

Agenda

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board

Thursday, 29 September 2022, 10.00 am
County Hall, Worcester

All County Councillors are invited to attend and participate

This document can be provided in alternative formats such as Large Print, an audio recording or Braille; it can also be emailed as a Microsoft Word attachment. Please contact Scrutiny on telephone number 01905 844963 or by emailing scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

DISCLOSING INTERESTS

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

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

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

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

WHAT MUST I DO WITH A DPI?

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

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

WHAT ABOUT 'OTHER DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS'?

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

WHAT ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF ANOTHER AUTHORITY OR PUBLIC BODY?

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

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

Not normally. You must withdraw only if it:

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

DON'T FORGET

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

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board
Thursday, 29 September 2022, 10.00 am, County Hall,
Worcester

Membership

Councillors:

Cllr Tom Wells (Chairman), Cllr Alan Amos (Vice Chairman), Cllr Alastair Adams, Cllr Brandon Clayton, Cllr Matt Dormer, Cllr Steve Mackay, Cllr Emma Stokes, Cllr Shirley Webb and Cllr Richard Udall

Co-opted Church Representatives (for education matters)

Mr T Reid (Church Representative - Church of England)

Parent Governor Representatives (for education matters)

Mr M Hughes (Parent Governor Representative)

Agenda

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1	Apologies and Welcome	
2	Declaration of Interest and of any Party Whip	
3	Public Participation Members of the public wishing to take part should notify the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance in writing or by e-mail indicating the nature and content of their proposed participation no later than 9.00am on the working day before the meeting (in this case 28 September 2022). Enquiries can be made through the telephone number/e-mail address below.	
4	Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting (previously circulated)	
5	Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) Annual Report (2022/23)	1 - 20

Agenda produced and published by the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager (Interim Monitoring Officer) Legal and Governance, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP. To obtain further information or hard copies of this agenda, please contact Samantha Morris 01905 844963 email: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website [Council's Website](#)

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7	Scrutiny Chairmen and Lead Member Update	31 - 38

NOTES

Webcasting

Members of the Board are reminded that meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board 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.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE BOARD 29 SEPTEMBER 2022

WORCESTERSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (WLEP) ANNUAL REPORT (2022/23)

Summary

1. This report has been written to provide Worcestershire County Council's (the Council) Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) with an annual update on the achievements of the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) over the last 12 months and to outline strategic objectives for 2022/23. The OSPB has requested a particular update on the WLEP Energy Strategy.
2. The Interim Chairman and Chief Executive of the WLEP, the Leader of the Council (who is also Vice-Chairman of the WLEP Executive Board and Local Authority Representative of the WLEP) and the Deputy Section 151 Officer have been invited to the Meeting.
3. In addition, District Councils have been invited to nominate a Councillor representative to attend the Meeting.

Background – What are Local Enterprise Partnerships?

4. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) are partnerships between local authorities, further and higher education and local businesses. They were set up in 2011 by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and are recognised by central government as the primary vehicle to help determine local economic priorities and lead economic growth and job creation within the local area.
5. There are 38 LEPs nationally and their role has developed considerably since inception. In September 2021, WLEP published their refreshed economic strategy for the county the *Worcestershire: Plan for Growth (2020-2040)*.
6. The Plan for Growth supersedes the Worcestershire Strategic Economic Plan, which was originally published in March 2014. WLEP continues to strive to achieve several ambitious objectives by 2025. These are to:
 - Create 25,000 jobs
 - Increase Gross Value Added (GVA)¹ by £2.9billion; and
 - Contribute towards the delivery of 21,500 new homes.
7. As part of the LEP's Local Assurance Framework and continued commitment to robust governance, it is agreed that WLEP will submit a report to OSPB on an annual basis to outline achievements and a forward look for the next 12 months.

¹ Gross value added (GVA) is the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy.

8. The OSPB is asked to note and acknowledge the outgoing WLEP Chairman, Mark Stansfield, for his outstanding leadership and commitment during his time in office with the LEP. Mark came to the end of his term of office in May 2022, after 7 years of service. A recruitment process is underway, but until its conclusion, the WLEP Board appointed Julie Snell as Interim Chairman in July 2022.

National LEP Review outcome

9. In the Chancellor's Budget Statement in March 2021, central government announced a National LEP Review to focus on the evolution of LEPs; which coincided with a shift in Government policy to route major capital funding for local economic development schemes via Local Authorities.

10. Originally intended to present recommendations to Ministers prior to Summer recess in 2021, the National LEP Review over-ran and eventually concluded on 31 March 2022, when Neil O'Brien MP and Paul Scully MP wrote a joint letter to LEP Chairs from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLHUC) and Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) respectively, copying in all Local Authority Leaders and Chief Executives.

11. Receipt of the letter was welcomed, in formally drawing a conclusion to the National LEP Review, which had caused considerable uncertainty over the previous 12 months for LEPs, their staff and local partners. It also set out Government's expectations for even closer integration between LEPs and local democratic institutions.

12. The letter confirmed a core funding allocation for LEPs and locked in certainty for delivery in 2022/23. However, the funding allocation was at a reduced rate (a 25% reduction on the previous year i.e., £375k, reduced from £500k in the previous year).

13. Finally, it articulated Government's intentions to ensure that businesses outside devolution areas could continue to access the support, insights, and representation that LEPs provide and to ensure that an independent business and stakeholder voice continues to play its vital role supporting growth in all parts of England.

14. Receipt of a similar letter coincided with this, outlining Government funding allocations for Growth Hubs, but again at a reduced rate (in this case a 50% reduction from the previous year i.e., £231k, reduced from £462k).

15. Following local interpretation of the Government correspondence and engagement with local partners, the role of the LEP and Growth Hub has been categorised into four parts, with the overarching principle of acting as the local convenor of the private, public and education sectors to support economic growth and prosperity. These four roles are as follows:

- Economic Strategy
- Business Voice and Intelligence
- Convenor
- Delivery.

16. The Economic Strategy role involves carrying out strategic economic planning in partnership with local government and other key stakeholders including business. Key functions within this part of the role involve acting as a central repository for economic data and intelligence, providing reports to partners and stakeholders to support their work. A timely example of this has been the support given to District Councils with the evidence base to inform their proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plans. There are also responsibilities around ensuring delivery and reporting of capital programme investments.

17. The Local Business Voice and Intelligence role will embed a strong, independent, and diverse local business voice into local democratic institutions and regional/national fora. This will primarily be carried out by the Growth Hub team. Again, data and intelligence captured is routinely shared with local partners and stakeholders using the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and we continue to manage the relationships with several foreign-owned businesses within the county on behalf of the Department for International Trade (DIT).

18. The Convenor role is crucial in continuing to facilitate collaboration between local business, education and training providers and local government partners. This is about supporting private sector partnerships and economic clusters for example around key themes such as Net Zero, Skills and Innovation. There is also a role to connect local employers with education and training providers to ensure skills delivery is aligned to local economic need. Coordination of Business Representative Organisations like the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), National Farmers Union (NFU) and others will also be important to share insights, challenges and distribute key messages across respective networks.

19. Finally, there is a Delivery role, which ensures the effective delivery of defined impactful economic functions on behalf of the WLEP Board, local partners and central Government departments. Existing examples include BetaDen, the county's commercial technology accelerator, and currently BetaDen North, a cleantech bootcamp spin-off being delivered in partnership with Wyre Forest District Council via the Community Renewal Fund (CRF). There are also national delivery commitments, for example the Careers Hub contract and Local Skills Analysis on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE).

20. Clearly, with the recent appointment of a new Prime Minister and subsequent Ministerial appointments, effectively signalling a new Government, there will be renewed questions about the future direction of economic policy in the UK, including the future role and responsibilities of LEPs and Growth Hubs.

Looking back – WLEP key local achievements

21. WLEP has always prided itself on its track record for successful delivery, within approved budgets.

22. Despite the lack of clarity at a national level during the National LEP Review, the WLEP Board consistently provided a steer to ensure continued focus on local and regional delivery, recognising the importance of meeting existing commitments and delivering against the Plan for Growth, on which there is local consensus amongst partners and stakeholders.

23. As a result, the last 12 months are no exception, and there are a significant number of achievements, from across the partnership to celebrate:

- Successfully launched the refreshed economic strategy following extensive engagement and consensus from partners and stakeholders, the *Worcestershire: Plan for Growth (2020-2040)*
- The Worcestershire 5G Testbed project has successfully spun out into a new commercial entity, nexGworx, working with businesses across Worcestershire and the Midlands region
- BetaDen continues to deliver and is building a thriving technology community within the county – over 30 Worcestershire-based technology businesses/entrepreneurs have been supported to date, creating new jobs, leveraging significant third party investment into the county, and winning contracts with high profile clients including Royal Mail, HS2, National Rail and others
- BetaDen is also receiving national recognition, having been shortlisted as a finalist at the UK Business Tech Awards 2022 event in the ‘Best Tech Accelerator’ category – results to be announced on 20 October 2022
- BetaDen North bootcamp has been delivered in Wyre Forest supporting 6 innovators with clean-tech ideas – an extension has been granted to extend the cohort and delivery programme for the period September to December 2022
- WLEP has led on launching a new Midlands Cyber brand on behalf of Midlands Engine, hosting three regional cyber technology focused events in 2022 with over 200 attendees in total
- Midlands Cyber continues to strengthen relationships across the region, exhibiting at three international expos in the last year (Cardiff and London) and attracting international delegations from India and the United States to Worcestershire
- Midlands Cyber has also formed a new international Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) partnership with Nord France Invest/ Euratechnologies in Lille
- WLEP and the Council worked with STEMWorks to deliver the Primary and Middle School STEM Challenge to 65 schools helping to inspire the county’s next generation of engineers
- A virtual event was recorded to showcase the Apprenticeship Awards to champion the valuable role of apprenticeships across the county, and was well received, attracting over 600 views across three days
- Linked to this, apprenticeship delivery has returned strongly following the pandemic with 20% more young people accessing them than during the pandemic, with key sectors returning to pre-pandemic recruitment levels demonstrating commitment from businesses to talent growth in 2022.
- The Local Skills Report for Worcestershire was successfully developed and published, outlining the strategy for the county to meet the needs of its businesses around employment and skills with practical action plan asks for the county’s stakeholders
- In 2021/2022, 89% of all young people in education under the Careers Hub initiative within Worcestershire received one or more employer encounters, supported by their education establishment and the Careers & Enterprise Company

