

Worcestershire County Council

Agenda

Cabinet

Thursday, 21 April 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.

Cabinet

Thursday, 21 April 2022, 10.00 am, Council Chamber, County Hall

Membership: Cllr Simon Geraghty (Chairman), Cllr Alan Amos, Cllr Marc Bayliss, Cllr Matt Dormer, Cllr Adrian Hardman (Vice Chairman), Cllr Marcus Hart, Cllr Adam Kent, Cllr Karen May, Cllr Tony Miller and Cllr Andy Roberts

Agenda

Item No	Subject	Page No
1	Apologies and Declarations of Interest	
2	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 both the nature and content of their proposed participation no later than 9.00am on the working day before the meeting (in this case Wednesday 20 April). Further details are available on the Council's website. Enquiries can also be made through the telephone number/e-mail address listed on the website and in the agenda.	
3	Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting The Minutes of the meeting of 24 March 2022 have been previously circulated.	
4	Corporate Plan 2022-2027	1 - 22
5	Pershore Area Review Consultation Findings and Recommendations	23 - 38

NOTES

- Webcasting**

Members of the Cabinet are reminded that meetings of the Cabinet 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.

Agenda produced and published by Abraham Ezekiel, Assistant Director for Legal and Governance, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP. To obtain further information or a copy of this agenda contact Sheena Jones, Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager on Worcester (01905) 846011 or email: DemocraticServices@worcestershire.gov.uk

All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website.

Date of Issue: Monday 11 April 2022

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CABINET

21 APRIL 2022

CORPORATE PLAN 2022-27

Leader of the Council

Simon Geraghty

Chief Executive

Paul Robinson

Recommendation

1. **The Leader of the Council recommends that Cabinet:**
 - (a) **Approves for recommendation to Council the refreshed Corporate Plan 2022-27, the four key priorities of open for Business, Children and Families, the Environment and Health and Wellbeing and their respective performance measures; and**
 - (b) **Delegates authority to the Leader of the Council for minor amendments to the text during the style and design process.**

Background

2. Worcestershire County Council's Corporate Plan, 'Shaping Worcestershire's Future 2017-2022', is due to be refreshed. This document has provided a blueprint for the organisation, setting out our core priorities and guiding how the organisation will operate, both internally and with partners across Worcestershire and beyond. It has focused our work on four key priority areas:

- Open for Business
- Children and Families
- The Environment
- Health and Wellbeing

3. These four priority areas have become the bedrock by which we do business across the County and have seen us deliver key pieces of work which we know are important to the people of Worcestershire.

4. Over the last five years we've truly become **Open for Business**, unlocking key strategic sites at Worcester Six, Malvern Hills Science Park and Redditch Gateway whilst growing our county's economy and providing jobs and opportunities for our residents. The delivery of Worcestershire Parkway Station has opened up accessibility regionally and nationally for residents and businesses.

5. We've put **Children and Families** at the heart of all we do, recognising the importance in having a great start in life. We've invested in our school estate,

providing good-quality educational facilities. We've supported families and invested in children's social care to protect at risk children where necessary.

6. Delivering growth in a sustainable way has been key to preserving Worcestershire's **Environment**. We've invested in all modes of transport to provide accessibility for our businesses, including easing congestion on our roads and delivering sustainable and active travel options. Our waste to energy plant has also helped us power homes and businesses through waste that could not be recycled.

7. Our work to improve the **Health and Wellbeing** across Worcestershire has seen ever closer working and integration with the NHS and other care providers to ensure people are provided the best, and most cost effective, service. We've adopted a preventative model, aimed at empowering people to live longer, healthier lives in their own homes for as long as possible. We know this has the best outcomes for our residents and helps us manage our resources to intervene where critically necessary.

Worcestershire Corporate Plan 2022-27

8. Through regularly engagement with our residents, business and partners, we know the four themes set out in the previous plan cover the key areas that people want to see the Council deliver on, and we are committed to continue our strong progress against each area. As such, our Corporate Plan 2022-27 is a refresh of our previous plan, with these areas continuing to be the four pillars by which we do business.

9. This refreshed document recognises the significant progress we've made over the past five years, across all four of the priority areas, and now sets out what we plan to deliver for the future. Here we've updated the content of the plan, setting out where we plan to focus our energy and efforts to ensure Worcestershire continues to be a thriving County for all.

10. On **Open for Business**, we will expand our key strategic sites to deliver more highly skilled jobs and support further business expansion. Alongside this, we will continue to invest in unlocking growth at key transport sites including Shrub Hill and Redditch Railway Stations, support our partners and deliver further digital connectivity through the provision of gigabit broadband. We will also support our partners around plans for Future High Street Fund, Towns Fund and Levelling Up proposals.

11. Our continued investment into **Children and Families** will aim to see our children's services rated as 'Good', recognising the significant journey of improvement we have been on. We will continue to invest in our school estate, including the delivery of a new secondary school and extra places to keep pace with development.

12. We know our role is to help preserve and protect our **Environment** for future generations. We have now agreed a Net Zero plan which will focus our efforts to reduce our environmental impact even further whilst still enabling us to deliver sustainable growth alongside maintaining a top-quartile quality for our roads and pavements. We will continue to invest in environmental measures that protect our natural environment, enhance our biodiversity and reduce our carbon footprint.

13. Ensuring good **Health and Wellbeing** for our residents remains a key priority for us. We'll work ever more closely with residents and communities to encourage active lifestyles, enabling people to live longer, healthier and happier lives. Our work with the NHS and other care partners through the Integrated Care System will help co-ordinate our services and ensure residents receive the right care at the right time to meet their needs.

14. To deliver against our priorities, our journey to reshape our Council alongside our communities and with our partners continues. In response to the pandemic, we've truly become an innovative, forward-thinking and flexible organisation. We intend to continue to harness the benefits and efficiencies of working flexibly, reducing our footprint, and connecting our employees more closely with the communities and partners we work with.

15. We commit to working ever closer with our communities, to build local capacity and allow people to be supported in their area. We will expand our Here2Help programme to provide a single front door of advice and guidance for people, whilst working with voluntary and community groups to strengthen local support.

16. All of this work sits within our 'One Worcestershire' approach to co-ordinating work, investment and priorities across our county. We seek to adopt new ways of working, including co-location and shared service, to embrace a joined-up approach to service delivery that best meets local needs and removes barriers between organisations. We also communicate regularly with our partners in all things we do, to ensure our services do not simply move demand to another organisation – and instead we work together to resolve issues as 'One Worcestershire'.

17. Our refreshed Corporate Plan ensures we build on the successes we've already delivered across the county and looks to focus our efforts on key areas we know matters to our communities, businesses and partners.

Legal Implications

18. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board is reviewing the Plan at its meeting on 26 April 2022 and the Leader is attending to discuss it.

Financial Implications

19. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Individual projects and initiatives highlighted in the corporate plan will have their own business cases and relative implications to be considered. At all times the Council will seek to invest smartly in our county and deliver value for money for our residents.

Implications

20. There are no direct HR implications arising from this report.

Risk Implications

21. There are no direct risk implications arising from this report. Should the Council choose not to adopt the refreshed Corporate Plan 2022-27 there is a risk that we do not focus our efforts and resource on our key priorities, and therefore not deliver as effectively for our residents, businesses and partners.

Joint Equality, Public Health, Data Protection and Sustainability Impact Assessments

This report provides an overview of the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27.

A **joint impact assessment (JIA)** screening (and any full impact assessments – if screening indicates that they are required) will be completed for any specific initiatives that arise as part of the plan.

Supporting Information

- Appendix A – Corporate Plan 2022-27

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report
Matt Vins, Head of Business Support
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Background Papers

None

Foreword

Our County

Worcestershire has it all. Nestled in the heart of Britain, Worcestershire is home to around 600,000 people. Whether it's exploring the historic City of Worcester, walking up the Malvern Hills or enjoying a day out with the family at the West Midlands safari park, there's something for everyone. Our County with its vibrant urban areas and picturesque rural communities, situated between the edge of bustling Birmingham and the idyllic Cotswolds, present a hugely attractive place for residents to live, people to work or those who visit.

Our continued investment in improving our highway, rail and digital infrastructure is ensuring the County is truly **Open for Business**. Worcester Six, Malvern Hills Science Park and Redditch Gateway are great examples of where we've supported business to grow and create new jobs in the County, and continued investment in our digital offer will ensure our residents are equipped to access future opportunities as we experience a shift in working patterns and value quality of life alongside earning potential.

Worcestershire is already home to a highly skilled workforce, supported by good educational attainment and schools that we continue to invest in and work with. With our vibrant communities, alongside a myriad of exciting attractions and places to visit, we know this makes us a great place for **Children and Families** thrive and achieve their maximum potential.

The County is blessed with an outstanding **Environment** with easy access to beautiful countryside and waterways which are home to many rare and important wildlife habitats and provide great recreational opportunities for our residents to enjoy.

Our country parks, 4,600km public rights of way, and growing number of attractive walking & cycling routes provide ample opportunities for our communities to exercise and support their **Health and Wellbeing**. Our health and social care journey, moving to prevention and promoting independence, is also crucial in supporting people to live in good health for longer and lead fulfilling lives.

We know Worcestershire provides a great quality of life and excellent opportunities for all, but we know we must continue to adapt and harness the benefits of change to maintain this and unlock our future potential. The best way to do this is through our 'One Worcestershire' approach, as public, private & VCS organisations, working together to address the challenges we collectively face and support our residents and businesses.

The Council

Worcestershire County Council delivers an array of services which support our residents and businesses. These include providing social care for some of the most vulnerable in society, helping the next generation get the best start in life through education, investing in our transport network, disposing of household waste sustainably, provision of library services & country parks and supporting health & wellbeing within our communities. We oversee over £1 billion of public expenditure each year and employ 2,672 full-time equivalent staff across the Council and Worcestershire Children's First, making us one of the largest organisations in the County.

