

Agenda

Council

Thursday, 8 September 2022, 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/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.

Thursday, 8 September 2022, 10.00 am, County Hall, Worcester

Agenda and Summons

Councillors: Cllr Chris Rogers (Chairman), Cllr Alastair Adams, Cllr Salman Akbar, Cllr Mel Allcott, Cllr Martin Allen, Cllr Alan Amos, Cllr Marc Bayliss, Cllr Dan Boatright, Cllr Bob Brookes, Cllr David Chambers, Cllr Brandon Clayton, Cllr Kyle Daisley, Cllr Lynn Denham, Cllr Nathan Desmond, Cllr Allah Ditta, Cllr Matt Dormer, Cllr Elizabeth Eyre, Cllr Simon Geraghty, Cllr Laura Gretton, Cllr Peter Griffiths, Cllr Karen Hanks, Cllr Ian Hardiman, Cllr Adrian Hardman, Cllr Paul Harrison, Cllr Marcus Hart, Cllr Bill Hopkins, Cllr Matt Jenkins, Cllr Adam Kent, Cllr Adrian Kriss, Cllr Aled Luckman, Cllr Steve Mackay, Cllr Luke Mallett, Cllr Emma Marshall, Cllr Karen May, Cllr Natalie McVey, Cllr Tony Miller, Cllr Jo Monk, Cllr Dan Morehead, Cllr Richard Morris, Cllr Tony Muir, Cllr Beverley Nielsen, Cllr Tracey Onslow, Cllr Scott Richardson Brown, Cllr Andy Roberts, Cllr Josh Robinson, Cllr Linda Robinson, Cllr David Ross, Cllr Mike Rouse, Cllr Jack Satterthwaite, Cllr James Stanley, Cllr Emma Stokes, Cllr Kit Taylor, Cllr Richard Udall, Cllr Craig Warhurst, Cllr Shirley Webb, Cllr Tom Wells and Vacancy

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 7 September). Further details are available on the Council's website. Enquiries can also be made through the telephone number/e-mail address listed in this agenda and on the website.

3 Minutes

To approve as a correct record and authorise the signing of the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2022 (previously circulated electronically).

4 Chairman's Announcements

To receive any announcements to be made by the Chairman.

5 Reports of Cabinet 1 - 2

To consider the reports of the Cabinet and to receive answers to any questions asked on the report of Cabinet – Summary of decisions taken

6 Constitutional Matters 3 - 18

To consider (a) Integrated Care Partnership and Integrated Care Partnership Assembly; (b) Independent Remuneration Panel; and (c) Arrow Valley West By-Election.

7 Notices of Motion 19 - 22

To receive the report of the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance on any Notices of Motion received by him.

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 30 August 2022.

8 Reports of the Cabinet Members with Responsibility 23 - 42

To receive the reports of the Cabinet Members with Responsibility for Children and Families, and Education on current issues and proposed developments within their area of responsibility and to receive answers to any questions on these reports.

9 Question Time 43 - 44

To receive answers to any questions asked by Councillors.

(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 30 August 2022 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 and the Chairman agrees the matter is urgent'.*)

10 Reports of Committees 45 - 50

To consider the report of the Audit and Governance Committee and to receive answers to any questions asked on that report.

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 for all councillors at 1.00pm or thereabouts in the Lakeview Room.

Agenda produced and published by Abraham Ezekiel, 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, 31 August 2022

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COUNCIL

8 SEPTEMBER 2022

REPORT OF CABINET - SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN

Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2020/21

1. Steve Eccleston, the Independent Chair of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership, attended the Cabinet meeting and presented the annual report for 2020/21.

2. The safeguarding partnership replaced the Board in 2019 following a change to legislation. The three member Partners, Worcestershire Children First, West Mercia Police and Health have equal responsibility for safeguarding. The Executive Group is made up of a representative from each of the Partners and the Chair of each of the four subgroups which are:

1. Get Safe Partnership Group
2. Quality Assurance Practice and Procedures Group (QAPP)
3. Child safeguarding Practice Review Group, and
4. Head Teachers Education Safeguarding Steering Group

3. Areas discussed included the breadth of the projects being provided and supported by partners, development of the GET SAFE initiative and the potential impact of changes to the health system. From a safeguarding perspective, Cabinet was reassured that the experienced safeguarding leads working in Health were still working within the new system.

3. The efforts of all involved in developing and demonstrating good practice was acknowledged at the meeting.

Malvern Hills Art College

4. Cabinet has allocated £0.4 million from the Open for Business reserve as a grant to a third party, Malvern Hills Arts & Community College Limited, to enable it to purchase the Malvern Hills Community College site, on condition that the limited company provides an arts skills programme from the site to meet the need of the community. Malvern Hills District Council and an external funder are also supporting the Company in this endeavour.

5. Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) has carried out an independent review of the Business plan, which concluded the plans put forward warrant support.

6. As a matter of general policy, provision of this sort is delivered by the market. The Council has a duty to ensure sufficiency of provision, but it is not considered that the Council has a specific 'duty' to ensure that the College remains in operation. However, the Council has powers under the General Power of Competence in the Localism Act

2011 to provide support. The local community has demonstrated support for the proposals to enable a continuing arts and creative educational presence in the town.

Shrub Hill Quarter

7. In November 2020, Cabinet agreed the purchase of interests in Gamechanger 2 Sites within the Parameters as set out in the report (topographical, legal, value and financial). These purchases were to be funded through the increase in the Capital Programme approved by Council on 12 November 2020.

8. The Council (WCC) purchased 3.93 hectares of land in two parcels, known as the Shrub Hill Industrial Estate (SHIE), on 30 November 2020 in accordance with the mandate provided by Cabinet.

9. Cabinet has now considered a report updating it on progress with the regeneration of this area. The County Council is working with Worcester City Council and other partners in developing a shared development vision for the Shrub Hill area as a whole and has also secured £985,000 Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF) grant for the release of land for housing. This can be applied to brownfield land in the ownership of the Council.

10. Cabinet has authorised the Strategic Director for Economy Infrastructure and Skills to let contracts to undertake works on Unit 16 of the SHIE in accordance with the BLRF grant and following due process of vacation of the site. It has also agreed that consultant/s are engaged to advise on the services that are required, funded from the Strategic Infrastructure reserve and that a market engagement exercise is carried out to understand the options for the packaging and phasing of works to optimise the conditions attached to any grants and to maximise any income. Cabinet will receive a further report, following the undertaking of the market testing, on the proposals for development of SHIE.

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

Sheena Jones, Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager

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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 background papers for the meeting of the Cabinet held on and 21 July:
[Browse meetings - Cabinet - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk)

COUNCIL
8 SEPTEMBER 2022
CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

(a) Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) and Integrated Care Partnership Assembly (ICPA)
Recommendations
1. The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance recommends that Council:

(a) Approves the terms of reference for the Integrated Care Partnership Assembly attached at Appendix 1; and

(b) Authorises the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance to update the constitution accordingly.

2. At its meeting in July, the Council considered a report updating it on the implementation of the Health and Care Act 2022 and approved changes to the terms of reference of the Health and Wellbeing Board. This report proposes that the terms of reference of the Integrated care Partnership and the associated Assembly are approved.

3. The Health and Care Act 2022 amends the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act to require the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and local authorities within its area to form an integrated care partnership (ICP). This is a joint committee and is made up of members appointed by the ICB and each relevant authority. It is proposed that the County Council's representatives include the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing as the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board, plus the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and three Directors - for Public Health, Children and People.

4. The ICP has a statutory duty to prepare the Integrated Care Strategy, which sets out how the assessed needs of an area will be met by either the ICB, NHS England or the local authorities. The local authorities' (Worcestershire and Herefordshire) Joint Strategic Needs Assessments will be shared with the ICP as part of this work.

5. The Health and Wellbeing Board of each local authority is required to prepare the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy in response to the Integrated Care Strategy. It is proposed that the Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy being prepared at the moment, following extensive consultation over the summer, will fulfil this requirement.

6. As the terms of reference attached as Appendix 1 illustrate, the ICP will meet in public and involve a wide range of local partners and stakeholders to participate in the discussions. These meetings with the wider attendance will be known as the Integrated Care Partnership Assembly (ICPA). The purpose of this wider meeting will be to develop an integrated care strategy that describes how the assessed health, care and

wellbeing of the population of Herefordshire and Worcestershire will be met. In doing so it will address integration of health, social care and health related services.

7. The core membership for the County Council is:
- Health and Wellbeing Board Chair
 - Cabinet member for Adult Social Care
 - Strategic Director for People
 - Chief Executive WCF & Director of Children's Services
 - Director of Public Health.

The Core Members are accountable and responsible for decisions made by the ICP. In reaching these decisions they will listen to and have due regard to the advice and input of the wider assembly membership.

8. Outputs from meetings of the ICP will be reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

(b) Independent Remuneration Panel

Recommendations

9. **The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance recommends that Council:**

- (a) Approves the reconstitution of the Independent Remuneration Panel with 5 members and that recruitment of members to the Panel is undertaken as set out at paragraph 12;**
- (b) Approves the terms of reference as set out in Appendix 2;**
- (c) Authorises the Chief Executive to make all necessary arrangements to put the recommendations in this report into effect and to bring recommendations for membership to Council for approval in due course; and**
- (d) Note that it is intended that the Panel will commence work on reviewing the Members Allowances scheme as soon as practicable in order to make recommendations to the Council in 2023.**

10. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003 require local authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to be responsible for making recommendations to the Council regarding the Members' Allowances Scheme. The Council must have regard to a report of the Panel when creating or amending its scheme of allowances.