- WLEP Careers Hub performance remained high with education partners and the Council delivering an average of 6.6 Benchmarks to a National Average of 5.3 benchmarks met
- WLEP and partners successful recruited over 600 placements with local employers for young people on the national Kickstart initiative, supporting 16-24 year olds back into work
- The Worcestershire Jobs website has listed over 10,000 vacancies since it was launched to provide a matching service for residents and employers seeking employment
- WLEP, working with the Council, opened its first physical space drop in for young people to access careers advice and support with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in Worcester under its Worcestershire Careers brand
- WLEP launched its Bootcamp programme in July 2022, accelerating careers into vocational areas of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Construction, Care and Nursing to support the need for workforce in these sectors. The target is to get 75% of the participants into careers in the sectors – so in one year this would be approximately 190 individuals
- Active Travel improvements were completed on the A38, funded by WLEP
- The Getting Building Fund (GBF) project at Vale Business Park in Evesham which delivered 10 new industrial units totalling 2,295 sq. m of new commercial floor space has successfully let all units
- First phase of the Redditch Gateway gamechanger employment site successfully completed with Amazon taking up tenancy
- Construction works commenced on the GBF-funded Burcot Lane housing scheme, delivering 61 energy efficient housing units in Bromsgrove
- The University of Worcester got the green light to a new health, wellbeing and inclusive sports centre campus, supported through the WLEP by GBF investment
- WLEP is also on track to exceed their targets for both the number of new broadband connections and number of businesses supported via the GBF-funded Rural Gigabit Connectivity project
- Two GBF-funded highways improvement schemes have also been completed in the north of the county – Hoobrook Island and Hagley Road, safeguarding 14 jobs and creating 38 construction jobs
- Successful funding announcements for Wyre Forest (£17.9m) and Bromsgrove (£14.5m) through the Levelling Up Fund
- 260+ businesses have now accessed the Worcestershire Growth Hub's Specialist Advisor Support Programme in response to Brexit and COVID-19 issues
- 150+ businesses have accessed the Government-funded Peer Network programme via the Worcestershire Growth Hub (WGH) growing their business and taking advantage of peer collaboration opportunities
- A series of strategic business events have been facilitated by WLEP and WGH including a Sustainability focused event at Morgan Motors, supporting the local MP (50 delegates), as well as a dedicated trip to The Manufacturing Technology Centre in Warwickshire, with Worcestershire manufacturers

- New business office space has been launched in the county, including 'The Pillar' in Wychavon
- WLEP are assessed as the joint-top performing area in Midlands Engine area by DIT for our delivery against the Key Account Management (KAM) contract, engaging and supporting foreign-owned companies in the county
- Several net-zero events were supported county-wide, raising awareness and providing advice and support to local businesses around the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), including beating off stiff competition from other Midlands areas to host the COP26 bus in the county – with videos and media produced to support and complement the event
- The Visit Worcestershire Tourism Awards showcased the best tourist organisations in the county
- In May 2022, WLEP launched a 'state of the nation' style report on the Worcestershire Economy, which monitors progress against targets and indicators identified in the *Worcestershire: Plan for Growth (2020-2040)*.

24. This is by no means an exhaustive list but provides a flavour of the range and scale of the initiatives that WLEP has identified as part of a wider partnership for the future economic prosperity of Worcestershire.

25. Further examples of successes and achievements are published in WLEP's 2021/22 Annual Report.

Focus on the Worcestershire Energy Strategy

26. In response to the OSPB's request for an update on WLEP's Energy Strategy, the following progress report outlines key headlines.

27. WLEP launched the Energy Strategy for Worcestershire in Spring 2019, three months ahead of the Government's amendment to the Climate Change Act (2008), committing the UK to the legally binding net zero emissions target by 2050.

28. The Worcestershire Energy Strategy was developed by WLEP in partnership with the Council and was informed by an extensive stakeholder engagement programme including input from businesses, local authorities, and education and training providers.

29. Since 2020, the WLEP's Energy Strategy has been adopted by the Council and acknowledged by all local authorities in Worcestershire.

30. WLEP has developed a dashboard which tracks some of the KPIs and targets outlined in the Energy Strategy, to monitor progress. This can be seen at Appendix 1.

31. The Strategy outlines the vision to create a thriving low-carbon economy across Worcestershire by 2030, which will support the creation of high value jobs, and stimulate investment and clean growth across the county. It sets out three key delivery measures/ targets:

- Reduction in carbon emissions by 50% on 2005 levels by 2030,

- Double the size of the low carbon sector between 2016 and 2030, and
- Tripling energy production from renewable generation by 2030.

32. Since October 2018, the WLEP has hosted an officer from the Midlands Net Zero Hub ((MNZH), previously the Midlands Energy Hub), appointed as a Worcestershire representative, to proactively assist the development and delivery of energy projects identified in the Energy Strategy.

33. In the lead up to the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), the WLEP and the WGH coordinated a local business breakfast event on 20 September 2021, providing details of the support programmes available across the county to help businesses to decarbonise. The WLEP successfully won the bid, developed at short notice, to host a COP26 event and the Government's Net Zero tour bus, working in collaboration with the University of Worcester and Worcester City Council.

34. WLEP produced videos and supporting media for the event to include the coordination of Carbon Stories/Case Studies from across the Worcestershire business community for the Net Zero tour bus event. Over the COP26 quarter, the WLEP ran a series of activities focusing on green energy across Worcestershire.

35. The Government published the UK Hydrogen Strategy in August 2021. In September 2021, the WLEP convened a workshop in partnership with FAUN Zoeller, a German-owned Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV) manufacturer based in Redditch to explore the potential for a Hydrogen Economy in Worcestershire. The Hydrogen Consortium developed a proposal to develop hydrogen fuel-cell and EV Refuse Collection vehicles to decarbonise the County's Waste Services.

36. Unfortunately, the proposals have not been adopted to date, primarily due to lack of investment. However, conversations have continued between FAUN Zoeller and some Local Authorities responsible for waste collection in Worcestershire to explore the potential for mapping routes to understand energy requirements and understand the energy vectors needed to meet those requirements.

37. Consultation with key businesses and HE/FE providers, as part of the WLEP's local Hydrogen Taskforce has also identified the potential for hydrogen to decarbonise public transport and logistics, industrial processes and residential heating.

38. The LEP and WGH continue to engage with high-energy business users across the county to understand their challenges and to identify opportunities and signpost into suitable national and regional programmes of support. For example, the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund, a £315m national programme managed by BEIS which supports the development and deployment of technologies that enable businesses with high energy use to transition to a low carbon future.

39. It is important to note that the LEP is technology-agnostic and is not wedded to promoting one energy source or solution above others. The LEP understands that the energy challenges posed across transport, industrial processes and heating will require a combination of different energy solutions and technologies to address them.

40. The LEP has been involved in working with partners and stakeholders on a range of projects and initiatives which support delivery of the Energy Strategy. A list of some of these is included in Appendix 2.

41. Working regionally, as part of the Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH), WLEP supported a commission by the MNZH to better understand the Low Carbon Environment Goods and Services (LCEGS) sector across the Midlands, broken down into LEP geography areas. This report was developed by kMatrix Data Services Ltd.

42. The report provided some insightful headlines into the Worcestershire LCEGS sector as follows:

- The LCEGS sector in Worcestershire employs 11,331 employees
- There are 703 LCEGS sector-based companies in Worcestershire
- The majority of LCEGS businesses in 2019/20 were Small to Medium Enterprises, accounting for 50% of the LCEGS sector
- The LCEGS sector has grown year on year since 2017/18. In 2017/18 total sales in the sector were worth £1.4bn and reached £1.5bn in 2019/20.

43. Looking forward, WLEP in its role as local convenor has developed a guiding coalition to help Worcestershire better prepare for the energy system transition through the development of Local Area Energy Plans for local priority areas within the county.

44. The Local Area Energy Planning Group (LAEPG) is led by the WLEP's Energy Lead, Non-Executive Director and includes representatives from the Council's Sustainability, Planning and Waste Services Teams and the MNZH.

45. Since inception in late July, the LAEP Planning Group has engaged with the County's main Energy Distributors, Western Power Distribution (WPD) and Cadent Gas, with the aim to:

- Identify energy constraints and pinch-points that present a barrier to economic growth/inward investment
- Identify opportunities for alternative energy solutions, to include renewables
- Foster good working relations with Energy Distributors to share information & data and participate in local area energy planning.

46. Consultation with Energy Distributors forms an essential preparatory stage to determine which local priority areas would benefit from a whole systems based approach to local area energy planning.

47. All seven Worcestershire Local Authorities have declared a Climate Emergency, however, the recently published Distributed Future Energy Scenarios (DFES 2022) produced for the six District Councils by Western Power Distribution shows that only one local council is on target to meet net zero by 2050.

48. Through local stakeholder engagement in local area energy planning, the WLEP aims to improve the visibility of local area information and data, to assist the Energy

Distributors to develop informed and accurate forecasts for energy demand and generation.

49. To date, this work has surfaced constraints in the current electricity grid capacity (at 11kV substation level). Details have been circulated to Local Planners to identify how the constraints will impact on consented/planned developments in Local Plans and the proposed allocations in emerging plans.

50. Work is also underway to share localised knowledge on the high energy users / industrial clusters in the county to inform the Hydrogen Valley Feasibility Study for the Midlands, currently being developed by Cadent Gas.

51. The LAEP Group are due to meet with Wales & West, the Energy Distributor responsible for smaller areas of the county and will also consult with Cadent Gas and Severn Trent's Biomethane Teams before this LAEP preparatory stage is expected to conclude by circa end October.

52. By the late Autumn, the LAEP Group aim to produce a rationale with key findings, to help determine the local priority area/s that could benefit from a whole systems-based approach to local area energy planning.

53. Further to the identification of the local priority area, the LAEP Group are looking to host a Local Area Energy Summit, to engage with the Local Planning Authority, Energy stakeholders and Skills and Training providers to identify local area energy planning priorities.

54. WLEP is well positioned to facilitate the development of Local Area Energy Plans, via the WLEP Energy Lead, Non-Executive Director; and the MNZH Regional Net Zero Officer, who is also a member of the Energy Systems Catapult LAEP Board.

55. Other live projects in the pipeline include:

- Bromsgrove Heat Network and green energy production
- Worcester City River Heat Network
 - River Severn Partnership (RSP) exploring this as a potential Pathfinder Project.
- Grid Capacity
 - Review of sub-station capacity and assessment against demand of new developments to inform Electricity DNO.

Looking Forward – WLEP key priorities for 2022/23 and beyond

56. The activity of WLEP is guided by the overarching economic strategy published in Autumn 2021, the *Worcestershire Plan for Growth: 2020-2040*.

57. The focus for the next 12 months is outlined below, in line with the three areas of focus set out for LEPs by Government.

Strategy

58. WLEP will monitor KPIs of the Worcestershire economy as identified in the *Worcestershire Plan for Growth: 2020-2040*.
59. WLEP will collaborate with Local Authority partners and stakeholder organisations on developing funding applications for the Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
60. WLEP will continue to execute the BetaDen Business Plan and identify a future operating model for our commercial technology accelerator, supporting entrepreneurs, businesses and attracting inward investment to the county.
61. WLEP will develop and implement a Digital Skills strategy for Worcestershire.
62. WLEP will also act as the voice of business, conducting research and producing reports into the challenges and opportunities facing businesses.