Already we have made great strides to become a more financially self-sufficient organisation, with around 80% of our net revenue budget being raised locally through Council Tax and Business Rates. We've grown our income streams, become more commercial and focused on those things that residents & businesses tell us are important and need improving. We now need to work more closely than ever in harnessing the potential of our communities and partnership organisations to maximise our resources and capacity to continue to deliver.

Around 69% of net our budget goes towards providing adult and children's social care. We will always ensure we support society's most vulnerable. To achieve the best possible outcomes, we know we cannot do this alone, and therefore we will work more closely with our communities to build local capacity to enable people to live independently in their local area for longer. We must also ensure we continue to be ambitious for our county and invest in the schools, transport system and employment sites that our growing County needs for our residents and businesses to thrive.

Our refreshed Corporate Plan, which continues with our four key priorities, helps build on the progress we have made over the last five years and sets out our ambitions for our county and the organisation to 2027. We will work even more closely with partners, to continue to build on the 'One Worcestershire' approach to address countywide issues and drive further economic growth across our county whilst ensuring what we do is sustainable and continues to protect the great quality environment we all enjoy in our County. As an organisation we're also working more smartly, with the adoption of flexible and mobile workforce arrangements, which reduces our footprint and supports wider partnership working through the co-location of services. This is an ambitious plan and one we can only achieve by working together with you, our residents, businesses and partners.

Our plan for Worcestershire

Our Corporate plan sets out our priorities for the county and the services we provide. It highlights how the Council will evolve its way of doing business to be able to deliver them and ensure its resources are used to maximum effect. We will continue to grow our income generation opportunities, invest smartly in our county and operate more commercially to reduce costs. We'll be working ever more closely with our partners and communities to maximise local capacity and reduce duplication of resource. We will continue to enhance our engagement with businesses and seek to raise the County's profile further to attract more investment, jobs and opportunities for all.

We will empower our communities to live prosperous, independent lives through building community capacity, developing local resilience and sharing best practice. The Council should only intervene when necessary as we know early action by individuals, families and communities working together can often provide more sustainable solutions than the Council acting alone. Through our Here2Help service we will enable people to build stronger communities which are resilient.

We will work with our schools and education providers to achieve excellence in education and ensure more school places are provided in the right locations to support housing growth. Our health & social care system will work more closely than ever before to deliver services in a more integrated way to improve outcomes for patients and service users. Continued investment in our highways & transport network alongside key employment sites and the regeneration of our towns & City Centre will ensure our residents are able to access better paid and higher skilled employment locally. The plan also ensures we continue to enhance our environment, reduce our carbon footprint on our path to Net Zero and dispose of our waste sustainably.

This plan sets out our vision for how we will achieve this and moves on our journey to be an enabling authority which prioritises investment and support in areas most important to our communities and businesses. Working together we will ensure Worcestershire continues to thrive.

Simon Geraghty

Leader, Worcestershire County Council

Open for Business

Vision and Objectives

Worcestershire's economy is on course to have grown by one third by 2025 from 2015 levels. We've seen significant growth across key sectors with the County Council working more closely with the private sector than ever before and alongside our Local Enterprise Partnership. Being Open for Business is a key priority for the Council to further continue this growth. Ensuring people and places are connected, physically and digitally, is vital to supporting continued economic growth, and unlock a further expansion in high-tech and knowledge intensive industries.

A growing and thriving economy generates wealth for residents and businesses enabling them to fulfil their aspirations. More homes and business growth generates more income through Council Tax and Business Rates for the Council, helping us to invest in those things that residents and businesses tell us are important.

Our plan for growth

A modern and dynamic economy, embracing new technologies and providing businesses and residents with more opportunities, will accelerate our recovery from the pandemic and attract further investment and opportunities to Worcestershire, whilst embracing the changing nature of work. This is key in attracting and retaining a highly skilled workforce locally.

We know we cannot do this alone. Partnership working continues to be the foundation of how we operate and is the reason we are successfully delivering against our 10-year Strategic Economic Plan for the County. Already, since its inception in 2015, we have seen Worcestershire's GVA increase by £2bn, with 34,000 extra jobs and 17,360 new homes. Our ambitions continue to grow, and by working closely with key strategic partners, both within the County and beyond, we will deliver over and above these targets. Our close relationship with the Worcestershire LEP has ensured we've embedded these ambitions into our collective, long-term plan for growth, with the aim of a further 11,500 jobs and an additional £1.3bn GVA by 2030.

We continue to engage and work closely with local businesses to understand their needs and how we can best support them to unlock their growth potential. Our pro-business approach has already paid dividends, with significant growth in strategic investment sites such as Worcester Six, Malvern Hills Science Park and Redditch Gateway. With our strong track record and sector focus on advanced manufacturing, Agri-tech and cyber security, we will seek to attract higher-skilled, better paid jobs and high-growth businesses to Worcestershire and provide the conditions to grow and prosper. We will continue to champion Worcestershire in the region and on the national stage, through Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect, to raise our profile and attract further investment.

We will:

- Enable high-growth start-ups to expand and remain in the County
- Provide direct support, advice and guidance, to businesses seeking to grow and invest
- Improve levels of skills and ensure they match the needs of the future economy
- Invest in physical and digital connectivity to bring business and people together

A Connected County

We are leading the way in the transformation of Worcestershire's connectivity. Having good transport and digital infrastructure is a pre-requisite of attracting and retaining high-tech and knowledge intensive business and building a resilient and dynamic economy for the future.

Our continued investment in transport seeks to better connect our places, our people and our businesses across Worcestershire and beyond. Situated at the heart of the UK motorway network,

and with easy access to airports and strategic rail corridors, we continue to work closely with partners, including Midlands Connect, National Highways, the rail industry and other regional bodies to maximise our geography and strategic assets.

The delivery of Worcestershire Parkway Station has opened up accessibility regionally and nationally for residents and businesses and will support delivery of a new settlement and employment opportunities. Our plans to improve the Cotswold Line will help deliver two trains per hour with reduced journey times and new services to Kidderminster and Droitwich.

We are leading the transformation of key transport gateways in Worcestershire – with the regeneration of Worcester Shrub Hill and Redditch railway stations being the catalyst to deliver mixed-use redevelopment and bring further jobs and opportunities to the County. Our investment along the Worcester Southern Link Road, Pershore Northern Link Road and A38 Bromsgrove, together with future plans for the Wyre Forest routes (A456, A491, A456) and A46 in Evesham, will unlock further investment and reduce journey times for those travelling around the County.

Alongside this, we will prioritise investment in digital infrastructure to provide gigabit capable broadband connectivity to 90% of our homes and business in Worcestershire by 2027, support improvements in mobile telecommunications and continue to explore leading edge digital technologies, such as 5G, for the benefit of the county. Embracing the digital revolution will support Worcestershire's economy for the next generation and maximise opportunities associated with our changing ways of work and life. Delivering gigabit capable digital infrastructure to homes and businesses will enable residents and businesses to embrace flexible working whilst continuing to maximise productivity and improve their quality of life. We will also work with mobile phone operators to improve the signal strength and the capability of mobile networks in our County.

Delivering Strategic Investment Sites

Worcestershire has a strong track-record in delivering key investment sites – including Worcester Six Business Park, Redditch Gateway and Malvern Hills Science Park. Providing more employment land has long been sought after by business seeking to expand in Worcestershire, and these sites have already provided 1,483,208sqft of employment floor space across a broad range of industries. We're committed to delivering the remaining plots at Redditch Gateway together with the Southern Extension of Worcester Six business park and the development of the wider Malvern Hills Science & Technology Park which will provide an additional 1,407,000sqft of employment floor space, bringing more high-skilled jobs to Worcestershire.

Our ambitions for the County mean we will continue to work closely with partners to bring forward further strategic investment sites. These will provide flexible investment opportunities, and cater for major market-led investment, or as high-growth hubs for start-up businesses to expand.

Further investment in our employment sites and town centres is a key priority for the Council and our partners. The successful Towns Fund and Future High Street bids of £20.5m for Kidderminster, £15.6m for Redditch and £37.5m for Worcester will deliver significant schemes. Alongside Levelling Up Funding of £14.5m for Bromsgrove and £17.9m for Wyre Forest this will help regenerate these towns. We will continue to seek funding to support further areas, including Evesham and Droitwich.

Investing in the Workforce

We know that having a high-skilled workforce is vital to supporting economic growth and attracts further investment – particularly in better paid jobs that are a priority to bring to the County to help increase the average salary of our residents. By 2027 we aim to increase the percentage of Worcestershire's 16+ population having Level 3 qualifications or above. Alongside a broad improvement in skills, we will work closely with businesses and the education sector, including

schools and local higher & further education providers, to ensure skills are aligned to the needs of the local economy.

We also want to attract and retain graduates to Worcestershire and reverse the trend of high-skilled people moving to larger cities and the South East. The move towards more flexible working, alongside our investment in transport and digital infrastructure, will support people living in Worcestershire to access jobs across the country. This will also encourage companies to start and grow in our County and we'll work closely with them to support this development.

Our desire to join-up education and business will see us continue to champion work experience and apprenticeship schemes with businesses across the County and invest in young people's futures. We're working in partnership with the LEP to provide the Worcestershire Careers Hub, helping young people prepare for the world of work and bringing education and business closer together to ensure people learn the skills that best prepare them for the future.

How we will measure this:

- 90% of homes to have access to Gigabit capable broadband by 2027.
- Increasing proportion of level 3+ skills amongst 16–64 age group.
- Narrowing the gap in the average salary between us and UK average
- Increase jobs in higher value added sectors - % of jobs.
- Reducing the journey times between economic centres – Birmingham, Bristol, Oxford & London.

Priority – Children and families

Vision and Objectives

Children and young people are Worcestershire's future. Putting children at the heart of everything we do is our "golden thread" as we know the importance of having a great start in life. This permeates throughout all our activity, and informs how we work with partners to achieve the best outcomes for our children and young people. To provide the best possible opportunities we must be part of a multi-agency commitment to invest in our children and young people and ensure our services support them to flourish.