11. The Panel must comprise at least 3 members and be independent of the Council. Previously it has been agreed by Council that membership of the Panel should be 5 in total, with varied backgrounds and to include one citizen representative.

12. Former Panel members have been approached to find out whether they would consider re-joining it for continuity of knowledge and expertise, but we would still have some vacancies on it. At the time of writing the report we have had one positive

response and propose that any former Panel members who re-join assist the Chief Executive in recruitment and selection to the vacancies. Council will be asked to confirm the appointments at a future meeting.

13. The role of the Panel is set out in Appendix 2 to this report. Council is asked to confirm these. The role of Panel member is voluntary, although the Council pays expenses incurred as a consequence of taking part. It is proposed that terms of office will be for 4 years and staggered, in order to ensure continuity.

(c) Arrow Valley West By-Election

Recommendation

14. The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance recommends that the Council notes the outcome of the by-election for Arrow Valley West and if required, reviews the political balance of the Council.

15. Following the resignation of Aled Evans, a by-election is being held in Arrow Valley West on 1 September.

16. The outcome of the by-election is not known at the time of publishing this report. Once the new Councillor is elected, they may choose to join a political group. The Council may therefore be required to review the allocation of seats on Committees etc, depending on which group they join. The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance will update Councillors once this is known and, if necessary, a proposed allocation of seats in accordance with political balance requirements will be circulated as soon as available for consideration at the Council meeting.

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Supporting information

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference for the Integrated care Partnership and Integrated Care Partnership Assembly

Appendix 2 – Terms of Reference for the Independent Remuneration Panel

Appendix 3 – Proposed allocation of places (to follow if required)

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.

H&W Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) and Integrated Care Partnership Assembly (ICPA)

Agreed Terms of Reference (July 2022)

Last reviewed: 28.07.2022

Next Review:

Co-Chairs	Chair, Herefordshire Health & Wellbeing Board Chair, Worcestershire Health & Wellbeing Board
Vice Chair	Chair, NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire
Joint Responsible Executives	Executive Director of Strategy and Integration, NHS Herefordshire & Worcestershire Director of Public Health, Herefordshire Council Director of Public Health, Worcestershire County Council
Administrator	Senior Business Support Officer, NHS Herefordshire & Worcestershire
Frequency of Meetings	At least twice a year
Core Purpose of the ICPA	To oversee development and delivery of the System Integrated Care Strategy and its deployment across partner organisations.
Reporting and Relationships	There is a direct relationship with the Herefordshire Health and Well-being board and the Worcestershire Health and Well-being board.

1. INTRODUCTION

- a) The Integrated Care Partnership (“**The ICP**”) is a statutory committee jointly established between NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire, Herefordshire Council and Worcestershire county council (“**The statutory organisations**”) and is established in accordance with Section 116ZA of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (as amended by the Health and Care Act 2022).
- b) When the statutory committee meets, it will do so in public and will invite a wide range of local partners and stakeholders to participate in the discussions. For the purposes of clarity, this wider group will be called The Integrated Care Partnership Assembly (“**The ICPA**”).
- c) The work of the ICPA does not duplicate the work of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Well-being Boards.
- d) These terms of reference set out the membership, remit, responsibilities and reporting arrangements of the joint committee.

2. PURPOSE

The ICPA is established to:

- a) Bring a broad alliance of partners together to develop an integrated care strategy that describes how the assessed health, care and wellbeing of the population of Herefordshire and Worcestershire will be met. Addressing integration of health, social care and health related services.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the ICPA are to:

- a) Develop strong relationships and a collaborative culture across all partners, driving the strategic direction of the system, through setting the overarching strategy for integration at system and place.
- b) Create a system level forum to support and enhance the work programmes to improve population health outcomes and reduce health inequalities at Place by addressing complex, long term issues that require a system level integrated approach across stakeholders.
- c) Enable the engagement of people and communities in the development of the integrated care strategy and associated work programmes as well as drawing on insights from the existing work such as that undertaken to develop the Health and Wellbeing strategies.
- d) Identify areas where work undertaken by individual Health and Wellbeing Boards can be shared in the spirit of collective learning, economies of scale and to the benefit of the local people.
- e) Ensure that best available evidence and data is used to inform the development of the integrated care strategy through drawing upon the joint strategic needs assessments and other sources of rich data, insight and intelligence, with support of public health teams to ensure robust application of evidence to work programme design.
- f) Enable, encourage and support partners, places and collaboratives to improve and innovate, including advocating for new approaches and transformational ways of working.

4. MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

4.1 – Core Members of the statutory committee

a) The proposed core membership of the statutory committee is:

Organisation	Role
Chair	HWBB Chairs as Co-Chairs ICB Chair as Vice-Chair
Herefordshire Council (5 committee members)	Health and Wellbeing Board Chair
	Leader
	Corporate Director for Community Wellbeing
	Corporate Director for Children and Young People
	Director of Public Health
Worcestershire County Council (5 committee members)	Health and Wellbeing Board Chair
	Cabinet member for Adult Social Care
	Strategic Director for People
	Chief Executive WCF & Director of Children’s Services
	Director of Public Health
NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB (5 committee members)	Chair (Vice-chair of the ICPA)
	Non-Executive Member
	Chief Executive
	Executive Director of Strategy and Integration
	Director of Partnerships, Prevention and Health Inequalities

b) The Core Members are accountable and responsible for decisions made by the ICP. In reaching these decisions they will listen to and have due regard to the advice and input of the wider assembly membership.

4.2 – Additional members

a) To enable the opportunity to have open wide-ranging stakeholder input to the partnership, the following places on the Assembly will be created:

Additional Members	Places
Healthwatch Herefordshire and Healthwatch Worcestershire	2
Chief Executive Leads for the two Place-based Partnerships	2
NHS England - Specialised commissioning	1
West Midlands Ambulance service	1
Worcestershire District Councils*	6
Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service	1
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner	1
West Mercia Police	1
Worcester University – 3 Counties medical school	1

Representative Members	
Local Medical, Dental and Optometry Committees	3
Other providers in areas such as Audiology, Pharmacy, Drug Services, Sexual Health	5**
VCSE Sector across both counties	4
Domiciliary Care Providers	2
Care Home Providers representatives	2
Housing Provider / RSL representatives	2
Education Providers representatives	2
Carer's Representatives	2
Youth Council Members	2
Additional and Representative Members	40
Core Committee Members	15
Total Membership	55

*Local Government Structures are different in the two counties – see Appendix 1 for more information

**Estimate, dependent on engagement and feedback from sectors.

- b) Representative Members will be asked to make connections between the ICPA and the sector in which they are representing. The core focus of this role is not to champion the interests of any single organisation.

4.3 – Attendance

- a) It is expected that Core Members will make themselves available, by exception, where this is not possible a deputy of sufficient authority may attend.
- b) Additional and Representative Members are welcome to nominate a substitute for the Assembly Meetings if these leaves the sector un-represented.

4.4 – Quorum

- a) The quorum is set at two thirds of the Core Membership, with at least 2 members from each statutory partner. If a quorum has not been reached, then the meeting may proceed, but no decisions may be taken.
- b) There is no Quorum requirement governing the wider Assembly Membership.

5. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- a) All members of the ICPA will be asked to declare conflicts of interest. Any substitutes nominated to attend on behalf of core members or wider assembly members must provide declarations of interest in relation to agenda items in advance of the meeting.
- b) The Chair will have an extract of members conflicts of interest declarations available for reference. Where a member/attendee is aware of an interest, conflict or potential conflict of interest in relation to the scheduled or likely business of the meeting, they will bring this to the attention of the Chair of the meeting as soon as possible, and before the meeting where possible.

- c) Members of the ICPA will adopt the following approaches to managing and mitigating conflicts or potential conflicts of interest:
 - i. To operate in line with their own sovereign organisational governance frameworks and sector specific guidance for probity and decision making and managing conflicts.
 - ii. To work in line with the ICS behaviours, values and priorities (which are currently under development)
 - iii. To abide by the Nolan Principles (appendix 2)
- d) Conflicts of interest will be included as a standing agenda item at the beginning of each meeting, where the chair will invite any members to declare any interests in connection to the business of the meeting.
- e) The Chair will determine how this should be managed and inform the member of their decision. The Chair may require the individual to withdraw from the meeting or part of it. Where the Chair is aware that they themselves have such an interest, conflict or potential conflict of interests they will bring it to the attention of the meeting, and the Vice Chair will act as Chair for the relevant part of the meeting
- f) Any declarations of interests, conflicts and potential conflicts, and arrangements to manage those agreed in any meeting will be recorded in the minutes. This will be subsequently recorded within the “Conflicts of Interest Declared During a Meeting” register.
- g) Failure to disclose an interest, whether intentional or otherwise, will be treated in line with the Managing Conflicts of Interest: Revised Statutory Guidance and may result in suspension from the meeting

6. MEETINGS AND VOTING

- a) The Chair will always actively seek to facilitate discussions that reach consensus amongst the core members. Decisions are expected to relate, in the main to the approval and oversight of the Integrated Care Strategy (which is to be developed between August and December 2022 and reviewed annually following initial approval).
- b) In the event of needing to vote on a decision, the following approach will be taken:
 - a. One vote per core member who is in attendance at the meeting.
 - b. Core member deputies are able to vote.
- c) Voting requirements do not apply to wider assembly members.
- d) If a decision is needed which cannot wait for the next scheduled meeting or it is not considered necessary to call a full meeting, the joint committee may choose to convene a special meeting to conduct its business.