Delivery

63. In line with the five foundations of productivity framework established in the Plan for Growth (2020-2040), WLEP's delivery priorities for the next 12 months are as follows:

Ideas

- Deliver the BetaDen North bootcamp initiative, supporting clean-technology acceleration, in partnership with Wyre Forest District Council
- Deliver the remaining funded cohorts of technology entrepreneurs via BetaDen
- Develop a funding application to support a feasibility study into exploring the potential for an energy innovation zone in Worcestershire to support net-zero ambitions
- Support local businesses to access national funding programmes / initiatives that stimulate innovation and improve productivity

People

- Continue to work with education establishments in Worcestershire to reach the eight Gatsby Benchmarks and support young people to understand the careers of the county's employers
- Deliver the Careers Hub contract on behalf of the Careers & Enterprise Company
- Continue to promote Apprenticeship opportunities within the county – and launch an access fund to support young people to access their apprenticeship
- Launch the Department for Education (DfE) Bootcamps programme into Worcestershire
- Open the Youth Hub in Worcester City to add a physical space to the Careers Worcestershire brand
- Work with the DfE in Worcestershire to support the building of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)
- Develop a digital skills strategy for the county, mapping the current offer and future needs

Infrastructure

- Complete the Malvern Technology Park infrastructure works to enable first development plot to come forward to market
- Complete the Construction and Automotive Skills Centre in partnership with Kidderminster College
- Complete the Low Carbon Housing scheme in Bromsgrove, a new housing development of 61 dwellings

Business Environment

- Establish a framework of Specialist Business Advisors to support Worcestershire businesses via the Worcestershire Growth Hub
- Deliver the Key Account Management contract on behalf of Department for International Trade (DIT), working with local Foreign-owned businesses
- Lead, manage and deliver a range of business engagement events across the county to capture business views on key topics
- Provide local business intelligence to local and national partners to inform future policy
- Coordinate insights and activity with other Business Representative Organisations (BROs) operating within the county e.g. NFU, Chamber of Commerce, FSB etc.

Place

- Support Redditch Borough Council with their Towns Deal investment programme for Redditch town centre
- Support Worcester City Council with their Future High Street and Towns Deal investments for Worcester city
- Support Wyre Forest District Council with their Future High Streets Funding and Levelling Up Funded programme in Kidderminster
- Support Bromsgrove District Council with their Levelling Up Funded programme for Bromsgrove town centre
- Support all Local Authority partners with their investment plans and applications for Government funds

Governance

64. WLEP remains committed to continuous improvement and will review and refine its Local Assurance Framework in line with any future revisions made to the National Assurance Framework and will continue to learn from best practice across the LEP Network.

65. WLEP's governance objectives for 2022/23 include undertaking an open and transparent recruitment process to appoint a new WLEP Chairman following the end of term for the previous Chairman.

66. WLEP will also continue to review and enhance private sector representation across WLEP Board and all sub-boards in 2022/23.

WLEP Financial Summary

67. Worcestershire County Council acts as the Accountable Body for WLEP and they support the budget monitoring, forecasting and control working with the WLEP

Executive, providing financial challenge to the Board. The Deputy Chief Finance Officer attends the WLEP Board, as an observer, on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer, and has a valued input into all Board reports prior to despatch and holds the Board to account on financial issues.

68. In October 2020, WLEP was successful in being awarded £12m as part of the national Getting Building Fund (GBF). This was subsequently invested into a programme of twelve capital projects across the county for delivery by end of 2021/22.

69. At the close of the financial year 2021/22, a small proportion of the allocation was unspent due to delays on three of the funded schemes. Using the Financial Freedoms and Flexibilities powers, the Accountable Body set aside the underspend amount of £1,037,067 to fund the completion of the three schemes in 2022/23.

70. Malvern Technology Park, Redditch Transport Interchange and the Construction & Automotive Skills Centre will fully defray their GBF allocations in 2022/23. Change control documentation has been completed for each of these schemes and the expenditure in 2022/23 is being monitored as per the agreement between WLEP, the Council & delivery partners.

71. The operational budget for LEPs nationally is determined by central government on an annual basis. The LEP's Core revenue budget for 2021/22 was £650k, comprising:

- i) DCLG income of £500k, and
- ii) Local authority income of £150k.

72. A full overview of WLEP's end year financial accounts for 2021/22 is published in the Annual Report 2021/22. The final position in 2021/22 was £29.2k (rounded up) excess of income over expenditure budget, which was transferred to the LEP reserve.

73. As outlined earlier in the report, the LEP's budget for 2022/23 is lower due to a reduced core funding allocation from central government. The LEP's core revenue budget for 2022/23 is £535k, comprising:

- i) DLUHC income of £375k,
- ii) Local authority income of £150k, and
- iii) Other income of £10k.

74. Current expenditure levels indicate that the WLEP budget is forecasting a broadly breakeven position following the agreed transfer from reserves of circa £21k which was approved by WLEP Board in May 2022 to utilise some of the surplus carried forward from 2021/22.

75. Quarterly financial monitoring reports are available as part of WLEP Board papers, which can be found on the website.

Purpose of the Report

76. WLEP welcomes the opportunity to report progress to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board of the Accountable Body and is proud to outline the positive impact that WLEP and the wider partnership is having on the county's economy, despite the obvious challenges currently presented.

77. WLEP trusts that the OSPB members will recognise the progress made to date and are assured about WLEP's ambitious plans to further enhance the future economic prosperity of Worcestershire as we embark on delivering on our refreshed economic strategy for the county, working with partners, local stakeholders and central government to deliver on our vision of 'building a connected, creative and dynamic economy for all'.

78. The OPSB is asked to:

- (a) Acknowledge Mark Stansfeld's time in office as WLEP Chairman, which concluded in May 2022, and to welcome Interim Chairman, Julie Snell, who was appointed in July 2022
- (b) Review and note the progress made by WLEP, including the publication of a refreshed economic strategy for the county in Autumn 2021
- (c) Note the conclusion of the National LEP Review and WLEP's continued collaboration with Local Authorities on key funding opportunities (e.g. Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund) and proposed project interventions
- (d) Review and note the positive progress made by WLEP and partners on the delivery of significant programmes and project interventions outlined, contributing towards the objectives of the economic strategy
- (e) Review and note the successful financial performance of WLEP and the ability to broadly operate within its financial envelope despite the 25% reduction in core revenue funding allocation from central government in 2022/23
- (f) Note the progress update on the Worcestershire Energy Strategy implementation and proposed areas of future focus
- (g) Note the planned programme of activity for 2022/23; and
- (h) Invite WLEP to provide a further Annual Report to OSPB in 2023/24.

Supporting information

Appendix 1 – WLEP Energy Strategy data dashboard

Appendix 2 – List of energy projects that WLEP have supported / delivered with partners

Contact Points

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Email: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