We continue our focus on improving the life experience and outcomes for all children and young people in Worcestershire. We have a clear ambition to provide a good educational offer across Worcestershire to enable children and young people to achieve their full potential. We know this is vital to support their transition to adulthood and being able to live happy, healthy and prosperous lives. Investing in our young people in this way also helps support our other priorities around health and wellbeing and equips our future generation with the skills to secure well-paid and rewarding jobs of the future.

A key priority is also keeping children and young people safe. We work pro-actively to ensure children have a safe and stable family environment as we know the best outcomes can often be achieved within a family setting. Should a child or young person be potentially vulnerable or unsafe, we will continue to act decisively, putting their welfare and safety first and then look to provide a positive care experience for them.

Education – providing the best start in life

Investing in education is vital to provide our children and young people with the best start in life. Whilst this is delivered through a range of different providers, including maintained schools and academies, we will support all schools, educational providers and early years settings to meet high quality standards. We continue to work alongside these providers to develop and promote a first-class educational curriculum and high-quality teaching, enabling the sharing of best practice across the county.

We are committed to ensuring at least four out of every five schools across Worcestershire are rated by Ofsted as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' and will continue to work closely with those others to improve their performance. Already our educational performance across Worcestershire is above the national average, and we are focused on improving this in all areas of the County to give our children and young people the opportunities to thrive. We'll also be focusing on improving outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged learners and supporting them to access learning.

We will continue to invest in our schools, ensuring good classroom facilities and learning environments, including the delivery of a new secondary school in Worcester. Our investment in our school estate will deliver more school places ensuring all children are able to access a provision of their choice that meets their needs and to match the needs of our growing county.

Transition from education to employment

To thrive, our children and their families need to have access to economic opportunity, accessible education and employment and to live in an environment that is a good place to live and grow up. The physical and mental health of our younger generation is also key to reducing need and demand in the long term. We will be working to ensure the voice and needs of children, young people and their families are heard across Worcestershire and that we take advantage of opportunities to develop our own services in line with the needs of these groups.

We are committed to supporting our young people transition from education to the workplace. A recent Worcestershire Skills Show was visited by over 6,000 young people from 43 schools and colleges, exploring over 120 Worcestershire employers. We will continue to run events like this to provide young people an opportunity to explore Worcestershire's employment sectors, getting to know its employers and their work, the skills they are seeking, and career entry points.

We recognise the importance of providing high-quality apprenticeships within the county. We will work in partnership to raise the profile of apprenticeship schemes and the positive contributions they have in providing our younger generations with a bright working future. The County Council is a leader in this space, currently employing 150 apprentices directly and supporting a further 140 across the county – providing great career opportunities for local young people.

Keeping Children Safe

Safeguarding is at the heart of what we do. We recognise the value of family life and we aim to ensure all children and young people experience a childhood where they feel happy, healthy and safe, giving them the stable building block to being successful young adults able to make a positive contribution to their communities and society. We will also fulfil our statutory duty to identify vulnerable children in need and those in need of protection, taking effective and timely action when necessary to promote their welfare and protect them from harm.

We will work with our partners to provide early help and family support to children and young people, including those with disabilities and additional needs and those identified as “vulnerable children” at risk of exploitation and or missing in education. We will “enable and promote” parents to care for their own children well, including through our edge of care services, preventing family breakdown or support a return to family care where it is safe to do so.

Where necessary we will continue to intervene to ensure the safety of a child and where children are received into our care we will ensure children and young people have a positive, stable and local care experience achieving timely permanency.

Alongside promoting the role of corporate parents to children and young people in our care, we will work together with our districts, partners and stakeholders to ensure these vulnerable young people have “permanency” in their care arrangement, access to education and training, accommodation and support that enables them to make a positive journey through care, as they transition into young adults.

Measures:

- Better than the national average attainment at GCSE and A-levels
- At least four out of five schools rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted
- % of children getting their first preference school
- Our Children's Services rated Good by Ofsted
- Higher than average number of young people accessing Education, Employment and Training

The Environment

Vision and Objectives

Worcestershire has an ideal blend of urban and rural environments. 85% of our County is classed as rural, with urban areas having good access to parks, open spaces and public rights of way. Worcestershire includes two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; The Cotswolds and Malvern Hills. There is easy access to the countryside wherever you live in the County, promoting outdoor activities which support healthy lifestyles and attracts visitors from across the country.

Our urban areas, with their rich fabric and strong historic and cultural offers, provide a good quality of life and encourage people to live in, work and visit our County. From the splendour of Worcester Cathedral to the quaint beauty of Bewdley's riverbanks, our towns and cities have something for everyone.

Alongside maintaining our roads and pavements in top quartile condition, moving forwards, we know our role is to help preserve and protect our environment for future generations. The County Council has already halved our emissions over the last decade. Striving to go further we have now agreed a Net Zero plan which will focus our efforts to reduce our environmental impact even further. We will continue to invest in environmental measures that protect our natural environment, enhance our biodiversity and reduce our carbon footprint. We continue to work with partners to protect our communities from the adverse impacts of extreme weather, including flooding, and ensure future developments meet national and local standards and are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

A Greener Future

Our Net Zero Carbon Plan outlines our commitment to reducing the Council's carbon emissions across several areas, including emissions from household waste disposal, council buildings, street lighting and through partnership working with contractors. We are working with key partners such as the NHS, the University and 'blue-light' services to understand our respective net zero strategies and how we can best support each other achieve our green ambitions.

Our investment in transport infrastructure has included provision of Worcestershire Parkway, the first new rail station in the county for 100 years, and major improvements to Kidderminster station. We have a programme to enhance and increase car and cycle parking at stations to meet demand, including new EV charging points. We have secured additional funding for walking and cycling in the county, including plans for Kepax and Hampton bridges, and we're working in partnership with our Borough, City and District councils to secure additional resources through external funding. With this brings the benefit of reducing emissions whilst also contributing to healthier, active lifestyles. We're also investing in the 4,600km public rights of way we maintain to encourage people to explore the beauty Worcestershire has to offer.

To enhance our Environment, we are planting 150,000 trees across the County creating new woodlands whilst also being a pollinator friendly and environmentally conscious Council when working with suppliers and contractors. We are now purchasing 100% green electricity and accelerating our programme to convert our streetlights to efficient LED bulbs. We are also providing advice and grants to help businesses and organisations across the county cut carbon emissions, improve biodiversity and develop and grow low and zero carbon products and services.

We recognise the scale of the net zero challenge, and we will work closely with our partners and residents to achieve our collective ambitions.

Resilience Transport Network

We are committed to improving all modes of transport to the detriment of none. Having good quality roads and pavements is a top priority for our residents and businesses. We will continue to invest in these striving for national top-quartile performance in the condition of our roads and pavements. Recognising the impact of flooding, we will keep investing in flood prevention and mitigation on our highway network.

We are investing in our roads to reduce congestion as this has been identified by residents as another top priority for them. This includes the delivery of the major projects to improve the Southern Link Road in Worcester and A38 in Bromsgrove alongside local improvements in Kidderminster, the A38 at Upton and Bromsgrove Town Centre. These will reduce congestion and improve journey time reliability. Our strategic investment sites will also support electric vehicle charging and active travel, helping to provide more travel choices. We will also work with Midlands Connect and National Highways to improve the A46 in Evesham.

Alongside our investment in roads and pavements we will continue to improve our public transport network across the County. This includes works already delivered and planned to improve rail station accessibility at Blakedown, Droitwich and Alvechurch which will support a multi-modal transport offer for residents and businesses alike. This will be supported by our strategic investment in Shrub Hill and Redditch stations and the continued growth of Worcestershire Parkway station.

Worcestershire aspires to deliver better local bus routes with Ultra-low and Zero Emission Buses within the County. We will continue to support local bus services to ensure our towns and villages remain connected and explore demand responsive travel opportunities to run these more efficiently and effectively for users.

Working with the Environment Agency we will deliver more schemes to prevent and mitigate the impact of flooding, including large schemes at Tenbury Wells and Bewdley.

Reducing our Waste

Our aim is to encourage residents to reduce, re-use, repair, recycle and compost more. By doing this we will use less raw materials and save energy whilst protecting natural resources and reducing carbon emissions. All of this will help us achieve our ambition of being a Net Zero Council by 2050.

New measures introduced through the national Resources and Waste Strategy and new Environment Act 2021 will help transition to a more circular economy and increase waste and resource efficiency. This means major changes to the way in which waste is created in the first place, with new measures to reduce packaging and the way waste is collected, disposed of and treated.

Over the last five years we have made significant progress by diverting waste which can't be recycled to our local Energy from Waste plant rather than to landfill. The facility produces enough electricity to power approximately 32,000 homes. We are committed to working with residents and businesses to reduce the amount of waste produced and increase the amount we re-use, recycle and compost.

As a growing economy, with more businesses and homes forecast, we know the importance of reducing our carbon footprint and ensuring new developments support a sustainable future. We will encourage and grow our communities' capacity to reduce and recycle waste through the right support and provision.

How we will measure this:

- Reduce kg of waste produced per person
- Improve the condition of our roads and pavements to be amongst the best nationally
- Additional increase in the number of homes and businesses protected from flooding
- Reduce Council's carbon emissions towards Net Zero by 2050
- Cut journey times and improve journey time reliability along key rail & road routes.

Health and Wellbeing

Vision and Objectives:

Having good health and wellbeing is the key to enable people to live happy, prosperous and independent lives. Our individual health impacts everything we do in life, so we must continue our journey to support Worcestershire residents to become more active, healthy and self-reliant in managing their health for as long as they can.

The scale of the challenge is significant, and so this must be done with partners, and through unlocking community capacity to champion health and wellbeing and provide local support and opportunities for people to access. We will continue to work closely with the NHS and other health providers to ensure all our residents are aware of ways to support their own health and wellbeing and encourage people to be responsible for their own health outcomes. Through this approach we can help people live more of their life in good health and increase healthy life expectancy.