7. SECRETARIAT AND ADMINISTRATION

- a) The Committee will be supported by an officer from NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire, who will work closely with the joint responsible executives supporting the Health and Wellbeing Boards. The overarching aim of ensuring that the joint committee receives relevant and timely information and that key documents such as the agendas, reports, minutes, the forward plan

and action log are effectively maintained and circulated in a timely manner. This will include ensuring that:

- i. Papers will be circulated at least 5 working days prior to meetings
- ii. Additional agenda items will be by exception and agreed by the Chair in advance
- iii. Draft minutes will be circulated within 5 working days of the meeting being held and will be ratified at the following meeting
- iv. Ratified minutes will be published on the ICS website

8. FREQUENCY

- a) In normal years ICPA meetings shall take place bi-annually in September/October and May/June.
- b) In the first year of formation ICPA meetings will take place in July (inaugural meeting to form the Joint Committee), September (to review progress on the creation of the Draft Integrated Care Strategy and December (to approve the Draft Integrated Care Strategy for publication).
- c) A minimum of 7 day's notice for calling a special meeting shall be given unless the meeting is being called due to urgent circumstances. If a discussion is needed which cannot wait for the next scheduled meeting, the Chair may choose to convene an ad hoc virtual meeting to conduct the discussion.
- d) During the year the two Health and Well-being boards will undertake the remit for overseeing the delivery of integration at place through their normal meeting cycle.

9. AUTHORITY

The ICP is a Statutory Joint Committee, convened under the 2022 Health & Care Act. It operates on a partnership and collaborative basis. Each of the constituent statutory partner members organisations remains responsible for discharging their sovereign statutory duties.

- a) The meetings will be Co-Chaired by the two Health and Wellbeing Board chairs on a rotating basis, with the specific arrangements to be agreed as part of the agenda setting process for each meeting. Where one HWBB chair is not available, the meeting will be chaired by the other. Where both HWBB chairs are not available, the meeting will be chaired by the ICB Chair.

10. REPORTING

- a) Outputs from the ICPA (in particular the Integrated Care Strategy) will be reported to:
 - a. Herefordshire Health and Wellbeing Board
 - b. Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board
 - c. NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board

11. CONDUCT OF THE MEETING

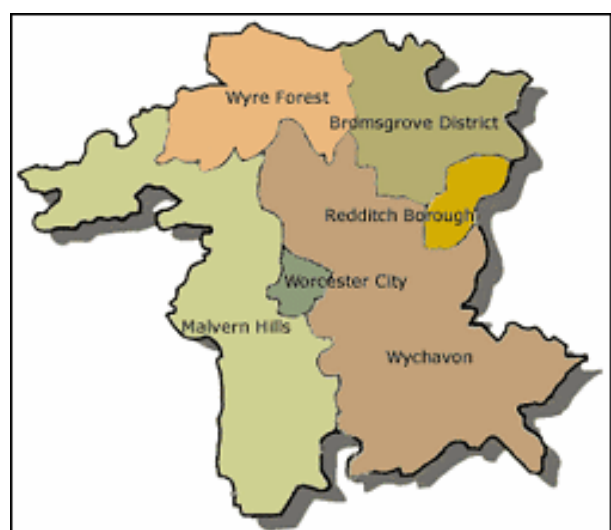
- a) The joint committee shall conduct its business in accordance with any national guidance. The seven Nolan principles of public life shall underpin the committee and its members.

12. REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

- a) Under normal circumstances the joint committee shall review its terms of reference annually. In the first year these will be reviewed after 6 months.

APPENDIX 1 – Public Sector Landscape in Herefordshire and Worcestershire

	Herefordshire	Worcestershire
Upper Tier Local Authority Services	Herefordshire Council	Worcestershire County Council
Children's Services		Worcestershire Children's First
Lower tier Local Authority Services		Six District Councils
NHS Acute Services	Wye Valley NHS Trust	Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust
NHS Community Services		
NHS Mental Health Services	Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care Trust	
NHS Ambulance Services	West Midlands Ambulance Service	
NHS 111 Services	West Midlands Ambulance Service (until Oct '22) DHU Healthcare (after Oct '22)	
GP Services	19 Practices in 5 PCNs	60 Practices in 10 PCNs
Police	West Mercia Police	
Fire and Rescue	Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service	



Worcestershire's Six District Councils

APPENDIX 2 – THE NOLAN PRINCIPLES

1 Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2 Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3 Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4 Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5 Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6 Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7 Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

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Independent Remuneration Panel

Terms of Reference

1. To review the level and extent of allowance payments currently made to county councillors having particular regard to:-
 - The role of the county councillor and the importance of effective democratically accountable local government and community leadership;
 - The scale and complexity of the County council's operations and changes taking place in the various roles councillors are expected to fulfil and the particular responsibilities attached to the various roles;
 - The time and commitment required from councillors to enable both the Council and individual councillors to be effective in their various roles; and
 - The importance of encouraging people from all backgrounds and circumstances to serve in local government without suffering financial loss as a consequence of their membership of the Council.
2. Members of the Panel will be appointed for a 4-year term which may be renewed. Appointments will be made so that there is staggered membership to enable continuity of knowledge and expertise.

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COUNCIL

8 SEPTEMBER 2022

NOTICES OF MOTION

Notices of Motion Received

1. The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance reports that he has received the following 3 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 – Bikeability

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 Cllr Emma Stokes, Cllr Emma Marshall, Cllr Alan Amos and Cllr Bob Brookes:

“The Council currently engages 23 instructors to deliver Bikeability, the Department for Transport Flagship national cycling programme for school children, to an expected 5,000 plus Children in Worcestershire during 2022/2023.

Whilst Bikeability assists the delivery of cycling competency and confidence to school children, this Council supports Bikeability PLUS schemes for delivery of family Bikeability, and e-bikes to increase cycling competency in adults.

We all saw an increase in cycling during lockdown; confidently, but “a bit wobbly”, sharing the road space with other users and this should be encouraged post lockdown.

An increase in cycling proficiency and confidence will sit within the Council’s promise to improve mental health, wellbeing and physical health and reduce car usage with associated carbon reduction benefits.

This Council, therefore, requests that the Cabinet Member(s) with Responsibility look at the allocation of some resource to ensure that this can be progressed”

Notice of Motion 2 – Rivers

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 Cllr Mel Allcott, Cllr Luke Mallett, and Cllr Richard Udall:

“Council believes cleaning up our rivers is important for public health and to protect and enhance wildlife, and that this requires the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders including local authorities, water companies, farmers, land-owners, developers, businesses and individual Worcestershire residents.

Therefore, Worcestershire County Council has a role to play in educating and raising awareness of the many individual behavioural changes that we can all make to lessen our impact on water pollution and the wider water environment.

Council calls upon the Cabinet Member with Responsibility to consider bringing a report to cabinet to outline the legal obligations and powers available to the council and to explore how Worcestershire County Council, in partnership with District Councils, the Environment Agency and other partners, can all contribute to improving river water quality in Worcestershire.”

Notice of Motion 3 – Air Quality

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 Cllr Matt Jenkins, Cllr Beverley Nielsen, Cllr Natalie McVey, Cllr Martin Allen, and Cllr Tom Wells:

“Poor air quality is a huge problem that the county has a large role in reducing. Transport is one of the primary causes of poor air quality and we, as the highways authority, have a leading responsibility to act in ways that improve air quality.

We call on the Cabinet Member with Responsibility to:

1. Make sure that Worcestershire County Council commits to taking an active leadership role in improving air quality and supporting the district councils.
2. Ensure impact assessments include the impact of our actions on air quality.
3. Work with WRS and City Councils/District Councils to encourage a collaborative review of best practices in terms of air quality prioritisation and improvement.
4. Work with partners to produce an updated Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan for Worcestershire and make this available ASAP.
5. The Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group for Worcestershire needs to be promoted and appointments clarified.

Have a regular review of the action plan, with a focus on the implementation of relevant proposals.”

Contact Points

Contact Points for this report

Simon Lewis, Committee Officer

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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**8 SEPTEMBER 2022****REPORTS OF CABINET MEMBERS WITH RESPONSIBILITY**

**(a) Report of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for
Children and Families****Introduction**

1. Since I last reported to the Council in November 2020, Worcestershire Children First (WCF) continues to make positive improvements in service delivery. An Ofsted focused visit to the Family Front Door in July 2021 noted *“the local authority has made strong progress in improving the quality of practice for children and families in receipt of services at its ‘Family Front Door’ since the inspection in June 2019.”*
2. This was followed by the removal of statutory direction by the Department for Education (DfE) in November 2021 and the early removal of the “Support and Supervision” phase in June 2022. Both a result of significant improvement since Ofsted’s 2016 inspection, evidenced throughout the monitoring and focused visits by Ofsted and the quarterly monitoring reports overseen by the County Council (WCC) and the DfE.
3. This is not to say there is not great challenge and much work to do in Children’s Social Care. The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care was published in June 2022 and its findings and recommendations strongly endorse the approach of WCF. The approach taken since 2016 has been well embedded in our improvement journey to date. Cabinet approved the 2022/23 Business plan in March 2022, a report that sets out how Worcestershire County Council (WCC) will support WCF to “Sustain, Innovate and Improve” our Children’s Services in Worcestershire.

Ofsted

4. Ofsted’s approach to Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services follows a programme of inspection that includes a Full Inspection (once every three years) and between those three years the Local Authority will also have two Focused Visits (a day inspection on a specific area of the service).
5. Ofsted’s last Full Inspection was undertaken in June 2019, the Local Authority was graded ‘Requires Improvement to be good’ with seven recommendations. These were incorporated into the Worcestershire Children First (WCF) Business Plans to focus our improvement. This was a notable achievement as we were the first service under a statutory direction to achieved this improvement grading before moving into company, reinforcing the services drive and commitment to make improvements at pace.