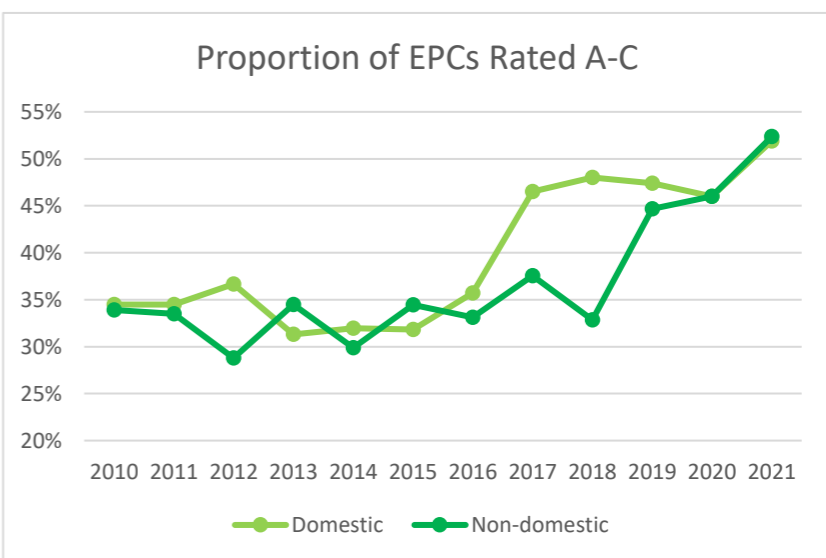
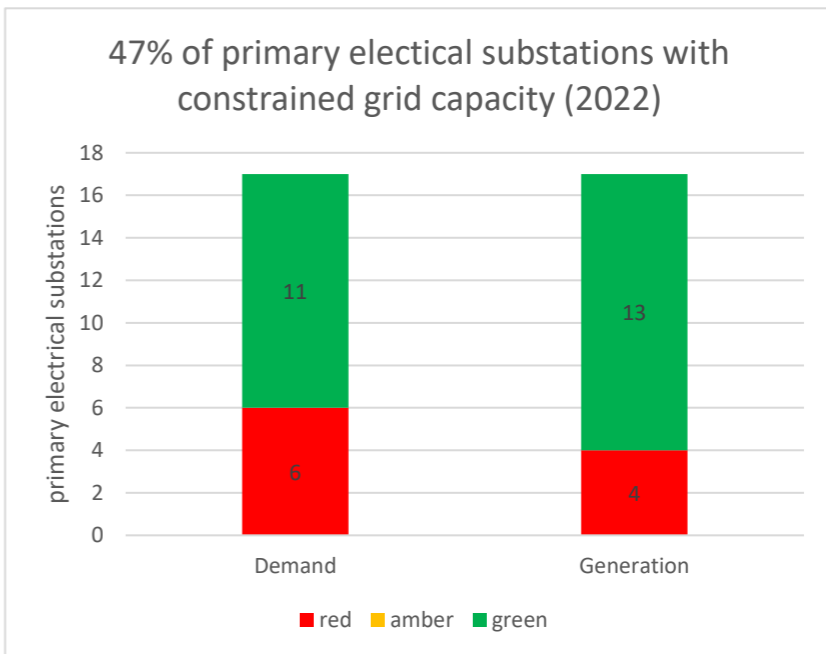
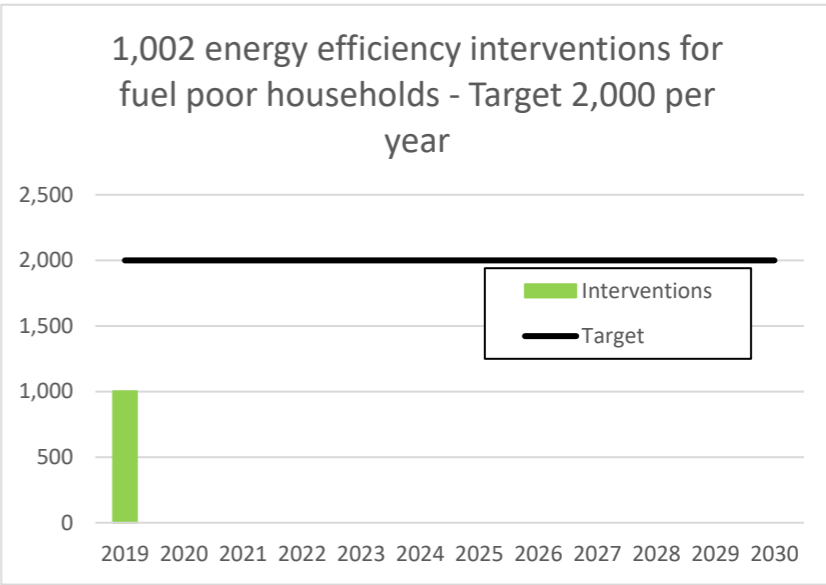
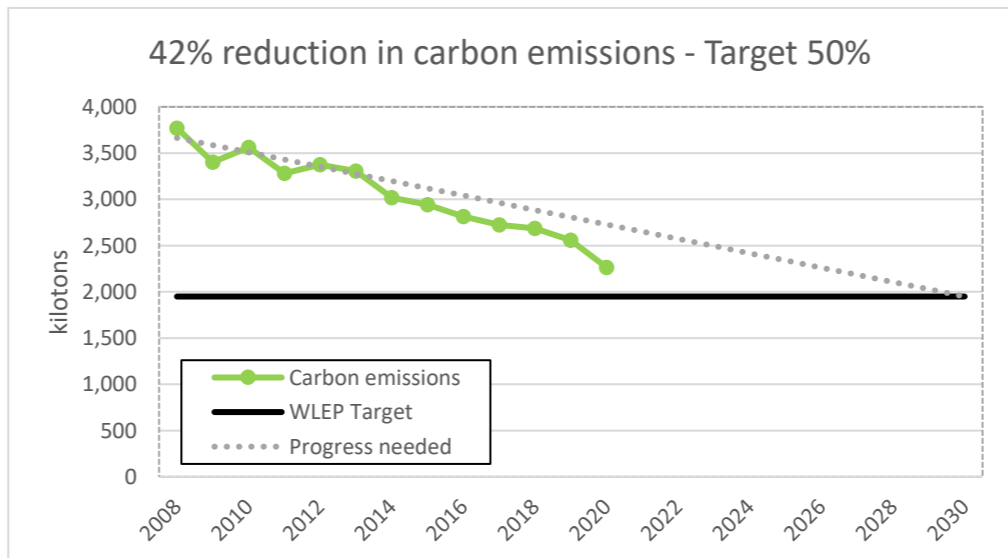
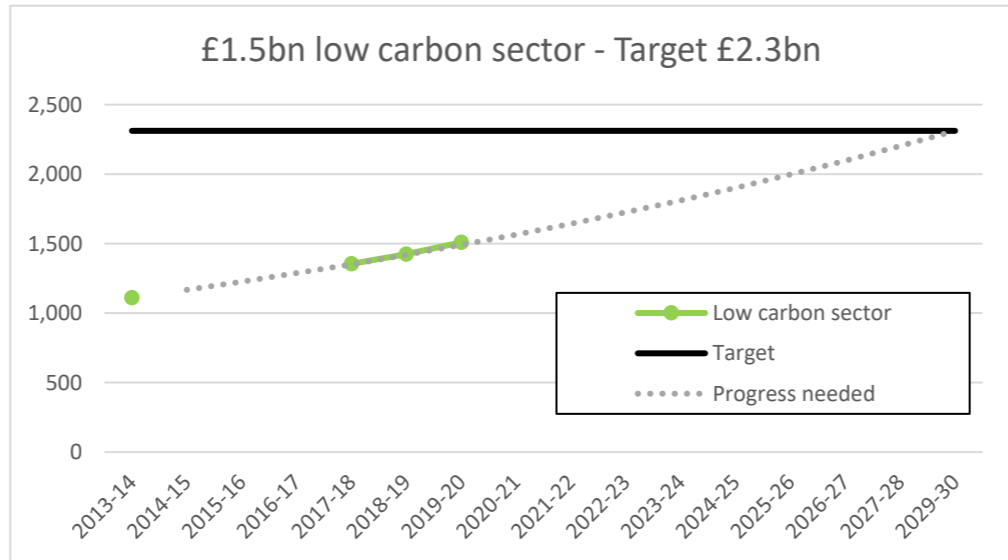
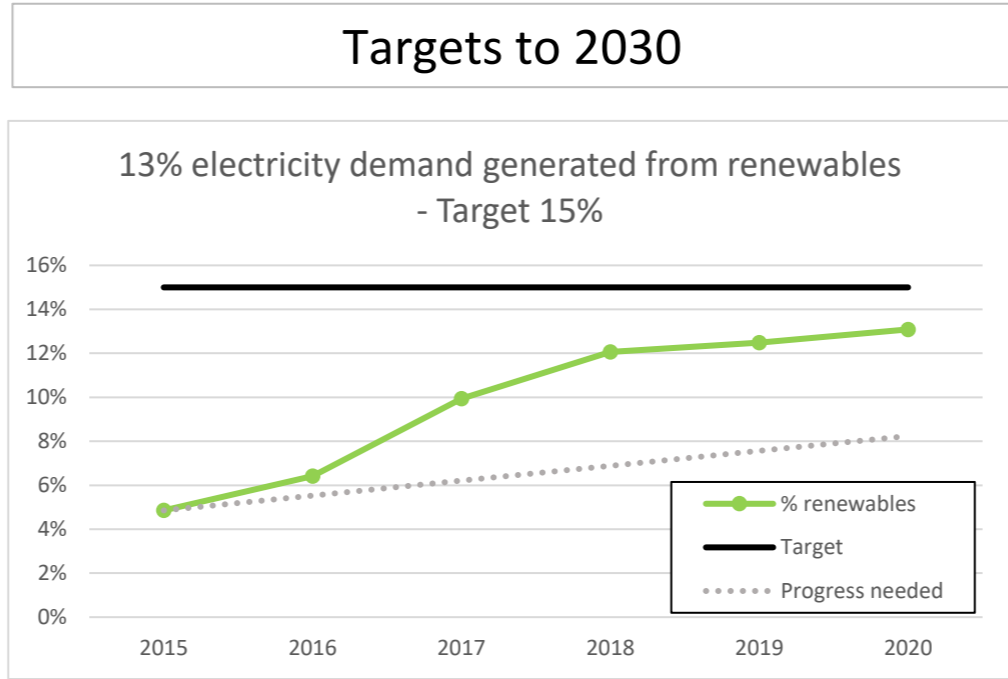
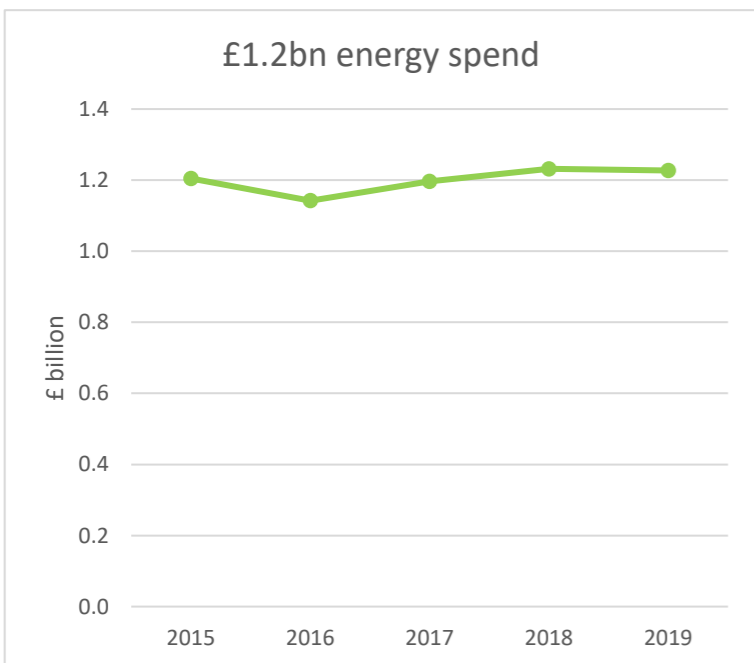
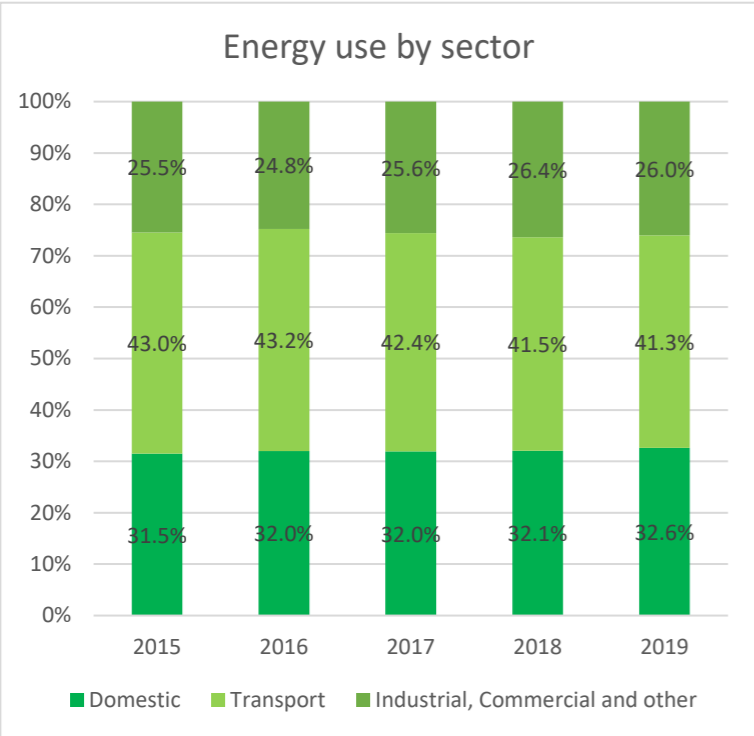
Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- WLEP Annual Delivery Plan 2022/23: <http://www.wlep.co.uk/resources/document-library/>
- WLEP Plan for Growth (2020-2040): <https://www.wlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/WLEP-Plan-for-Growth-2020-2040-FULL-VERSION.pdf>
- WLEP Plan for Growth (2020-2040) – exec summary: <https://www.wlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/WLEP-Plan-for-Growth-2020-2040-EXEC-SUMMARY.pdf>
- WLEP Energy Strategy: <https://www.wlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/P3695-Worcestershire-Energy-Strategy-Strategy-with-glossary.pdf>