We will engage with our communities to grow local resilience and to help support them to plan for later life. We know that the best outcomes are often achieved by empowering people to live in their own homes, rather than accessing full-time care, and therefore we will look to support this wherever possible. This includes investing in technology to enable people to live healthily and independently in their own homes for longer and supporting preventative measures to reduce incidents which require NHS or care services such as falls. This will also help manage the demand for our care services, enabling us to focus more resource on preventive measures that support care in the community and within people's own homes.

Living Well in Worcestershire

We want to encourage everyone in Worcestershire to lead a healthy, active lifestyle. This is the bedrock by which people can achieve positive physical and mental health and is fundamental to improving health outcomes across our county. Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy emphasises the importance of good mental health and wellbeing, and the impact that has upon all other areas of our lives. It recognises the importance of empowering people to live well and take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing, with the Council working with partners to grow community networks and link people to support in their local area.

Adopting a healthy and active lifestyle starts from a young age, is closely tied into our focus on ensuring all children and young people in Worcestershire have a great start in life. We will also actively work with our communities to grow local capacity and support networks through an asset-based approach, maximising the strengths of the local area. The assets within communities, such as skills and knowledge, social networks and community organisations, are all building blocks for good health. Our Being Well and Here2Help programmes will further help bring people, volunteers, charities and communities together – all of which have a key role in supporting health and wellbeing provision at a local level. This will also support us to tackle loneliness and isolation and ensure people feel connected and involved in their local area.

We will continue to invest in our natural environment, to encourage residents to use and benefit from the natural assets Worcestershire has to offer. We are also making these more accessible through significant investment in public rights of way and walking & cycling routes which all contribute to supporting people's physical and mental health.

Independent Living and Adult Social Care

We will continue to work with our partners across Worcestershire, including through greater integration between health and social care, to support people to plan for later life. We know that if you act early, you can have the biggest impact on your later years and help support independence for longer without being reliant on direct care services. We have encouraged the use of technology to enable this, through adaptations to people's homes to providing digital solutions that provide reassurance and support to families. We have also been successful in being part of a successful £3.3m funding bid which will see Worcestershire at the forefront of exploring how 5G connectivity can transform health and social care for rural communities.

We are flexible in the types of support we provide and will work with people intensively if they are in a crisis to help them regain control of their life, and, wherever possible, support them to return to independent living. Our approach promotes "strength based" social work and focuses on listening and connecting with people to understand their needs. In doing so, we can reduce the long-term care costs for individuals and reduce the numbers of people entering long term care homes or having very expensive services at home. We will continue to work with our trusted service providers to ensure that we can offer the right services, in the right place, at the right time and which deliver quality outcomes and value for money for our residents and users.

As commissioners of care, we will prioritise opportunities to accelerate the availability of 'accommodation with care', such as Extra Care housing for older residents, and supported living for younger adults with disabilities. This will enable people to maintain their independence and avoid the use of institutional care provision as much as possible which helps support our focus on independence and wellbeing.

Building on the success of Here2Help we will expand our offer, through advice and information in a variety of accessible formats, to enable people to access the support available in the voluntary and community sector. Through this joined-up approach, encouraging personal responsibility for health, maximising community resources and application of assistive technology, we will continue our journey to promote independent living and move away from the traditional care options.

Health & care services when you need them

We are working with partners across the health and social care system to ensure it meets the needs and expectations of our residents and communities. At the forefront of this will be the role of the Integrated Care System (ICS) which will bring our services, those of the NHS, other local government services and third sector organisations together to reshape the provision of health and social care across Worcestershire. This will help realise our ambition to improve the health and social care in Worcestershire and to make it work more effectively and efficiently for residents. This will also have a significant role in improving the health and wellbeing of our population.

We continue to work with our health partners to implement the "Home First" approach aiming to discharge people from hospital, within 24 hours, back to their usual place of residence. We will develop alternative provision for those who require further intensive rehabilitation to enable them to be as independent as possible following a stay in hospital.

There are approximately 81,000 carers, including 66,250 voluntary carers in Worcestershire. It's important to recognise and value carers' vital role in society and continue to support them by working closely with our partners including the voluntary and community sectors. Carers will form a key link within our communities and are vital in enabling the growth of community capacity and

resilience to support independent living. For all this work we'll continue to engage closely with our partners and be guided by evidence in designing services and support structures that meet the needs of our residents and achieve the best possible outcomes with our resources.

How we will judge progress:

- Increase in healthy life expectancy in Worcestershire.
- Increase in the % of people doing 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous activity a week.
- Increase in the number of people aged 65 or more living independently for longer
- Increase in the number of people living in supported living and or extra care residences
- Minimising the number of people who need to go into permanent residential / nursing placements

What Does This Mean: For you, your family, communities and the Council?

Vision and Objectives

Worcestershire is a fantastic place to be, with beautiful countryside, historic towns and excellent connectivity to the rest of the UK. Whether it's to live, work, visit or invest in, the County has an abundance of opportunity for everyone. We're passionate about enabling people to achieve their full potential, from having a great start in life, to living prosperous, independent lives in thriving communities.

Our community capacity is growing, enabling people to do more for themselves in their local area – supported by family and friends. We know this provides a better quality of life, and better outcomes, for our residents and communities, and helps foster a true sense of 'One Worcestershire'.

Our relationships with our Parish, Town and District Councils have continued to strengthen, which supports the joined-up approach to working closely with our local communities and building local resilience and capacity. We also work closely with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) which is vital in joining-up our offer within our communities. Only by working together can we ensure our communities have the right information, advice and support in place, that is easily accessible, to enable them to become more resilient and self-reliant.

This approach is key to ensuring our limited resources can be focused on those vulnerable people in our society who need support the most. It will also enable us to continue to invest in improving those things you tell us are important and most need improving in the County.

For You, Your Family and Communities

Our journey to reshape our Council alongside our communities continues.

We know our community capacity has grown, supporting people to live happy and independent lives, with access to support from within their community. But there is still more to do. We aspire to work even more closely with you, alongside our key partners, including the Voluntary and Community Sector, to support volunteers and link them together to those that need support.

The successful launch of our Here2Help scheme has shown how committed we are to this and we have expanded the range of resources available. Here2Help will provide support for people of all ages and is available for both residents and organisations to access information, advice, tools and guidance which can help signpost to local support options based on their needs.

A key priority moving forwards is also to expand our Here2Help offer on-line, via telephone and face to face and through Independence Community Hubs – linking closely with our aspirations to enhance digital connectivity throughout our County. This will bring more opportunities for you to access information, advice and service on-line and get face to face support in your local area.

We want to keep inspiring you, our communities and individuals to get involved and help us shape Here2Help and other programmes to ensure they align closely with your needs and those of our communities. Thousands of hours of volunteering are done each year in Worcestershire – and as a key employer within the community, we encourage our employees to undertake volunteering activities across the County. We want to keep growing this resource and will work with you and the Voluntary and Community Sector to do that.

You have a key role in shaping and influencing our priorities moving forwards. We want you to become more involved and engaged with the Council – helping shape our various programmes

and ensuring they deliver for you and the communities you are part of. By designing our offer together, Worcestershire will be an inclusive and supportive place for you, your communities and businesses.

For the Council

Councillors working for you

We are a member-led authority, meaning the people you vote to represent you set the priorities, plans and budget of the organisation. Our 57 Councillors make up the Full Council which meets every two months and sets the budget and policy framework. The Leader and Cabinet provides the political leadership and sets the key plans & policies of the organisation. Overview & Scrutiny committees help review the work of the authority alongside other decision-making committees.

Local Councillors continue to act as leaders for their communities – providing on the ground intelligence to help inform and prioritise the Council’s activity. The Divisional Fund and other funding continue to empower local members to invest in their own solutions and ensure local priorities are met.

Councillors are at the heart of how we develop our policies, working closely with our staff and providing scrutiny and challenge to ensure the intended outcomes most benefit our residents and businesses.

Through public roadshows and surveys, the Council engages with large numbers of people each year from communities across the County and this information helps inform decision making.

Our continued focus on engaging with our stakeholders is further enabled through our website and social media platforms. These are a great way to interact and work with our residents – and we are committed to providing more services and solutions through these platforms to enable greater self-service.

By joining all these aspects together, our transformation programme will ensure high-quality outcomes for our residents and businesses, delivered by a highly efficient and effective Council.

Our Council

As we support the transformation of our communities, the pace of our own evolution continues to accelerate. Our model focuses on driving forwards Worcestershire’s economic and social development and providing high-quality services whilst maintaining excellent value for money for our residents and businesses.

To do this, we continually strive to innovate and look for the most efficient and effective way to deliver our services to achieve the best outcomes for Worcestershire. Through our ‘One Worcestershire’ approach we work closely with our partner organisations to understand the best way to support people, whilst removing duplication and inefficiencies. Together (including Worcestershire County Council, District Councils, Schools, Academies, Police, NHS and Fire and Rescue) we represent over 36,700 people across the public sector in Worcestershire highlighting the scale of our organisations and the importance they work seamlessly together.

We seek to adopt new ways of working, including co-location and shared service, to embrace a joined-up approach to service delivery that best meets local needs and removes barriers between organisations. We also communicate regularly with our partners in all things we do, to ensure our services do not simply move demand to another organisation – and instead we work together to resolve issues as ‘One Worcestershire’.

Within the Council, we continue to monitor our performance and drive through improvements to our day-to-day operations. It’s vital we continue to have a culture that embraces change and

empowers staff to think of even more innovative solutions to the challenges we continue to face – growing demand for services and limited resources. Our preventative approach seeks to resolve issues before they arise which can improve outcomes for service users and reduce costs.

We've grown our commercial and commissioning capacity to keep costs down and ensure the best value for money for our services. We will continue to encourage the use of the local economy in the provision of goods and services, and champion this approach across the whole of Worcestershire's public sector.