6. Due to Covid-19, Ofsted did not undertake Inspections following the same system in 2020. Many inspections did not take place and were replaced with Assurance Visits which focused on areas of most concern. Worcestershire did not receive an Assurance Visit. In 2021, Ofsted resumed some of their Inspection activity, and in July 2021, Worcestershire had a Focused Visit with specific focus on our Family Front Door, including decision-making on new referrals, quality of Social Work Assessments and the quality of Early Help decision-making and assessment.

7. Ofsted reported; *“the local authority has made strong progress in improving the quality of practice for children and families in receipt of services at its ‘Family Front Door’ since the inspection in June 2019. Leaders have established a positive culture of commitment to continuous improvement across this service area, supported by particularly strong quality assurance arrangements. The early help partnership is now well engaged in the delivery of services, and most schools in Worcestershire have an early help offer, bespoke to the needs of their community.”*

8. As of 2022, Ofsted have now resumed their inspection programme as normal practice; Worcestershire are due a Full Inspection this year, this can take place anytime during the 12-month period so is expected between July 2022 and July 2023.

Worcestershire Children First

9. On 1 October 2019, following a two-year programme of activity, WCF officially took over the operational responsibility for the delivery of Children’s Services on behalf of Worcestershire County Council. The company has been running successfully for nearly three years and has performed well against its contracted Statutory Key Performance Indicators and its agreed contract value is currently £134.2m

10. WCF’s 2022/23 business plan was approved by Cabinet in March 2022 and highlights the aims, objectives, financial and operational context, the continuation of development, innovation and sustained improvement in conjunction with the priorities within the County Council’s Corporate Plan.

11. The strong strategic partnership working of WCF and WCC was positively highlighted in the External Auditor Annual Audit report to Audit and Governance Committee in March 2022, stating ‘a real commitment to work together to get the best outcomes for young people and their families.’ The report also acknowledged a clear understanding of different roles within the Council and company, that governance is appropriate, and arrangement is in place to analyse business and performance information on a regular basis, therefore this gives me assurance that we have got this right in Worcestershire.

12. An equally strong and essential partnership of professionals working in the field of Children’s Services was noted in the recent LGA research on “Structural changes in Children’s Services: Form and Function” in the Ofsted focused visit July 2021 and in the Newton research on care prevention “The future of Children’s Social Care”.

The impact of the global pandemic: Covid – 19

13. During the past two years Children’s Safeguarding Services across the country have experienced an unprecedented rise in demand. WCF have seen a rise of over 1,000 contacts per quarter to the Family Front Door (FFD).

14. The service also reports a rise in the complexities of need and risk being experienced by adult parents. The trio of harm, “Substance Misuse, Mental Health and Domestic Abuse” existed in 10% of assessed cases in 2019/20, (pre Covid), rose to 12% in 2021/22 and has risen to 14% in Quarter 1 of 2022/23. For children and young people emotional health is the highest risk factor of need assessed in Quarter 1 of 2022/23, a rise to 20% from 17% the previous year. In short, the needs and risk in families are increasingly multi-faceted.

15. As the impact and aftermath of the pandemic comes to the fore, we see an almost 50% rise in families claiming free school meals and the national coverage of the heart-breaking cases of child abuse reported in the media. Children’s Services have been through its biggest review in years under the Care Review led by Josh McAlister, Chair of the independent review and there is a well reported crisis in sufficiency and costs of placements for children in care.

16. This was captured by Charlotte Ramsden, the previous Chair of ADCS (Association of Directors of Children’s Services) in her November 2021 conference address:

“The independent review of children’s social care published its case for change. It reiterates a series of very important issues that ADCS has been raising with government over the last few years - the value of early help, the impact of poverty on children’s lives and outcomes, the marketisation of services for vulnerable children, the slow pace of change in youth custody responses, funding and the lack of coordination for child and family policy across government.

As well as highlighting concerns, which the report does in spades, we must also recognise the incredible work undertaken by our social workers, and the wider workforce, on a daily basis. Social workers operate in a grey space bound by a strict legislative framework and under intense scrutiny from many different angles. Yes, the workforce must be empowered to make the best decisions for children and families, but appropriate and measured checks and balances are also needed to support this life changing work, which can be absolutely transformative for children and families. For too long external influences have driven risk averse cultures and we need to challenge this.

We have one of the safest child protection systems in the world and it is vitally important to work to keep families together where that is right for children and keep children and young people close to their supportive networks. However, whilst by no means perfect, care can be and is the right place for some children and we must work to make it the best place possible for those who need it.

Early Help

17 WCC made the decision to include Early Help, often referred to as Family Support, in its Children’s Services company, understanding the inter-relations between the levels of need i.e. level 1; universal services to all children and families, level 2; support to all families, level 3; targeted support to families where more complex issues exist and level 4; where a child is deemed to be in need of social care support, care or protection services. Social care services need to be able to “step down” support for families when

they have made good progress against social work plans and “Early Help” needs to be effective to prevent risk and needs increasing.

18 Early Help is the provision that lies between universal (level 1) and safeguarding services (levels 3/4). It is delivered by a wide range of agencies including universal services, the voluntary and community sector and specialist services. A review of this Early Help provision, its approach and model was launched October 2020.

19 The outcome of the review highlighted that the current arrangements for the delivery of Early Help were not consistent in meeting the changing needs of families, there was inequality in access across the county and professionals found it confusing / unclear.

20 The outcome of the review and wider Early Help partnership work has led to the development of the “Early Help Family Support” service, launched in April 2021 which provides support to children and young people aged 0-18, with a focus on both preventative and targeted support to prevent escalating needs to statutory intervention and to offer a service across all districts.

21 Within WCF this sits under the Director for Early Help, Children in Need and Family Front Door (FFD) and is delivered and overseen by the Early Help multi-agency partnership board that sits under the Children and Young People Strategic Partnership. The membership was reviewed and revised to ensure we had the whole system 0-18 years represented. There is one central point of “*request for service*” for professionals and families, and young people aged over 13 years can self-refer directly into their district team via the telephone.

22 In the last year the new Early Help Family Support service has worked with 2,806 children at level 2 and 3 needs and has developed the following:

- September 2021 - the new Early Help support booklet was published as a resource for families.
- November 2021 - the new “Early Help in the community” portal was launched which allows partner agencies to submit their agency Early Help assessments and plans to the Local Authority.
- December 2021 - the new Early Help strategy was signed off and launched which was also a recommendation from the July 2021 Focused visit by Ofsted.
- In 2022, new face to face partnership training on Early Help was launched and is co- delivered by WCF and partners to the Worcestershire Early Help partnership workforce.
- January 2022 - we launched the “Worcestershire Virtual Family Hub” It is a requirement of all Local Authorities to have both a virtual and a place based “Family Hub”. This site has on average 3,000 views a month and is a great resource for both families and professionals.
- June 2022 - the Early Help partnership hosted “Early Help in the community” marketplace events in each of the six districts with partners and practitioners attending to further understand how they can support families in their community.

- September 2022 - there is an event being hosted by the Early Help partnership for partners to look at place-based Family Hubs in the 6 districts, a government initiative recognition of best practice.

Troubled Families (now known as Supporting Families)

23 In 2021, the government changed the programme name from Troubled Families to Supporting Families, which is a payment by results programme. In June 2021, the responsibility for the delivery of Supporting Families was transferred to the Director of Early Help, Children in Need, Family Front Door and Chair of the Early Help Partnership.

24 In 2020/21, Worcestershire was set the target of 555 claims for families. This was achieved early on in Quarter 4 and submitted with 100% successful and approved.

25 The Supporting Family's data and progress is reported in a bi-monthly meeting with partners, chaired by the WCF Early Help Partnership Manager and reported directly into the Early Help Partnership meeting.

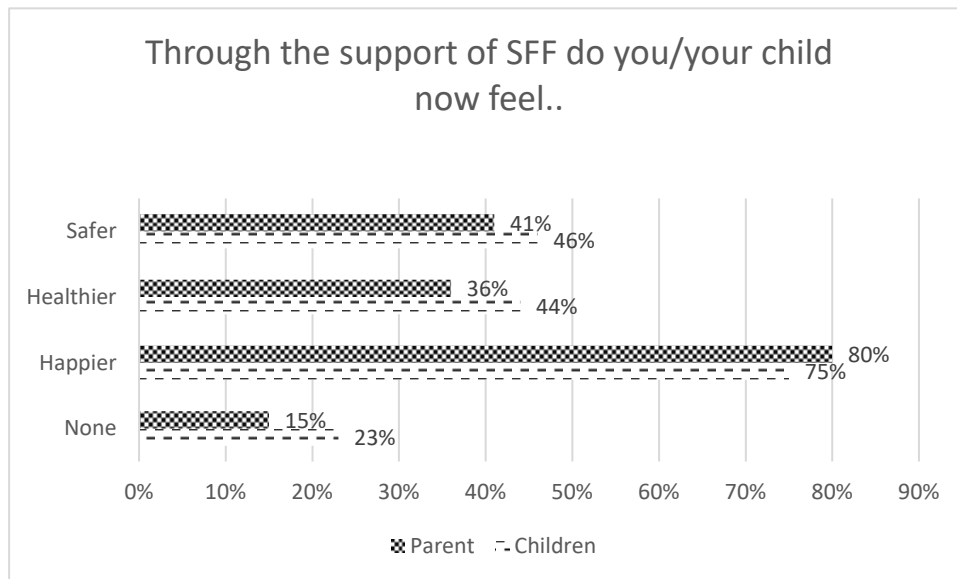
Children in Need (CIN): Supporting Families First

26 Our overall CIN cohort at 261 per 10,000 is in line with statistical neighbours and a little below England average of 314. A focus on our CIN has been the expansion of our Supporting Families First, our "Edge of Care/Child Protection" multi-disciplinary team.