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

Energy Strategy Dashboard

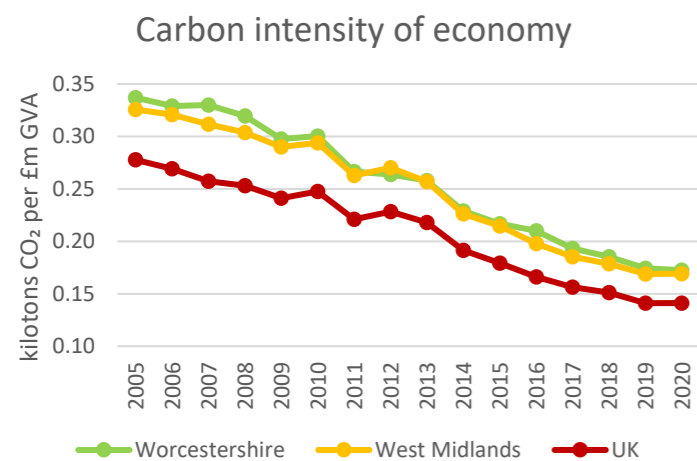
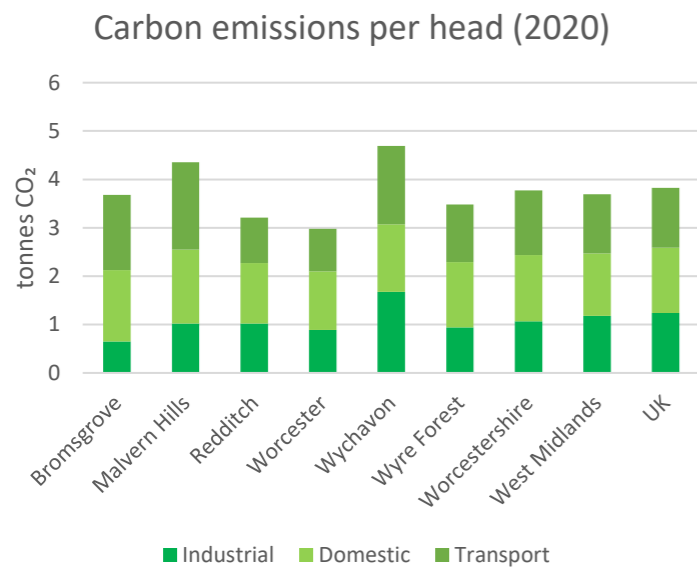


Energy Strategy Indicators



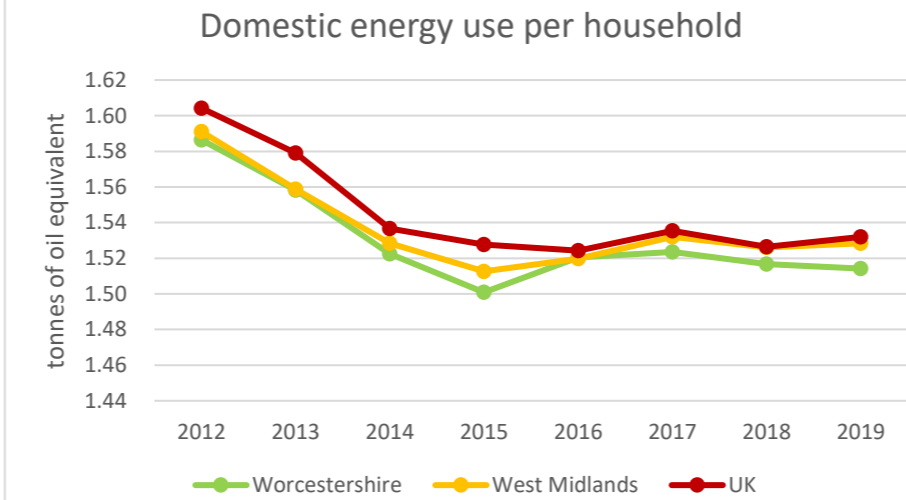
Carbon emissions

2,264 kilotons CO₂ emissions (2020)
3.8 tonnes CO₂ emissions per head (2020)
0.17 kilotons CO₂ per £m GVA (2020)



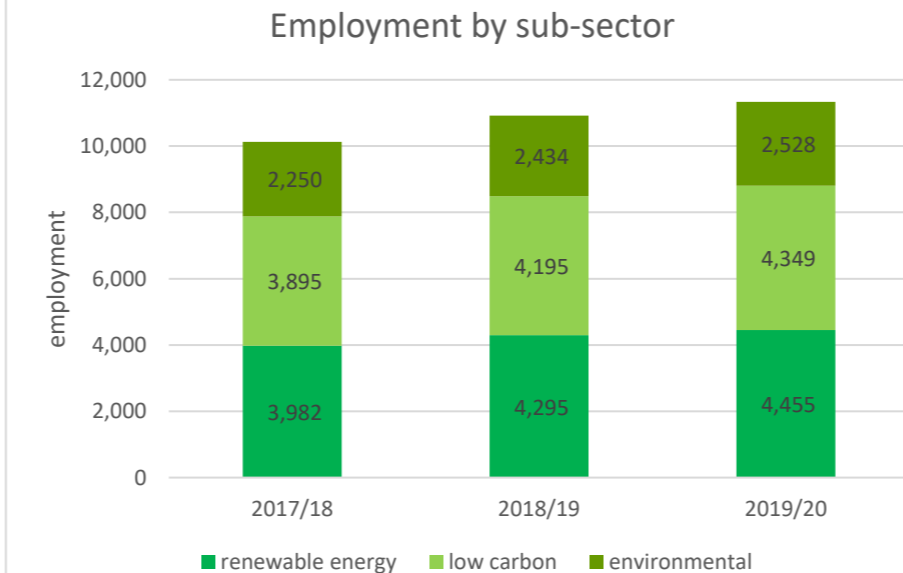
Affordable energy

14.5% households in fuel poverty (2020)
1.51 (toe) energy use per household (2019)
1,002 home energy interventions (2019)



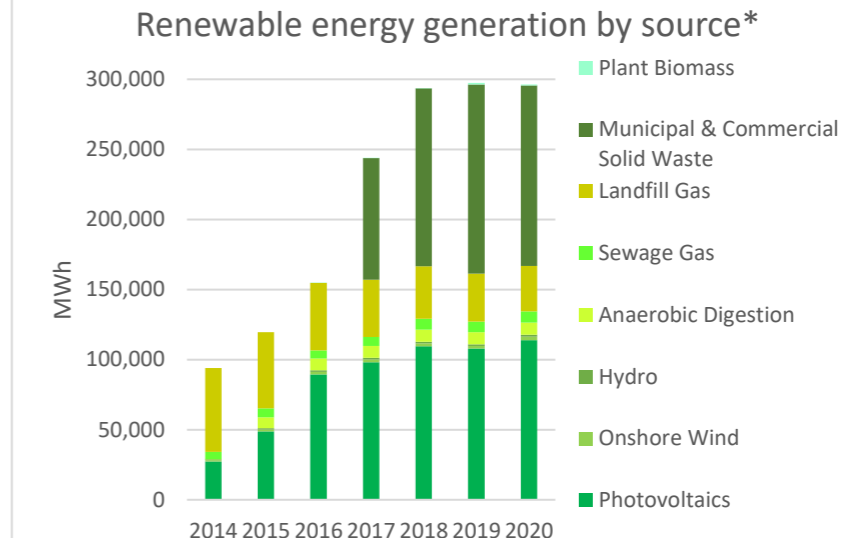
Low carbon economy

11,300 jobs (2019/20)
700 businesses (2019/20)
£457m investment in R&D (2019/20)
£37m renewable energy generation (2020)



Infrastructure and development

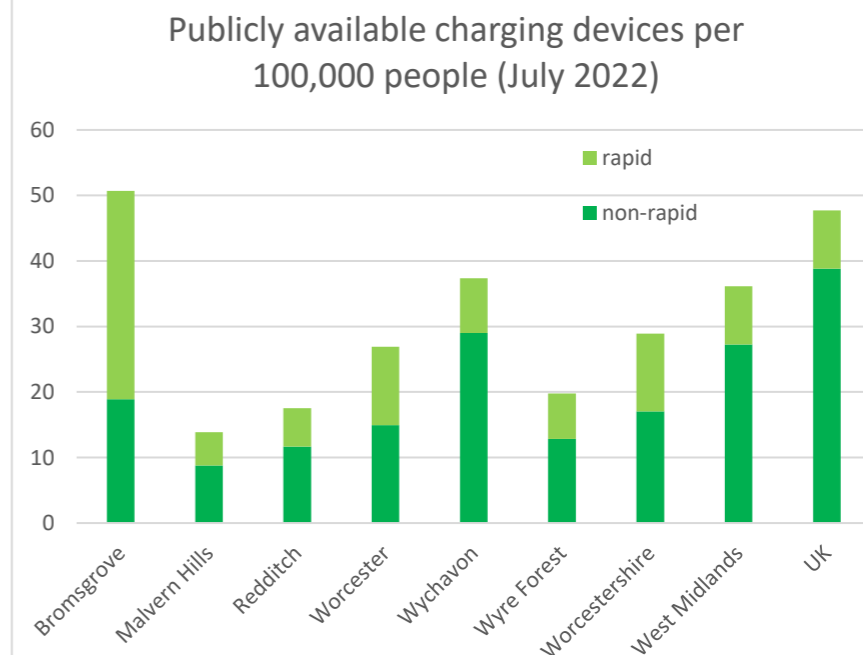
£ funding for community energy
296,228 MWh renewable energy generation (2020)



* Figures include generation from energy-from-waste facility.

Low carbon transport

173 electric vehicle charging devices - (July 2022)
6,895 ultra low emissions vehicles (Q1 2022)



WLEP Annual Report to OSPB 2022/23

Appendix 1 – List of WLEP Energy Strategy Successes and Achievements

SUCCESSSES

Since the launch of the Energy Strategy in 2019, WLEP and WGH has supported several local energy projects across the partnership as either a convenor, delivery body or investor. Each of them contributing towards the county's pathway to net zero. This has included the support for the Carbon Reduction Strategy and Action Planning for all six Local Councils, via provision of support from Midlands Net Zero Hub.