The Council will continue to harness the potential of digital solutions and encourage a 'digital by design' approach to the provision of its services. Together with the investment to grow community capacity and in developing digital infrastructure through the provision of faster broadband, we will ensure the Council is at the forefront of the digital revolution and embrace digital solutions for our services – particularly in the way we manage our business – where possible. This will support residents and businesses to self-serve when accessing our services which speeds up the process for them whilst reducing our costs, allowing us to invest in the key priorities of our residents.

Digital technology will also support our management and decision making through the provision of real-time data and trend analysis. This will support our data-driven decision-making approach, ensuring we focus our resources on key areas that will provide the best outcomes for Worcestershire. It'll also help focus us understand and forecast potential demand or identify areas where we can improve our approach.

To deliver against our ambitions transformation programme and continue to deliver great services we must continue to invest in our workforce. Our Workforce Strategy is designed to build an organisation with the personal and collective resilience to drive us to have a high-performance culture, and employees who are valued and supported.

We will also expand our provision of apprenticeships within the Council, providing opportunities for people to forge a career within Local Government and support the Council's succession planning through investing in local people and providing support to our leaders of the future.

Our Finances

We have made great strides to become a more self-sufficient Council through raising our income streams and reducing inefficiencies and costly processes. The delivery of 17,360 new homes since 2015 and business growth of 40% since 2010 has provided us additional income to invest in our county, including supporting our demand-led services and delivering on key priorities that the public tell us is important – such as better roads and pavements.

Our investments into tackling congestion, improving public transport and providing enhanced infrastructure will support the continued growth of our economy, delivering what you want us to deliver whilst providing us more income to invest in Worcestershire. This is the model for our Council of the future.

Alongside our growth in income, we've been rigorous in driving down our costs. Since 2015 we have delivered over £140m of budget savings, including a reduction of £16m through back-office efficiencies and process automation. We will continue to streamline our organisation and reduce cost to allow us to focus our resources in areas of priority for our residents. This will include the rationalisation of our assets where these do not meet a core business function or provide long-term strategic opportunities.

We know the demand for our services, specifically Adults and Children's Social Care, is forecast to increase over the next period, and we have already made record investment into these services that support the most vulnerable in society. Our work to help communities, unlock support at a local level and to enable people to live safely and independently, continues to a vital part of our

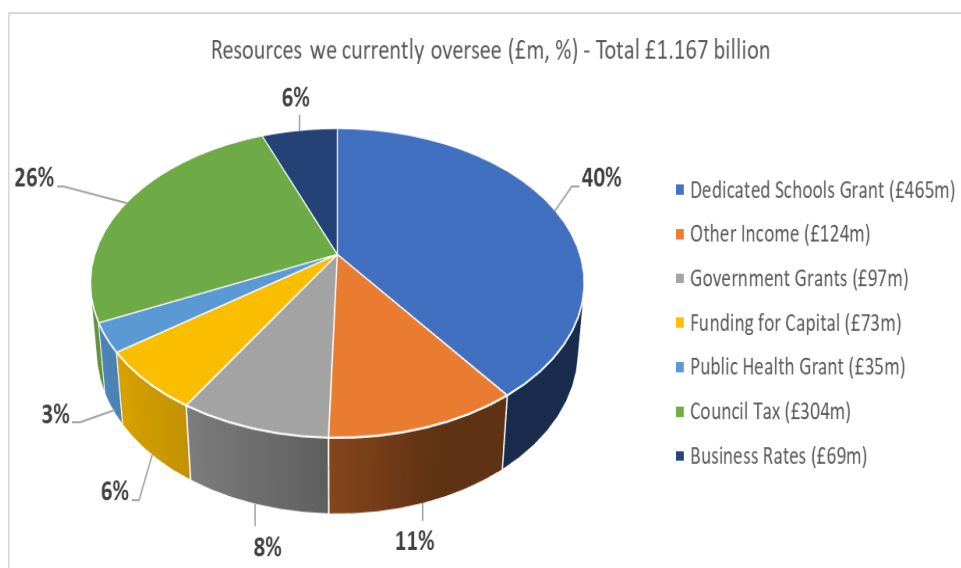
Medium-Term Financial Plan – in reducing that demand for our most costly services, whilst providing better outcomes for the needs of our residents.

Our ambition for the County remains as strong as ever, evidenced by our 3-year capital programme which will help provide an even stronger future for Worcestershire. This includes around £120m of capital funding for significant highway improvements, rail investment and education to improve Worcestershire’s connectivity, ease traffic congestion, and support our growing County.

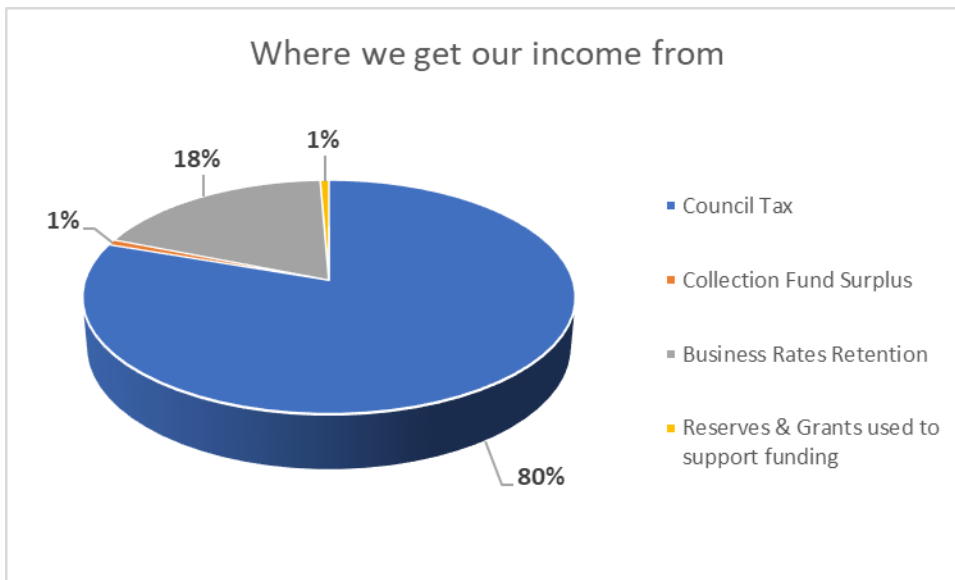
We will continue to work with partners to leverage additional funding into the County to fund our capital and regeneration ambitions. Already we have supported over £87m of central government capital funding through the Getting Building Fund and Local Growth Fund to support the delivery of key investment sites and town centre and high-street regeneration across the County.

By 2027 the Council will be a leaner, more efficient business which will have adopted further digital and self-service solutions to reduce our costs. We will work even more closely with partners as ‘One Worcestershire’ to leverage additional funding for our County, its businesses and its people. Our operating model will evolve as we deliver services more closely with these partners, reducing duplication and inefficiencies and providing a better service for customers. This will be pivotal in being able to review our assets and service processes to drive through further efficiencies whilst not impacting the provision of services to those that most need them.

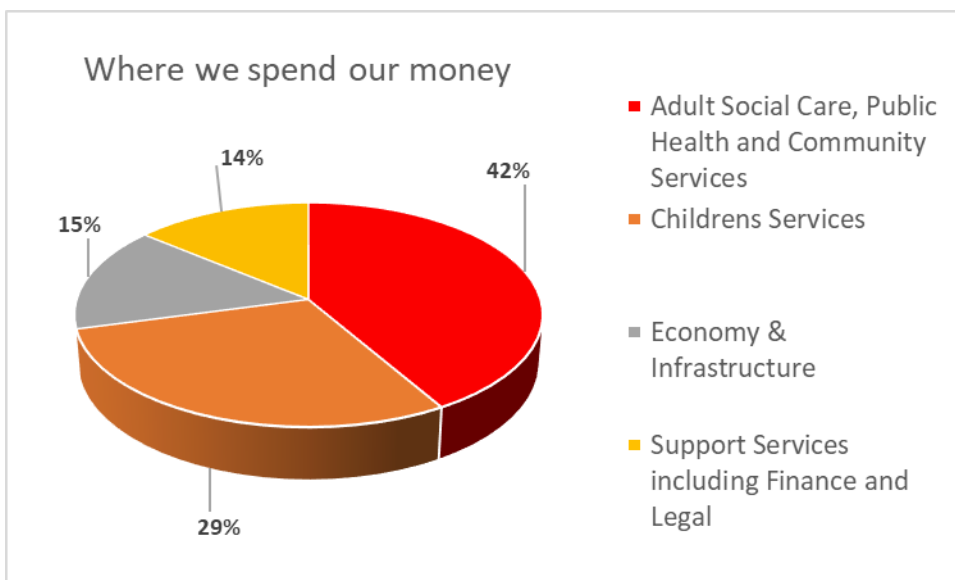
Resources we currently oversee:



Where we get our income from:



What we spend your money on:



How we will measure this:

- Council Tax in the lowest 25% of all County Councils across the UK
- Improving resident's satisfaction with the County
- Lower than average back office \ processing costs
- Higher proportion of our interactions done via cost-effective methods (including internet self-serve, chatbot etc.)
- Reduction in our estate costs and improved efficiency

CABINET
21 APRIL 2022**REPORT OF PERSHORE AREA REVIEW CONSULTATION**
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Relevant Cabinet Member

Councillor Marcus Hart, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education

Relevant Chief Officer

Director of Children's Services

Local Member(s)

