemes will provide local employment opportunities, make Worcestershire an attractive business location and improve the local area for residents.

23. The WCERG will continue to monitor the impact of COVID 19 on the local economy and work together to co-ordinate activities to maximise the support, the group can offer, and to ensure that local businesses are aware of all the support that is available on a local, regional and national basis.

Legal, Financial, and HR Implications

24. From a County Council perspective, alongside the £3.5 million allocation to support businesses including the Here2Help business support, Worcestershire's Growth Hub has facilitated support for businesses. This has been through a one stop shop for business support across the County which has been funded by a mixture of funding from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and ERDF grants totalling c£0.6 million.

25. Additional funding of c£0.2 million from BEIS was also received by the Growth Hub to deliver 11 cohorts on Peer to Peer networks, award ERDF grants to businesses affected by Covid and offer local and regional specialist support to all businesses affected by EU transition.

26. There are no legal or HR implications as far as we are aware with respect to this update.

Purpose of the meeting

27. The Panel is asked to consider and comment on the latest information update on the Council's support to businesses during the COVID pandemic and

- whether any further information or scrutiny is required at this stage.
- agree any comments to highlight to the Cabinet Member.

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 - Presentation

Contact Points

Emma James / Jo Weston, Overview and Scrutiny Officers, Tel: 01905 844964 / 844965
Email: scrutiny@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 and Minutes of Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 11 September 2019

Minutes and Agendas are available on the Council's website at: [web-link to agendas and minutes](#)

Support for Business

A partnership response:

Worcestershire COVID 19 Economic Response, Recovery and Resilience Group (WCERG) was established March 2020. An economic recovery framework was developed to rapidly identify local interventions and the most effective ways to deploy resources.

There are **five key areas of focus** within the recovery framework which are:

1. Delivering co-ordinated, timely and accurate information about national programmes/COVID 19 guidance to the business community;
2. Focusing and enhancing current business support programmes available across Worcestershire and Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP Areas to support restart and recovery;
3. Accelerating investment in major schemes;
4. The use of direct resources to support specific demands and opportunities including the Here2Help initiative;
5. Ensuring we have the best information we can – national analysis and local data.

Impact on the local Economy - Claimant Count

- Overall, the **claimant count** has **risen by 9,885** compared to the same time last year, taking the total number of claimants within Worcestershire to 17,855 (5.1%), this figure has recently seen a small decline.
- The claimant count for **18-24-year olds** has risen to **8.3%** although again has seen a slight decline over recent months.
- **Unemployment by gender:** The increase in the claimant count over the last year has been greater for men, with a claimant count rate of 6.2% in January 21 compared to 4.0% for women.

Impact on the local economy - Furlough

- In Worcestershire 39,700 employments were furloughed as at 31 January 2021. This represents a take-up rate of 14.7%, similar to regional and national rates.
- The proportion of employees furloughed is highest in Wyre Forest at 15.2%.
- The take up rate of CJRS has risen in the last month due to the January lockdown, the take up rate in the county in December 2020 was approx. 8%.

Area	Employments furloughed	Eligible employments	Take-up rate
Bromsgrove	6,500	44,300	14.7%
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Worcester	7,200	51,200	14.0%
Wychavon	8,900	58,900	15.0%
Wyre Forest	6,500	42,900	15.2%
Worcestershire	39,700	270,900	14.7%
West Midlands	366,400	2,552,300	14.4%
England	3,769,700	25,097,500	15.0%

What Businesses said....

Working in partnership with Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce, Worcestershire Business Central and Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership we carried out two business surveys (in April and June 2020) to inform plans and understand local impact. The key findings of the surveys were:

- Almost **50% of the businesses** surveyed were either in **survival mode** with the majority of staff furloughed or ticking over with staff furloughed but still operating to some degree
- Unsurprisingly, **76% of the businesses surveyed expect a decrease in revenue**; almost **30% of these businesses expect this decrease to be 50% or above**. Key challenges for businesses were lack of sales, cashflow problems and the need to adapt products/services.
- Encouragingly, **over 70% of respondents have taken up Government support**; the experience ratings for the majority of these schemes were high with over 80% ratings of excellent, very good or good
- The survey confirmed, **ongoing support is required** to support local businesses, being provided with **regular updates and clear information** on compliance in relation to COVID 19 rules, **support for business diversification** and **support with business development and marketing** were the most popular requests from respondents

Supporting Business

Repurposing existing support and developing new programmes:

- **Business Support Programmes**



Supporting Business

Repurposing existing support and developing new programmes:

Worcestershire Business Central – A single point of contact to access support



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- Supporting Businesses to employ young people