Some examples of successful projects that the WLEP has been involved in:

Transport:

- OLEV Ultra Low Emission Taxi Infrastructure Scheme
 - WLEP supported Bromsgrove District Council with their bid via provision of support from MNZH, ultimately securing £300,000 from Government to install charging points in the Rubery and Wythall areas.
- Woo Bikes
 - WLEP investment of c. £50k for Worcester e-bike scheme in partnership with the University of Worcester as Lead Delivery Agency
- Worcestershire Parkway (Charge station / EV bus facility)
 - WLEP investment of £8.3m Local Growth Fund into this scheme in partnership with WCC as Lead Delivery Agency. Technical /Advisory support via MNZH

Place:

- Worcestershire Heat Mapping and master planning study
 - This included a pre-feasibility study of Geothermal Potential in Offenham and was conducted by Mouchel.
 - This study was 70% funded by BEIS Heat Networks Delivery Unit (HNDU) and supported by WLEP match funding contribution.
- Seismic Study of Geothermal Potential in South Worcestershire
 - Further to the Heat Mapping Study, a deep geothermal seismic study was delivered by GT Energy, jointly funded by Worcestershire County Council and Local Councils: Wychavon, Worcester and Malvern Hills, with the WLEP contributing the larger share of funding.
- Community Energy Projects
 - Investment from the BEIS Rural Community Energy Funded (RCEF) to fund local community energy projects in Worcestershire.
 - Feasibility studies have been completed for:
 - Hanley Energy Action
 - Eckington Weir Hydro-Power
 - Sesame Community Energy - Sedgeberrow
- Grid Capacity
 - A review of sub-station capacity to assess ability to meet demand of new developments (conducted 2020 and 2022) to inform Electricity DNO
 - This work intends to ensure network constraints do not present a barrier to local economic growth

Business & Industrial Processes:

- BetaDen North Bootcamp
 - Successful delivery of the inaugural 8 week intensive business support programme, supporting six local businesses to accelerate their cleantech innovations and lead industry supply chains towards net zero (April to June 2022)
 - This has been delivered in partnership with Wyre Forest District Council and central government via the CRF
 - The BetaDen North programme has since been extended to provide support to more businesses with their greentech/cleantech innovations from September to December 2022
- The WLEP, via the Worcestershire Growth Hub has signposted businesses to ERDF and CRF funded advice and grant programmes, administered by WCC.
 - Business Energy Efficiency Programme (BEEP)
ERDF funded free energy efficiency assessments and grants of up to £20,000 for SME's. The current phase of the programme started in April 2019. Cumulatively, to July 2022, the BEEP programme has registered 226 Worcestershire based businesses and exceeded the local target by 101%. Worcestershire Growth Hub referred 143 businesses to the programme of which 41% were eligible for assistance and grant awards.
 - Low Carbon Opportunities Programme – Renewable Energy & Innovation (LoCOP)
ERDF funded advice and installation of renewable energy technologies & support for businesses to develop and commercialise low carbon technologies and services. The current phase of the programme started in October 2019. Cumulatively to July 2022, the LoCOP programme is progressing well against targets, with 58 registered companies for renewables and 27 Worcestershire based companies registered for Innovation support. Worcestershire Growth Hub referred 14 businesses to the programme, accounting for 15% of Worcestershire businesses currently on the LoCOP programme.
 - Zero Carbon Ready Worcestershire (ZCRW)
CRF funded advice and grant programme, providing organisations and businesses with decarbonisation advice and assessments and access to grant funding for smart meters. This short-term programme started in March 2022 and is due to close c November 2022. Cumulatively to July 2022, the ZCRW programme has assisted 161 businesses. To date, Worcestershire Growth Hub has referred 7 businesses to the programme, culminating in over 60 hours of bespoke specialist advice and assessments.
- The WLEP, via the Worcestershire Growth Hub and MNZH has signposted businesses to the BEIS funded Industrial Energy Transformation Fund (IETF). This grant supports businesses to invest in energy efficiencies and deploy decarbonisation technologies to reduce industrial energy consumption and achieve industrial carbon emissions savings. Nine Worcestershire based businesses were identified as eligible for the IETF. Following close consultation, only four companies demonstrated suitability. The WLEP supported Mettis Aerospace to submit a bid for an Energy Efficiency Feasibility Study in Spring 2022, via provision of support from Midlands Net Zero Hub

and The Clean Tech Group. Mettis have submitted a second bid for a feasibility study on furnaces for the Summer Round 2022 for £70k, as their first application was unsuccessful. Mettis welcomed the assistance provided by the Worcestershire Growth Hub Team, and have provided the following quote:

“Clean Tech provided funded support from the Worcestershire Growth Hub which enabled Mettis to take their first steps to evaluating the road to net zero”

The WLEP via the Worcestershire Growth Hub has engaged with 16% of Worcestershire’s strategic companies. The Growth Hub are continuing to promote support to companies that have yet to engage.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES TO NOTE

Further highlights of the WLEP’s business engagement with the green agenda, include:

Events:

- Sustainability Event @ Morgan Motors, Malvern (Sept 2021)
 - WLEP / WGH held a Sustainability Event for Worcestershire based businesses in September 2021.
 - This event aimed to help businesses understand the steps needed to reach their net zero targets.
 - Harriett Baldwin, MP for West Worcestershire and Andrew Griffith, MP (the Government’s Net Zero Business Champion) supported the event.
 - Businesses received presentations from Indra Renewable Technologies; Octopus Energy and The Clean Tech Group, in addition to information on the current business support programmes available from the Worcestershire Growth Hub and insights on improving the environmental footprint for businesses.
 - The event assisted the development of a letter to the COP26 President Alok Sharma from the Worcestershire business community
- Hydrogen Roundtable with Cadent and Worcestershire businesses
 - In October 2022, the WLEP / WGH will deliver a roundtable event on Hydrogen for Worcestershire Based businesses.
 - The Head of Regional Development (Northwest and West Midlands), from Cadent Gas will be delivering an update on Hydrogen Developments, nationally as part of Cadent’s Future of Gas Transition Plans, to include an update on the Hydrogen Feasibility Study for the Midlands, which is due to report in early 2023
 - This will provide high-energy business users in Worcestershire an opportunity to learn more about emerging plans, outline their challenges and inform Cadent’s future strategy

Sub Station Upgrade:

- Warndon sub-station
 - WLEP / WGH / MNZH also facilitated an acceleration of the investment by WPD to upgrade Warndon Substation, which took place earlier this year
 - Business intelligence gleaned from the local area, including companies on Worcester Six Business Park, revealed that some Worcestershire businesses

- were not able to invest in smart energy solutions (PV, batter storage, EV schemes etc.) due to constraints on the electricity network
- WLEP conveyed this information to WPD, demonstrating real commercial demand and the investment plans were accelerated resulting in the substation upgraded by WPD in July 2022

Worcestershire Growth Hub (WGH) Business Support:

- Specialist Professional Business Advisors programme
 - WLEP via WGH has completed delivery of two BEIS-funded Specialist Professional Advisor Programmes (Jan 2021 – March 2022).
 - This programme enables businesses to access specialist advice from professional external experts on a range of topics, including the green agenda and sustainability.
- Worcestershire Growth Hub: Specialist Professional Advisor Programme (1)
 - BEIS funded programme providing specialist business advice on the green agenda and sustainability.
 - Specialist Adviser: Clean Tech Business Group (aka Shrewsbury Consulting) delivered 73 interactions and supported 16 Worcestershire businesses, accounting for 132.3 hours of support during the 3 month pilot phase from: January 2021 – March 2021. Sustainability contract value for period: £7,453
- Worcestershire Growth Hub: Specialist Professional Advisor Programme (2)
 - This programme ran from 18 June 2021 to 31 March 2022. The initial contract awarded for the Sustainability Specialist Advisor, The Clean Tech Group was £8,950.00, however, due to high demand from businesses, this was increased to £11,950.00.
 - 34 Worcestershire based businesses were supported on this programme with one to one and group session delivery. Over half of the businesses (53%) on the scheme were referred by the Worcestershire Growth Hub.
 - It is important to note that the nature of the sustainability specialism required more time spent with a business than the other programme specialisms, such as marketing or finance.
 - The Clean Tech Group delivered 113 interactions with Worcestershire businesses. This included 13 site visits, accounting for a total of 33 hours, to first ascertain the business issues before advice on energy efficiency savings could be provided.
 - The programme exceeded its initial business engagement targets by 36%.
- Worcestershire Growth Hub: Specialist Professional Advisor Programme (WGH-funded)
 - With the advent of the global energy crisis, the WLEP Board have approved local funding for a further wave of the Specialist Professional Advisor Programme.
 - This will again be delivered via the WGH
 - Pro Enviro have now been appointed as the Specialist business advisor for the green agenda and sustainability contract
 - This contract started 1 August 2022 and will run until 31 March 2023. The Sustainability contract value for this period is £12k

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE BOARD 29 SEPTEMBER 2022

UPDATE ON THE WORCESTERSHIRE RESPONSE TO INVASION OF UKRAINE

Summary

1. The Board is asked to consider the update provided in respect of Worcestershire's Response to the invasion of Ukraine.
2. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities, the Chief Executive and the Assistant Director for Communities have been invited to the meeting for the discussion.

Background

3. The County Council, District Councils and partners have unanimously pledged to do all they can to support families and individuals arriving in Worcestershire from Ukraine as part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and the Ukraine Family Scheme.

The Schemes – A Recap

4. **Family visa scheme.** This is entirely dependent on whether Ukrainians living in the UK have relatives who want to support those leaving Ukraine. It is estimated there are around 130 Ukrainians in total living in the county according to provisional 2021 census data. This scheme does not attract additional funding (see scheme below), but it is envisaged that Councils will be expected to perform their duties in relation to housing / education etc.
5. The **Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme** was announced on 14 March. Around 150,000 individuals across the UK have registered interest in being a sponsor. People arriving under this scheme will be able to:
 - Live and work in the UK for up to three years
 - Access healthcare, benefits, employment support, education, and English language tuition.
6. This scheme does attract additional funding. A £350 per month 'thank you payment' has been offered to sponsors for between 6-12 months (6-month period is the minimum expectation set for sponsors). The 'thank you' payment is limited to one payment per residential address and will remain tax free. Payments are only issued once accommodation and DBS checks are carried out and passed.
7. £10,500 per person is also be provided to Local Authorities accepted under this scheme. The funding is "to provide much wider support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities" and is paid to Upper Tier authorities on a quarterly basis, in arrears. Arrangements have been made to treat the funding as

a pool, under the joint control of officers from the seven councils, who can agree how it is allocated fairly between the councils in order to cover the costs that they face.

8. The government is also providing additional funding to councils to provide education services for children from families arriving from Ukraine under the scheme. The Department for Education (DfE) will allocate funding on a per pupil basis for the three phases of education at the annual rates listed below. The first payment was made through the Education Skills and Funding Agency ESFA on 31 August 2022.

- Early years (ages 2 to 4) - £3,000
- Primary (ages 5 -11) - £6,580
- Secondary (ages 11-18) - £8,755

Worcestershire Data

9. Worcestershire had its first data transfer on Tuesday 22 March 2022, the system is updated daily with new sponsors and guests as and when a match has happened. Current information suggests the following breakdown for Sponsors and Guests across Districts (as of 12 September 2022). Numbers change on a daily as those households who have expressed an interest find a match with Ukrainian guests.