27 In Quarter 1 we continue to see positive outcomes with 66% of cases closing after and intervention, 3% of children becoming looked after and 26% progressing to child protection. The team manage a range of complex risks that exist within these families and a percentage escalation to Child Protection/Care is to be expected if we are working at the right threshold.

28 The service user experience tells us most families and children and parents feel happier, healthier and safer following intervention in their lived experience. At the start of an intervention children and parents are asked to rate from 1-10 on specifics and then again at the end of an intervention to measure impact.

29 The chart below shows how much children and parents reported things had improved i.e. 46% of children and 41% of parents reported feeling "safer" at the end of an intervention.



30 By tracing the sustainability of outcomes achieved for Children In Need we can see from 50 children worked with, now 12 months on, that 40% of children have remained closed sustaining the positive outcomes, 26% remain at the Children In Need level only. Only one child has since become looked after and six escalated to child protection.

31 Tracking the original cohort of 51 children who were deemed on the “edge of care” at the January 2020 data 25 months on, 69% remain closed to Children’s Social Care, one child escalated and remains on a child protection plan and eight children (16%) are looked after. This demonstrates positive long-term outcomes for 69% of edge of care children who have remained at home safely with their families without the need of further statutory support at level 4 needs. This model of multi-disciplinary work is effective in care and child protection prevention in both the short and longer term for edge of care children.

Child Protection

32 Through 2021/22, the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan in Worcestershire has slowly risen, taking our number now to 41 per 10,000 which puts us in line with England averages.

33 Back in 2015, reports that we were significantly below England average were interpreted as a positive. Then we had our Ofsted inspection and we understood this was not necessarily a measure of success. We now use our data with greater sophistication and measures such as “sustainability outcomes” in care prevention and “service user feedback”, help us better understand what we are achieving and how children and young people experience the interventions.

34 As we work effectively to prevent care, children will for periods of time, need Child Protection plans to provide a multi-agency framework for working with parents to address risk. On average 80% of child protection plans end with successful outcome of risk being reduced.

35 Whilst all family courts have seen a reduction in timeliness of care proceedings through the Covid and post Covid period, WCF continue to demonstrate good

performance at 25 weeks average before case completion compared to the national average of 46 weeks.

Looked After Children and Care Leavers

36 At Quarter 1 2022/23, there are 916 looked after children, who we act as corporate parents to. At 76 per 10,000, this means we have slightly more than the England averages. However, WCF has been in the lowest two local authorities in the region for three consecutive years for children entering care and Quarter 1 data for new entries is consistent with last year, so at this stage on trend.

37 There are slightly more children placed in a foster care placement in WCF at 72% compared with an England average of 71%, however there is a decreasing number of children in WCF's internal foster care provision, which is now at 16%, a continued declining trend seen through 2021/22. This is a major area of work but is seeing insufficient outcomes as foster carers leave the profession to retire or find it too challenging. WCF is not immune to the national difficulty in recruiting new carers, specifically carers willing to care for the very complex children entering care.

38 Positively, kinship carers are increasing and represent 23% of Worcestershire Children First Fostering (WCFF) children in foster care. There are much better outcomes for young people in kinship placements, with only a minority breaking down and requiring residential care.

39 Overall, there are 18% of children in residential/semi-independent and secure provision, which is in line with statistical neighbours, although above the England average of 14%. Broken down, this represents a good news story with an increase to 7% of young people in supported semi-independent living. This is reflective of work to support children aged 17 to have a supported year of semi-independent living as they transition from residential care to independence.

40 However the number of children in residential care at 12%, is up from 11% at year-end 2021/22. The sufficiency challenge for this 13-17 age group exists where there is breakdown with birth family or previous placement. With a lack of foster care provision able to meet need, leading to demand for residential care.

41 Whilst WCF has achieved significant cost avoidance in procuring and reviewing external placements (over £2.3m in 2021/22 and over £0.85m since April 2022) placement spend remains the highest budgeted cost for WCF. 11% of WCF's total looked after population are currently in externally commissioned residential provision.

42 Residential care is commonly not providing stability or positive outcomes for young people and as Josh Macalister's Independent Care Review illustrated, the market is provider led with inconsistent quality. WCF commonly experience notice being served by residential providers when a young person's behaviour becomes challenging, which in turn leads to heightened difficulties in identifying a suitable alternative provision. At times, as reported by local media, this lack of sufficiency in placements has resulted in children under 16 being placed in unregulated settings. This is unlawful practice that we do not condone, though we do recognise this as a national challenge and understand for WCF, case by case we must find placements.

43 During 2021/22 a total of 61 young people needed a residential placement:

- 33% came from an existing residential provision
- 34% from Foster Care: 5 children from Worcestershire Childrens First Fostering (only one being from a kinship foster care placement) and 16 coming from external foster placement breakdown
- 22% breakdowns from birth family with eight being with children with disabilities and 14 with SEND

44 Worcestershire Children First placement sufficiency strategy continues to look at reducing the need for residential provision by:

- Developing services to support young people with SEND to remain at home and support their independent living experience/preparation for transition to adulthood
- Supporting foster carers to prevent placement breakdown
- Recruiting and supporting foster carers and 'buddy' carers for teenagers
- Continuing to focus on promoting Special Guardianship and Placement with Parents arrangements
- Utilising DFE grant funding to develop a one bed crisis residential home to be opened in the new year – to address the level of breakdown from external residential homes and the challenge in thereafter procuring a registered provision
- Above all else, key to reducing demand for residential provision is prevention of care and thereby a continuing focus on WCF's successful edge of care Family Support - see above section on Children In Need, Supporting Families First

WCF Fostering and Adoption Independent agencies

45. WCFF – Independent Fostering Agency - Worcestershire Children First Fostering (WCFF) offers placements for children who are looked after by WCF on behalf of the Local Authority. WCFF, registered in October 2019, was required to register as an independent fostering agency when WCF became a company. It provides fostering families to 360 children, made up of both kinship/connected person and mainstream fostering families.

46. In September 2021, Ofsted carried out a full inspection of WCFF. The inspection of fostering services is reviewed in three key areas, and each is graded independently with an overall judgment reached. Overall, the Inspection judgement given to WCFF was "Requires Improvement to be Good" although the effectiveness of leaders and managers was found to be "inadequate". The inspection identified nine requirements, and four recommendations that are addressed in the service improvement plan.

Independent Permanency and Adoption agency

47. Following the government's commitment to redesign adoption services across the country, the local authorities of Coventry, Herefordshire, Solihull, Warwickshire and Worcestershire set up a new regional adoption agency called Adoption Central England (ACE). It launched on the 1 February 2018.

48. ACE carries out key adoption functions in relation to the recruitment, assessment, approval and support of prospective adopters.

49. WCF have a separate team called the Permanency Team who undertake the adoption functions in respect of children. An Ofsted requirement was this service was registered as an independent child adoption service and as such it was registered on the 17th of November 2021.

50. Ofsted Inspection of this services took place in June 2022. The Ofsted Inspection found that the service provides effective services that meet the requirements for children with a care plan of adoption and therefore was graded as Good in all three areas:

- Overall experiences and progress of service users – Good
- How well children, young people and adults are helped and protected – Good
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers - Good

Corporate Parenting Board

51. I chair the WCC Corporate Parenting Board as Lead Member for Children's Services, with membership representation from all six districts as well as key stakeholders including Young People, Housing, Police, Youth Justice and Health.

52. Pledges have been agreed with our care experienced young people and represent a commitment from "corporate parents" to actively promote and contribute to the resolution of the challenges they face.

53. The Pledges include:

- We will listen to your voice and support you to be involved in decisions about your life.
- We will support you to have a safe, positive, secure, and stable home to live in.
- We will help you stay in touch with family, friends, and anyone else who is important to you and support you to return home if able to do so.
- As your corporate parents, we will celebrate your progress, personal milestones, and achievements.
- We will help you to build and develop positive relationships with your support network.
- We will encourage and support your learning and development of life skills, while helping you to access opportunities, to engage those young people not in employment, education, or training (NEET).
- We will help to promote good fostering environments that cater for all individuals and their personal needs, particularly promoting the fostering of teenagers.
- We will support you to access services and resources that maintain your physical and emotional wellbeing.

54. Local District Councillor's, as members of the Corporate Parenting Board, have become 'Champions' to promote and develop key issues for young people - feeding back to the board and sharing positive outcomes that can be promoted in the other districts. Champions lead on one of the following:

- Housing and Council Tax
- Employment
- Leisure and Cultural Activities
- Fostering
- Education

- Being a Care Leavers Ambassador

55. There is a National Review for care experienced young people and adults and a regional DfE funded *Children’s Social Care Covid-19 Regional Recovery and Building Back Better* (CRABB) review. These have looked at best practice and consistency in the offer across the West Midlands. **Feedback by the DFE from the regional survey describes Worcestershire’s local offer as “comprehensive”.**

56. Ofsted consultation is underway regarding the creation of a separate graded judgement for Care Leavers within the ILAC framework.

Quality Assurance in Children’s Services

57. Our approach to Quality Assurance (QA) is well embedded across Social Care & Safeguarding, following a framework of three key elements.

- Key Performance Indicators (how much are we doing?)
- Audits (how well are we doing?)
- Feedback from children & families (what is the impact of what we are doing?)