Councillor Adrian Hardman

Councillor Daniel Boatright

Councillor Laura Gretton

Councillor Linda Robinson

Councillor Liz Eyre

Councillor Marc Bayliss

Recommendations

- 1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education recommends that Cabinet:**
 - (a) notes the findings of the pre-publication Consultation undertaken in October – November 2021 as outlined in paragraphs 27 - 29;**
 - (b) agrees a commitment in principle to support a collective change of age range to align schools in the Pershore Education Planning Area (EPA) to a single, two-tier (primary and secondary) system of education subject to funding being fully secured;**
 - (c) recommends officers to continue to work with all partners including schools, Multi-Academy Trusts and the Department for Education to identify a collective solution to fund the changes required;**
 - (d) agrees that until a collective solution for funding the whole pyramid age range changes is identified, Cabinet cannot take proposals for LA Maintained schools forward; and**
 - e) the critical milestones (see paragraphs 62 & 63) for changes from September 2024 are not going to be viable unless funding is identified by September 2022 and changes are likely to be made from September 2025 at the earliest subject to funding.**

Background

1. Worcestershire County Council has a duty (under s13-14 Education Act 1996) to ensure there are sufficient school places to accommodate the children and young people who reside in the county and to ensure these places are efficient with a view to promoting high standards, with sufficient capacity to promote parental preference and diversity.
2. In April 2018 the Leader of the Council delegated authority for the publication of statutory proposals for prescribed alterations to maintained schools to the Director of Children Services and Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education (Previously Cabinet Member for Education and Skills). This delegated authority was endorsed by Cabinet in January 2020.
3. The Pershore EPA incorporates part of the Wychavon district, made up predominantly of small rural villages. A map of the education planning area is available in Appendix 1.
4. Until 2019, the education provision in this area has followed a three-tier journey, where pupils attend first schools from the ages of 4-9 (reception to year 4), transfer to middle schools at age 9-12 (year 5 to 7), and then transfer for a final time to high school at age 12 to complete their education (year 8 to year 13).
5. From 2018 onwards the following changes were agreed or submitted for approval within the Pershore EPA:
 - a. Avonreach Multi-Academy Trust gained approval from the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) in December 2018 to vary the age ranges of three first schools, The Orchard, Inkberrow, and Norton-Juxta-Kempsey CE, to convert to Primary Schools and in September 2019 Pershore High to convert to a Secondary School in September 2021, although still operate an intake point at year 8, meaning pupils either start at year 7 (two-tier pyramid) or year 8 (three-tier pyramid);
 - b. The Local Authority in April 2020 approved the conversion of Flyford Flavell to a Primary School in Sept 2020 (with Year 7 places agreed at Pershore High from September 2022);
 - c. Himbleton C.E. converted to a Primary School from September 2021, approved in October 2020 by Himbleton Governing Body (with Year 7 places agreed at Pershore High from September 2023); and
 - d. Crowle C.E. submitted an application to the RSC to convert to a Primary School from Sept 2022. This decision is on hold pending the outcome of the Pershore Review Consultation.
6. The above mentioned schools were not part of the pre-publication engagement as they are not proposing any further age range changes.
7. The above mentioned changes to age ranges in schools (5) has led to uncertainty and sustainability concerns across the EPA. This creates a risk to ensuring clear, quality, sustainable education journeys for pupils in Pershore and the surrounding rural villages and ensuring the sustainability of a number of small rural schools.

8. Further details of the schools currently operating in the Pershore pyramid are outlined in Appendix 2. As a result, the EPA is now made up of a mix of education tier journeys. The pyramids are outlined in Appendix 3.

9. Across Worcestershire we seek to maintain a 5% surplus in line with the agreed strategic aims as outlined in the Worcestershire Education and Skills Strategy (2019 – 2024). The creation of additional places in years 5, 6 and 7 as a result of the already approved changes above has resulted in a forecast level of surplus in these year groups of 31% in September 2021, 34% in September 2022 and 36% in September 2023 which is projected to rise. This is outlined in further detail in Appendix 4.

10. Over the last two years, parents have increasingly chosen a two-tier system of education in their admissions applications with an increasing percentage choosing to remain at converted primary schools or choosing to transfer from first to primary schools. For small rural first schools, this can have a notable impact on sustainability. Please note the increasing retention rates at primary schools in Appendix 5.

11. Between 2013 and 2018, an average of 3% of pupils moved out of the pyramid between year 4 and 5. In 2019 the area gained an additional 3% of pupils through in-year transfer. Despite this, the retention is not significant enough to offset the reduction in pupils in middle schools. The number on roll in middle schools is outlined in Appendix 6.

12. A decline in preference for a three-tier system has been further exacerbated by the Middle School Ofsted ratings. Abbey Park Middle (community maintained), St Barnabas CE First & Middle (DOWMAT academy) and St Nicholas CE Middle (DOWMAT academy) are currently rated as 'requires improvement' by Ofsted. Ofsted noted at the recent inspection (June 2021) of St Nicholas CE Middle School that it is an improving school.

13. Based on the impact of these changes and projection of further risk it was recommended to consult in review of the future provision required for this area to ensure a consistent and quality educational journey for all children; and to enable a coordinated and cohesive approach of change for the pyramid if this is required.

14. Since November 2020, at the request of all the schools and bodies in the Pershore area, Worcestershire Children First (WCF) Officers have facilitated education partners (including head teachers, governing bodies, Academy Trust partners, the Diocese of Worcester, the Department for Education, Education Funding Agency (EFA) and Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC)) in this area to work together to understand the issues and opportunities, to collaborate on agreed principles, and consider options for the future. Any coordinated change has required multiple parties to work collectively.

15. There are multiple proposers, including School Governing Bodies, Academy Trusts and the Local Authority, and multiple decision makers including School Governing Bodies, the Local Authority, the Regional Schools Commissioner or Secretary of State as per Appendix 7, which will require a coordinated approach to decision-making. The relevant decision-making body for each school is determined by the status of the school and the type of proposal.

16. The Council's revised Change of Age Range Policy on responding to change of age range requests (approved by Cabinet 30 January 2020) identified several criteria

that must be considered and satisfied prior to decisions being taken to propose such changes.

17. Between July and September 2021, the schools' governing bodies and Multi Academy Trusts confirmed their agreement / intentions to consult on the change to a two-tier EPA, seek changes of age range (where necessary) and in the instance of the Middle Schools amalgamate with the First Schools.

Pre-Publication Engagement (Consultation)

18. In September 2021 Cabinet approved pre-publication engagement with stakeholders on the proposal for a coordinated change of age range to align schools in the Pershore EPA to a single, two-tier (primary and secondary) system of education. Cabinet also supported Worcestershire Children First to continue to manage this change and coordinate the consultation with families, residents and other key stakeholders.

19. In line with the Code on School Admissions all admission authorities proposing any changes to admission arrangements, including policy and Published Admission Number (PAN), must conduct a full public Consultation within the statutory timeframes set out in the Code. It was therefore determined that both Consultations should be conducted at the same time and reference to each Consultation should be included in all documentation. Stakeholders were invited to provide their views in a seven week-engagement exercise running from 11 October - 26 November 2021. Consultation involved a survey advertised through the WCC and school websites, on social media, and shared directly to all Worcestershire schools, Pershore Early Years providers and local stakeholders including local councillors, parish councils and Unions. Hard copy surveys were also available from WCF and individual schools.

20. Each proposing school held Consultation events, both virtually and face to face to allow stakeholders including parents and the community an opportunity to find out more about the proposals and ask any questions. Cabinet Member Marcus Hart along with WCF Officers held an overall Consultation event at Pershore Civic Centre open to any stakeholders with a vested interest in the proposals.

21. The survey and details of Consultation events can be found in the Consultation Pack in Appendix 8, with a detailed summary of all responses in Appendix 9.

Consultation Proposals

22. The Consultation included the following proposals:

- a. Conversion of the following first schools to primary schools, resulting in accommodation changes:
 - i. Fladbury CE First School (Governing Body proposer) *including a decrease in Pupil Admission Number from 20 to 15 pupils per year group (link to Admission Arrangements Consultation and Cabinet Report)*
 - ii. Upton Snodsbury CE First (Governing Body proposer)
 - iii. Defford-cum-Besford CE First (Governing Body proposer)

- b. Conversion of St Barnabas CE First & Middle School to a primary school (Academy Trust proposer) including an increase in the Pupil Admission Number from 30 to 45 pupils per year group¹
- c. Amalgamation of Abbey Park First and Nursery and Abbey Park Middle School to provide a single primary school (Local Authority proposer)
- d. Amalgamation of Pinvin CE First School and St Nicholas CE Middle School to provide a single primary school (Academy Trust proposer) including an increase in Pupil Admission Number from 25 to 45 pupils per year group¹
- e. Increase of places at Pershore High School in year 7 (Academy Trust proposer); and a change of feeder school links for all Pershore Primary schools (as included in the School's Consultation).

23. A number of other changes, to include Early Years provision as pupils of these schools, were proposed including:

- a. St Barnabas CE First & Middle School to lower the age range of the school to start from age 2 to incorporate pre-school age children as pupils (Academy Trust proposer)
- b. Abbey Park First and Abbey Park Middle School to lower the age range of the school to start from age 2 to incorporate pre-school age children as pupils (Local Authority proposer)
- c. Pinvin CE First School to lower the age range of the school to start from age 3 to open a new pre-school (Academy Trust proposer)
- d. Fladbury CE First School to lower the age range of the school to start from age 3 to incorporate pre-school age children as pupils (Governing Body proposer)

24. Appendix 10 shows the pyramid structure if all of the above proposals were agreed in a coordinated approach.

25. There are several process timescales that could have implemented the conversion to a consistent tier structure. The following process timescales were included in the Consultation to gauge stakeholder views and an indication of their preference:

- a. Process 1: Transition in line with natural progression. All changes made by September 2024. This process sufficiently meets all school organisation and statutory requirements for making changes of this type.
- b. Process 2: Some disruption and greater impact for families. All changes made by September 2023. This would result in the change of age range at most First Schools in 2022, with all First Schools converted to primary by September 2023, in line with the removal of the year 5 intake at Middle Schools in September 2023. This process will require some families to make

¹ Paragraph 1.3 of the Code on School Admissions specifies that Own admission authorities are not required to consult on their PAN where they propose either to increase or keep the same PAN

three school applications in three years, impacting on education journeys during transition.