The table below shows a breakdown of host properties, expected guests and guests arrived including number of children split by school age.

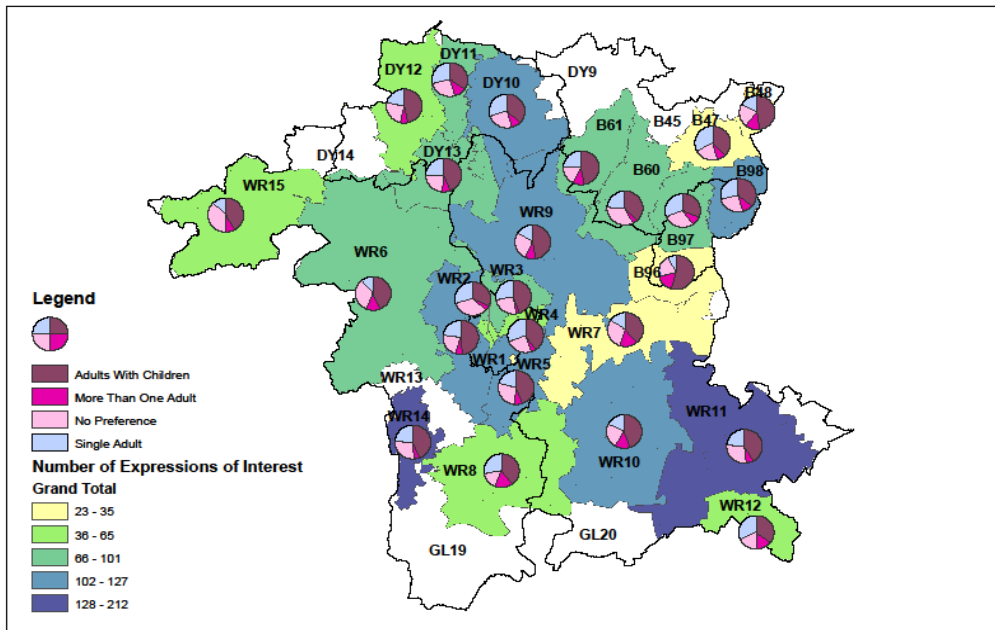
District	No of Host Properties*	No of Guests Expected^	No of Guests Arrived+	Number of Children by school Stage^		
				Pre-school	Primary	Secondary
Bromsgrove	60	152	112	5	28	24
Malvern Hills	140	334	250	17	65	54
Redditch	24	51	36	5	8	8
Worcester City	75	185	150	3	31	28
Wychavon	161	358	296	17	49	66
Wyre Forest	63	119	86	10	15	15
Unmatched Guests	-	57	-	0	2	2
Total	523	1256	930	57	198	197

* Host property figures exclude "Failed" households

^ Expected guest figures and "No of Children by School Stage" exclude guests that are no longer moving to Worcestershire or that have moved out of the county

+ Guests arrived figures taken from [Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme: Visa data by country, upper and lower tier local authority](#)

10. Worcestershire is also in receipt of data from central government around the total number of expressions of interest to host Ukrainian guests by Worcestershire household. As mentioned previously, the national figure is c. 150,000 and at first look at the data suggests that the total figure for Worcestershire is 2431. This data has since been cleansed and the number has reduced to 2058. The map below shows the distribution of expressions of interest and the sponsors preference of age ranges of guests (e.g. Adult with children, single adult, adult group, no preference). District maps are also available.



Homes for Ukraine - Expressions of Interest - Snapshot 16 May 2022

11. Contact has been made with all 2058 individuals who have expressed an interest to confirm their interest in hosting Ukraine guests. This information is being collated and the latest response is outlined in the table below.

Worcestershire		Total Sent	Total Responses	Interested	Not interested
		2058	435		
Row Labels	Count	% responses against total sent	% against responses received	41.84%	44.37%
Being Processed	14	0.68%	3.22%		
Guests already arrived	46	2.24%	10.57%		
Still interested Form completed	84	4.08%	19.31%		
Still Interested no form completed	98	4.76%	22.53%		

Unable to accommodate	193	9.38%	44.37%		
Grand Total	435				

Education Update – school places for Ukrainian children

12. All children and young people arriving under these schemes have the right to access education and childcare whilst in the UK. The best place for all children to be educated is in schools, and attending school is vital to help newly arrived children integrate as quickly as possible into the communities in which they are living.

13. Local authorities also have an important role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has published guidance for local authorities on the Homes for Ukraine scheme [here](#), information on access to education and childcare can be found on pages 24-29. For children we all know that attending school is an important protective factor.

14. To supplement this, the Department for Education (DfE) have updated the Gov.uk page on [school access rights for pupils from overseas](#) and have provided some questions and answers to DLUHC's [Homes for Ukraine FAQ page](#). In addition DfE have also provided information in Ukrainian [How do families arriving from Ukraine apply for a school place and childcare? / Як родинам, що приїжджають з України, подавати заяви на отримання місць у школі та допомоги з оплати послуг з догляду за дитиною? - The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

15. The Government's expectation is that if there are school places available in the local area, even if not in the immediate vicinity of the family's home, the local authority will work with families arriving from Ukraine to enable the children to attend school as soon as possible.

16. The Secretary of State for Education has stated local authorities should be looking to provide places and, where necessary, use the flexibilities to admit above published admission number (PAN) and exceed the infant class size limit, as well as using the in-year Fair Access Protocol. The School Admissions Code applies to the admission to school of Ukraine arrivals, in the same way as it does to all other children.

17. Local authorities have a duty to support local parents in choosing schools. DfE, are therefore looking to local authorities to support refugees with:

- information on where schools have vacancies; and
- how to apply.

18. In Worcestershire access to information and the admission application process is being supported by Here2Help. Support to assist with admissions is available via School Admissions on 01905 844 111 or email at schooladmissions@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk The Worcestershire Children First (WCF) website has information in relation to how to make an application for anyone

arriving in the county, that requires a school place. In addition, anyone contacting the Worcestershire Hub in relation to School Admissions, on 01905 822 700, are signposted to WCF, if the query is not something Customer Service Advisors can answer from their extensive School Admissions knowledge base. The School Admissions Team, has a designated placement officer for each geographical area of the county who can support sponsors, families, and schools through the process. The Worcestershire Hub has the specific contact details of individuals and can direct calls to where they need to go. The School Admissions website has a link on the homepage to Google Translate, where any applicant can copy the published information and have it translated into their own language.

19. As at 5 September 2022, 315 applications have been received with 285 children and young people already offered places in schools across the county through the application process, and 30 new applications are pending.

The table below shows by district council area the offers of school places

District	Number of Offers Primary	Number of Offers Secondary	Pending Applications	Total
Bromsgrove	25	13	0	38
Malvern Hills	34	16	6	56
Redditch	9	0	1	10
Worcester City	38	25	6	69
Wychavon	61	44	11	116
Wyre Forest	14	6	6	26
Total	181	104	30	315

20. If no schools within a reasonable distance of a child's have vacancies or are not able to admit more pupils, the local authority should place these children under its in-year fair-access protocol, in the same way it will place all other hard to place children. A school place must be allocated under the protocol for all children referred to it within 20 school days. Arrangements should be made for the child to start at the school as soon as possible.

21. In certain areas across the county, and in some year groups, there are limited places available in schools. Where the local authority has not been able to offer a place within a reasonable distance, then a referral to Fair Access is made. Fair Access panel meetings are usually held once each half term. However, because it is vital to help newly arrived children integrate as quickly as possible into the communities in which they are living, requests have been made virtually, prior to meetings.

22. In terms of the number of Ukraine arrivals, that have been referred for action under Fair Access, to date, there have been 2 referrals, both of which were successfully placed and are now on roll in schools.

Support in Schools

23. WCF continue to update schools using the Education Bulletin, on any information released by DfE. Schools have been provided with access to resources to support children in schools. This includes the following support that is available for any child and can also be used to support Ukraine arrivals:

- Free Training to become a Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware Setting.
- Transport Assistance where eligible.
- Language support, through the WCF Learning Support Team.
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for post-16 and adult learning, community based with funding support.
- Early Help Offer.
- Access to Oak National Academy, who have rolled out an auto-translate function across all 10,000 of its online lessons.
- Uniform costs, if families are struggling to afford uniform, schools can support with costs.

24. In addition, the following resources are also available to support Ukraine arrivals with schools provided with access to resources to support children in schools:

- Free School Meals for all Ukraine arrivals.
- Ukraine Culture Briefing Sessions for schools.
- Support to access remote education during the pandemic has been extended to those Ukrainian pupils who need laptops.
- Access to Ukrainian learning materials and the Ukrainian curriculum, to compliment Ukrainian pupils' education.
- Ukrainian Educational Materials to support both pupils and families.
- Access to Twinkl, English/Ukrainian language resources.

Wider Support

25. **Cultural awareness and education sessions** - Worcestershire County Council's Adult Learning Team have delivered sessions for Officers (Districts, County Council, wider partners inc. schools) and Sponsors on cultural awareness. These have been well received. In addition the following provision is being offered:-

26. **Voluntary Sector, non-accredited, informal ESOL provision** is being supported by the team. The Team have created an online platform for sharing resources, signposting to further information, communication and support for the volunteers involved in this. District Councils are helping to connect local groups in their areas to this provision.

27. **Access to English qualifications** is progressing well and the Team have been piloting a 5-week Functional Skills English programme. This would ordinarily be a 9-month programme so it's ambitious to try and do so quickly but early indications are that it is working successfully and planning is underway to scale up the delivery from September. This is being piloted as an online course to try and improve access to education for those being hosted in more rural locations. This qualification should boost the confidence of proficient speakers of English and aid their

employability. Connections are also being made with the local colleges and the university to make sure that there are options for learners across the county.

28. **An ESOL for Employment** orientation course has been rolled out to ensure learners have at least a basic understanding of accessing employment in the UK, key language for this and the main routes to finding employment. **Deeper-rooted employability needs** are being addressed with extension options to this. The main concern continues to be identifying appropriate support for access to very specific, professional careers (such as NHS requirements) as this is outside of the Team's expertise but will work with partners to address need.

29. **Modular opportunities for pronunciation, spelling and grammar** are being made available, to complement both the non-accredited and qualification programmes.

30. **Vocational qualifications and traineeships are being promoted for learners aged 16+** with a number of Guests attending Fairfield's Open Day to speak with staff about these opportunities.

31. **All 16-19 year olds** are receiving phone calls from the Skills and Investment Information, Advice and Guidance teams to check that learning options are in place for September. Where gaps are found, it is intended to commission provision (if appropriate) through Young Adult Learning.