58. In July 2021, the Ofsted Focused Visit said; *“the quality assurance framework is a strong area of practice, well embedded internally and across the safeguarding partnership. In particular, the audit approach is very effective”* and since the visit Ofsted have recommended a number of other LA’s contact WCF for input to their own QA frameworks and practice.

59. In Autumn 2021, WCF appointed a Head of Quality Assurance to lead on developing this Quality Assurance approach across the whole service to include WCF Fostering, Early Help and SEND, giving quantitative and qualitative information and assurance about the company and the services it provides.

Serious Case Reviews

60. There have been five Child Safeguarding Rapid Reviews undertaken in the past 12 months. These are undertaken following an unexpected child death or serious harm to a child where abuse and neglect is a possible factor. These reviews are completed by the multi-agency Worcestershire Child Safeguarding Review Group on behalf of the Worcestershire Children Safeguarding Partnership (WSCP) and decisions are fed back to the National Review panel for audit. Of these reviews, one was progressed to a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR).

61. Worcestershire Child Safeguarding Practice (WSCP) currently has four live Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews in progress. One is completed and due to be published imminently.

62. One of the current CSPR’s relates to the death of a child in February 2021, where abuse and neglect is suspected. Both mother and mother’s partner have been charged with offences in relation to this incident and are awaiting trial (set for October 2022). On the advice of CPS this review has been placed on hold pending completion of the trial.

Partnership Working

63. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) outlines that 'Local authorities, under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, have a responsibility to promote inter-agency co-operation to improve the welfare of all children'. To do this effectively 'Local authorities should work with organisations and agencies to develop joined-up early help services based on a clear understanding of local needs.'

64. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) introduced a requirement for new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to replace Local Safeguarding Children Boards (WSCB). The responsibility for ensuring implementation of the new arrangements rested with the County Council, Police, and the Clinical Commissioning Group. These were implemented in September 2019.

65. Our Safeguarding Partnership have written an Annual Report which was presented to Scrutiny (10 May 2022), Health & Wellbeing Board (15 February 2022) and Cabinet (21 July 2022).

66. Our 2021 Ofsted Focused Visit also reported on strengths within partnership working and quoted as saying: "*The early help partnership is now well engaged in the delivery of services*", "*the local authority and wider partnership have planned and delivered a well-coordinated and effective response to the pandemic*" and "*the quality assurance framework is a strong area of practice, well embedded internally and across the safeguarding partnership*". All evidencing independent validation of the effectiveness and impact of partnership working across services but also the strategic direction and support of leaders.

67. The Children & Young People's Plan (CYPP) has been refreshed for 2022 - 2024. This sets out how organisations in the Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) will work together to improve outcomes for children, young people, and families.

68. The CYPP supports the priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the children's outcomes of the Integrated Care System (ICS). Outcomes and measures for the CYPP have been developed and will be led by the four groups reporting to the CYPSP - Early Help Partnership; Children & Young People's Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health Partnership; 0-25 All Age Disability Partnership and the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership. Progress reports will be presented regularly to the CYPSP and a biannual update given to the Health & Wellbeing Board (HWB).

Andy Roberts

Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families

(b) Report of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education

Introduction

69. It gives me great pleasure to present my first report to Council.

Schools Context

70. As of 31 August 2022, Worcestershire has a total of 243 State-funded schools, of which 127 are Academy or Free schools and 116 are maintained. These are made up of 1 nursery, 177 Primary/First schools (of which 81 are academies), 19 Middle schools (12 academies), 31 Secondary and High schools (27 Academies), 9 Special Schools (4 academies), and 6 Alternative Provision / Pupil Referral Units of which 3 are academies.

71. These schools operate across 16 Education Planning Areas based around the main population centres of the County. 4 separate tier structures are in operation across the County, with 11 of the 16 areas operating on a 2-tier structure where children transfer from primary to secondary, and 5 operate a 3-tier structure with first, middle and high schools. 2-tier routes also exist within 4 of these education planning areas.

Ofsted Outcomes Summary (7 July 2022)

Maintained Schools (116)

Outstanding	22	19%
Good	82	71%
RI	10	9%
Ofsted Category	2	2%
No Ofsted Judgement		

90% of maintained schools either outstanding/good

Academies (127)

Outstanding	18	16%
Good	79	72%
RI	11	10%
No Ofsted Judgement	1	2%

88% of Academies either outstanding/good

This figure removes those schools that have been subject to an academy order - 18.

School Places

72. During the last academic year approximately 14,700 applications were made for school places at the normal point of entry across Worcestershire.

73. For high schools almost 6,200 applications were received with almost 89% being offered places at their first-choice school. Just over 5% received offers for their

second-choice school. For middle schools, of the 2474 applications received almost 96% received offers for one of their top 2 choices. For Primary schools almost 6,100 applications were received with almost 91% being offered places at their first-choice school. Over 96% of children received offers for one of their first 2 choices.

74. Worcestershire's application performance against national comparative data is available for Year 7 first preferences, which for Worcestershire is 84.7% against the England average of 83.3% and the West Midlands average of 83.2%, showing that we meet more 1st preferences than both nationally and regionally for year 7 transition.

75. At every phase, no children were left without an offer of a primary, middle or high school place. On 1 June 2020, WCF began the co-ordination of in-year applications, that is those children moving schools outside of the normal starting point for a school. The numbers of in year applications are increasing from 3462 in 2020/21 to 4150 in 2021/22.

School places for children arriving under re-settlement schemes

76. DfE have collected from every local authority across England, data collections in relation to overseas arrivals. At the end of May 2022, 374 applications for school places had been made for families arriving from overseas in the UK, not including arrivals from the Ukraine.

77. As of June 2022, a total of 214 applications have been received from Ukraine arrivals. 201 children have been offered a school place, and 13 applications were being processed.

Early Years Sufficiency of Places

78. Worcestershire currently has 496 settings offering Nursery Education Funded provision. This number has remained relatively consistent during 2021/22.

79. Take-up of funded places for 2-year-olds has increased substantially to 81% over the past year and has been higher than the national average of 62%.

80. Take-up of 3- & 4-year-old funded places within Worcestershire remains at around 97%, which is higher than the national average of 92% and slightly above statistical neighbour average of 96.5%. The funding for this is through the Early Years Block of the DSG which is £35.4m.

81. According to the most recent Early Years Sufficiency Assessment (September 2021), Worcestershire has sufficient childcare and high-quality early education places for funded children spread across its six districts.

82. Challenges in recruitment and retention of staff within early years is a national issue, this experience is reflected in Worcestershire. The Early Years team has linked up with WCC Skills and Investment Team to identify the pathways that support entry into the Childcare workforce.

Education Provision Planning Capital Programme

83. The DfE also launched last year the Rebuilding Schools Programme that prioritises part or full rebuild based on conditions assessments. Waseley Hills School will be fully rebuilt as part of this programme and Pershore High School will have a partial rebuild.

New First / Primary schools

84. Work is underway to secure school places through section 106 funding to meet the demand anticipated over the next 6 years as a direct result of new housing on the South Worcester Urban Expansion, West Worcester Urban Expansion, Foxlydiate Redditch Urban Expansion, Perryfields Bromsgrove, Kidderminster Lea Castle and Mitton housing developments.

South Worcester – new secondary school

85. The new Worcester City Secondary school scheme funded by WCC is progressing for delivery by September 2026. Land negotiations and design and build contractor bids are progressing well, an Academy Sponsor competition has been completed and a recommendation made to the Secretary of State.

New Primary Alternative Provision Free School

86. Unity Academy Free school, Kidderminster, is due to open in September 2023 run by the Rivers Academy Trust as a 60 place Primary Alternative Provision. The build and delivery of the school has been funded by the DfE and is intended to operate using a preventative and outreach model.

New Primary Free School

87. A new Primary Free School was approved by the DfE in 2021 to open in September 2024 in Rubery. WCF and WCC Officers are currently working with the DfE and Bromsgrove District Council to identify a suitable and viable site.

Specialist provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

88. Place forecasting and the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan recognise the need and focus for ensuring capacity and appropriate use of specialist provision for SEND.

89. A new Enhanced Primary Mainstream Autism Base was opened in April 2022 at Chaddesley Corbett Primary School, Kidderminster offering 10 full-time equivalent places.

90. A new Enhanced Secondary Mainstream Autism Base is planned to open in a Worcester in this academic year at Christopher Whitehead Language College.

91. Work is underway to review the demand for specialist places across the county for September 2023 including reviewing Special School Nursery / Nursery

Assessment provision, Special School places and Mainstream Autism Base provisions.

92. The Local Authority has submitted a pre-registration bid to the DfE for a new ASD Special Free School. The full bid must be submitted in October 2022.

93. £1.5m of High Needs Provision Capital has been identified to support the development of additional Post 16 Specialist provision in County. In Autumn 2022 expressions of interest from providers will be requested to meet the demand and needs.

Attainment

94. In 2022, Key Stage 1 (KS)1 and KS2 SATs, phonics and multiplication tests, alongside KS4 and KS5 exams were all reinstated following the pandemic.

Statutory duties for moderation and monitoring recommenced in 2022. WCF School Improvement Team undertake the moderation and monitoring role reporting to the Standards and Testing Agency.