Supporting Business

- Local districts councils have been administering government grants schemes including; they have issued over **17,000 grants** totaling more than **£140m**.
- **Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans Scheme (CBILS)** and the **Bounce Back Loan scheme**, we have worked with British Business Bank to promote the availability of the schemes. Both schemes have seen a large take up. In Worcestershire 753 CBILS Loans have been offered at a value at £196,051,770 and 12,228 Bounce Back loans at a value of £353,863,934. This is an investment of almost £550m.
- **Getting Building Fund:** Awarded £12m to accelerate the delivery of key infrastructure schemes including; Malvern Technology Park, The Vale Business Park expansion, Shrub Hill Development, A456 improvements and Kepax walking and cycling bridge. Many of these schemes will provide local employment opportunities, making Worcestershire an attractive business location and improve the local area for residents.

Marketing & Comms: Social Media



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- Re-launched Twitter account as Business Worcestershire (**@BusinessWorcs**)
- Implemented a new content plan & social media strategy with regular posts, which has resulted in increased followers and engagements
- Increased posts on LinkedIn to engage our business audience
- Launched project-led social media campaigns to increase awareness of business support programmes.

Marketing & Comms: Social Media

We have recently launched two newsletters to promote the work of the County Council and keep our database of businesses and suppliers informed about the latest business news, and the support on offer.

- Businesses (issued bi-monthly)
- Suppliers (issued bi-annually)

We will continue to send these out regularly, and will be building this database to reach a larger readership.

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Business Worcestershire

Welcome to the Business Worcestershire newsletter!

Here at Worcestershire County Council, we've been working hard throughout the pandemic to ensure our local businesses are supported during these challenging times.

We have a variety of different support available to businesses of all sizes across the county. This regular newsletter will keep you up to date with the latest news including the support available to you and your business. Take a read to find out more.

Support Available



Book a free business advice session

We're here to support your business during these challenging times. As part of our Here2Help Business programme, our expert advisers are offering support in key areas to enable Worcestershire businesses to adapt, recover and build resilience for the future.

Set up in response to COVID-19, the Adapt Programme offers hours of free advice sessions and consultancy to help businesses across a variety of sectors. Click on the key areas below to find out more about the support available to you:

- Business Planning & Finance
- Marketing & Digital Comms
- IT & Technology

Are you a future-thinking Worcestershire business, passionate about innovating?



Do you understand how innovation can drive growth, productivity, and your competitive advantage? Why not learn more from cutting-edge innovators and subject specialists about how these ideas can work in your business?

The WINN Innovation Launch Pad is your mission, should you choose to accept it. To find more, check out the mission HQ by [clicking here](#). If you tick all of these boxes then sign up to the next mission day on 22nd and 23rd Feb 2021 by [clicking here](#).

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 12 MARCH 2021

HIGHWAYS OPERATIONS UPDATE

Summary

1. The Panel has requested an update on the Council's highways operations, specifically plans for expenditure of the additional 2021/22 Budget funding for highways, footways and public rights of way, as well as an update on use of drainage system technology to improve reporting facilities.
2. Senior Officers from the Directorate of Economy and Infrastructure have been invited to the meeting along with the Cabinet Member for Highways.
3. Further information is included in the presentation slides at Appendix 1.

Carriage, Footways and Public Rights of Way

4. As part of the Panel's scrutiny of the 2021/22 Council budget, which was agreed by Council on 18 February, Panel members are aware of, and welcome, the additional expenditure available for highways (£6million), footways (£4million) and public rights of way (£500,000).
5. The Panel has therefore requested an initial update on plans for expenditure for:
 - Highways Carriageway Condition – Aim for Upper Quartile
 - Footways – a priority for residents
 - Enhancement of Public Rights of Way

Cyclical Drainage

6. Gully cleansing is an area which the Panel has maintained regular oversight of, including systems and schedules to cleanse and use of technology to report issues.
7. The Directorate has carried out a collaborative exercise with the Council's Service Contractor, Ringway, to review the data relating to drainage assets, including cleansing frequency, locations and defects identified.
8. The exercise identified the following requirements:
 - Good understanding of cyclic maintenance and resources required
 - Effective prioritisation schedule for assets to determine frequency of inspections
 - Improved mapping facility to improve performance
 - Better information available
 - Pilot test study - users/geographical area
 - Additional future funding to enhance Highways drainage network

Purpose of the meeting

9. The Panel is asked to consider and comment on the highways operations update and determine:

- whether any further information or scrutiny is required at this stage.
- agree any comments to highlight to the Cabinet Member.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Presentation Slides: Highways & Footways (slides 1-9); Public Rights of Way (slide 10), Cyclical drainage (slides 11-15)