32. **Community Learning opportunities** continue to be promoted to refugee audiences, to encourage community integration.

33. **Family Learning programmes** are targeting support towards schools which have high numbers of refugees and we are working with schools admissions and Nikki Jones on this.

34. **Accessing the NHS** - The health guide [here](#) covers resources to help both Guests and Sponsors to make the most of the NHS services available in the county. The guide can be [accessed online](#) and sponsors are being encouraged to use this guide to support guests. In addition, resources are being developed to support guests with low level mental health and wellbeing needs along with plans to commission specific services from the voluntary and community sector and specialised mental health services. These are currently being costed.

35. Information is being gathered of **local support**, in addition to the support given by the County Council and its partners, that may be available for when the Guests arrive. The already well established [Here2Help service](#) is being utilised to organise and link up those wishing to offer help (individuals and organisations/community groups etc) to those who may need help or advice. Communications have been published encouraging anyone who feels they are able to support in any way to go through Here2Help to register.

36. **Access to employment** –Ukraine claimants will receive the same support and access to provision as anyone else and if eligible, they should be referred to relevant support to help them into work. There are currently quite a few employers who are sending through vacancies where they are welcoming applications from Ukraine (and Afghan) communities and these are being shared with the local job

centres. The Way to Work campaign is well under way and focussed on connecting claimants to employers and meeting demand in the labour market. Discussions are also taking place with local recruitment companies (e.g. Hewett Recruitment) who are keen to support Ukraine guests into employment.

37. All District Councils now have employed **Support Workers**, who will work with guests and hosts in their area. A programme of support has been provided to all those workers across the county. This includes regular meetings to share information, experience and to provide information of various services to support their work

38. In addition to all of the above **free bus passes** have been issued to all guests (extended to the end of the calendar year) and the institute of advanced motorists are running courses, using the county hall car park, to help improve guests' confidence in driving.

Re-matching and supporting sponsor/guest relationships

39. Rematching is a new expectation for local authorities using the expression of interest information currently shared from central government. It is expected that re-matching will focus on those most in need and, therefore, only be used where it is unviable or unsafe for the sponsorship relationship to continue. Only those who received a visa through the Homes for Ukraine visa route are eligible for rematching, to ensure that those without family links in the UK are prioritised. Rematching should only take place if one of the following applies:

- a. When the local authority determines it is genuinely not viable or safe for the Ukrainian guest(s) to stay where they are.
- b. Because of failed DBS or accommodation checks.

40. Councils should keep rematches to a minimum, to limit instability for guests and ensure rematching is prioritised for the most pressing situations. If a local authority has a request for a rematch from Ukrainian guests, but does not deem it justified, it is reasonable to turn this down or prioritise cases deemed more pressing. Local authorities are expected to use their judgement in determining whether there has been an irreparable breakdown in sponsorship. Where the Ukrainian guests include children who are already enrolled in school or college, local authorities should prioritise rematches that are as local as possible to the education setting, to ensure continuity of education. Children **must not** be rematched separately to the Ukrainian adult(s) in the existing sponsorship relationship. Within a household with multiple Ukrainian adults, you will be able to rematch part of the adult household if appropriate (i.e., in a Ukrainian household with just two adults, you could rematch just one adult, with the other adult remaining with the existing host, if appropriate

41. In preparation of hosts who may not be able to support guests after the initial 6-month period, the County Council is actively contacting those on the expression of interest list (detailed above) to ascertain their willingness to be a host. This list has then been sent to districts who have chosen an initial list of guests to receive property and DBS checks in readiness. It is hoped that this will provide some hosts ready and able to assist in rematching with little delay.

Next Steps

42. Discussions have now turned to the longer-term plans for managing the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, including the management of re-matching guests to sponsor households and the wider resettlement of guests in the county.

43. The Council is developing a One Worcestershire approach to this transition with newly recruited Support Workers within the district linking with (where appropriate) the resettlement service.

Purpose of the Meeting

44. Members of the Board are asked to consider the update, provide comments to the Leader and determine whether it would wish to carry out any further scrutiny.

Contact Point

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sjmorris@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager (Interim Monitoring Officer) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda and Minutes of the [Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board](#) 23 March 2022 and 26 April 2022

Agenda and Minutes of the [Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel](#) 7 July 2022

24 March 2022 [Cabinet](#) Report -Worcestershire Response to Invasion of Ukraine

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

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE BOARD 29 SEPTEMBER 2022

SCRUTINY CHAIRMEN AND LEAD MEMBER UPDATE

Summary

1. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (the Board) are asked to provide feedback on the work within their Scrutiny remit, Panels and Task Groups. This should include suggestions for Work Programmes and items to be considered from the latest Cabinet Forward Plan.

Member Updates

2. In order to ensure that Members of the Board are fully informed about issues relating to scrutiny in Worcestershire, communication between Members is essential.

3. Members of the Board are therefore invited to feedback on recent Scrutiny meetings (including performance and budget monitoring), Task Groups and emerging issues and developments within their remit. Regard for the Council's statutory requirements in relation to access to information will be critical.

4. Board Members' areas of responsibility are as follows:

- Adult Care and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Shirley Webb
- Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Steve Mackay
- Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Emma Stokes
- Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Matt Dormer
- Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Alastair Adams
- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) – Brandon Clayton
- Crime and Disorder – Richard Udall

5. To assist in their role, scrutiny lead members have the benefit of regular briefings from the Directorates they are shadowing, something which was put into place by the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). These briefings, alongside the Forward Plan (see below), can be used to help identify any emerging issues that may be appropriate for future scrutiny. Recognising that work across the County Council is of interest and value to all Board members, the notes from these briefings (where produced) are available to all members electronically.

Work Programme

6. From time to time the Board will review its work programme and consider which issues should be investigated as a priority.

7. Worcestershire County Council has a rolling annual Work Programme for Overview and Scrutiny, which is agreed by Council on an annual basis. The last programme was agreed on 14 July 2022.

9. The Board is asked to consider its 2022/23 Work Programme (attached at Appendix 1) and agree whether any amendments are needed.

8. The main responsibilities of the Board are:

- Commissioning work for Scrutiny Panels
- Establishing Scrutiny Task Groups (agreeing Terms of reference and Reports)
- Advising on Council's Policy Framework ie Sustainable Community Strategy (if any), Corporate Plan, Children and Young People's Plan, Local Transport Plan, Youth Justice Plan, 'Act Local in Worcestershire' framework, such other plans and strategies as required by law to form part of the Policy Framework or which may be and have been adopted to be part of that Framework eg Corporate Plan, Budget
- Call-ins
- Designated by the Council as its statutory Crime and Disorder Committee and must meet at least annually.

10. The Board agreed to use a set of criteria (listed below) to help determine its scrutiny programme. A topic does not need to meet all of these criteria to be scrutinised, but they are intended as a guide for prioritisation.

- Is the issue a priority area for the Council?
- Is it a key issue for local people?
- Will it be practicable to implement the outcomes of the scrutiny?
- Are improvements for local people likely?
- Does it examine a poor performing service?
- Will it result in improvements to the way the Council operates?
- Is it related to new Government guidance or legislation?

Cabinet Forward Plan

11. The Board will wish to consider any issues arising from the Council's Forward Plan. The latest version of the Plan available at the time of Agenda despatch is (attached at Appendix 2) for consideration.

Purpose of the Meeting

9. Members of the Board are asked to feedback on:

- the work within their Scrutiny remit, Panels and Task Groups;
- key issues from the Directorate that may be appropriate for future scrutiny;
- performance information they have queries or concerns about;
- any issues to be added to the Work Programme:
- items in the Forward Plan which they consider may be possible issues to scrutinise; and
- any other issue which they feel is relevant/of interest to the OSPB.

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1: OSPB 2022 Work Programme
- Appendix 2: Forward Plan (to follow) [Forward Plan 2022](#)

Contact Point for the Report

Samantha Morris, Overview and Scrutiny Manager - Tel: 01905 844963

Email: sjmorris@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

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

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Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board – 2022 Work Programme

Date of Meeting	Issue for Scrutiny	Date of Last Report	Notes/Follow-up Action
29 September 2022	Annual Update from Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) (2022 Update to include the WLEP's Energy Strategy)	30 September 2021	
	Update on the Worcestershire Response to Invasion of Ukraine	23 March 2022 26 April 2022	
	Member Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan		
20 October 2022	Annual Crime and Disorder Meeting (including an Update on Community Speed Watch Schemes and Community Safety Partnerships)	21 October 2021	
	Member Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan		
16 November 2022	Quarterly Performance and In-Year Budget Monitoring (Q2) - Feedback from Scrutiny Panels		
	Draft Scrutiny Report: Developer-Funded Highways Infrastructure and Section 278 Technical Approval	19 November 2020	Task Group started October 2021
	Member Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan		
7 December 2022	Budget Scrutiny		
	Draft Scrutiny Report: Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	10 December 2019	Task Group started December 2021
	Member Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan		

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item(s)	Date of Last Report	Notes/Follow-up Action
January 2023	Budget Scrutiny		
	Member Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan		
February 2023	Member Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan		
March 2023	Quarterly Performance and In-Year Budget Monitoring (Q3) - Feedback from Scrutiny Panels		
	Member Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan		
April 2023	Review of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme	30 September 2021 29 June 2022	To be endorsed by Council in May 2023
	Member Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan		
Possible Future Items			
May 2023	Update on the 2022-27 Corporate Plan		
TBC	Draft Scrutiny Report: Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)		
TBC	Draft Scrutiny Report: Elective Home Education	10 December 2019	Scrutiny Task Group paused due to COVID-19

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item(s)	Date of Last Report	Notes/Follow-up Action
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Crime and Disorder	Safety of Worcestershire Parks and open spaces (Crime and Disorder)		Suggested at 30 September 2021 Meeting
TBC	Income Generation		Suggested at 17 March 2020 meeting
TBC	Update on Trading Standards (including reporting mechanisms)		Suggested at 22 July 2020 meeting

Standing Items

Each meeting	Member Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan	Each meeting	
November/January	Budget Scrutiny		
March (Q3) July (Q4) September (Q1) November (Q2)	Quarterly Performance and In-Year Budget Monitoring - Feedback from Scrutiny Panels		
April	Review of Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme		To be endorsed by Council in May
July	Annual Crime and Disorder Meeting		
As necessary	Call-ins		
As necessary	Commissioning work for Scrutiny Panels		
As necessary	Establishing Scrutiny Task Groups (agreeing Terms of reference and Reports)		
As necessary	Advising on Council's Policy Framework ie Sustainable Community Strategy (if any),		

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item(s)	Date of Last Report	Notes/Follow-up Action
	Corporate Plan, Children and Young People's Plan, Local Transport Plan, Youth Justice Plan, 'Act Local in Worcestershire' framework, such other plans and strategies as required by law to form part of the Policy Framework		