- c. Process 3: Fastest change with least consultation. All changes made by September 2023. All First Schools converted for September 2022, with the final year 5 intake at Middle Schools in September 2021. An emergency variation does not provide sufficient consultation time before families will be asked to make a decision. Moreover, the Schools Adjudicator is the decision-making body for emergency variations and therefore the outcome of this application cannot be determined by current stakeholders.

26. Further details of the process timelines can be found in Appendix 11.

Consultation Findings

27. 270 responses were received to the Consultation Survey. The majority of respondents were parent carers (60%), members of staff at Worcestershire Schools (34%), and residents of Worcestershire (27%), other respondents included Governors and those with other vested interests. One response was received from a pupil at a Worcestershire School.

28. The full summary of the responses is outlined in Appendix 9 and key points summarised below:

- a. 95% of respondents felt they had been provided with sufficient information to make a decision on whether to support or challenge the proposals.
- b. Overall, respondents were in support of the proposals, with 78% agreeing and 16% disagreeing on the proposals to convert to a single tier structure in Pershore. A further 6% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- c. The most common reasons for supporting the proposals were a preference for children to stay at their (primary) school for 2 more years, fewer transitions, a preference for two-tier system, and support to keep First Schools viable.
- d. The most common reasons to not support the proposals were that the Middle Schools help with the transition to Secondary School from smaller schools, a preference for the three-tier system and a feeling that it was being forced by other schools who had already changed to two-tier.
- e. Overall, respondents supported the quickest timescale for changes to take place, although there was some variance between school responses (Appendix 12).
- f. The breakdown of summary responses in Appendix 12 shows the spread of preferences against individual school proposals, which shows different preferences for different schools, therefore the overall preference cannot be viewed in isolation or used to form recommendations.

29. Some schools received very low numbers of responses to the survey, for example Pinvin CE First School and St Barnabas CE First and Middle School, however parental preferences (see paragraph 30) are showing a majority of Year 6 parents applying for Year 7 places at Pershore High School.

Parental Preferences – School Admissions

30. For September 2022 the Year 7 places intake at Pershore High School was 181 first preferences for the 90 Year 7 PAN. In comparison, the 2021 Year 7 intake saw 109 first preferences received for the 90 places. This shows a significant shift in parental preference for Year 7 places at Pershore High for September 2022 (current Year 6 pupils).

31. For the Pershore High School Year 8 intake in 2022, circa 226 pupils are expected against the 282 places, this remains fairly consistent when compared with 2021 applications.

32. Some Pershore First Schools have reported parents requesting to move their children into the Pershore Primary Schools in-year or in September 2022 as they believe this will increase their likelihood of a Year 7 place at Pershore High School.

33. The forecasting of school places in Pershore prior to 2022 Admissions highlighted an over-supply of places in Middle Schools. The 2022 Admissions preferences has shown a majority of parent carers seeking to move into a two-tier system. This will exacerbate the efficiency and ability to improve standards at the three Middle Schools.

34. Based on the consultation feedback and parental preferences, Cabinet are recommended to agree a commitment in principle to support a collective change of age range to align schools in the Pershore Education Planning Area (EPA) to a single, two-tier (primary and secondary) system of education subject to funding being fully secured to ensure there is an agreed, clear and practical pathway for children to move on from each school affected by the change.

Proposals

Governing Body Proposals

35. Defford-cum-Besford and Fladbury require capital investment (as detailed in paragraph 53) to create the additional accommodation required for Year 5 and 6 pupils. Upton Snodsbury First School have accommodation they could utilise for one year of Year 5 pupils but would require capital investment (as detailed in paragraph 53) to create permanent accommodation required for Year 5 and 6 pupils.

36. Where a school is designated as having a religious character, they should ensure they have the consent of the trustees of the school, the Diocese or relevant diocesan board, or any other relevant faith body, where appropriate. The Diocese have confirmed their support for a coordinated approach to proposals and decision-making. These Governing Bodies have confirmed following consultation their support to continue with the proposed changes.

Local Authority Statutory Proposals

37. Abbey Park First and Nursery School (Community school) consulted to change the age range from First to Primary (from 3-9 to 2-11 years) including integrating pre-school school age children as pupils of the school. The Local Authority also consulted on increasing the number of pupils at Abbey Park Nursery and Primary School by 60 school age pupils, 30 Nursery pupils and 30 Pre-School pupils. Although this will not involve an enlargement of premises it is a permanent increase in capacity of the school

by more than 30 pupils and 25%. The Local Authority is the sole proposer for such alterations including adding nursery provision and increasing the capacity of the school.

38. Abbey Park Middle School (Community school) consulted on amalgamating with Abbey Park First and Nursery School, to do so Abbey Park Middle School would be closed and the age range of Abbey Park First and Nursery School changed to accommodate the year 5 and 6 pupils. It is proposed the Year 7 pupils would attend Pershore High School as included in the Pershore High Admission Consultation.

39. The Local Authority (LA) can propose these changes by following the statutory process. There is a strong expectation that schools and LAs will consult interested parties in developing their proposal prior to publication to take into account all relevant considerations.

40. Abbey Park Nursery and Primary School will require capital investment (as detailed in paragraph 53) to remodel and refurbish parts of the First and Middle School buildings to create a Primary School and to relocate the Children's Centre to ensure the Pre-School can be accommodated close/next to the Nursery to provide good safeguarding and good access for children and parents. The mobile building on site will become surplus to requirements.

41. If proposals are agreed for Abbey Park First and Nursery School to amalgamate with Abbey Park Middle School to form a 1FE Primary School, there will be surplus accommodation on this site. The initial feasibility study details options for this surplus accommodation. There may be opportunities to consider additional specialist education provision and/or multi-agency provision on this school site, taking into account the longer term need for school places in the Pershore EPA.

42. Should a collaborative agreement be found to fund the additional Year 7 places at Pershore High School, Cabinet would be requested in a further report to agree the publication of the statutory proposals for amalgamating Abbey Park Middle School and Abbey Park First School and changing the age range of the school to a Primary School.

Academy Trust Statutory Proposals

43. The DoWMAT and Diocese have confirmed their preference to proceed in a collaborative approach to convert to a two-tier system.

44. Pershore High School (Avonreach Academy Trust) consulted to increase the overall physical capacity of the school to provide a Year 7 PAN increase from 90 to 282 places (included in the School's Admission Arrangement Consultation). Avonreach MAT have confirmed their intention to proceed to a fully collaborative two-tier system.

45. Pershore High has been named in the first 50 schools of the DfE rebuilding programme (SRP)²; the school, working with the Local Authority and DfE agreed to incorporate the surveys required for the additional accommodation into the feasibility study of the SRP.

² [School Rebuilding Programme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Coordinated Approach

46. Where local provision is organised in three-tiers and the aim is to move to a two-tier age range, the DfE expects Academy Trusts to engage with the local community at the earliest opportunity and to provide details in their application of how they will work with Local Authorities and, where the school is designated as having a religious character, the trustees of the school and the appropriate religious authority (in the case of church schools the Diocese or relevant diocesan board), to ensure the change is implemented in a coordinated way.

47. Approval will only be given, in this context, where the DfE is satisfied that a coordinated implementation plan is achievable and can be delivered before the new age range of the academy is operational.

48. The Diocese and Local Authority continue to support a coordinated approach to proposals and decisions for the Pershore EPA to move to a two-tier pyramid.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

Statutory Requirements

49. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure a sufficiency of efficient school places for all children living in the Local Authority area who wish to access state-funded education with a view to promoting high standards and parental preference and diversity. The previous changes of age ranges and parental preferences for a two-tier system in Pershore is impacting on the distribution of places, creating surplus places in some schools and an over demand in Pershore High. Currently the Local Authority is meeting the sufficiency of places, yet the diminishing ability to provide the broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 3 in Middle Schools is causing a risk to standards. Movement of pupils out of small First Schools into Primary Schools will not support the long-term sustainability of small rural First Schools.

Financial Impact

50. Basic need allocations are paid to Local Authorities to support the capital requirement for providing new pupil places by expanding existing maintained schools, free schools or academies, and by establishing new schools. This is un-ringfenced capital funding that is not time-bound so that Local Authorities can make the best decisions for their local area.

51. The Local Authority does not receive capital funding for School Re-organisation. The Pershore Review was not instigated to resolve a lack of school places / basic need requirement or an increased need for places from housing growth. The aims of the Pershore Review were to consider whether a re-organisation from a mixed tier system in Pershore to a consistent two-tier system would improve the educational journey for children and families and ensure longer term viability of all the schools in the area.

52. DfE guidance states that generally, the DfE does not provide funding for significant changes, and that Academy Trusts need to consider how to fund any associated costs in terms of capital funding.

53. The initial capital costs to deliver the accommodation changes of all proposals were estimated at a total of £4m across all schools and funding bodies, based on the cost per pupil place model. Costs were expected to increase due to time lag and impact of COVID-19 on materials. In the Cabinet paper on 6 January 2022 £1.3m has been allocated in the budget setting for the Capital Programme in relation to the Pershore Review for the Local Authority Maintained schools (Defford-cum-Besford, Fladbury, Upton Snodsbury and Abbey Park Federation).

54. Initial feasibility studies completed at each of the **Local Authority Maintained Schools** have estimated the capital investment required between **£1.7m-£2.1m** for the additional accommodation and remodelling of these four schools. There is a shortfall of capital funding required for the Local Authority Maintained School adaptations (£400k-£800k).

55. The DoWMAT have confirmed the accommodation changes required at Crowle, Pinvin St Nicholas and St Barnabas schools would be funded by the MAT.

56. The DfE School Rebuilding Programme conducted a feasibility to cost the additional **Year 7 places required at Pershore High School** for a consistent two-tier EPA. An **indicative £4.3m** is required to create the additional accommodation. Local Authority Officers have been working with the DfE and Avonreach MAT to identify potential sources of funding to deliver the Year 7 places at Pershore High School.