95. Performance tables are suspended again for the 2021/22 academic year.

Assessment	National	Worcestershire
KS1 Reading	67.1%	68.1%
KS1 Writing	57.8%	58.7%
KS1 Maths	67.8%	68.7%
KS1 RWM	53.2%	54.2%

Attendance

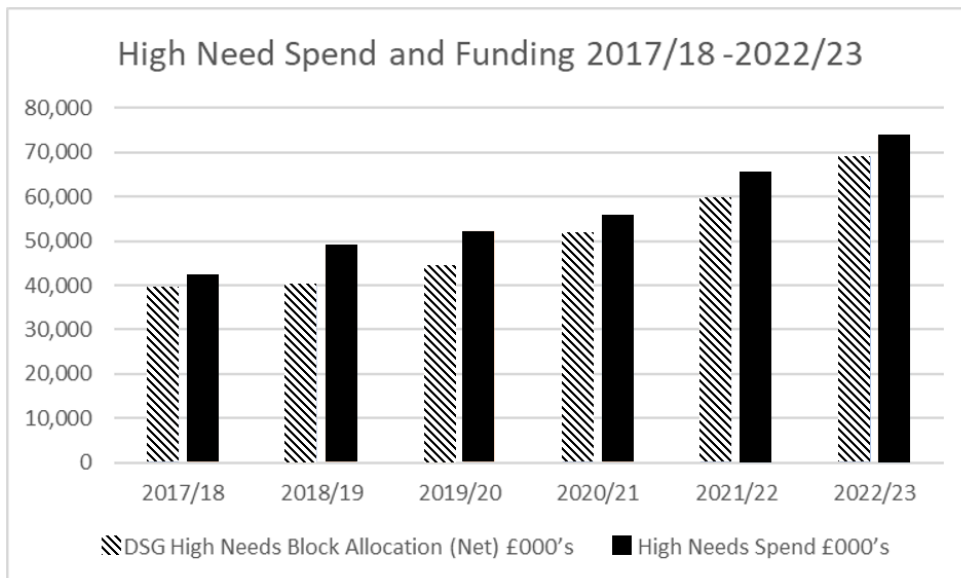
96. Year on year, attendance has previously been the same or better for each phase and this is also reflected in National figures (approximately 94-96%). March 2022 figures showed a return to almost pre-Covid rates at approximately 92-95% following a significant drop attributed to the disruption of the pandemic. WCF Education Welfare Service currently provide services for schools to improve their attendance.

97. New attendance guidance has been published by the DfE, replacing all previous attendance guidance. This places new responsibilities on Local Authorities and schools in improving school attendance from 2022. The guidance is effective from September 2022 and will become statutory from September 2023. WCF is developing a plan alongside schools to focus and work together on improving attendance.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) & Vulnerable Learners

High Level Needs Funding

98. Nationally the provision of High Needs funding for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability and vulnerable learners is a significant area of concern. In Worcestershire the Dedicated Schools' Grant (DSG) High Needs block is currently forecast to spend £73.7m in 2022/23. This is a forecast overspend of £4.5m on a £69.2m budget. Worcestershire is not unique on this issue.



99. Q1 data for 2022/23 showed that 4,776 currently children have an EHCP in Worcestershire. This means that broadly, each EHCP draws from the High Needs block an average of £15,426 per year (£297pw) to arrive at a total spend of £73.7m (the forecast spend as at 31 June 2022).

100. There continues to be an increase in the prevalence and complexity of SEND nationally. Whilst this is reflective of need, this increase also in part reflects the change in legislation resulting from the Children and Families Act 2014, which means that Local Authorities are now responsible for meeting the needs of their learners with EHCPs to the age of 25.

101. Worcestershire has been invited to be part of the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme that was announced by the Department for Education (DfE) in February this year. The DBV programme is designed to provide dedicated support and funding to help 55 local authorities with deficit issues in their high needs block to reform their high needs systems.

SEND Improvement

102. Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out a revisit inspection in November 2021. It was confirmed that the local area had made sufficient progress in eight of the twelve weaknesses identified at the initial inspection in 2018. The four areas where sufficient progress was not being made are:

- The variation in the skills and commitment of some mainstream schools to provide effective support for children who have SEND.
- The lack of suitable specialist provision to meet the identified needs of children and young people.
- Fragile relationships with parents and carers and a lack of meaningful engagement and co-production and collaboration.
- The poor quality of EHCPs and limited contributions from health and social care along with the process to check and review the quality of EHC plans.

103. In response to the inspection report, the DfE and CQC required an Accelerated Progress Plan, covering the four identified area. The APP was signed off by Ofsted and CQC and the six-monthly review of progress is scheduled for 22 September 2022.

104. Following Cabinet approval in February 2022, the All-Age Disability Service (0-25) was developed. The Young Adults Team (YAT) TUPE transferred from WCC to WCF on 1 June 2022. In addition, the Director for All Age Disability came into post on 6 June 2022 and will continue to lead and deliver the necessary changes to improve the experience and outcomes for those children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs.

Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

105. As illustrated below there has been an increase year on year since the 2014 SEND reforms.

Year	Number of Children and Young People with an EHCP
2017 / 18	3295
2018 / 19	3879
2019 / 20	4308
2020 / 21	4484

SEND Green Paper

106. On 29 March 2022 the Government published the SEND Review: Right support, right place, right time, a consultation on the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision system in England. The consultation set out proposed reforms to the SEND and alternative provision (AP) system that seek to address the following three key challenges:

- Poor outcomes for children and young people with SEN or in alternative provision.
- Navigating the SEND system and alternative provision is not a positive experience for children, young people and their families
- Despite unprecedented investment, the system is not delivering value for money for children, young people, and families.

Vulnerable Learners

107. On 30 June 2022, there were a total of 407 children who are identified as missing education with investigations underway to establish school status or interventions in place to get children back to school. 758 Children Missing Education (CME) investigations have been completed and closed since September 2021.

108. There are systems in place to prioritise children with an EHCP and those open to Children's Social Care who are missing education. The Fair Access Protocol implemented in September 2020 is now embedded and children without a school place are being placed more quickly through FAP Panel with schools working together to meet needs. The continuation of the multi-agency Missing Mondays ensures that children are missing from education for the shortest amount of time possible.

109. The number of children who become electively home educated has experienced a slower rate than last year following the pandemic. As of 30 June 2022, there are a total of 935 electively home educated children across Worcestershire, compared to 1071 in June 2021. This academic year we have seen 165 EHE children return to school.

110. The number of permanent exclusions across Worcestershire has returned to pre-pandemic levels. At the end of July this was 152 CYP with the most common reason being persistent disruptive behaviour. In 2021 there were 83 permanent exclusions. The Exclusions Officer and Vulnerable Learner Team supports Schools and families to act at the earliest point possible when notified of a permanent exclusion and promote early intervention for young people at risk of exclusion. New “Promoting Inclusion in Schools” guidance has been produced and will be formally launched in September. The guidance provides a pathway for schools to prevent exclusions.

111. From September 2022 a new approach to procuring alternative provision will be in place providing both WCF and schools with a directory of quality assurance checked provision that can be used to procure places for children when needed.

112. A reintegration plan is now required for all children who have been permanently excluded to reintegrate back into either mainstream school or another placement that meets their needs. This process is monitored through the Fair Access Protocol and overseen in localities by head teacher groups and WCF.

113. Nearly half of schools in Worcestershire have undertaken the Trauma Informed Schools Training to establish a whole school approach and support for children.

Virtual School

114. The Virtual School has continued to support Worcestershire Children Looked After (CLA) ensuring 100% have undertaken a termly Personal Education Plan (PEP). All CLA aged between 2-18 years have been supported through the PEP process, to achieve their potential. Child/young person views have been gained throughout this process.

115. Current overall attendance for CLA (statutory school age) for 2021-2022 academic year is 91%. Attendance is 1% above national comparator. Attendance for CLA with an Education Health Care Plan is (85%), this is 4% above all Worcestershire pupils with an EHCP.

116. Permanent Exclusions for CLA remain the same as last year (2 pupils). There has been a 5% reduction from last academic year, in the number of suspensions for CLA placed in Out of County schools. Combined in and out of county suspensions is 4.5% of the CLA cohort, this is 1% better than the previous academic year.

117. In June 2021, the Virtual School was successful with a Post 16 bid to DfE for Pupil Premium Plus grant to support CLA young people attending colleges of Further Education and this has been extended for 22/23.

118. From September 2021, the Virtual School Head's role has been extended to include the strategic leadership of promoting the educational attendance, attainment and progress of children with a social worker (CWSW).

119. Outcomes achieved this year include improved overall data and intelligence on the education outcomes for these children, improved staff professional development with social care and school staff for example improving parental engagement. The Supporting Families First (SFF) and Virtual School Joint Project was successful in increasing attendance for identified children. 40 visits to schools have been carried out to learn from good practice.

120. I am pleased to have taken on the role of Chair of the Governing Body (GB) of the Virtual School and welcome Cllr Boatright to the GB who represents elected membership of the Corporate Parenting Board. The Governing Body scrutinises and supports the self-evaluation of the virtual school and improvement planning. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Colette Maynard, the Virtual School Headteacher for all her excellent work with the Virtual School.

Education White Paper “Opportunity for all: Strong schools with great teachers for your child”

121. The White Paper published in March 2022 sets out 4 chapters:

- An excellent teacher for every child
- Delivering high standards of curriculum, behaviour and attendance
- Targeted support for every child who needs it
- A stronger and fairer school system.

Tracey Onslow
Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education

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COUNCIL
8 SEPTEMBER 2022**QUESTION TIME**

Question 1 – New footpath connecting Norton Farm with Elm Grove, Bromsgrove

1. Cllr Josh Robinson will ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport:

"Can an update be provided on the planned new footpath connecting Norton Farm with Elm Grove, Bromsgrove?"

Question 2 – Worcestershire Veterans Identity Cards

2. Cllr Martin Allen will ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities:

"With the delay in the issue of Veterans Identity Cards to Veterans who live in Worcestershire, will the Cabinet Member kindly write to the Government Minister with responsibility for our Worcestershire Veterans to ask for the process to be speeded up and request for a date when Veterans in Worcestershire can expect their Identity Card?"