Contact Points

Emma James / Jo Weston, Overview and Scrutiny Officers, Tel: 01905 844964 / 844965
Email: scrutiny@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 and Minutes of Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 23 January 2020, 21 November 2019 and 14 November 2018

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ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Highways Operations Update

March 2021

Content

- Carriageways
- Footways
- Public Rights of Way
- Cyclical Drainage

Carriageways

Funding

Additional funding of £12M has been made available for the improvement of the Worcestershire's carriageway asset. This has been split equally over two financial years – 2020/21 & 2021/22

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DfT funding for carriageways for 2020/21 is £14.4M.

The combined funding available for carriageway improvements is £20.4M



Carriageways Cont.

How does this funding compare to previous years?

Year	Dft Funding	WCC Funding	Total
2017/18	£9.8M	£4.2M	£14.0M
2018/19	£10.6M	£4.0M	£14.6M
2019/20	£9.8M	£3.8M	£13.6M
2020/21	£14.4M	£6.0M	£20.4M

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The final budget for 2021/22 has not yet been finalised but it is expected to be Circa £20M

Carriageways Cont.

Current Strategy

Strive for road condition to be in the Upper Quartile of condition of A, B, C and U roads in Worcestershire measured with the national average of road condition.

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Annual Programme

In order to get best value from structural maintenance funding, schemes are prioritised using a number of factors but including road condition data, defect data (number of pothole repairs), engineer site assessments as well as cost/benefit analysis

Footways

Funding

Additional funding of £8M has been made available for the improvement of the Worcestershire's footway asset. This has been split equally over two financial years – 2020/21 & 2021/22

DfT funding for Footways for 2020/21 is £2.43M.

Page 24 £1.8M of this fund is utilised for structural renewals. The remainder is utilised for other footway treatments including preventative treatments such as thin micro-surfacing overlay.

There has also been addition funding provided through the New Members Highways Fund. To date, circa £1.5M of the available £2.5M Fund has been spent on footway renewal schemes.

Footways Cont.

Footway Hierarchy

The total length of the footway network amounts to circa 3,400km and has been divided into the following categories

Main Shopping Areas

Busy Urban

Less Used / Quite Urban

Busy Rural



Footways Cont.

Funding Allocation

Recent asset trend analysis shows steady improvement for all footway categories. Therefore, available funding is prioritised and allocated based on the following factors:

- Information and modelling scenarios provided by the Asset Management Team. This identifies the lengths of footways requiring treatment in all categories of footway.
- Identified footways defects and clusters of defects (Advisories raised by Highways Inspectors or Liaison Engineers on behalf of Members).
- Third Party Claims information in relation to footways.
- An onsite engineering assessment of each footway identified from the above information.



Footways Cont.

Forward Programme

The funding allocation for 2021/22 is expected to be circa £7.3M. However this may increase if additional footways are funded through the New Members Highways Fund (£1.25M for 2021/22).

The Core budget allocation has already been agreed and passed to Ringway to programme for next year.

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Members have each been sent a list of proposed schemes for their Division. A good deal of Members have already replied and agreed with our proposals.

Sufficient schemes have already been passed to Ringway to allow them to programme up to November

It is likely that the annual programme will require between 10 – 12 gangs working throughout the year to deliver the full budget allocation.



Public Rights of Way

Enhancements 2021/22

The funding allocation for 2021/22 has been increased by £500k Capital and £100k revenue in order to enhance the PRow network.

A project group has been established to ensure that the additional works are carried out efficiently and effectively, within budget and with member approval

Funding will be deployed across a variety of schemes including:

- Traditional PRow works (Gates, styles, footpaths, signage etc.)
- Structures – bridges
- Enhancement of well used footpaths
- A mixture of urban and rural rights of way ensure accessibility

Designed to ensure that value is added to the PRow network, at a time when it being used more than ever

Cyclical Drainage

Gully Cleaning Update

There are circa 104,000 gullies on the Worcestershire highways network. There are also circa 10,000 additional drainage assets such as grips and spillways.

During 2019/20, significant resources were deployed to cleanse the County's drainage assets and improve the asset data recording and reporting functions.

During the past few months Ringway have utilised resources both within Worcestershire and on other contracts to analyse the new data to produce a revamped optimised cleansing schedule.

All drainage assets have now been prioritised based on recent and historic data. This prioritisation will determine the cleansing frequency for each gully. E.g. Monthly, quarterly, six monthly, annually or bi-annually.