57. Avonreach have confirmed they funded the adaptations to the Primary schools in their Trust and funded the additional staffing and resources required. Avonreach Multi-Academy Trust has confirmed they support the proposed change to two-tier in Pershore EPA. The Trust are committed to find the most cost efficient use of the school buildings particularly at Pershore High School. Avonreach currently do not have the necessary levels of funding to permanently increase the accommodation required for the additional Year 7 places.

58. The School Rebuilding Programme will only fund the rebuild project and not increased pupil places. The RSC office have confirmed that no capital funding is available to create the additional Year 7 places at Pershore High School.

59. Local Authority funding sources instead of Council borrowing that could contribute to the creation of the additional Year 7 places at Pershore High School including: Basic Need Grant, Section 106 Developer Contributions, and Capital Receipts have been considered:

- a. Currently there is no unallocated Basic Need Grant funding (see Exempt Appendix 13);
- b. Section 106 (S106) funding received and expected could be utilised to support some changes across the EPA. Pupil growth from housing in Pershore EPA is expected over the next 4 years. Several S106 agreements are in place or expected in the Pershore EPA. Exempt Appendix 13 provides the details of these including existing status and possible strategies to maximise the use of S106 to support the sufficiency of places long term.
- c. Initial investigations into potential capital receipts in the EPA would indicate that whilst there is surplus capacity of places within the Middle Schools in the EPA for two years, beyond this (2025 onwards) there no options to release buildings (see forecasts within Exempt Appendix 13). The DfE have offered

the support of LocatED³ to review the Pershore EPA estate and consider any further options.

60. If a funding solution cannot be found from the Local Authority, DfE and / or the Academy Trust then the proposals cannot be fully funded to enable the proposed changes.

61. It is recommended to Cabinet that officers continue to work with DfE/RSC and Avonreach MAT to identify a solution to fund the changes required to align schools in the Pershore Education Planning Area (EPA) to a single, two-tier (primary and secondary) system of education the resolution of this is delegated to officers in consultation with the Cabinet Member.

Timescale Impact

62. Communication was sent out at the end of January 2022 to all stakeholders to confirm that process 3, some changes from September 2022, was no longer possible. Further communication aligned to the publication of this Cabinet report will confirm the stakeholders that changes in First Schools in September 2023 and conversion to two-tier in September 2024 is also no longer possible. Stakeholder feedback and parental preferences for September 2022 school places has clearly indicated that the majority of families want this to happen as soon as possible. There are some key milestone dates that all proposers and decision-makers will need to bear in mind to achieve a coordinated change to a two- tier system including:

April 2022	Cabinet Report with consultation findings
May – September 2022	Collective solution to fund all changes identified
By October 2022	Cabinet report with financial agreement and request to publish full proposals
By Jan 2023	Start 6-8 week Representation period for full proposals (Abbey Park and Fladbury)
By March 2023	DCS or CMR decision on full proposals
By April 2023	RSC / Advisory Board meetings
By June 2023	Governing Body decisions
By June 2023	Seek planning consent for First School projects
July - September 2023	Start on site at First Schools
September 2024	First Schools take Year 5 pupils
September 2025	All First Schools and Middle Schools convert to Primary Schools AND Pershore High School takes all Year 7 pupils

63. If partners do not meet these critical milestones for the proposed changes to the remaining First Schools, it is unlikely that the additional accommodation will

³ [LocatED – The government-owned property company creating much-needed school places for thousands of children](#)

be delivered in time for September 2024 and full implementation of the two-tier system by September 2025.

Staffing Impact

64. If proposals proceed, implications for schools would include reductions in some schools and the need for more staff in other schools. This does present a risk of potential redundancies and the costs associated with this. WCF Schools HR Team are providing support and guidance to individual schools.

65. A small number of staff may be affected or at risk as a result of this change. For the two Academy Middle Schools, the DfE and ESFA are working with the Multi Academy Trust to minimise this impact. For the Local Authority Maintained School, Human Resources colleagues are working with the school to minimise any impact.

66. Legal advice is being sought regarding whether TUPE will apply to Year 7 staff currently working in Middle Schools when the service provision transfers to the High School. Given that TUPE is so fact specific there will not be clarity at this stage, however, the initial indication is that TUPE may not apply. For a service provision change, the activities must be 'fundamentally the same', which may not be the case if activities and requirements for staff at the High School are different.

67. The Local Authority will work with the schools to ensure every effort is made to minimise the impact on staff and avoid redundancies. WCF Officers will continue to update and engage with the relevant Trade Unions.

Curriculum Impact

68. Due to falling numbers of pupils in the Middle Schools, the curriculum at these schools affects the delivery of the Key Stage 3 (Year 7) teaching as students prepare to enter year 8. WCF Officers have met with the Middle Schools and High School to address these concerns and is actively working between the schools to ensure a strong and balanced curriculum. Intentions are that Pershore High will share their year 7 and year 8 detailed curriculum plans with the Middle Schools. This action will enable Middle Schools to best prepare year 7 students for transition to year 8 at Pershore High School and develop a consistent approach across the area. There is a risk on curriculum delivery and standards dependent upon Middle School resourcing i.e., retaining suitable staffing levels.

SEN Resourced Provision

69. Abbey Park First and Middle and Pershore High School have Mainstream Autism Resources Base provision on site for children and young people with an identified Autism diagnosis and an EHCP naming resourced provision. There were no proposals as part of the consultation to alter this provision significantly apart from the age range for both bases in line with the school age ranges. WCF Officers will work with both schools to ensure any changes to these Bases lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for the children that attend.

Revenue Funding

70. Revenue implications for schools are yet to be fully determined – whilst Middle Schools and some First Schools are likely to be at increased risk from financial deficits during the change period as pupil numbers decrease, Primary and Secondary Schools will have the increase in numbers and pupil-led funding. The revenue implications will be reviewed and carefully managed on a school-by-school basis. The WCF Schools Finance Team have provided guidance to all the schools in the Pershore Area in relation to the impact of proposals on schools funding, further queries from individual schools continue to be responded to also.

Transport Impact

71. Any proposed changes would have an impact on the Schools Transport budget. The Education Transport Team have confirmed that the policy can be managed during the transition stage to ensure pupils are still eligible for transport support irrespective of whether they apply for Primary or Middle School places during this stage. Further technical analysis will be undertaken to understand the implications for transport costs longer term.

Risk Implications

72. At present, there is a mixed two-tier and three-tier system in the Pershore Education Planning area. This mixed system is continually affecting the sustainability and viability of all remaining First and Middle Schools and therefore in the longer term the Local Authority is at risk of failing in our statutory duty to ensure a sufficiency of good school places in this area.

73. If the pyramid remains with individual and uncoordinated decisions for further age range changes it risks the small rural First Schools and the two Academy Middle Schools becoming financially unsustainable and risks the quality of education provision. WCF and WCC Officers are providing support and guidance to these schools to mitigate as much as possible financial and curriculum delivery impact.

74. Some schools are experiencing specialist staff choosing to leave ahead of decisions being made. There is a risk that schools will be unable to recruit and retain quality teaching staff during this period of uncertainty. WCF and WCC Officers continue to offer support to these schools on a case-by-case basis.

75. There is a risk that Section 106 funding may not be able to contribute to changes depending on the details within specific agreements. There is also a risk that some agreements may not be able to be varied.

76. There is a risk that partners will not identify capital funding to contribute to the additional places required at Pershore High. This will likely prevent any further changes being agreed and limit parental preference for school places. The Local Authority would need to work with the Middle Schools to identify solutions to mitigate falling pupil numbers and retention of staff.

77. There is a risk that partners will not agree contributions of capital funding to contribute to the additional places required at Pershore High in time for decisions to proceed for First School changes to be implemented from September 2024. There is a strong possibility that the deadlines required for decisions (paragraph 63 & 64) will not be met. Changes would then take longer to implement.

78. Pershore area population includes a larger than average Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) community. Schools have engaged with those families known in their schools. There is a risk that GRT families might choose to withdraw their child(ren) from education at the end of year 4 (First Schools) and year 6 (Primary Schools) rather than transition to the next school. Further engagement work with families through the WCF GRT Team will take place in the 2022 summer term to ensure that this group of the community are full informed and supported.

79. Capital costs are increasing due to the impact of Covid-19 on material costs, WCF and WCC are working together to monitor and manage the education capital programme accordingly.

Joint Equality, Public Health, Data Protection and Sustainability Impact Assessments

80. A joint impact assessment (JIA) screening (Appendix 14) has been carried out in respect of the proposed options. It identified that further impact analysis will be required in respect of a full Equality & Public Health and Environmental Sustainability Impact Assessment to identify and manage the impact of the proposed changes to those with protected characteristic, together with any mitigation should this be approved by Cabinet following consultation.

Supporting Information (available electronically)

- Appendix 1 – Map of Pershore EPA schools
- Appendix 2 – Pershore EPA schools
- Appendix 3 – Current Pershore EPA structure
- Appendix 4 – Percentage surplus school places
- Appendix 5 – Primary school numbers on roll and retention rates
- Appendix 6 – Middle school numbers on roll
- Appendix 7 – Proposers and Decision Makers
- Appendix 8 – Pershore Consultation Pack
- Appendix 9 – Pershore Consultation Responses
- Appendix 10 – Two-tier structure
- Appendix 11 – Process Timescales
- Appendix 12 – Breakdown of summary responses
- Appendix 13 - Pershore EPA demand and S106 capital (EXEMPT)
- Appendix 14 - Joint Impact Assessment Screening

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director for Children's Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Cabinet Member Report February 2022 – [School Admission Arrangements](#)
- Cabinet decision on Change of Age Range Policy – [Cabinet on Thursday, 30 January, 2020](#)
- Cabinet Report School Sufficiency and Organisation for the Pershore Education Planning Area – [Cabinet on Thursday, 23 September, 2021](#)
- DfE guidance on school organisation changes – [School organisation: local-authority-maintained schools](#) and [Academies: making significant changes or closure by agreement](#)

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