Question 3 – Highways contractor

3. Cllr Dan Boatright will ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport:

"Back in January the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport gave us the welcome news that the contractor for Spitfire Homes in Eckington would be suspended from using their statutory right of access to the Highway as a result of their behaviour and damage to Eckington and the surrounding area. They seem to have re-surfaced in Pershore after their suspension, working on Station Road for Persimmon. There has been no regard for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists and the chaos of the road closure has been for all to see. Given their work remains poor, and they clearly have not learnt from their previous suspension, can we now look at a permanent ban from the highway?"

Question 4 – Public right of way between the Alcester Road to the A38 in Lickey End, Bromsgrove

4. Cllr Josh Robinson will ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport:

"Can an update be provided on the works to the public right of way between the Alcester Road to the A38 in Lickey End, Bromsgrove?"

Question 5 – Vehicle Activated Safety Signs (VASS)

5. Cllr Martin Allen will ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport:

"Does the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport agree with me that the use of VASS devices is part of an important strategy of helping to reduce speeding on our roads and that VASS Poles should be installed quickly and efficiently within 3 months of a Parish or Town Council requesting them if the locations are acceptable to the Highways Department."

Contact Points

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.

COUNCIL
8 SEPTEMBER 2022**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES****(a) SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

2021/22 Internal Audit Annual Report

1. The Committee has received a summary of the Internal Audit work during 2021/22 and as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, an overall opinion of Moderate Assurance of the Council's control environment has been given. The rating is based upon a lack of application and consistency within the Council's control framework; an action plan has been developed in conjunction with the Annual Governance Statement. The Committee has noted the Internal Audit 2021/22 Annual Report and assurance level.

External Audit – Council and Pension Fund Audit Plans and Informing the Audit Risk Assessment

2. Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditor has produced audit plans for the County Council and Pension Fund accounts together with audit risk assessment reports. The Committee has noted the content of the external audit plans and the Informing the Audit Risk Assessment reports.

Draft Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

3. . The Council is required, as part of its ongoing review of the effectiveness of its governance arrangements, to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2021/22. The AGS will form part of the Annual Statement of Accounts and it is anticipated the final version will be signed by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive and available for approval by this Committee at its meeting on 23 September 2022.

4. The AGS is primarily retrospective. It reports on the assurance framework and measures in place for the financial year 2020/21 and takes into account any significant issues of governance up to the date of publication of the Statement of Accounts. The AGS outlines the actions taken or proposed to address governance issues identified. A detailed action plan to ensure that work is undertaken to deliver the areas where it is recognised that governance arrangements could be strengthened, will be developed. Progress against the plan will be reported to this Committee on a quarterly basis.

5. The governance of the Council will continue to be monitored by Cabinet, the Audit and Governance Committee and other committees, and the Council's Strategic and Wider Leadership Teams. Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditors, will consider the AGS as part of their external audit, with the aim of confirming that it is consistent with their knowledge of the organisation and the financial statements. The Committee has noted the draft Annual Governance Statement 2021/22.

Draft Annual Statutory Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022

6. The Council and Pension Fund are required to prepare annual Statement of Accounts and to arrange for them to be audited and reported in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and the 2021/22 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The Statement of Accounts presents the overall financial position of the Council and the Pension Fund, reflecting the Council's outturn position and the Pension Fund net asset position.

7. In response to measures to improve local audit delays, the requirement to prepare draft accounts by 31 May has been extended to 31 July and the requirement for the public inspection period has been amended to commence on or before the first working day of August 2021. Notwithstanding this, the Council has completed the 2021/22 draft accounts to its planned timetable and has continued to enhance its supporting evidence and working papers in response to prior year audit findings, with a focus on clarity of financial reporting, particularly in areas that involve estimation and judgement.

8. Latest national data on the completion of audit opinions shows that the audit sector continues to face significant challenges. As at 31 May 2022, a total of 51 local authorities have not yet received an audit opinion for 2019/20 with a further 19 opinions delayed from earlier years. There remain 201 audit opinions still in progress for the 2020/21 financial year.

9. For 2021/22, a key issue affecting all local authorities is the accounting treatment and disclosure of infrastructure assets in the financial statements. The Council will continue to work with external auditors on this technical issue and consider developments and formal guidance as it is issued.

10. It is anticipated that all parts of the accounts process will be completed within statutory deadlines, subject to the outcome of current national rulings on the application of IFRS requirements over Infrastructure assets. Dependent on the outcome of this will determine what will be presented at the Committee meeting on 23 September 2022. The deadline for signing is 30 November and the Chief Financial Officer and external auditors will update Committee in September of progress on the audit and in particular this matter.

11. The financial position reported in the Council's Statutory Accounts for 2021/22 was an underspend of £1.3 million against the net budget of £352.5 million, with an accounting deficit taking into account pension actuarial costs, capital costs and other financial adjustments, of £5.5 million. The County Council's General Fund reserve balance has increased by £1.3 million to £14.3 million and there has been an increase of £47.5 million on available earmarked reserves taking their balance at 31 March 2022 to £144.4 million. Additionally, School reserves of £5.4 million and £7.8 million of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) reserves are retained.

12. The cumulative DSG deficit brought forward from last financial year was £6.5 million which will now be increased by £4.8 million deficit from 2021/22 and the deficit to carry forward into 2022/23 is now £11.3 million.

13. The value of the Pension Fund's net assets increased by £219.8 million from £3,364.8 million at 31 March 2021 to £3,584.6 million at 31 March 2022. During the year, a deficit resulted on the Pension Fund accounts totalling £7.4 million, a decrease of £109.2 million from a surplus of £116.6 million in the previous year.

14. The Committee has noted the draft Final Accounts Pack, including the Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2022.

Internal Audit Progress Report

15. Internal Audit are working closely with operational service managers to ensure that actions are undertaken. For actions relating to limited assurance audits where a follow up audit is planned, actions are transferred to the new audit.

16. There have been no fraud and corruption investigations undertaken in the first quarter of 2022/2023. Internal Audit's grant certification work supports the Council in ensuring that money claimed from government agencies is correctly accounted for and Internal Audit work closely with operational teams to deliver this. Two grants have been certified as accurate during the first quarter.

17. Jenni Morris, the Chief Internal Auditor left the Council on 31 July 2022. The Chief Internal Auditor of the Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Services will act in the statutory role for the Council and provide formal support to the Audit and Compliance Manager, who will manage the audit service on a day-to-day basis. The Committee has agreed the Internal Audit progress report.

Risk Management Report

18. Risk Management is a key part of effective governance for the Council. Understanding the risks the Council faces and managing them effectively has a number of significant benefits, including informed decision-making, planning, and enabling the Council to make the most of opportunities to achieve its strategic ambitions.

19. A Strategic Risk Management Group (SRMG) has been established to provide strategic direction to the risk management process. A strategic framework is being developed to ensure the relevant risks are clearly identified and appropriate mitigation strategies are in place. The Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG) has set the overall risk framework and has the responsibility of reviewing and challenging

corporate risks monthly, supported by the specialist leads. Corporate risks are those that may have a significant bearing on our ability to deliver the corporate plan.

20. The new risk management system is now in place and has been adopted not only at directorate level but across 30 service areas giving a more accurate picture of risk. This new approach has increased the number of risks which are being operationally managed, giving improved information and a better understanding of the Council's risk profile.

21. As part of the process, risks are identified which have an impact on the ambitions of the corporate plan. The most significant are: Adult Social Care – unprecedented demands leading to delays in the provision of service; and Commercial and Property Team – inflation in construction costs. CRMG is monitoring the existing high risks to escalate any relevant matters to directorate leadership teams. At this stage no escalation outside of the directorates has occurred and any escalation will be aligned with the proposed strategic framework.

22. The Committee has noted the Risk Management update and agreed that a risk management report be brought to the September Committee which will include details of how the Council intended to review its approach to risk management.

Income and Debt Monitoring

23. The Council's debt increased just after the financial year end 2021/22 by nearly £11m. The reason for this is largely due to the year end and billing of clients, as such debt less than 30 days, however by the end of May debt less than 30 days had fallen to average.

24. Longer term debt has continued to increase with debt greater than 12 months accounting for 35% of debt in progress (£6.353m). A further £4.378m (24%) is over 6 months but less than a year overdue. In total 59% of debt is over 6 months old. The majority of this debt sits within the People Directorate which is expected, given the scale of income that service receives. Of the Adult Care debt, £12.6m (35%) is over 12 months due, and a further £3.282m (26%) is over six months but less than a year. That is 51% of the total debt over 12 months and 75% of the total debt over six months but less than a year.

25. Significant work is ongoing with the service to improve both recording and chasing debt. The introduction of changes being brought about through the Adult Social Care reforms under Build Back Better initiatives is going to introduce significant risk and as such the Council is looking at options around this. Of the remaining debt the focus remains on chasing the top debts, this includes a large number of public service bodies. Whilst there is a focus on collecting debt the Finance Team are also working with IT on the refresh of the Council's website to ensure that payment of income is made simple and available for more services.

26. The Committee has noted the Income and Debt Management report and supported the continued actions to recover all debt. The Committee has agreed that an item be added to the September Committee agenda specifically to examine issues associated with debt monitoring in Adult Social Care. The Strategic Director for People has been invited to attend the meeting.

Work Programme

27. The Committee has noted the work programme subject to the addition of an item on Debt Monitoring in Adult Social Care to the September Committee meeting

Cllr Nathan Desmond
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 meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 22 July 2022.

[Agenda for Audit and Governance Committee on Friday, 22nd July, 2022, 10.30 am - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

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