Cyclical Drainage Cont.

Mapping Systems

Each Gully has a unique ID reference and has been accurately plotted on the Council's GIS mapping system

Through GIS, each gully can be interrogated to determine the following

Unique ID reference

Cleaning frequency

Date last attended

Known issues

Cyclical Drainage Cont.

Online Mapping System

This system is in the final stages of development. This is in two parts:

1. Ensuring the data is accurate and fit for purpose
2. Ensuring the functionality of the system is compatible with the existing 'report it' function on the WCC website

Both parts of this development are progressing well and a demonstration of the system will take place later this month.

A trial period will then commence with a limited amount of users to ensure any glitches are identified and rectified before the platform is launched.

Cyclical Drainage Cont.

GIS Platform

The screenshot displays a GIS interface with a map of a road network. A popup window titled 'Ringway Drain Info' is open, showing the following data:

Gully_ID	WG026858
Eastings	379319
Northings	248413
Zone	Area 3 - Zone 22
Location Number	2138
Address	Worcester Road, Great Malvern, WR14 1, England
Cycle	Annually
Road Class	A
Drainage Type	Gully
Cleanse Status	Emptied- Gully Emptier
Attended Date	18/11/2019 10:45:16
Silt Levels	Half Full (50%)
Traffic Management	Stop & Go
Vehicle Reg	worcs.f03@AKEN
Have you Relocated the Gully?	No

The map shows a road network with various features like 'Clarence Park', 'Madeley Brook', and 'Woodlands R'. A blue arrow points to a specific gully location on the map.



Cyclical Drainage Cont.

Next Steps

Additional drainage funding has been made available next year which will be used to provide the necessary resource to repair many of the defects identified during the recent gully emptying activities.

The new asset data system provides sophisticated reporting functions that allow us to identify and cluster similar defects into work streams

In preparation for next financial year, works programmes are already in development to ensure works can start at the beginning of April.

Whilst this is still a work in progress, we envisage there will be three additional drainage crews next year as well as an additional jetting resource capable of high pressure jetting and root cutting.

Any Questions...



ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 12 MARCH 2021

WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

Summary

1. From time to time the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel will review its work programme and consider which issues should be investigated as a priority.

Background

2. Worcestershire County Council has a rolling annual Work Programme for Overview and Scrutiny. The suggested 2020/21 Work Programme has been developed by taking into account issues still to be completed from 2019/20, the views of Overview and Scrutiny Panel Members and the findings of the budget scrutiny process.
3. Suggested issues have been prioritised using scrutiny feasibility criteria in order to ensure that topics are selected subjectively and the 'added value' of a review is considered right from the beginning.
4. The Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel is responsible for scrutiny of:
 - Economy
 - Environment
 - Highways
 - Infrastructure
5. The current Work Programme was agreed by OSPB on 22 July and by Council on 10 September 2020.

Dates of Future Meetings

- 19 July, 2pm
- 10 September, 10am
- 9 November, 2pm

Purpose of the Meeting

6. The Panel is asked to:
 - Consider the 2020/21 Work Programme (attached at Appendix 1) and agree whether it would like to make any amendments so that the topics listed will be as relevant as possible to the new Panel membership following the County Council elections.
 - Forward the agreed Work Programme to the OSPB on 17 March 2021.
 - Retain the flexibility to take into account any urgent issues which may arise.

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2020/21

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 and Minutes for Council on 10 September 2020
- Agenda and Minutes of OSPB on 22 July 2020

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)

2020/21 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME: Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date of Meeting	Issue for Scrutiny	Date of Last Report	Notes/Follow-up Action
12 March 2021	Update on what the County has done and is doing to help businesses in Worcestershire during COVID-19		Requested at Agenda planning
	Highways Operations Update		Requested at Agenda planning
Standing Items	Performance and In-year Finance Monitoring	Jan/March/July/Sept/Nov	
	Broadband Annual Update	29 May 2020	
	Flooding Annual Update	29 May 2020	
	Highway Maintenance Annual Update		
	Street Lighting Annual Update	4 August 2020	
	The Council's Work and Role in Tackling Climate Change (Council 16 May 2019) including monitoring progress against the new goal of being carbon neutral by 2050	4 August 2020	
	Active Travel in Worcestershire	9 November 2020	Further updates requested at 9 November 2020 meeting, and by OSPB on 19 November 2020

NB – A Scrutiny Task Group was commissioned by OSPB on 6 January 2021 to look at Developer-Funded Highways Infrastructure and Section 278 Technical Approval and is included on the OSPB Work Programme

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